

Merry Zoo Christmas

School or Group Program Information Package

For any booking questions, modifications or cancellations, please contact our booking office directly:

Phone: **780-496-2926**

Email: artsattractionsbookings@edmonton.ca

Field Trip Preparation

Adult Supervisors

Adult supervisors are admitted free of charge with the program in the following ratios:

- Preschool: 1 adult per 3 children
- K – Grade 6: 1 adult per 5 children
- Grades 7 – 12: 1 adult per 10 children

Additional parents (exceeding a total of 40 individuals) will be asked to pay facility admission fees and tour the facility on their own. Additional participants can rejoin the group after the registered program ends.

Please inform adult supervisors that they will be asked to help out with group activities and that they are there to supervise the group. With young children, it is helpful to have your students arranged into smaller groups assigned to a parent helper leader before the program begins. You and your adult helpers' encouragement and active participation in all activities will help to make this learning experience a truly positive one for your students! Adult supervisors should not be bringing younger children (e.g. babies in strollers) to the program. We want all parent volunteers to be focused on supervising the children in the program.

Group Size

- The maximum number of **children** permitted in a program is 30. Groups exceeding 30 children must book an additional program.
- The maximum number of **individuals** (adult supervisors and children) permitted in a single program is 40. Groups exceeding 40 individuals in total must book an additional program.
- To ensure a high quality program we recommend that all children participating in a program be within the age range advertised for the program.

Name Tags

Please have your students wear name tags; this helps the interpreter acknowledge the students by name.

Special Needs

Please inform your interpreter, in advance of the program, about students with: learning disabilities, physical disabilities, medical concerns (including allergies*), or behavioural issues. Please also indicate any strategies you use with students to help them have success in the classroom.

Program content and activity locations can be adjusted, if necessary, to accommodate students with special needs.

Please advise your interpreter of any allergies your students have or indicate any allergy concerns at the time of bookings. The Zoo is **not a nut-free or fragrance-free facility, as many animals eat seeds and nuts as part of their diet, and receive daily enrichments that may include scents (including extracts and spices). Common allergens encountered at the zoo include fur, feathers, dust, pollen, straw, and hay.*

Zoo Rules

For zoo programs, it is usually a good idea to go over some basic ground rules and expectations for behaviour for the field trip. Some suggestions:

1. Keep with the group at all times (sometimes a buddy system or dividing the kids into small groups each with an adult leader is helpful).
2. Keep fingers out of the enclosures. Sometimes the animal may not know the difference between a yummy snack and someone's fingers.
3. Don't try to touch an animal unless the interpreter says it's okay for the same reason given above. There may be some chances for encounters and touching animals but let the leader tell you when it is an appropriate time for that. During the COVID-19 pandemic, none of our animals are permitted to be touched by the public.
4. Do not climb any fences. We have had quite a few visitors slip and hurt themselves from climbing, so it's a good reminder to ask students to keep both feet on the ground.
5. Anything else you think may be necessary to ensure appropriate behaviour from your class. The interpreter will review these rules at the start of the program and add anything they think is necessary

What to Bring

1. Appropriate Clothing and Footwear

Please make sure your students (and adults) dress for the weather as some of the activities will take place outdoors. It is important to dress for hot sunny weather (hat, sunscreen, bug spray) as well as cold or wet weather (jacket, extra sweater, raincoat, hat, mitts, snow boots, and appropriate footwear). For hot sunny days, we also recommend that each participant bring a refillable water bottle.

For your group's safety and comfort while walking around the zoo, we recommend comfortable, closed-toed footwear.

2. Are You Staying at the Zoo For Lunch?

There are **no guaranteed or designated spaces for eating lunches or for storing lunch totes or backpacks**. We recommend that each participant carries their own lunch, snacks, and water bottle with them in a backpack at all times. The Zoo is not responsible for lost or missing items that are left unattended.

The Zoo's indoor classroom program spaces are reserved for school and group programs throughout the day. Because of this, they are unavailable for your class or group as a lunch location.

There are a number of outdoor grassy and picnic areas within the Zoo that can be used for lunch, as well as some indoor public areas that can be used as temporary lunch locations in inclement weather. All of these public locations are first-come, first-serve. Please ask your interpreter for suggested locations.

Schools and groups are responsible for cleaning up after themselves, ensuring that all garbage and recyclable containers are deposited in the correct bins (garbage bins or blue recycling bins).

3. Classroom or Group Activity Sheets/Workbooks

You are welcome to bring any worksheets or notebooks for students to fill out during your program. Please let your interpreter know in advance if you would like him/her to include any information specific to these worksheet activities during your program.

4. Are You Coming For an Evening Program?

You may wish to have members of your group bring their own flashlights during the fall/winter/spring, as there is minimal lighting at the Zoo once the sun has set. Please refer to the section on "Evening / After-Hours Program Procedures" below for additional information.

What Not to Bring

For health and safety considerations of both humans and animals, we ask that you do not bring into the Zoo:

- ✗ Balloons and kites
- ✗ Sparklers and other fireworks
- ✗ Pets or other animals*
- ✗ Your own BBQs or indoor grills (for preparing food on-site)
- ✗ Food items to donate to the Zoo for the animals or for feeding the animals
- ✗ Bicycles, children's scooters, or inline skates (for use and/or lock-up)

*Service dogs that are accompanying persons with disabilities are permitted. Please be prepared to present your documentation for your service dog to the cashiers at the front gate. Service dogs without appropriate certification will not be permitted to enter the Zoo.

Interpreter Contact

The interpreter assigned to lead your program will contact you (the main contact person who booked the program) at least 48 hours prior to your field trip to confirm details with you. If you have not heard from your interpreter within 48 business hours and have questions about your program, please call the program coordinator at 780-718-2695.

Please note: the interpreter will first try to contact you by email. They may also try to call the phone number you have provided. If you wish to leave an alternate phone number where you can be reached during the daytime or evening, please ask the booking agent to include this number as a “note for the interpreter”.

- **If you have booked multiple classes/groups for multiple programs** , only the person listed as the primary contact for these will be contacted.
- **If you have booked programs on behalf of other teachers or groups** , please pass along any information provided by the interpreter to the adult supervisors who will be accompanying the group(s).
- **If you will not be attending the field trip yourself but are listed as the program contact**, please inform the interpreter when they call. If possible, please also provide the name(s) of the supervisors who will be accompanying the group at the time of booking.

Payment & Cancellation Procedures

Payment

The amount owing is shown on your program confirmation. Payment is required prior to the program. Invoices are mailed out by the City on the first of each month. You will receive your invoice the same month as your program runs. For example, for a May booking, your invoice will be issued on May 1.

Payment can be made by cash, cheque, Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

Please have cheques made payable to The City of Edmonton, and write your booking confirmation numbers on your cheques.

Payment can be phoned in: 311 or 780-496-2926.

Cheques can be mailed to:

Citizen Services Payment Processing
PO Box 2359
19th Floor Edmonton Tower
Edmonton, AB, T5J 2R7

Program Cancellation

- You are required to submit written notice of cancellation of your programs by email to: artsattractionsbookings@edmonton.ca.
- Programs cancelled with 30 or more days notice will not be charged the program fee or a cancellation fee.
- Programs cancelled with 8-29 days notice are subject to be charged 50% of the program fee, unless the cancellation is filled by a waitlisted group.
- For programs cancelled with 7 or less days notice, the full program fee will be charged.
- Programs run rain or shine. In the event of poor weather, you must call 780-496-2926 or email artsattractionsbookings@edmonton.ca if you are not coming.
- Programs cancelled due to severe weather conditions but are rescheduled within the current school year, or the upcoming school years fall term (Sept-Nov), will not be charged a cancellation fee.

Arrival Procedures

Your interpreter will meet you in the main plaza of the Zoo for the start of your program. If you will be arriving at the zoo for a program prior to the time that the zoo opens to the public, you can wait in the plaza if the gates are open, or you can wait just outside the gates if they are still closed.

We recommend that you organize your group(s) on the bus before disembarking.

If you will be arriving at the zoo and doing a self-guided tour prior to your program start time, please return to the plaza area to meet your interpreter at the program start time. The zoo is generally open daily 9 AM - 4 PM from May long weekend until Thanksgiving. Then the zoo is open to the public Thursday - Sunday 9 AM - 4 PM and open only to field trip programming Monday - Wednesday. Check the [website for hours and more details](#).

Admission is included in your program fees if the zoo is open to the public. We strongly recommend touring the Zoo before and/or after your scheduled program to make a whole day out of your field trip.

Evening / After-Hours Programs

You will be able to do the same or similar types of activities as you would during a daytime program. Please be aware that there is minimal lighting within the Zoo grounds, and that during the fall, winter, and early spring, some animals in outdoor enclosures will be considerably less visible at night. Participants are welcome and encouraged to bring their own flashlights that can be used for outdoor activities during an evening program.

You will meet your interpreter just outside the front gate of the Zoo at the scheduled program start time. Please be aware that the Zoo gate may be locked if you arrive early. Your interpreter will bring your group through an alternate side door.

Please ensure that all members of your group arrive a little early or on time, since your interpreter will need to lock the gate once your group is inside the Zoo. If you are anticipating any late arrivals, please inform your interpreter so that they can wait until all members of the group have arrived, at which time the program can begin. Alternatively, we recommend providing members of the group with your personal cell phone number, so that they can call you upon their arrival at the Zoo. Your group can then head to the front gate to meet them.

No member of your group can wander around the zoo on their own after-hours. Your group must stay together with your interpreter.

At the end of your program, your interpreter will lead you back to the plaza area where there is an after-hour exit. Members of your group cannot remain in the facility after the program end time. If members of your group are being picked up by parents after the program, please let parents know in advance that the gate will be locked, and that they will need to wait at the front gate for the group to exit the zoo.

Program Information

We have made our list and checked it twice, and all the animals have been on their best behaviour! During the Christmas season, you will have a chance to “Get Closer” to some of our animals and learn all about Christmas traditions from around the world. You will even have the chance to deliver a gift for an animal and make their holiday wishes come true.

This program is offered year-round for schools and groups.

Program Objectives

1. Introduce students to Christmas traditions and animals from different ecosystems from around the world.
2. Compare the needs of animals from different parts of the world.
3. Foster an excitement for the Christmas holiday.
4. Encourage an appreciation and sense of duty towards animal conservation.

Curriculum Links

This program is very adaptable and can be tailored to meet the needs of any class. We can accommodate a specific theme or learning objective as part of your program. If you have anything you want included in the program, just let the interpreter know when s/he calls you to confirm your program.

Suggested classroom connections (based on Alberta Curriculum) can include, but are not restricted to:

- K - Social Studies - Citizenship and identity
- K - Social Studies - Environment and community awareness
- Gr 1 - Social Studies - Establishing communities

Program Activities

This program includes activities that occur both indoors and outdoors. Activities may include a guided tour to see some of our indoor and outdoor animals, interpreter-led discussions about animal features and animal information, one or two small animal encounters* touching animal artifacts, and learning-based activities. When your interpreter calls to confirm your program, please inquire about activities that may be included during your program. We cannot guarantee any encounters with specific animals, as this is dependent on animals' health on the day of your program.

**Please let your interpreter know in advance, or at the time of booking, if you or your group have any specific requests or concerns with certain types of animals that may be brought out for encounters (i.e., if you do not want any snakes brought out during your program). Our selection of tractable animals includes reptiles, birds, mammals, and amphibians. Most but not all of our tractable animals are touchable by members of the public. For more details about which animals may be included in your program, please ask your interpreter.*

Programs do not automatically include time for a snack or bathroom break, but this can be incorporated into your program, especially with Pre-S and K classes. Classes and groups are responsible for providing their own food and beverages. Please confirm with your interpreter when they call, or just prior to the start of your program, if you would like to include a mid-program break. The length of the program is not increased to accommodate the break.

Questions?

Please view our online **School and Group Programs FAQ:**

https://www.edmonton.ca/attractions_events/edmonton_valley_zoo/zoo-school-group-programs-faq-group-programs-faq.aspx

You may also call the program coordinator at 780-718-2695.

We look forward to seeing you at the Edmonton Valley Zoo!