

EDUCATION PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does a typical program look like?

Educators will meet your bus upon arrival and lead your school into our facility where students and teachers will be divided into smaller groups for hiking. Each program is structured to include hiking and activities based on the program selected.

Can we eat lunch onsite?

We have an outdoor plaza and picnic tables at our Nature Center that are available on a first come first serve basis. Please consider packing re-useable containers as we encourage conservation and a zero waste, trash-free lunch. Please dispose of any trash or food before you leave.

What if I have students with mobility concerns?

Our goal is to create a diverse and accessible forest experience where there is something for everyone. The boardwalk, located at the Nature Center, is ADA compliant. Please let us know any specific needs when requesting a program so that we can work with you to identify appropriate accommodations.

What is your inclement weather policy?

If Omaha Public School schools and/or Bellevue Public Schools close due to inclement weather Fontenelle Forest school programs are cancelled. Our educators check the weather before students arrive to discuss the best plan for the day. Safety is our number one priority. Every effort is made to give all students a safe and fun outdoor experience for a portion of the program. We strongly encourage everyone to look ahead and dress appropriately for the weather. Time outside will be limited if the temperature is below 15°F, above 90°F, or involves strong winds. If you need to cancel your program we will work with you to reschedule. Please keep in mind we have a 48 hour cancellation policy and a fee may incur.

Is there a cancellation fee?

A \$50 cancellation fee will be charged for no-shows or for programs cancelled for reasons other than inclement weather within 48 business hours of the scheduled program.

Why do you charge for student trips?

Fontenelle Forest provides an opportunity for your students to inspire a deeper connection with the natural world. All programs invite you to explore the quiet wild of nature and discover the many diverse aspects of Nebraska's natural landscape. Fees help offset the cost of time and resources as our educators plan programs to meet school standards and provide the best experience for your students.

What is included with my program fee?

Your fee includes a naturalist led hike and science based lesson at the Forest. Daily admission is included allowing you to stay and enjoy use of our public facilities before or after the program to eat lunch, explore the Raptor Woodland Refuge, play at Acorn Acres or Habitat Hollow, or explore our extensive trail system on your own.

How do we pay for our program?

When you arrive for your program, an educator will get a final count of students and adults and your organization will receive an invoice for the total amount owed.

How many students and chaperones can we bring?

A maximum of 60 students can participate in any single program due to facility and staffing limitations. If you require a program that allows for more than 60 students, please note this on your program request form.

Because we divide into smaller groups for a more meaningful educational experience, we require enough teachers and chaperones to allow for one adult for every fifteen students. Groups are welcome to bring up to one adult for every 10 students. Groups will be charged for additional adults over the 1:10 ratio at \$11/adult.

What can my group do before or after my program?

You may come to the Nature Center before or after your program to eat lunch, explore our Raptor Woodland Refuge, play at Acorn Acres or Habitat Hollow, or explore the public areas on your own.

What do chaperones need to know?

While the educator will facilitate discussion during the hike and activities, it's helpful for chaperones to assist in keeping students together and encouraging participation as needed. We expect all adults to silence and put away cell phones during programs unless needed for an emergency. Please keep in mind that, as an adult, students will look to you to guide behavior and engagement.

How do we prepare for our trip to the Forest?

Participants should dress accordingly for an outdoor hike on uneven dirt/gravel paths with closed toed shoes and weather appropriate outerwear. Layers are best! Shoes and clothes may get dirty or muddy, especially following rain. Mosquitoes and ticks are prevalent at all Fontenelle Forest sites; we recommend bringing and applying bug spray and checking for ticks after the program.

If rain is in the forecast, rain gear is needed. The field trip will take place outdoors rain or shine (except in the event of lightning or thunderstorms).

What if I submitted a program request and haven't heard from you?

We do our best to reach out to schedule a trip as quickly as possible. If you don't hear back within 48 business hours you can try resubmitting the online form or you can email the Education Assistant at

KLeware@fontenelleforest.org

What if I want to bring my group to explore Fontenelle Forest on our own?

We love that you want to visit Fontenelle Forest! If you are coming on your own, you do not need to set up a reservation. On the day of your visit you will pay daily admission at the front desk. There are trail maps for you to explore on your own, visit our raptor refuge, enjoy your lunch on the plaza, and visit our educational playgrounds.