

## SCHOOL PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How many students and chaperones can we bring to a school program?

A maximum of 75 students\* can participate in any single program due to facility and staffing limitations. Our program fee includes one adult attendee for every 10 students. Additional adults will be asked to pay daily admission (\$11 per non-member adult; free for members). To ensure clear communication, please let our team know if the number of adults that you expect to attend will exceed our recommended 1:10 ratio.

*\*If you have more than 75 students and would like to speak to our team about potential accommodations, please reach out using the contact information at the top/bottom of this document.*

### What do chaperones need to know?

Upon scheduling a trip with our education department, a confirmation document will be sent with information for adult attendees.

A gentle reminder: students will look to adult audience members to model appropriate behavior and engagement during a program. We request all adults silence and put away cell phones during programs unless needed for an emergency.

### What does a typical program schedule look like?

A member of our team will greet your bus upon arrival to facilitate unloading and guiding your group to the program site. We will ask one teacher to check in at the front desk while our naturalist educator leads the group into the program space. Once everyone is settled in, we will begin the indoor portion of your program (tailored to meet current State of Nebraska Education Standards).

When the lesson is complete, we will ask your group to split into small groups for your naturalist educator-led hike. Please pre-plan how you will split your students into groups of 10-15 to make this process go smoothly and quickly. If your district requires a certified teacher with each hiking group, please plan accordingly.

When the hike is finished, all groups will reconnect to prepare for the next item on your agenda (i.e., lunch; free play at Acorn Acres; self-guided exploration).

### How do we check in and pay for our program?

Upon arrival, one of our naturalist educators will ask a teacher to check in your program at the front desk. The front desk will ask for the total number of student and adult attendees. Our school programs cost \$7.75 per student, so the final price for your program will be determined upon arrival to ensure an accurate final invoice. Our program fee includes one adult attendee for every 10 students. Additional adults will be asked to pay daily admission (\$11/non-member adult; free for members). \*

Unless prior arrangements have been made with the education department, payment will be processed at the front desk upon check in.

*\*If you have specific questions about our program fees or payment options, please reach out using the contact information at the top/bottom of this document.*

## **What is included with my program fee?**

Your program fee includes a naturalist-led hike and science-based lesson at the Forest. Additionally, school program guests are invited to stay and enjoy use of our facilities before/after your scheduled program.

## **What can my group do before/after my program?**

You are welcome to access the Nature Center and surrounding areas before/after your program. Enjoy lunch on the plaza, explore Acorn Acres (a one-acre natural playscape), visit the Raptor Woodland Refuge, or check out any of our hiking trails. Be sure to pick up a trail map at the front desk and fill your water bottle in the Nature Center before your self-guided adventures!

## **Where 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 dispose of all trash and/or food before you leave. If you would like to reserve an indoor space for lunch with your scheduled program, we do have a couple of rooms with limited availability. \*

*\*If you would like to speak to our team about potential accommodations, please reach out using the contact information at the top/bottom of this document. School program guests are not guaranteed indoor lunch accommodations.*

## **What if I have students/adults in need of mobility accommodations?**

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 a one-mile, ADA-accessible trail system that is great for everyone, and easily accommodates strollers and wheelchairs. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns regarding our facilities, so that we can discuss the accommodations available at our program locations. \*

*\*We regularly host programs at locations other than the Nature Center (i.e., Camp Brewster). If you have specific questions or accommodation concerns, please reach out using the contact information at the top/bottom of this document.*

## **If we need to cancel a scheduled program, will there be a fee?**

If a program is cancelled by the school/organization less than two business days prior to the reservation, we will issue an invoice for a \$50 cancellation fee. If a program is cancelled due to inclement weather, public health related concerns,\* or with advance notice (i.e., more than two business days prior to the reservation), there will be no cancellation fee.

*\*If your school or organization has a COVID-19 exposure, please follow current CDC guidelines. No cancellation fee will be issued due to public health related concerns. Please reach out to coordinate with our team using the contact information at top/bottom of this document.*

## **What is your inclement/hazardous weather policy?**

In the event of inclement/hazardous weather conditions, closure of the Nature Center and cancellations of programs will be determined by the Fontenelle Forest Executive Director. Safety is our number one priority; our educators will make every effort to communicate with your school/organization in the event of a program cancellation.

In the event of lightning or other severe weather conditions that do not require program cancellation, our educators will utilize prepared indoor lesson plans and students will *not* hike. Time outside will be limited if the temperature is below 15°F or above 90°F.

If you would like to reschedule or cancel your program due to less-than-ideal weather conditions, please reach out to our team as soon as possible to discuss available options.

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

If you would like to bring a group of students on a self-guided adventure, you may be interested in our Backpack Forest Exploration Program. For more information, check out the Backpack Program flyer on our [website](#)!

If you do not wish to reserve a program, all attendees will simply be asked to pay daily admission at the front desk (daily and group admission rates can be found on our [website](#)). You are welcome to enjoy lunch on the plaza, explore Acorn Acres (a one-acre natural playscape), visit the Raptor Woodland Refuge, or check out one of our many hiking trails. Be sure to pick up a trail map at the front desk when you check in!

## **How do we prepare for our trip to Fontenelle Forest?**

Attendees of all ages should expect to participate in an outdoor hike on uneven dirt/gravel trails - rain or shine! Weather appropriate outerwear, hiking-ready shoes, sunscreen/bug spray, and a refillable water bottle are recommended. Please check the weather before your trip to make sure you and/or your student are properly prepared. \*

When preparing lunch for your program, please be mindful of the environmental impact of your meal. If possible, try to utilize reusable packing containers instead of single-use plastic.

After your field trip, we advise performing a tick check on attendees who participated in an outdoor hike to ensure there aren't any hitchhikers! If you have questions or concerns about ticks, please contact a medical professional.

*\*As noted in our inclement weather policy, we will not take students outside in hazardous weather conditions.*

## **Further questions?**

Please contact Lauren Walker at [LWalker@FontenelleForest.org](mailto:LWalker@FontenelleForest.org), or call (402) 731-3140.