



Know Before You Go Field Trip FAQs

Thank you for planning a field trip to San Antonio Zoo and helping to secure a future for wildlife!

Field trips to San Antonio Zoo can inspire a student's love of nature for a lifetime and are a wonderful way to extend learning beyond the classroom.

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about the day of your visit to the zoo.

Field trips must be registered at least two weeks in advance and paid in full prior to the day of visit in order to secure discounted admission for schools. If you have not registered, please visit our website: <https://sazoo.org/education-programs/field-trips/>.

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01. School Group Expectations

Please review with students and chaperones

Be Safe

- Students must stay with chaperones and maintain a ratio of 1 adult chaperone for every 10 students.
- Stay on designated paths and never cross barriers.
- Walk instead of run.
- Notify a zoo staff member if you get separated from your group.
- Notify a zoo staff member if you accidentally drop any items over a barrier or a habitat.

Be Respectful

- Do not yell at animals, feed them, chase them, hit, kick, or tap on animal habitats, barriers or glass.
- Keep your hands, body, and objects away from animals and their habitats.
- Be considerate of other guests.
- Do not vandalize or damage property.

Be a Good Steward

- Place trash and recycling in the appropriate bins.
- Do not litter, pick plants and flowers, or move sticks and rocks.
- **Conservation is a group effort!**

02. Chaperones: Teachers, Staff & Parent Volunteers

How many chaperones do I need?

- Please plan for 1 chaperone for every 10 students.
 - Teacher and staff chaperones should be included in the school’s registration numbers
 - Parent volunteers/chaperones should purchase their tickets separately
 - Parent volunteer/chaperone tickets are eligible for the same discounted rate as students and teachers
- ALL chaperones are expected to model and encourage good behavior as listed in the School Group Expectations

How do parent volunteers/chaperones purchase their discounted tickets?

- Parent volunteers/chaperones must purchase the discounted ticket in advance using the online link provided to the coordinating teacher.
- Discounted admission for schools, chaperones, and parent volunteers is **NOT** available at the zoo gate
 - Title I Funding awarded by San Antonio Zoo does not cover admission for parent volunteers/chaperones or any staff chaperones beyond ratio requirements

Where do parent volunteers/chaperones park if they are not arriving on the bus?

- There are 2 locations for parent volunteers/chaperones arriving in personal vehicles to park:
- Train Depot parking lot near Starbucks (3910 N. St. Mary’s St., San Antonio, TX 78212)
 - San Antonio Zoo Parking Garage (151 Tuleta Dr., San Antonio, TX 78212)
 - Both parking locations are free

Can parent volunteers/chaperones use Zoo Memberships to cover admission for the field trip?

San Antonio Zoo Memberships may be used for zoo admission for Self-guided Tours; however, they do not cover the cost of staff-led Education Programs such as Zoo Connection Classes or Wild Walks.

What if chaperones are late?

- Any chaperone (teacher, staff or parent volunteer) whose ticket was purchased by the school and included on the school’s invoice **MUST arrive and enter the zoo at the same time** as their group
- Parent volunteers/chaperones who purchased their tickets in advance using the online ticket link may scan their ticket’s bar code at the zoo’s main gate any time the day of the field trip

03. Arrival & Check-in

In the interest of student and guest safety, as well as efficiency, bus unloading and school entry locations will vary daily based on a number of factors. Your flexibility and patience is appreciated!

Who needs to complete check-in upon arrival?

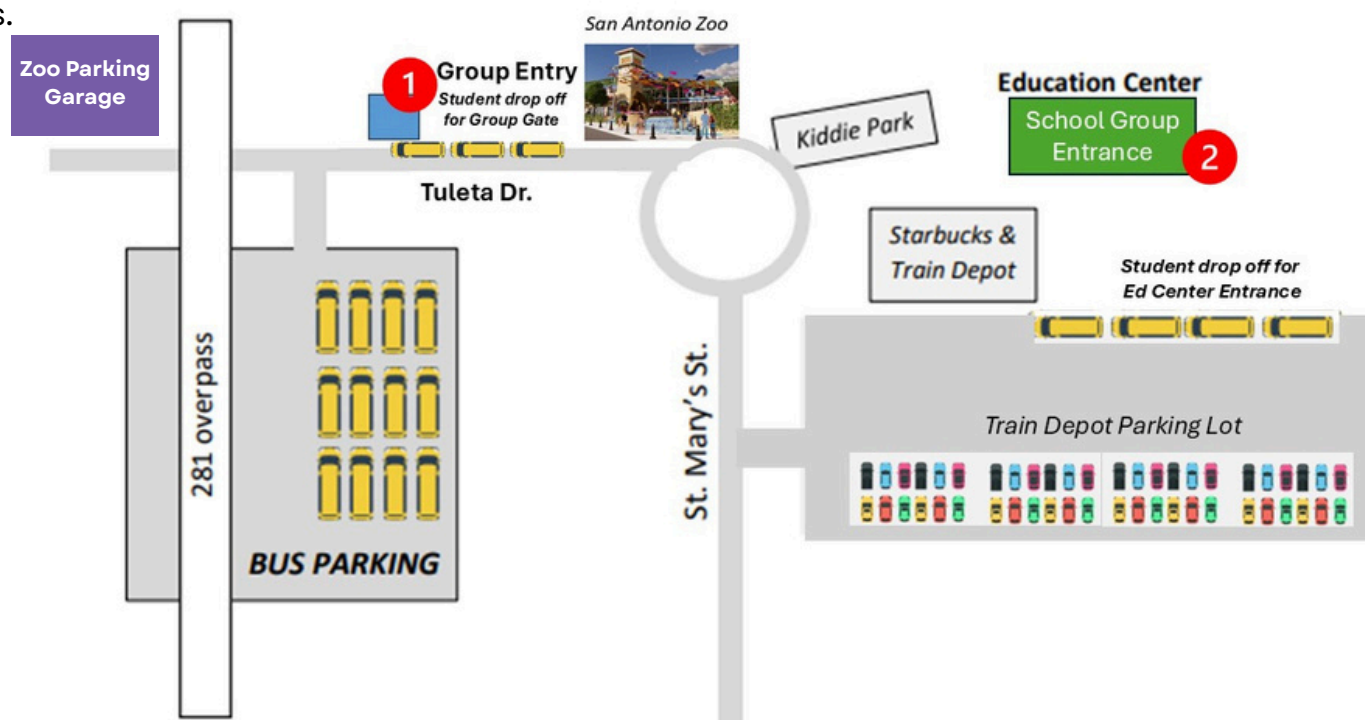
- One lead teacher/field trip coordinator needs to check-in with zoo staff upon arrival to the zoo.
- Zoo staff will make every attempt to greet buses as they arrive and provide a School Check-in Form
 - The lead teacher/field trip coordinator will complete the School Check-in form and return it to zoo staff before entering the gate with the group
 - The following information will be needed to complete the School Check-in Form:
 - Final count of students present who the school paid for
 - Final count of adults present who the school paid for
 - Number of buses and description (bus number, ISD, etc.)
 - Estimated departure time

Where will buses unload?

The zoo utilizes two different points of drop off and entry for school groups which change daily depending on projected attendance and other factors.

- **Your group's designated unloading location will be assigned by the zoo and emailed to the coordinating teacher approximately one to two weeks prior to the scheduled field trip**
- Zoo staff will help direct buses to the assigned student drop-off locations upon arrival
- Both drop-off locations are ADA accessible
- Unloading in the traffic circle/roundabout is strictly prohibited due to the red curb and is enforced by SAPD

Please ensure buses do not block entrances, driveways, roads, VIA bus stops, pedestrian crossings, or accessibility ramps.



Where will school groups enter the zoo?

Once the lead teacher/field trip coordinator has checked in, your group will enter the zoo **at your assigned location**: either the Group Entrance or the Education Center

- Zoo staff will reach out to confirm your assigned entry location one to two weeks prior to your visit
- Zoo staff will be available during scheduled arrivals (9-11 am) to direct groups to their designated entry location

Should we unload lunches when we arrive?

Yes, please unload your lunches and bring them when you enter the zoo.

- Zoo staff are unable to provide assistance with unloading or transporting lunches
- We recommend bringing rolling ice chests, coolers, or wagons

Where will buses park after drop off?

Bus parking is available in the lot on Tuleta Dr. under Highway 281.

- Parking in the "281 Lot" is not required; however, on busy school group days, the zoo's Security Team will help coordinate school group departures and only buses in the "281 Lot" will have the advantage of communication with zoo staff

04. School Lunches

Can we bring our own lunches?

Schools may bring sack lunches into the zoo in ice chests, boxes, covered totes, or student backpacks.

- Ensure all items are labeled with the school or group name
- We recommend schools bring wagons or wheeled coolers to make transporting lunches easier
- **Restaurant prepared or catered food is NOT permitted (including pizza, Chick-Fil-A, Subway, etc.)**
 - Starbucks food and drinks purchased at the Brackenridge location ARE permitted

Where can we store our lunches when we enter the zoo?

Lunches packed in labeled coolers, boxes, or covered totes can be stored around (not on top of) any outdoor picnic tables located throughout the zoo.

- All picnic areas are first come-first served
- Please be prepared to share spaces
- Picnic tables can **NOT** be reserved

Where can we eat lunch?

Groups may eat lunch at any outdoor picnic area in the zoo, including Meme's Pavilion.

- Please do NOT place coolers or signs on tables to reserve them

We kindly ask groups help the zoo stay clean by placing recycling and trash in the appropriate receptacles.

- Please ask parent volunteers/chaperones to help students clean up their area after lunch

Can we purchase lunch from the zoo?

Yes, individuals can purchase food from any open dining location.

- Please note that the zoo is cashless; there are cashless kiosk machines located throughout the zoo

School group catering options are also available for purchase with at least two weeks' notice.

- Please refer to the Field Trip Guide or contact the Education Center, education@sazoo.org, for more information and a menu of options.

05. Exploring the Zoo

How long does it take to explore the zoo?

It takes approximately 2.5 - 3 hours to walk the entire zoo.

- We recommend downloading a map before your visit to plan which areas to explore: <https://sazoo.org/map/>

Why do some animal habitats look empty?

Animals may have access to both their indoor and outdoor areas so they might not always be visible.

We strive to provide our animals with naturalistic habitats that allow them to behave as they would in their natural habitats.

- Encourage your students to look closely for animals that might be resting and using their camouflage to blend in
- Upcoming and ongoing construction projects may impact the visibility of some of our animal habitats. We appreciate your flexibility and patience as we make improvements!

Are there any large restrooms that could better accommodate multiple students?

While there are restrooms located throughout the zoo, the largest are:

- Near the front entrance next to Chango's Cafe; there is also a universal changing station at this location
- In Beastro Restaurant near the carousel
- In Africa Live

Can students bring items like backpacks?

Backpacks are permitted inside the zoo.

Can students explore the zoo on their own?

All students under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times, including in gift shops and concession area.

06. Exiting the Zoo

Where will we exit the zoo?

School groups will exit the zoo through the same gate they used for entry.

- Zoo staff will reach out to confirm your designated arrival and departure location one to two weeks prior to your visit
- The entire group must be gathered and ready to exit before approaching the exit gate.
 - You may wish to ask your group to meet at a specific location inside the zoo before heading to the exit location

When should we contact our buses for pickup?

Contact your buses when your **entire group** from your registration is ready to immediately board the bus.

- Buses at pick-up locations must be **actively** loading
- Buses are not allowed to idle unless students are actively loading
- On busy field trip days, the zoo staff will assist buses with finding their school groups

Can parent volunteers/chaperones re-enter the zoo after leaving?

Guests may re-enter the zoo through the front gate only if they have obtained a hand stamp before exiting through Mariposa Market/gift shop.

- Hand stamps for re-entry are available **only** at the zoo's main exit (Mariposa Market/gift shop)

07. Gift Shops, Concessions, and Add-on Experiences

When are gift shops, concessions and add-on experiences open?

The hours of operation for gift shops, concessions, and add-on experiences vary.

- Please refer to the zoo's hours of operation for more information: <https://sazoo.org/hours/>

If your visit occurs outside of the zoo's regular operating hours, such as during School Safari Days (mid-November through December), gift shops, concessions, and other attractions will NOT be open until the zoo opens to general zoo guests.

Do students need to be chaperoned inside gift shops, concession areas, and add-on experiences?

Yes, an adult must accompany students at all times, including in gift shops, concession areas, and any add-on experiences.

Can I rent a wheelchair, stroller, or electric scooter?

Yes, wheelchair, stroller, and electric scooter rentals are available at the zoo's main entrance during regular operational hours.

- Learn more about rentals here: sazoo.org/guest-info/

Are discounted rates available for any add-on experiences?

Yes, discounted rates are available for school groups if purchased in advance for the following experiences:

- Project Selva 4-D Theater
- Zoo Train
- Zootenial Carousel
- Butterfly Rainforest

Please refer to the Field Trip Guide or contact fieldtrips@sazoo.org for more information