

Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm

Health & Safety Information

We comply with Health and Safety Regulations as set out in the Code of Practice (June 2012) for open farms such as Tam O'Shanter and facilities for handwashing, etc. are provided. However, it is important that all children and supervising adults are aware of the correct Health and Safety guidelines.

The risk of infection is very small, but disease caused by an infection could be serious. By following simple guidelines, similar to everyday basic hygiene recommendations, the risk can be easily minimised.

All animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans, causing ill health. Some, such as the bacterium *Escherichia coli* O157 (*E coli* O157) cause infections which can potentially cause disease, which may be particularly acute in young children.

Touching or feeding ruminant animals can be a source of life-threatening infection (*E coli* O157) particularly in young children.

The only way to eliminate this risk entirely for young children is to avoid contact with ruminants and their faeces.

The ruminants on this farm are **sheep and goats**.

It is the **parents or carer's choice** whether their child is allowed to touch these animals. It is also primarily the parent or carer's responsibility to supervise the washing of their children's hands immediately after touching these animals, before eating or drinking on the farm and after removing footwear.

Sanitising hand gels do not provide adequate protection alone. They are not a substitute for thorough handwashing but can be of value if used as an additional measure.

While the hazard from infection resulting from a farm visit is real, the risk can be readily controlled by following sensible steps which will help make your visit safe, healthy and enjoyable.

Before your visit:

- read and understand the advice to teachers in the booklet available at <http://www.face-online.org.uk>
- Discuss visit arrangements with the farm management. Assure yourself that the facilities provided match the recommendations in the code of practice
- decide what the ratio of pupils to teachers/assistants/parents should be, using advice from the Registration and Inspection Unit of your local authority social services department. As a general rule, the ratio of supervisors to children should be 1:1 for children under 1 year old, 1:2 for children between 1 and 2 years old, 1:3 for children between 2 and 3 years old, 1:4 for children between 3 and 5 years old, and 1:8 for those between 5 and 8 years old. If supervision levels are

less than this, you should not allow direct contact with the animals for children under eight

- discuss with the supervisors, who may be parents or staff of the school, creche, etc. their role during the visit. They must understand the need to make sure that the children wash, or are helped to wash, their hands thoroughly after contacting animals, and follow the other rules suggested below
- discuss with pupils the rules for the visit, stressing that they must not eat or chew outside the areas in which you permit them to do so
- make sure that pupils wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy outdoor shoes (not sandals) or wellington boots if possible
- check that cuts, grazes, etc. on children's hands are covered with a waterproof dressing.

During and after the visit, make sure that the children:

- do not kiss animals
- always wash their hands thoroughly before and after eating, after any contact with animals, and again before leaving the farm
- eat only food that they have brought with them, or food for human consumption that they have bought on the farm, in designated areas, and never eat food which has fallen to the ground, or taste animal foods
- do not suck fingers or put hands, pens, pencils or crayons, etc. in their mouths
- clean or change their footwear before leaving, remembering to wash their hands after any contact with animal faeces on their footwear.

Check that the children stay in their allocated groups during the visit, and that they:

- do not use or pick up tools (e.g. spades and forks) unless permitted to do so by farm staff
- do not climb on to walls or animal pens, etc.
- listen carefully, and follow the instructions and information given by the farm staff
- approach and handle animals quietly and gently
- do not chase, frighten or torment the animals.

Remember:

- the children are your responsibility during the visit
- you should supervise them during the visit, especially during hand washing, to make sure that each child washes thoroughly.

If a member of your group shows signs of illness (e.g. sickness or diarrhoea) after a visit, advise them or their parent/guardian to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

Further information

<http://www.face-online.org.uk/>

<http://www.face-online.org.uk/face-news/preventing-or-controlling-ill-health-from-animal-contact-at-visitor-attractions>