

EXPLORIS AQUARIUM INFORMATION

YOUR VISIT

Exploris is Northern Ireland's only aquarium and seal sanctuary. It is an award winning visitor facility and one of the country's must see attractions. Exploris is located in the conservation village of Portaferry, on the shores of Strangford Lough, one of the most important marine sites in Europe.

Exploris is the perfect venue for an Educational or group visit for all ages.

DISCOVERY POOL

A chance for your group to discover a variety of living animals at close hand. For example, you can observe Rays, Starfish and Sea Urchins. Exploris Discovery Pools are run by experienced guides who will help you to understand the marine life found in and around Strangford Lough.

AQUARIUM TOUR

A guide takes your group on a journey from Strangford Lough to the Irish Sea via our themed display tanks. Also, our Seal Sanctuary takes you through the seals' journey back to health.

SHORE WALKS

This is an opportunity for pupils of all ages to learn about life along the shore, the different types of seashores, how the shore is divided, and conserving the sea shore. All closely linked to the Northern Ireland curriculum requirements

BOOKING

Please complete the booking form which can be found at www.exploris.org.uk/education

Please be realistic about your journey time to the aquarium, as we may not be able to extend the time allocated to you if there is another group booked in after your session. Please try to arrive ten minutes before your session is due to start.

Telephone: **02842 728062**

ON ARRIVAL

The teacher in charge should report to reception for payment (Cheque on the day) and to confirm group details. Groups will be met by Exploris guides and directed to the appropriate starting point for their tour.

DISCIPLINE AND SAFETY

Teachers or leaders are responsible for individual and group discipline at all times. Pupils must not be allowed to run around the building or grounds on their own. Pupils must be supervised at all times especially on the bridge over the open sea tank, in the shop or café, and whilst at the Discovery Pool.

We ask that there is a minimum of one adult per ten children for the visit.

CLOTHING

Please ensure that for activities such as Shore Walks, your pupils are dressed in wind and waterproof clothing, with sensible shoes, Wellingtons are preferable. Please note it can be damp and chilly on the beach however sunscreen might be required on sunny days.

LUNCHES

Our café offers a variety of food and drink including packaged lunches. Group menus are available on request. Lunch arrangements must be made prior to the visit. During the summer term, groups will be allocated half hour lunch intervals for pupils to eat their own packed lunches in our Education Room. This can only be offered if groups keep to their allotted times.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Exploris is happy to welcome pupils with special requirements on our education programmes, however for practical reasons, it is helpful if we can be informed of particular needs at the time of the booking.

It is advantageous if we can be told in advance if a group contains a significant number of pupils with special educational needs so that we can ensure that the content of your visit is appropriate to your group.

VISITING THE SHOP

It would be helpful if the children could visit the shop in small supervised groups. It is sometimes most appropriate to do this during your lunch break rather than have the whole class queuing at a single till two minutes before your coach is about to leave.

BEHAVIOUR

Whilst most school groups are very well behaved, there are occasions when problems arise, we will meet these with understanding. It is however the responsibility of the leaders to ensure that pupils behave in a sensible manner.

TOUR PROGRAMME

Unguided Tour (option 1)

Entrance to the Aquarium and Seal Sanctuary for your group. Duration is 1 – 2 hours including the lunch break.

Guided Tour (option 2)

Entrance to the aquarium and seal sanctuary. Discovery pool demonstration with a guided tour. Duration 2-3 hours including lunch break.

Guided Tour (option 3)

Entrance to the Aquarium and seal sanctuary. Discovery pool demonstration with a guided tour. There will also be a visit to a local rocky shore to study living things in their natural habitat. Duration - Over 3 hours including lunch break.

Guided Tour with Workshop (option 4)

Entrance to the Aquarium and Discovery Pool Demonstration with a workshop based on our Education Programme.