

Preparing for Your Guided School Visit

Pre-Visit Checklist

- **Book Your Visit Early**

Openings for field trips fill up quickly so plan ahead. All guided trips must be booked at least two weeks in advance. Please reserve your visit using the online registration form. If you do not hear back from us within 5 business days, please contact us at 480-481-8121.

- **Confirming your visit**

You will receive an email within 5 business days confirming that we received your tour request. If we were able to accommodate your options, you will receive a confirmation email and a visit confirmation number. As your visit draws near, you will receive a Confirmation and Entrance Form in the mail. Make sure the date, time, and tour noted on your confirmation email and Confirmation and Entrance Form match your expectations. Let us know if the number of students changes significantly. Please notify us if there is any discrepancy.

- **Canceling or Changing Your Tour**

To cancel or change your reserved time to visit the Garden, notify the Garden as soon as possible by phone: 480-481-8121 or by e-mail to teacherRSVP@dbg.org. As our schedule fills up there is a chance we will not be able to rebook your visit.

Please note: A fee of \$1.00 per student and adult will be assessed for cancellation one week prior to a scheduled tour. It will be necessary to charge a \$50.00 fee if we do not receive prior notice of a scheduled tour cancellation plus \$1.00 per student and adult booked. Tours booked with Title I scholarship funds are subject to the cancellation fee. If the number of students arriving on the tour is significantly reduced from the scheduled number, a fee may be assessed.

- **Make Arrangements for Lunch and/or Snacks**

The Desert Botanical Garden does not have facilities for student groups to have lunch or snacks. We do have drinking fountains but it is highly recommended that your students bring water bottles. Picnic tables are available in Papago Park, ¾ mile south of the Garden. Reservations are not required but if you would like to reserve a space call (602) 256-3220 and say you are a school field trip group. Remember to arrange for transportation to and from Papago Park. Suggestion: younger children may need a snack before they leave school for 10 or 10:30 tours.

- **Prepare Your Class**

There is so much to see, do and learn here! Please take a few moments to tell your class about their tour. Review the Garden Rules with them. Also, please remind your class to wear light-colored clothing appropriate for sitting on the ground, comfortable walking shoes, hats, sun block and to bring a water bottle.

- **Arrange for Payment of Your Visit Fees**

As the lead teacher, you will need to present the entire payment for your group immediately upon arrival at the Garden. If you are requesting students or chaperones to pay individually, collect their fees in advance. If you are paying by a purchase order, you may submit it in advance to the Education Department via fax at 480-481-8189 or you may bring it with you. If a chaperone arrives late and their payment is not part of the groups payment, they will be charged the regular admissions rate.

- **Chaperone Preparation**

Teachers and schools may determine the number of chaperones they would like to bring. We recommend one chaperone for every 5 - 8 students. Give chaperones a copy of the Garden rules. Remind them that they should not bring siblings on guided tours and that they will need to have cell phones off during their visit.

The Day of Your Visit Checklist

- **Complete the Entrance Form**

Fill in the total number of students, chaperones, and teachers for all classes attending. You must bring the confirmation form and payment on the day of your visit to the Garden. Have a single payment ready for your entire school group before you disembark the bus. Checks, credit cards and purchase orders are preferred, cash accepted.

- **Car Parking**

Please park in the main parking lot and walk your group towards the main Garden entrance. Your guides will meet you near the flagpoles.

- **Bus Parking**

Please follow signs for the bus zone when entering the Garden. The bus will unload and load in the same area. The Garden has a special bus parking area located directly east of the main parking lot where the school guides will meet your bus. During the occasional special event the bus zone will be closed; please follow signs to the alternate bus loading area.

- **Please Wait on the Bus**

When you arrive, the lead teacher should leave the bus and meet the waiting school guide. The guide will collect the entrance form, payment, and confirm the return time. Another school guide will greet students and teachers on the bus. Groups arriving early may have to wait on the bus until their scheduled tour time. Groups arriving more than 25 minutes after their scheduled tour time may have a shortened tour or be turned away.

- **Entrance**

The guide(s) will unload the bus and guide the group to a tour gathering area. There a guide will give a tour introduction and overview of the day's activities. The guide(s) will then ask the lead teacher to help group students and assign them to a guide. There will be 20 or less students per guide and ideally, we will work to make each group as small as possible. All groups should have at least one teacher or chaperone with them. Teachers are expected to stay with tour groups for the entire time. This is essential in case of a sick child or other emergency. Each group sets out on their adventure with their guide.

Garden Rules

- Please stay on the trail. Desert plants have shallow roots that can be damaged by walking off the trail. Many plants are prickly as well. Please stay on the trail for your own safety.
- Stay with your group. The Garden is often host to large numbers of people. It is important to stay with your group.
- Respect the plants. The Garden IS a museum and the plants are part of our special collection. Please do not pick or touch the plants unless directed to do so by your guide. Help preserve our museum by leaving it the same way as you found it.
- Walk and watch where you go. In many places, plants grow over into the trail. It is important to walk at all times and look where you are going. This is for your own safety.
- Enjoy yourself. The Garden is a wonderful place to relax and learn about the desert. If you need help or have any questions, please ask your guides...we are all here to make your visit the best it can be!

Chaperone/Teacher Reminders:

- Stay with your group at all times. The only exceptions to this rule are if a ranger or guide asks you to accompany a child to the First Aid station or to the restroom.
- Focus on the children and their learning. We all want to see the students learn from their visit. Please focus on what is happening during the tour and turn off your cell phones.
- Bring siblings on another day. Siblings can distract students and you from the Garden and the tour making it difficult to focus on your role as a chaperone. Please bring siblings to the Garden on another day.
- There is not time to visit the Gift Shop. With all there is to see and do, there will not be time for anyone from your group to go to the Gift Shop during your visit. The Gift Shop is open 7 days a week, and you do not need to enter the Garden to visit it. Please plan on visiting the Gift Shop on another day.
- Lunches and snacks are not permitted in the Garden. Please leave all food in your buses or vehicles. If your group needs to eat a snack before their trip, make sure all students finish their snacks before exiting the bus/car. Leave all trash inside the vehicles.