



Education Policy

Introduction

For several years now staff at the sanctuary have provided a great standard of education to groups and organisations of all ages and abilities. Sharing our knowledge of owls, their characteristics, habitats and conservation has always been a top priority.

However, having knowledge of the birds is only part of it. This policy has been designed to help staff members to teach groups as effectively as possible ensuring that they are aware of what to teach, who they are teaching and that their teaching is appropriate for the audience's stage of development.

Pre-school, nursery and primary school children

When teaching children it is important to always use good, positive communication skills and give clear simple instructions of what you expect of the children. Lectures given should always be tailored to the specific age group remembering that very small children usually have very short concentration spans.

We recommend using simple vocabulary and visual aids to help hold the children's attention. For example, if you are trying to explain to young children that an owl has asymmetrical ears, it would be a good idea to show them. They will find this a much more enjoyable way of learning and are also far more likely to remember it.

Activities on site can also be structured to try to include as many aspects of the curriculum as possible. The following can be considered and/or discussed with the teacher/supervisor when planning a visit:

- Knowledge and understanding of the world – habitats, origins, climates and different species.

- Personal, social and emotional – providing quiz games to work in partners or as part of a team. Encourage hand washing particularly after touching the birds and before eating.
- Communication, language and literacy – quiz games help with this too.
- Creative development – we can provide feathers for children to take back to make collages, dream catchers etc..
- Physical development – we have play equipment for children to enjoy and exercise gross motor skills.

Secondary schools and students

Groups of older children or young people visiting the sanctuary are usually focusing on a specific topic. Always ensure that you are aware of the particular topic they are learning and plan your talk/lecture accordingly. Much more in-depth lectures are usually required for these groups and possibly activities such as pellet dissecting (or they may wish to take back pellets to dissect at a later date).

Allowing time to plan your talk and to discuss with the teacher/supervisor will ensure that we can provide the best service of education and have any handouts and leaflets which they may find relevant and useful to their topic readily available.

Disabled groups

We have a lot of disabled groups visit the sanctuary throughout the year of various ages. We always try to allow them sufficient time to enjoy the benefits of what we have to offer. Staff members allow opportunities for these groups to touch the birds under supervision in a relaxed environment. Particularly groups with sensory impairments really appreciate their visit.

Sarah Clement, Appointed education officer
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