



School & Group Visits to the Conservatory

PROCEDURES & POLICIES



Registration

All groups of 10 or more people must pre-register for their visit to the Conservatory. If your group arrives without pre-registering and we are at capacity for the day, you may be asked to wait or even reschedule. Our calendar fills up quickly, so we recommend contacting us at least 3 weeks ahead of time. Anything less than 1 week ahead is considered a late registration and will result in higher program and rental fees, as well as the chance that our calendar is already full for the day you would like to visit.

Chaperones

Groups must supply a minimum of 1 adult for every 10 children. We recommend bringing more adults for younger children, as the Conservatory's narrow, winding pathways can make it easy to lose sight of a child. Chaperones are required to keep their students within sight at all times.

Payments

If your group reserves exploration kits, scavenger hunts, a lunch room or a program, payment is due no less than 1 week prior to your visit. After that time, LATE RATES will apply and your group will be charged more to utilize these resources. Please visit the field trip page of our website for "early" and "late" rates and for an explanation of your payment options.

Cancellations & Refunds

We require at least 48 hours notice if you need to cancel a group visit. If you have a payment on record with us, we will process a refund as soon as possible. Cancellations made less than 48 hours ahead (including last minute cancellations due to poor weather) will not be eligible for refunds. On cold or rainy days, groups should plan to explore the indoor greenhouses. (Exceptions will be made only if official warnings are issued by the National Weather Service on the day of your visit.)

Emergency Procedures

Chicago Park District and Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance employees are not permitted to provide basic first aid or any type of medical treatment to visitors. In the event of an emergency, please find the nearest Conservatory employee for assistance. We will contact our Security Team and 911, if necessary. If you encounter a life-threatening situation, please call 911 first, and then look for a staff member to assist you. In the event of a weather emergency - hail, high winds or a tornado - our staff will direct your group to designated safety areas within the Conservatory.

Group Gathering Places

For the safety and comfort of all of our visitors, we cannot allow groups to congregate in walkways, doorways or in the Lobby of the Conservatory, except under the direction of our staff when waiting for a group Orientation. Please use another location outside or inside the building as a gathering or meet-up place for your group.

Respect for People, Property & Plants

While the Conservatory itself is not a park, it is a place where you can have fun and enjoy yourself using the guidelines and rules we provide. All registered youth groups will receive a brief orientation from our staff before entering the Conservatory. We will also include a list of the rules and guidelines with your confirmation materials. Please treat the Conservatory like a living museum and its staff members as hard-working, knowledgeable professionals. You will encounter horticulturists and educators, tools and equipment, and thousands of important and valuable plants along the way. It's important to respect these people, their tools, and the plants, as they are what make this rainforest-in-the-city possible! Our staff is prepared to help answer your questions. Feel free to ask them about the plants or the work they are doing. Please do not pick any leaves, flowers or fruits, and do not move or throw any rocks along the way. These beautiful specimens and landscapes are here for all to enjoy and we need your help to keep them thriving for another 100 years!



Unloading & Parking Buses

Buses can pull up directly in front of the Conservatory to unload and load. Before unloading your buses, please send a teacher or group leader inside to sign in and get further instructions. If several groups are arriving at the same time, we may need you to wait on the bus for a few minutes before entering. Occasionally, on very busy days, our staff will come directly onto the bus to facilitate an Orientation with your group. After unloading, bus drivers should promptly move their vehicles to another place along the street or to the back of our main parking lot.

Recreational Equipment

The Conservatory and its outdoor gardens contain a collection of important and valuable plants. For that reason, we do not allow any balls, frisbees, kites or other flying objects anywhere on the grounds. If your group would like to engage in these kinds of recreational activities, the greater Garfield Park is just a few steps away!

Coat Storage

The Conservatory does not have a coat-check or a designated coat storage area. We have a limited number of large bins, available at no cost to registered groups, that can be labeled with your group name and used to store coats during your visit. If you will need coat storage during your visit, please let us know at the time of registration so we can plan accordingly.

Food & Drinks

The Conservatory does not have a cafeteria or a consistent food vendor. Our Gift Shop carries a limited selection of sandwiches and salads for purchase, but not enough for most groups. If you are planning to bring lunches with you, please let us know when you register. We have lunch rooms available for rent, or you may choose to use one of our free designated eating areas, which are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. For storing and carrying lunches, we have a small number of carts available at no cost to registered groups. We recommend bringing your lunches in large cardboard boxes or storage bins in case we run out of lunch carts on the day of your visit. All groups are responsible for cleaning up their lunch spaces and making sure trash and recyclables get to the appropriate containers provided.

Group Behavior Issues

If our staff determines that a group is not following the guidelines and rules provided them, and is not responding to our requests for behavior management, we reserve the right to ask that group to leave the Conservatory at any time. We will also follow-up with group leaders, teachers and/or principals of any schools or groups that do damage to Conservatory property or the plant collection. If a group has caused problems in the past, we reserve the right to refuse future visits to our site. Please respect the people, property and plants of the Conservatory. Please clean up after your group. Please enjoy yourself responsibly!

Please direct your questions about our group visit procedures and policies to:

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