Common Questions

What happens during the overnight?

A typical schedule includes: dinner (either supplied by the Zoo or brought in), an animal encounter, a brief tour of the Zoo animals, a behind-the-scenes tour, and we will create enrichment for an animal and visit that animal in the morning. Breakfast is at 7:30 and everything must be cleaned and packed by 9:00 a.m.

What do I bring?

A sleeping bag, pillow, reusable water bottle, weather-appropriate clothing, walking shoes, pajamas and toiletries are the only required items for the overnight. Sleeping pads, cots, or air mattresses, and an extra blanket are recommended.

Will we see the whole Zoo?

A complete tour is planned, provided your group would like to follow the Zoo itinerary. Some larger animals are put up for the night for safety reasons, but can be viewed the following morning.

Where and do we ever sleep?

We plan for groups to be ready for bed at 10:30 p.m. with lights off at 11:00 p.m. Groups will either sleep in the Education Center or the Birthday Cabin depending on the size. Both are air conditioned and heated indoor areas.

Where will we arrive and around when?

Arrival will be at 6:00pm EST. Parking is located in the back of the Zoo, the old Zoo entrance off McCallie Ave. Turn into the Warner Fields complex and continue behind the baseball field to the parking lot behind the Education Building. There will be a sign on the gate as well as a staff member at the open gate to welcome you into the Zoo. Cars will be parked in a secured lot by the education building.

What do we get to munch on?

Dinner - includes at least two slices of pepperoni or cheese pizza and a selection of juices or water.

Snacks – We will provide buttered popcorn for movie time.

Breakfast - includes cereal, yogurt, oatmeal, milk, and a selection of fruit.

How many adults do we need to bring?

For every group of ten children attending, one adult is required. For example, if you bring 28 children you need at least 3 adults.
Do all adults have to sleep at the Zoo?

If there are adults with your group that cannot stay the night, they may be able to leave around 10:00 pm. But you must still maintain the 1 to 10 ratio and adults not spending the night will still pay the same amount.

When do we have to leave?

The program is schedule to end by 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time. At this time the Zoo will be open and you will be asked to enter the Zoo through the main entrance. You may visit the gift shop or explore areas that were closed.

Will there be time to buy cool stuff in the Gift Shops?

The gift shops at the Chattanooga Zoo will close at 5:00 but re-open at 9:00 a.m. the next morning and you may visit it then.

Are there showers available during our overnight?

Showers are not available, but there will be restrooms with sinks if people care to wash faces, brush teeth, etc.

When should our final payment be made?

You must be paid in full for all of your confirmed attendees when you check in. Final headcount is due 1 week before your scheduled visit. You will be invoiced for this number of participants.

What is the Cancellation policy?

Cancellations received less than 2 weeks prior to the program date will not be refunded. Reschedules must be made at least 2 weeks prior to your scheduled program date to avoid loss of deposit. Reschedules will not be permitted within 2 weeks of scheduled program date.

Zoo Rules

- Follow directions from zoo staff and chaperones.
- Stay with an adult
- Respect our animals
  - Do not feed animals
  - Do not tap on glass
  - Give the free-roaming animals a respectful amount of space
- Do not throw anything into animal habitats
- Be mindful of volume
- No outside food is allowed while walking zoo grounds

- Stay safe
  - Stay on pathways at all times
  - Do not climb or cross any barriers
  - Do not place any body parts into animal habitats
  - Use walking feet and keep body parts to yourself.

- Respect zoo property
  - Please deposit trash into either recycle or trash bins
  - Do not vandalize zoo property in any way
  - Please leave the plants and native wildlife untouched.

Chaperone Guidelines

You as the group leader, and all chaperones, must stay with the group the entire night.

- If a participant must leave the program, the group leader or a chaperone must notify the parents and arrange for transportation for the group member.

As the group leader, you are responsible for all decisions regarding any member of your group.

- The group leader must notify the zoo in advance of any medical issues or special needs regarding group members.
- The group leader (not the Chattanooga Zoo or overnight staff members) will be responsible on the night of the overnight for the emergency/medical information on a participant.
- In the event of an emergency, Chattanooga Zoo staff is trained in basic First Aid and will take further actions needed including alerting Emergency Medical Services.

The chaperones and group leader will be responsible for the group members during the overnight program.
• Chaperones are responsible for making sure each group member is following zoo rules so that the overnight program is a positive experience for all.
• The Chattanooga Zoo reserves the right to remove from the program any participant who is exhibiting inappropriate or unsafe behavior, without refund.
• Children under the age of four are not permitted. Chaperones bringing younger children will be asked to leave without a refund.

You as the group leader must provide all chaperones with these chaperone guidelines prior to the overnight program to prepare them to carry out their responsibilities.