

Residential Guide for Schools and Teachers

This short guide has been written for schools and teachers visiting Springhead for a residential visit. We aim to provide you with all of the key information that you will need about your stay with us. This information is regularly updated and was last reviewed for this version of the guide in March 2023.

About Springhead

Springhead lies at the foot of north Dorset's most spectacular downland on the edge of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Springhead has a range of thatched cottages and an 18th century mill house formed around a courtyard with a small pool at its centre. The pool is fed by water that runs beneath the mill house to become a gentle stream flowing into the River Stour.



The gardens at Springhead have been evolving since the 1920s. They are centred around a beautiful lake that provides a sense of mystery and tranquility. At the head of the lake, clear drinkable water bubbles up from springs that are crossed by a wooden bridge and overshadowed by a collection of trees from across the world. The lake and gardens create habitats for wildlife and visiting Springhead provides opportunities to learn about the site's amazing biodiversity. We also have our productive garden and orchard that offers the chance to connect with where food comes from and perhaps even enjoy tasting some of our produce.

Learn with Springhead

Part of the mission for The Springhead Trust who own and manage Springhead is to provide educational opportunities for children and adults. Learn with Springhead is our educational offer. As an ecologically fragile site we limit the number of schools that visit Springhead each year, but the benefit of this is that you have exclusive use of the site for you and your learners.

At Learn with Springhead we are motivated by our core values of *connection with nature, stewardship, open-mindedness, personal well-being, and active choices*. Environmental education and outdoor learning is central to what we do, but the opportunities we can offer will also contribute to the personal development and life skills of your learners. This may include communication, team-building, problem-solving, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity skills, for example.

Our programmes always put children at the centre, starting with their natural curiosity for the world around them and building their experience and understanding of new ideas in a manner appropriate to their age and ability. We will schedule a pre-visit consultation with you to help us understand the needs of your learners and adapt our programmes accordingly.

Our team of practitioners are all experienced in leading children to learn and engage in outdoor activities. They will work closely with you to ensure that all children benefit from their visit to Springhead. Although our team may lead activities with your children, we expect school staff to remain present and responsible for learners at all times.

You can find out more about Learn with Springhead on our website at www.learnwithspringhead.org.uk

Arrival and departure

You can arrive on site any time from 10.00 am. Please park in the top car park which is signposted approximately 400m beyond the main entrance to Springhead along a track that skirts the edge of our site. A member of the Springhead team will come to meet you and your learners in the car park.

Your introduction to the site will include a Health and Safety briefing for all of your party (children and adults) and a fire drill will take place on the morning of your arrival. We ask that all staff members are present for these.

Departure is by 2.00 pm on the day of departure. We require bedrooms to be cleared, with beds stripped down and bags packed, by 9.30am on your last day. We will provide a space for any luggage to be stored during your remaining time on site.

Accommodation and facilities

We can accommodate groups of up to 37 in a range of rooms. Most of the bedrooms are simple dormitory style with bunk beds, but there are also some twin and single rooms that can be used for your staff. All bedding is provided but we do not provide towels or toiletries. We will provide you with a plan of the accommodation to help you pre-plan sleeping arrangements for your learners and staff.

Regardless of numbers, we only accept one school on site at any time and so you will have exclusive use of the site during your visit. In addition to the sleeping accommodation, this means you will have use of the communal spaces in the Mill House which can be used for free-time and evening activities with your learners. In good weather there are also outdoor spaces in the courtyard and the main gardens that can be used with appropriate supervision.

Accommodation blocks have their own bathroom and toilet facilities and there are additional toilet facilities within the main Mill House.

Safety and security

We do not allow other groups on site at the same time as school groups. Anyone else on site will be known to our team and signed in with an appropriate lanyard system to indicate their presence on site at all times. The site is not open to members of the public during school visits.

There will not always be a member of Springhead staff on site overnight. Visiting staff will be given sets of keys and mobile numbers for our staff. A member of the Springhead team is always on call during the night. Mobile phone signal is very poor at Springhead and should not be relied on. We have a land-line available for your use and this also serves as an emergency phone during a power cut. Springhead does have WiFi that covers most of the site, but the signal may be variable owing to our rural location.

All groups are required to bring a designated first aider. Pupils' medicines and medical information are the responsibility of visiting staff at all times. We can provide secure/chilled storage for medicines where needed.

Risk Assessment and behaviour

Our site has 15 acres of lakeside gardens and grounds. We have a Schools' Risk Assessment that is kept under regular review to reflect the changing nature of our site. You are welcome to use our Schools' Risk Assessment for your own information and guidance but you are required to have completed your own risk assessment prior to your visit.

We want everyone to enjoy their time at Springhead and to treat each other, our environment, and our buildings with care and respect. Visiting staff are responsible for the behaviour and well being of learners for the duration of their stay at Springhead and we expect staff to be present at all times, including where activities are led by members of our own team. You will know your learners and their particular needs better than we can. Your support with behaviour ensures that we can focus on our knowledge of the site and on leading the activities for the benefit of all learners.

Food and dietary requirements

Our meals are home cooked using fresh ingredients, many of which come from our own productive garden when possible. We have a dining room in the Mill House but will eat al-fresco in the courtyard when the weather permits. Breakfast will be at 8.00 am and timings for lunch and dinner will depend on your programme schedule. This will be agreed with you during the pre-visit consultation as will shorter drink and snack breaks.

We can cater for all dietary requirements if notified in advance. It is your responsibility to inform us of any dietary requirements at least one week before your visit.

Please note that everyone will need to bring a packed lunch for your arrival day. Staff will have access to a fridge and tea/coffee making facilities for the duration of their stay.

Learning Agreement

We require all schools to complete a Learning Agreement ahead of their visit to Springhead. This sets out all of the key information that we will use to plan your visit, minimises the risk of miscommunication and shares the responsibilities and expectations that will ensure a successful visit for all. A returned Learning Agreement also acts to secure your booking with Springhead.

Learning Activities

We have a growing bank of learning activities at Learn with Springhead. If you have asked for a facilitated programme for your visit then we will integrate some of these activities into the wider programme and agree these with you during the pre-visit consultation. If you are running your own programme on our site then you are welcome to access a range of our learning activities (and supporting equipment/resources) by agreement. Please raise this with us during the pre-visit consultation.

Photos and social media

We understand that you may wish to record your visit to Springhead for your school website or social media. We ask that you respect the privacy of our team members and ensure they give their verbal consent to being photographed and that they are informed of how you intend to use the images. We know the power of images and so may also seek permission from you and your learners to take photos during your visit with us for our own website or publicity purposes. We ask that you are fully aware of current photo permissions for your learners in advance of visiting so that we can respect any restrictions that are in place.

We request that staff do not upload images 'live' to social media during activities that are led by our team members. We value staff being fully present during these activities to support their learners. There will be time to upload images during the breaks and free-time in the schedule and the Wi-Fi reception is stronger near the Mill House to improve this process. We are aware that parents, caregivers, and school staff value updates about how the residential is going and we are keen to support you to be able to update them when appropriate.



A typical day

We understand that every school visit needs to work for your learners and will work with you in the pre-visit consultation to create a programme and timings that are best suited to them. That said, there is a pattern to a typical day at Springhead:

8.00	Breakfast
9.00	Morning Briefing
9.10	Activities (with short mid-morning break)
12.30	Lunch
13.15	Activities (with short mid-afternoon break)
16.30	Free-time
17.15	Dinner
18.00	Evening Activity (one evening activity is supported per visit)
19.30	Free-time
20.30	Getting ready for bed
21.00	Lights out/bed time*

* Bedtime is at your discretion. In our experience, aiming to have children settled by 9pm hugely improves their experience (and yours!).

This pattern of a typical day is appropriate for facilitated visits. If you are staying with us in a self-led visit then the timings and programme will be agreed with you in advance so that we can meet our responsibilities for meals and breaks. In any case, Springhead team members will typically be available to support your visit from 8.00 am through to the close of dinner at 6.00 pm. Team members will also support one evening activity during your stay (campfire or nightwalk for example) and remain available until 8.00pm on that day.

Scheduled free-time is not supported by Springhead team members, though we may have activities and ideas that we can share with you for using this time on site.

At the end of this guide (pages 6 - 8) you will find some examples of typical day programmes for facilitated visits. These should give you more of an idea of what to expect from your visit. The precise details of your programme will be discussed in the pre-visit consultation and a copy of the proposed programme will be emailed to you following the consultation.



Recommended kit list

Having the right gear will make your visit to Springhead much more enjoyable. We are an outdoor centre and aim to use our outdoor spaces in all weather conditions, providing our high safety standards are still able to be met. Please note this list is about **specific items** that children will need **in addition** to basic clothing requirements for their length of stay. This list is included in our [Residential Guide for Parents and Caregivers](#).

Clothing items	Non-clothing items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellington boots Walking boots/sturdy shoes Waterproof coat (and waterproof trousers if possible) Full-length trousers and long-sleeved top* Plenty of spare socks Hat/Cap (for sun) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rucksack - with comfortable straps for hiking Named water bottle Sunscreen Torch Towel and toiletries A cuddly toy A reading or puzzle book

* Ticks (small spider-like creatures) are present in the local area so these items are to cover up and protect children from ticks when we go on walks in the local environment. You can find out more about ticks here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057568/Be_tick_aware_toolkit.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Note: a version of this FAQs is included in our [Residential Guide for Parents and Caregivers](#).

Question	Answer
Do we need to bring bedding?	No - all bedding is provided.
Do we need a towel?	Yes - please bring a towel for a shower plus your own toiletries.
Are meals and snacks provided?	Yes - but you will all need to bring a packed lunch for the first day . Please inform us of any dietary requirements in good time - at least one week ahead of the visit.
Will we be sleeping in dormitories?	Yes - most rooms at Springhead are basic dormitory style with bunk beds. We leave decisions on sleeping arrangements to you and will provide an accommodation plan to support you with this. There are adjoining rooms for school staff.
Will there be free time during the visit?	Yes - there may be periods of time when children are not part of led activities. We can share ideas of how to use this time. Learners are not permitted to leave the grounds of Springhead.
Can we swim in the lake?	No - the lake is not suitable for swimming. All visiting staff and pupils will be briefed on water and site safety on arrival.
Should we bring mobile phones?	No - we strongly recommend children leave mobile phones, electrical devices at home. Mobile phone reception is very poor at Springhead and there is no Internet access for children. Staff will be given WiFi access and will have access to a landline phone at all times .
Is Springhead open to the public during our stay?	No - for safeguarding reasons, Springhead is not open to members of the public for most of the year. We do hold 'Open Gardens' when anyone is welcome to visit and these dates can be found on our website www.springheadtrust.org.uk
What if it rains?	Many of our activities take place outdoors, so you must be prepared for all weathers. We try to carry on with our planned timetable, whatever the weather!
Do children need any pocket money?	No - there are no opportunities to spend any money at Springhead.* We advise leaving money and valuables safely at home.

* If you are taking part in a visit away from Springhead during your stay then you may decide that some spending money is appropriate.

The Springhead Pathway, where we plan the day to connect with nature

Time	Session	Description	What's needed
10.00	Arrival	Settling in and briefing	
10.45	Intro and warm-up	Group warm-up activities and building the group	LwS staff lead
11.00	Orientation	SEED Bank: Memory mapping This begins with a briefing, and then 25 mins 'explore, discover, notice' around the site, then 20 mins mapping. Includes tasting spring water as part of discovery walk	All school staff and LwS staff
12.10	LUNCH		
13.00	Connection with nature, stewardship, open-mindedness	Nature challenges , which might include a colour hunt, an art activity, finding food and meeting a tree!	LwS staff lead
15.30	BREAK		
15.45	Choosing	Reflective time in small groups with support – multiple choice	All school staff and LwS staff
16.30	Close/Free time		School staff supervise children
17.15	DINNER		
18.00	Night Walk or Campfire	Evening activities may happen on <u>one night</u> of your residential visit, by pre-arrangement	Negotiated
20.30	Bedtime		School staff supervise

The Wellbeing Pathway, where we plan the day to support students' wellbeing

Time	Session	Description	What's needed
08.00	Breakfast	Students eat, then make packed lunch, before getting ready	Walking clothes and shoes, day bag, water
09.00	Briefing and warm-up	Setting the scene for a wellbeing day	All school staff and LwS staff
09.30	Walk and den-building	Walk up chalk hill behind Springhead to den-building woods. Morning break time in the woods.	All school staff and LwS staff
12.00	LUNCH		
12.30	Spring	Bark-boat challenge Building boats out of various found materials near spring, and testing them to see how well they float	Lws Staff Lead
13.30	Sport or Art	Meadow games or Nature Art Use meadow next to car park for football, rounders, French cricket or some other games OR following suggested methods or using own to create an art memory of Springhead	All school staff and LwS staff
14.45	BREAK		
15.00	Choosing	Reflective wellbeing time in small groups with support – multiple choice	All school staff and LwS staff
16.30	Close/Free time		School staff supervise children
17.15	DINNER		
18.00	Movie night / Games night	Evening activities and DVDs available	
20.30	Bedtime		

The Curriculum Pathway, where we plan the day with you, to support topic work (Water example)

Time	Session	Description	What's needed
08.00	Breakfast	Students eat, then make packed lunch	
08.30	Pack	On last day students strip beds and pack bags, putting dry clothes at top	LwS staff lead
09.15	Briefing	Setting the scene for a water-themed day	All school staff and LwS staff
09.30	Walk	Walk up chalk hill behind Springhead integrating challenges, to view landscape and the water features and river journey in it.	All school staff and LwS staff
10.45	BREAK		
11.00	World Map	World Beneath our Feet: Water Interactive map workshop working with giant map and water numbers	Half group then swap with below
11.30	River	River dipping (intro) Minibeasts workshop prepping for river dipping	Half group then swap with above
12.00	LUNCH		
12.30	River	River dipping (activity)	LwS staff lead
14.00	Close	Students change into prepared dry clothes	Staff supervise
14.30	DEPARTURE		