



Safety at Blandy Experimental Farm



The safety of your students when they visit to Blandy Experimental Farm is of utmost importance to the Blandy Education Team! Here are some of the many ways we plan for your students' safety.

Blandy Activities

We follow the VDOE *Guide to Safety in Science Teaching* when planning for safety during our programs. Each of our activities addresses safety in our written lesson plans.

For our outdoor activities we consider potential hazards such as:

- uneven terrain
- possible contact with wild animals and dogs on the loose,
- plants that could be harmful to touch (thorny or poisonous, such as poison ivy)
- insects that can sting or bite and how to avoid contact
- slippery surfaces
- any other potential hazards we may observe at a teaching site

For all activities, we consider safety when:

- handling sharps (scissors, forceps, etc.)
- working with mild analytical chemicals (goggles and gloves)
- any other special safety concerns that our staff are aware of when teaching

Advance preparation with teachers

We request contact information for all teachers accompanying students and the number of students expected in each class group. We ask all teachers to alert us about any student special health needs prior to their visit to Blandy such as:

- food and insect allergies
- physical injuries that may impact movement during activities
- other special needs information that will help us provide a safe teaching environment

Communications at Blandy

All Blandy Educators carry cell phones during programs so that we can communicate if the need arises. We also request the cell phone number of the lead teacher(s) who accompany their students.

Student Instructions

Upon arrival, safety precautions to follow are reviewed with all students. We stress:

- Stay with your class group and to always be with an adult (teacher, Blandy educator, or chaperone)
- Keep off the rock walls and trees
- Do not approach or touch a wild animal or a plant unless instructed to do so

Chaperone instructions

Teachers are given an advance copy of safety guidelines and Arboretum etiquette for students and chaperones to follow during their visit to Blandy. Teachers then, distribute these guidelines to the chaperones. [Click here to view these guidelines.](#)

Safety on our grounds

The Blandy Grounds crew works very hard to keep Blandy safe for all of our visitors; teaching areas are mowed regularly making the grounds easy to stroll and beautiful for your enjoyment. Trees are kept trimmed, especially to remove dead branches, and gardens are kept tidy.

All teachers are given a copy of the schedule for the day and a map of Blandy's grounds that clearly indicates where students will be during their time at Blandy.

Our main entrance road has a cross walk for students walking to and from the bus parking area and we post vehicle warning signs alongside the road to alert other visitors that school groups are present.

First Aid Preparedness

All staff carry first aid kits when outdoors with students in order to attend to minor injuries if they occur.

Each of our three classrooms is equipped with a first aid kit. In addition, a first aid kit and AED are available to ALL visitors in our main Quarters building. Our first aid kits are kept stocked and they undergo a thorough inventory twice a year (before our busy fall and spring seasons). We encourage students and adults to stay hydrated, carry water with them, and make frequent stops at water fountains for fill-ups.

All members of Blandy's education team are certified in CPR and AED use for adults, youth, and infants.

We also keep current with health alerts and information from Virginia's Department of Health. For example, when the MRSA bacteria was a problem in some of our public schools a few years ago, we reviewed health alerts and developed plans to recognize whether MRSA appeared at Blandy and how to mitigate the possibility of MRSA infection at our site.

We also are very aware of the possibility of tick bites, especially for programs that occur in our research areas, outside of our Arboretum where most programs take place. We avoid known tick areas, especially for our younger visitors, and instruct students to check for ticks when they arrive home from school.

Extreme Events Planning

We developed Blandy education-specific plans for emergency situations using the University of Virginia and Virginia Department of Emergency Preparedness guidelines for winter storms, thunder storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, heat waves, power outages, and unwelcome strangers. We keep all of our safety information on-line and in a binder in our main classroom for ready reference.