

Name of School:

Date of Visit:

Your Name:

Under 5s Reptile Handling Permission Form

Important information concerning your forthcoming visit to **Marwell Wildlife**.

The **Department of Health** has issued advice which will be relevant to your visit.

“To avoid possible risk of infection, the Chief Medical Officer has issued the following advice:

People at increased risk of infection or at risk from serious complications of salmonellosis should avoid contact with reptiles. This includes children less than 5 years old, pregnant women, the elderly and those with impaired immunity.

Infants under one year old are at particular risk from direct and indirect contact with reptiles.

Always wash hands with hot, soapy water after handling reptiles, reptile cages and equipment and stools from reptiles. Children should be supervised whilst handling reptiles to prevent hand and mouth contact”

Both the Department of Health and our own vet point out that no reptile can be guaranteed salmonella-free. Nine out of ten reptiles carry salmonella, though they show no symptoms, and treatments to remove the salmonella bacteria are not effective.

In any human/animal contact, care must be taken to prevent any hand to mouth contact until hands have been thoroughly washed with hot soapy water. We have always stressed this at Marwell, and have never encountered any problems regarding salmonella infection, even with young children. Hand washing facilities are available both in the Science and Learning Centre and in the toilet block next door.

The sessions you have booked in the Science and Learning Centre would normally include the opportunity for all the children to touch a snake. However, with consideration to the Department of Health advice above we will not include “reptile touching” in any class containing children under 5 years old **UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY REQUEST THAT WE RETAIN THIS ELEMENT OF THE SESSION** (using the form below).

If you **DO** wish the under 5's in your care to have the opportunity to touch a snake, we suggest that you check the policy of your Local Education Authority, ensure good supervision – sufficient to prevent hand to mouth contact before washing and obtain parental consent if you feel that is necessary.

We feel that this should be a decision made for the whole class and that children should not be excluded on an individual basis.

Please confirm that you are happy for all the children attending the sessions below to be given the opportunity to touch a reptile in their education session at Marwell Wildlife.

Yes I confirm

No I do not