

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Visiting Magdalen Farm is an opportunity to learn through real outdoor adventures - while enjoying home cooked organic food and a very high standard of on-site accommodation. Groups choose Magdalen Farm because of our bespoke programmes of activity, qualified teaching staff (including SEN) and the wonderful combination of learning and excitement. Our natural surroundings close to the River Axe and Jurassic Coast also make us a perfect location for field trips.

Activities your child may participate in during their visit include feeding chickens and collecting eggs, team challenges and games, orienteering, investigating rivers and streams, exploring (and getting muddy!) in our woodland, feeding animals, village studies, arts and crafts, harvesting vegetables, building shelters, lighting fires and cooking snacks over fires. Your child will have the opportunity to run through meadows, learn about farming and sing around a campfire in the evening. We are confident that your child will immensely enjoy their stay at Magdalen, and you can rest assured that your child will be cared for at all times.

What do you need to tell Magdalen before a visit?

Before any group visits we ask the group leaders to provide Magdalen with the following information about each person:

- Name
- Allergies
- Special dietary requirements
- Medical Information
- Additional needs
- Disabilities

Additional information may be required by the group leaders. This will help us to ensure that everyone who visits Magdalen has a safe and enjoyable experience.

What should your child bring to Magdalen?

At Magdalen your child will spend almost all their time outside, the days are very long (but lots of fun!). Learning to spend time outdoors comfortably in all weathers is an important part of residential visits at Magdalen. To ensure your child is comfortable and to maximise your child's enjoyment, please supply them with all the items stated on the kit list below. It will not be fair to individuals or the group if an activity has to be cut short because a child was not supplied with correct clothing or footwear.

Please pack your child's suitcase or bag with your child present so they know what is in their bag and which compartments things are in. We often have children who come to the farm not knowing what clothing or equipment is in their case, this makes it much harder for them when getting organised for activities.

On average, each group that visits Magdalen brings over 900 items of clothing and equipment with them. **Please label EVERYTHING your child brings with them**, only named items can be returned. We would prefer you don't send your child with anything of value, such as mobile phones, please note there is no mobile phone reception at the centre.

Magdalen Residential Visit Kit List

All Magdalen activities are all outside so regardless of what time of year you visit Magdalen, the following five items are compulsory.

- A good waterproof jacket – large enough to fit over several layers of clothing
- Waterproof over trousers
- Wellington boots or walking boots with thick socks
- Water bottle labelled with child's name
- Warm hat e.g. woolly hat

Plenty of **layers** of warm, comfortable old clothing (jeans are not good for outdoor activities as they do not dry quickly), non-cotton tracksuit type clothing is best. Clothing that can be worn in many layers is much more flexible, and allows adjustment to the weather and conditions.

- Thick socks (including a long thick pair to wear with Wellingtons)
- Underwear
- Pyjamas
- Backpack (for packed lunch, clip boards etc)
- Outdoor shoes such as trainers or walking boots (designated to only be worn outside the building) – These are ESSENTIAL if your group will be doing the Low Ropes Challenge Activity (wellies and converse-style canvas trainers are not suitable)
- Indoor shoes such as slippers or trainers (designated to only be worn inside the building)
- Trainers or shoes to wear on the coach
- Warm coat (If waterproof jacket is a thin material)
- Towel and wash kit
- Sun cream and sun hat
- Torch and spare batteries (especially for campers)
- Camera (optional)
- A game or book for quiet time e.g. top trumps
- Three spare plastic bags to take home dirty laundry, muddy waterproofs and muddy wellies
- Teddy bear!

You will be advised as to whether you require:

- Packed lunch on day 1
- Bedding

If the visit is in the colder months you will need to bring a lot of layers of clothes, extra thick socks, a warm hat, scarf and gloves. If the visit is in the warmer months and have planned a beach visit you may want to bring swimwear and an extra towel for paddling in the sea.

Please note that we accept no responsibility for property left with us or left in the centre or farm. All visitors should ensure they have adequate insurance cover in place either under their own household policies or group policy to provide cover for personal liability and possessions.

Please ensure all your personal items are clearly labeled.

Do you need to supply any bedding?

Your group leader will advise you as to whether you need to bring linen with you but as a guide if you are only staying in one of the main accommodation blocks for 1 night only you should bring a pillow case and either a sleeping bag or single duvet cover and sheet. If you are staying for 2 nights or more linen will be supplied by Magdalen.

Campers will need to supply their own sleeping mats, sleeping bags and pillows. Tents are provided.

If your child suffers from bed wetting, please provide them with disposable night time pull up pants or supply a waterproof mattress cover which will be discreetly added to the bed.

Does your child need to bring any money?

Your group leader will advise you as to whether your group will be visiting the Magdalen tuck shop. We sell Magdalen magnets, key-rings, pencils etc. as well as a few snacks. (usually £3 to £5 is ample).

What type of accommodation is available?

Your group leaders will advise you as to whether the accommodation the group is booked into is the Courtyard Centre, Magdalen Farmhouse or camping.

The Courtyard Centre and Magdalen Farmhouse provide secure, comfortable and warm accommodation in dormitory style rooms with shared bathroom facilities. Each group will have sole use of their dormitory area.

Tents will be provided for any camping – campers will need to supply their own sleeping mats, sleeping bags and pillows. Showers and toilets are a short walk from the campfield.

Your group leader is responsible for assigning bedrooms/tents before the group arrives.

What type of meals will be offered?

The food served at Magdalen is tasty and nutritious and there is ample quantity. We use as much food from the farm as possible, otherwise we try to buy organic and local produce. Everyone will be given three hearty meals a day, at least two healthy snacks, and have access to the fruit bowl.

We offer a hearty breakfast which includes cereal, toast, orange juice and on set days a choice of 2 cooked items such as fried eggs and beans. Lunch is often sandwiches, sausage rolls, flapjack and fruit and supper is a 2 course child friendly hot main course and pudding. The first evening meal will be pre-set but further evening meals will have a choice of 2 options.

We discourage children from bringing sweets and snacks to Magdalen, as we are a working farm in the countryside, sweets and snacks hidden in bedrooms tend to attract unwanted creatures which may not enhance your child's stay!

Can Magdalen cater for any special diets?

Our cooks can cater for any special dietary requirements ***providing we receive this information from the group leaders at least two weeks prior to any stay***. Dietary requirements include vegetarians, vegans, those with allergies, faith related requirements such as pork free diets, and those requiring wheat or dairy free diets etc. Our kitchen can provide scales to weigh food for diabetic diets if needed.

If you are unsure about any dietary requirements then please contact Magdalen's kitchen team.

Will my child require a packed lunch for the first day?

Please ensure that your child has a healthy and energy filled packed lunch along with a refillable water bottle for the first day of their visit unless you are advised otherwise.

Will my child be able to take regular medication?

Please discuss any medical requirements with your group leaders before arrival. Only visiting group staff under parental instruction can administer medication and Magdalen will provide a secure storage location and fridges if required. It is a good idea that you check your child's tetanus is up to date.

What happens if my child is ill before or during a visit?

Magdalen takes the safety and security of all its visitors very seriously therefore we ask that you do not send any children to Magdalen if they have had sickness or diarrhea within 48 hours of arrival. Should a child have sickness or diarrhea during their stay they will be asked to return home.

If your child falls ill or has an accident during their stay the visiting group staff will contact you to discuss any action. Please ensure that the group leaders have your latest contact details.

Unfortunately Magdalen cannot offer any refunds for non-attendance however we can supply any necessary paperwork for travel insurance claims.

Can I contact my child during their stay?

You are welcome to write to your child while they are with us, please put the name of their school on the envelope and address it to:

Joe Bloggs - St Mary's Primary School
Magdalen Environmental Trust
Magdalen Farm
Winsham
Chard
Somerset
TA20 4PA

We advise keeping letters light hearted to prevent your child from becoming anxious, distressed or concerned about family and home. Perhaps telling your child you are looking forward to hearing about all the fun they have been having, rather than you're missing them terribly will ensure they feel you want them to enjoy their time away and not feel as if they have to worry or feel guilty about how the family is coping without them!

Can I contact my child in an emergency?

The Magdalen office is open from 9am to 5pm on 01460 30144 and your group leaders will advise of any particular emergency arrangements. ***Please do not call the office unless in an emergency*** – you will be contacted if there is an issue to discuss that relates to your child.

What activities will my child be taking part in?

Prior to the trip the group leaders will have agreed an itinerary with Magdalen. Activities run from 8am to 8pm with break out times to relax and chill however your child may be tired when they come home.

All activities are risk assessed and any relevant documentation will have been sent to your group leaders prior to the visit. Activities are based on the requirements of the group as a whole therefore please advise your group leaders if your child requires special assistance.

Activities are based outside around our working farm which includes contact with our farm animals. Your child will be encouraged to try new experiences but will not be forced into anything that they are uncomfortable about. Please ensure that your group leaders are advised of any allergies.

Magdalen staff are first aid trained and we expect all groups to bring their own first aider.

We are confident that your child will have a wonderful time during their stay at Magdalen, and will come home bursting with excitement, great memories, new ideas, an inch of mud on their wellies, and a big smile on their face!

