

Excursion Planning Guide

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COVID-19

Merlin Entertainments is excited to be welcoming back school groups to all our Sydney attractions after the recent government announcement lifting the restrictions placed on schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you can imagine, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on all our attractions and temporary changes to our school product offering have been put in place to ensure the safety of all visitors during this pandemic.

Commented [CK1]: Can we include an opening sentence to say we are happy to be welcoming school groups back after the easing of government restrictions? I think it's good to start with a positive

For all the latest updates regarding school excursions please visit our attraction websites school page and download our COVID safety information sheet or call our bookings team on 1800 195 650.

How to make a booking

Have a look at the different options available for your visit (self-guided and guided). If you have any questions about your options, please call 1800 195 650.

Once you are ready to book, you can book one of the following 3 ways:

- 1- Call us directly and speak to one of our members in our call centre bookings team on 1800 195 650.
- 2- Complete an enquiry booking form via our website. Your request comes through to our call centre booking team that will confirm your excursion details by sending a booking confirmation/invoice email or will contact you if alternate arrangements or dates need to be selected.
- 3- Book online and pay now, this option is available and is the easiest, quickest and most convenient way to book for those schools that can pay straight away with a credit card.



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All group bookings are essential and must be made and paid for in advance two weeks prior to when you wish to visit with your group.



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Payments

Merlin Entertainments has thousands of visitors each year. To ensure that your school is not delayed unnecessarily all education school bookings must be PRE-PAID prior to attending the excursion date.

Your tickets cannot be issued on the day to enter the attraction, so please check with your accounts department and SAN team two weeks prior to your excursion date to ensure payment has been made in time.

Groups cannot pay individually nor do we accept payment on the day of your visit.

To check your booking and payment details- call our bookings team 1800 195 650 or email SchoolsGroupsAR@merlinentertainments.biz

Unsure how many students are coming?

We recommend that you make a booking for maximum number of children you are likely to bring on the day. You can call 1800 195 650 or email education@merlinentertainments.com.au prior to your booking to amend your student numbers.

On the day of the excursion when you are collecting your school group tickets, you will be asked to confirm student numbers entering the attraction. If it is less than expected- a school may request student absent voucher- which allows the absent child to return to the attraction for free with their family on another day.



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Payment Methods

Preferred payment method for school groups is by Credit card. Credit card payments over the phone by calling 1800 195 650.

EFT details for schools wishing to pay this way:

Financial institution:	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited
Bank Address:	115 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW 2000
BSB:	012 - 003
Account number:	836 928 562
Account Name:	Sydney Attractions Group Pty Ltd
Swift Code:	ANZBAU3M

Please make sure you use your account booking number as your reference and the name of the attraction you are visiting. The number can be found on your tax invoice/booking confirmation email which starts with ACCC.

You can use the following attraction code to let us know which attraction you are visiting.

These are:

- SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium- SLSA
- WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo- WLSZ
- Madame Tussauds Sydney- MTS
- Sydney Tower Eye- STE

Please send your remittance to our Accounts Payable team via email

SchoolsGroupsAR@merlinentertainments.biz

Cash or cheques cannot be accepted as payment for school visits. Payment on the day of your excursion can also not be accepted and must be made prior to attending the excursion date.



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Cancellations and Postponing

Cancellations must be made either via email education@merlinentertainments.com.au or over the phone 1800 195 650.

Cancellations must be made 72 hours prior to excursion date. Any groups that no show without contacting Merlin Entertainments will be charged for the excursion and no refunds will be issued.

School groups may move their excursion date if they give Merlin Entertainments 72hr notice prior to their initial excursion date. Excursion dates may be moved within the same calendar year at no additional charge.

Refunds

Merlin Entertainments does not issue refunds for students who are unable to attend the excursion date once numbers have been confirmed with us. If a school has students that are unable to attend due to sickness, we will supply the school with absent student vouchers which will allow the student to return to the attraction at a later date for free with their family.

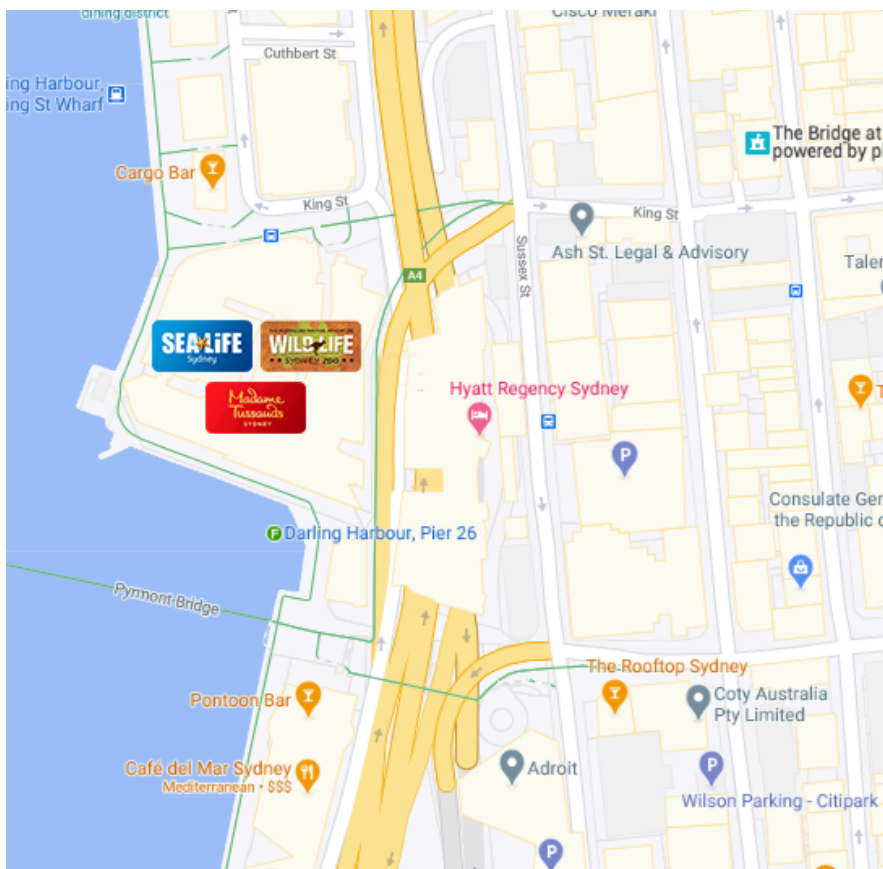
Refunds maybe issued if there is an issue with the service or product Merlin Entertainments has promised to deliver. Refunds are done through our admissions team and cannot be issued on the spot. Teachers will need to complete a refund request form and supply relevant documentation needed to process this. Please note a refund can take up to 2 weeks for Merlin Entertainments to process through our system once we have all the required information.



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Transport

SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium, WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo and Madame Tussauds Sydney are located in the heart of the city in Darling Harbour. The address of the attraction is 1-5 Wheat Road Darling Harbour.



Coach



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If you are travelling to our attraction by private bus, there are 16min pick up/drop off bus bays located on Wheat Road- which position you directly behind the aquarium. It is then a short 2-minute walk to the front of the admission area for all 3 attractions.

Train

The closest train stations to Darling Harbour are Wynyard or Town Hall Station. To use the train all students will need an opal card to use this service. Contact Transport NSW for more information in regards to purchasing opal cards.

From both these stations it is a short 10-20min walk to Darling Harbour- depending on age of student and group size.



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Condition of Entry

ALL school aged children aged 3-17years must be accompanied by a supervising adult at all times. Schools that fail to inappropriately supervise their school group or leave their group unattended for no apparent reason- can and will be asked to leave the attraction by Merlin Entertainments Management regardless if they have not finished their excursion.

All students must be wearing school uniforms to enter- so that students are can be easily identified by Merlin Entertainments employees. For groups that do not have a school uniform we recommend that all students within the group wear excursion badge or a wrist band with a school emergency contact phone number of details on it.

Teachers, students or parent helpers that are seen not behaving approximately, are not respectful or considerate to other guests and animals or destroying and damaging Merlin Entertainments property- can and will be asked to leave the attraction by Merlin Entertainments Management.

These conditions of entry are to ensure you and your students have a fun time and remain safe at all times within the attraction.



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Teacher Planning Information

Excursion Options

When booking an excursion at Merlin Entertainments attractions please be aware that each attraction offers a variety of school excursion options. When booking you will have an option to specific if you are after the following:

- Self-guided tour- where you take your group through the attraction on your own and stop to visit and see all the animals that you are currently learning within your classroom. Either create and bring your own worksheet or use one of our specially designed worksheets to help guide your student learning. Visit our resources page!
- Guided tour option- all our attractions offer a range of curriculum aligned guided tours on specific topics. Have one of our expert educators take you through the attraction and provide your students with added insights, knowledge and fun facts either about the animals or the attraction depending on where you are visiting. Please note that guided tours are only offered at specific times during the day and group size restrictions also apply. ***(Please note currently we are unable to offer this option under the current COVID-19 restrictions. As restrictions lift we will be able to offer this again soon to all our school groups.)***
- Multi-ticket- groups can also visit 2 or more attractions in one day!

On the day- arriving to the attractions

On the day of the excursion please make sure to arrive at least 45 mins prior to your attraction excursion entry time or your guided tour start time. Due to capacity restrictions because of COVID-19, we need to adhere to strict entry times to ensure safety of all guests. School groups that arrive late or do not enter at their designated entry time, may risk not being allowed to enter the attraction. We understand moving small or big group of students takes time and coordination, this is why we suggest at least arriving 45mins prior. This gives your group enough time to find the attraction location, collect tickets, arrange into smaller groups, brief students and teacher/helpers, visit the bathroom and have a small snack before entering the attraction.



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Darling Harbour is in the heart of the city and is an area full of restaurants, shops and other tourist attractions by the water. It is a popular area that can be very busy at times. We recommend that groups select an area that they can safely wait away from the busy admissions area to get their groups organised. There is a green grass area that can be accessed by Lime Street next to Cargo Bar, which is a large open space that is good for big groups.

Collecting tickets

We recommend that only one teacher comes to admission area to collect the tickets. Teachers can join the schools/tour groups queue to be assisted by one of our admission team members.

Please bring with you your booking confirmation that has your account reference number that starts with ACC. This will assist the team in being able to quickly find your booking, make sure payment was made prior and will be able to issue you with your tickets. If you have booked a guided tour, our admissions team will notify the attraction educators that you are here for your tour.

Guided tour times and waiting area

This information is for school groups that are having a guided tour. When booking a guided tour and selecting a time, please note that the start time is the time the tour actually starts, not the time to arrive to the attraction. It is really important you arrive early, so that your group gets to fully enjoy their guided tour experience. For SEA LIFE and WILD LIFE many of our education guides are our animal keepers and aquarist team that are also responsible for looking after the animals.

If you arrive late to the attraction, please note that this may impact your guide tour duration time and maybe cut short.



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For school groups doing a guided tour for SEA LIFE we ask that after you have collected your tickets, you move your group down to SEA LIFE Café entrance, where the SEA LIFE education team will meet you there to start your guided tour experience.



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[Darling Harbour Attraction Map](#)

Attraction maps for SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium, WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo and Madame Tussauds Sydney can be downloaded from the attraction websites prior to your visit. These maps are designed to give you a basic outline of the attraction and to highlight important safety information required to make your own risk assessment.



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What to bring

As we don't have bag storage facilities at our Darling Harbour attractions, we ask that groups limit what they bring with them on excursions. We ask students bring with them a small back pack that contains a small water bottle and food, hat and jumper.

All our attractions are all weather attractions, which means you will be protected from the elements when inside the attractions whether its rain, hail or shine.

We have many resources and worksheets available for school groups to download and bring with them on the day- visit the resources page on the attraction website.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment for each attraction can be downloaded from each attraction website under schools section.

If teachers wish to make their own assessment prior to your excursion date you can apply online to arrange for your free visit.



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Insurance

Merlin Entertainments attractions all are covered by Public liability insurance of \$20million. If you wish to get a copy of this certificate, please contact our bookings team on 1800 195 650.

Ratios

SEA LIFE, WILD LIFE and Madame Tussauds require children ages 3-17 to be adequately supervised at all times when inside the attractions. This allows one free teacher ticket per a set number of students.

To ensure this can occur we recommend the following supervision ratios

- 1:3 Preschool aged students 3+
- 1:6 K-2-year aged students
- 1:8 Year 3-12 aged students
- 1:1 Special or additional need students

If groups wish to bring more supervising adults then an additional rate will be charged for these teachers.

When booking via the online enquiry form or talking to the bookings team please mention and let us know if you are bringing students with additional needs and do require additional supervision on the day.

Also, if you are visiting SEA LIFE and wish for your students to go on the penguin boat ride, additional supervision above the recommended ratios will be required. See information below regarding ride restrictions.



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Penguin Ride at SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium

Please be advised of the following ride rules and restrictions when planning a visit to SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium. The penguin ride takes you on an expedition through the Gentoo and King penguin enclosure. The ride is optional, groups that do not wish to go on the ride can go straight to the penguin viewing area and do not need to line up.

- Guests under 0.9m must be seated next to an accompanying adult of 18 years of age or over.
- Guests between 0.9m and 1.2m must be seated next to or in the row immediately in front of an accompanying adult of 18 years of age or over.
- Guests over 1.2m are free to ride without supervision.
- Only 2 per row (including infants)
- Only a total of 6 guests per boat.
- Only one non-ambulant guest on the ride at one time, with two companions aged 16 or over.
- Guests with back/neck problems are not allowed to ride.
- Boarding and alighting is allowed only at the designated areas.
- Explorers must be seated properly in the boat seats, not on the boat rim.
- Smoking, eating and drinking is forbidden.
- Standing up during the ride is strictly forbidden.
- Explorers must keep their arms and legs inside the boat at all times.
- No rocking the boats or leaning out of the boats.
- Loose articles must be put away securely, including cameras & selfie sticks.
- Large bags, umbrellas, walking canes, child buggies/strollers etc. are not allowed on board and must be left in the designated buggy park before boarding.
- Any instruction from the ride operator must be followed by guests, in the interest of their and others safety.
- Guests must wear shoes when going on the ride.



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Accessibility

SEA LIFE, WILD LIFE and Madame Tussauds are accessible buildings that are equipped with ramps, lifts and accessible toilets.

We can also provide students with vision impairment kits to help assess viewing within the attraction.

Seeing eye dogs or assistance dogs are permitted within the Merlin Entertainments attractions.

Toilets

We have toilets located at the admission area and throughout the attraction, please see map for locations.

Enjoy your visit with us!

Merlin Entertainments is looking forward to you and your school visiting our attractions! We hope we have covered all the information you need to know to ensure your excursion runs as smoothly as possible! We are here to help and love you to join our Merlin Teachers Club Facebook community- the only place to receive all the latest attraction updates, special school resources, behind-the-scenes videos, competitions and more! So join us today!



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