

Glenveagh National Park  
A Place to Learn

# Teacher's Guide

Planning an Educational Visit  
to the National Park



National Parks are leaders in Conservation Education. We're passionate about teaching children and young people to know and care for our natural world. We will support schools in any way we can to make your visit enjoyable and successful. Before booking a guided visit with our team of Education Guides or planning your own self-guided visit to Glenveagh, we ask that teachers read this guide.



## What We Offer

Our Education Centre and Programme is all about helping children and young people learn about nature and what we can all do to protect it. We offer a choice of learning modules for National Schools and both Junior and Leaving Cert Field Trips for Second Level. We can also tailor visits and talks for college and university groups.

Our programme books up quickly. For teachers who are leading their own visit to the National Park, we will help and support when we can. Please contact us in advance if you plan to do this.



## How to Book a Guided Visit



1. Use the Learning Module Factsheets on our website to help you select your choice of topic for the visit.
2. Email us at [glenveagh-education@npws.gov.ie](mailto:glenveagh-education@npws.gov.ie) with the following information:
  - Full Name and contact details of school
  - Name of Lead Teacher
  - Year/Class and Group Size. Breakdown of ages if you are a whole national school
  - Choice of topic
  - Any special or additional needs/allergies
  - Special requests or topics you'd like us to consider
  - Days and dates that suit best
3. We will then contact you to offer suitable dates and send you a full booking form and information pack to complete your booking.
4. We will contact you one week before your visit to confirm all final arrangements.

## Our Learning Modules

We provide a range of themed days where students learn about the National Park, protecting nature, and our environment.

### Primary school days

- Protect Nature Activity Day
- Woodland Discovery
- Life in our Bogs
- Glenveagh: Past, Present & Future
- Discover Primary Science & Maths Certificate
- Little Nature Explorers

### Secondary Schools

- Ecology and Conservation Field Study:  
An informative, practical day which brings textbook definitions to life through real examples of conservation work and science in the National Park.
- Transition Year Protect Nature Project:  
A unique learning experience for TY students, which aims to inspire change in values and attitudes towards the environment, conservation, sustainability and outdoor recreation.

## What to Bring

If you are booked for an Autumn/Winter visit, hats and gloves are strongly advised, especially for younger children. Sun hats and cream are advised for Summer visits. Please ensure anyone with their own medication has supplies for the day with them.



Sensible footwear & waterproof clothing.



Healthy packed lunches. It's an active day.



Schools should take their own first aid kit, as well as student inhalers, epipens, or medication.

## Access to the Castle

Glenveagh Castle can be enjoyed from the outside as part of your visit. Please tell us clearly at the time of booking if you hope to include this in your time with us.



## What to Expect

The Nature Education Programme is delivered mainly outdoors in most weather, hence the need for appropriate clothing. We will call you the evening before a visit where severe weather conditions could postpone your visit or weather warnings have been put in place. Please ensure you can be contacted on the phone number you provide to us at the time of booking.

Between May and September, midges can be a problem in certain weather conditions, so we try to work in locations where their presence is minimal on those days. Insect repellent should be bought or applied before coming, at parent's discretion.

Duration of your visit is agreed at the time of booking including time for breaks. A typical day lasts from 10am to 2pm approximately (1pm for infants), with some Second level field trips requiring a full day.

We will sometimes seek your consent to photograph school groups enjoying their day for promotional purposes. We will always discuss this with you in advance and ensure the necessary permissions are given. Some of our activities involve getting close to and involved in the natural world such as looking for insects and examining soil and plants. Please let us know if any student in your group will find this uncomfortable or if there are allergies we need to be aware of. We want your day to be as safe, enjoyable and as inclusive as possible.



## Food and Refreshments

**NOTE:** Teachers should bring their own flasks of tea and coffee. Talk to us about group bookings in the restaurant and special rates for schools if you would like to include this in your visit.

There is a restaurant at the Visitor Centre. Take away lunches can be purchased from here by teachers. There is also a Tea Room at the Castle with similar services. However these facilities can get very busy so we highly recommend packed lunches for all.

## How to Prepare your Class

We would encourage all groups to explore and discuss the following:

- What is a National Park?
- Why are they special/different?
- What are the important plants/animals in the park?

Look at a map of the area – talk about where you're going, what you hope to see and what you'd like to learn. Look at our website for news, updates and detailed information, or our social media feeds for photos and videos.

## Supervision

Schools must bring 1 teacher or supervising adult for every 10 children as far as possible. This is in line with our Child Protection Policy. Teachers are responsible for their group and their behaviour at all times and must not leave the group unattended.

Please advise us if any student in your group has additional needs or special requirements so we can ensure the day is planned out to include them as fully as possible. Students needing inhalers or medication should have them during the visit.

## Leading a group in Glenveagh



If you are planning to lead a group yourself in Glenveagh, we ask that you get in touch with us in advance to advise us of your plans. This way, we may be able to arrange a meet & greet with one of our Education Guides. We can also assist with route planning or health and safety measures, and can supply worksheets, resources, and equipment for groups.

On arrival in Glenveagh with a group that hasn't booked in advance, we would ask you to report to the Visitor Centre to advise us of your presence on site and your plans for your group. This way our staff can help you get the most out of your visit and ensure the day runs smoothly for you.

**NOTE:** All groups visiting the park do so at their own risk. The advice in this guide is here to help you make sure your visit is as safe, successful and enjoyable as possible.

## Things to Think About

Think about the season - there are things to learn and nature can be best explored outside of peak times and summer.

Be aware of your group size, their ability and how much there is to see in the park. A visit can often take longer than anticipated and you need to allow time for queueing for buses and facilities in busy periods.

Toilets are located in the Car Park, Visitor Centre and Castle Garden area. However some of our more remote trails do not have facilities for quite a distance.

Tell us if you plan to use the bus service. It is free to National & Secondary Schools, with a small charge for Third Level groups. All other facilities are free. Students should bring money for purchasing gifts or refreshments if you plan to allow them time for this.

## Protect Nature

We can tailor a full session around our Leave No Trace outdoor ethics programme.



We ask that all visitors minimise waste brought into the park. All litter must go to an appropriate recycling point or taken back to school.



Encourage your group to respect other people, plants and animals



Download our 'Protect Nature' Booklet for helpful tips on how to play your part

## Getting Around

Our shuttle bus service runs throughout the year linking the main car park to the Castle & Gardens area 3.5km away. The park can be busy at the height of the season, so we ask for your patience at these times if you are using the bus.

There are several trails to enjoy as well as the Visitor Centre and Gardens and groups can explore freely for as long as their time allows. Bike hire is also an option. See our website for details.



## Suggested Routes & Experiences

### 2 Hour Visit

Start at the Visitor Centre, enjoy some of the audio visual presentations and then walk the Derrylahn Nature Trail to explore both woodlands and our bogs. This 2km loop path has some steep sections, so is good for energetic older groups, but younger ages could choose to take the short cut back towards the car park. Contact us if you would like to use our Outdoor Classroom in the woods - this is often available on Mondays and Fridays.

### 3-4 Hour Visit

You could plan to visit both ends of the park inside this time. Walk to the castle along the lakeside walk (3.5km, easy trail) and enjoy exploring the Gardens, Castle grounds, Tea Rooms and Gift Shop. Options after this could include a hike up The View Point trail (2km, steep, strenuous) or, catch a bus back to the lower end. Walk The Nature Trail or enjoy the views from the head of the lake and the play park before catching your bus back home.

### Full Day

For those looking for a bit more adventure and able to walk long distance, a walk down the 'Glen Path' is one of the park highlights. (7km, moderate walk to Castle, 11km all the way back to main car park ) Talk to us about directions and drop off points. Or, catch a bus to the Castle and walk to the Asteleen Waterfall (3km each way from the Castle, 6km total). Enjoy some of the most important Woodlands in the park and incredible views of the lake.



## Want to Learn More?

We encourage all visitors to explore our website and visit our social media feeds before coming to the Glenveagh. Find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and learn more about the National Park. Visit our website for tips on responsible outdoor recreation.



## Staying Safe

Be aware of buses and park vehicles along roadways and car park areas. Always stay with your group and never leave them unattended. Contact us about the safety of our trails after stormy weather and never allow your group to climb trees or enter the water.

Talk to your group about what to do if someone gets lost and how to get help. Carry out your own school risk assessments before visiting.

## After your visit..

When you return to the classroom, there are lots of ways that your class can reflect on their learning together.



Draw or write about what you saw and learned about during your visit.



Find out what plants and animals live in and around your school grounds.



Discuss what you can do as a school or class to support local wildlife and Protect Nature.

## In Case of Emergency

On a guided visit, in the event of any emergency the Education Guide on duty will lead your group to the nearest exit or assembly point and stay with your group until the event has been dealt with or you depart from the park. All Education Guides are trained in First Aid and with your permission, can help a sick or injured child. We also advise schools to bring a small first aid kit if your school policy is to treat an injured child yourself. Ensure any pupil with allergies or with medication is always identified to us on arrival and has medication with them.

Please be advised that mobile coverage in Glenveagh can be unpredictable.

If you are leading a group yourself, we advise all groups to be well prepared for their day in the park. Plan your route in advance, check the weather forecast, bring a first aid kit and always have an emergency plan. There may not always be staff present in more remote areas of the park, though if park assistance is required notify a member of staff if possible. Save emergency contact numbers in your phone. Talk to us if you need advice on how to plan ahead and prepare for your own visit and how to lead an outdoor session safely.

## Feedback is Always Welcome

We will send you information on how to give us feedback on your experience. This is an important part of our programme and helps us constantly improve what we do.





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**Protect  
Nature**