

# Handwashing — Volunteer Training Guide

How to wash your own hands, and how to make sure every visitor washes theirs. Handwashing is mandatory at Naylor's Ark Soul Sanctuary — for volunteers, staff and all visitors.

## 1. Why handwashing is mandatory

Our animals can carry germs (zoonoses) such as E. coli O157, Cryptosporidium, Salmonella and Campylobacter. These can pass from animals, fences, gates, bedding and soil to people's hands — and from hands to mouths. Young children, pregnant visitors, older people and anyone with a weakened immune system are most at risk. A single proper handwash removes the risk. Hand sanitiser gel is NOT a substitute — it does not work reliably against these farm germs. Only running water and soap count.

## 2. When you must wash your hands

- After any contact with animals — touching, feeding, grooming, leading or bottle-feeding
- After touching fences, gates, pens, bedding, feed buckets, toys or equipment in animal areas
- After mucking out, cleaning or handling manure and dirty bedding (even if you wore gloves)
- Before eating, drinking or preparing food — and before your break
- After using the toilet
- Before leaving the site at the end of your shift

## 3. How to wash your hands properly (the 20-second rule)

Wash at a handwashing station with running water and soap. Allow about 20 seconds for steps 2-6 — roughly the time it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice.

|   |                                                                              |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Wet hands with warm running water and apply soap.                            |
| 2 | Rub palms together.                                                          |
| 3 | Rub the backs of both hands, fingers interlaced.                             |
| 4 | Interlock fingers and rub between them; clean around thumbs and fingertips.  |
| 5 | Rub around the wrists.                                                       |
| 6 | Rinse thoroughly under running water.                                        |
| 7 | Dry with paper towels — damp hands spread germs. Put used towels in the bin. |

## 4. Encouraging visitors to handwash — it is a condition of entry

Every visitor signs a waiver agreeing to wash their hands after animal contact and before eating. Signs alone are not enough — your friendly, active encouragement is the control measure that works. Health & Safety Executive guidance for open farms expects visitors to be actively supervised and directed to handwashing, not just signposted.

### How to do it well:

- Say it early: include handwashing in your welcome — 'We'll meet the animals, then we'll all wash our hands together before you go.'
- Do it with them: wash your own hands at the same time — visitors copy what volunteers do, and children copy adults.
- Make it a routine: end every animal contact session at the handwashing station, before the picnic area or exit — never after.
- Keep it positive: 'Let's get the farm germs off!' works far better than warnings, especially with children.

- Help the little ones: parents wash young children's hands for them; offer to hold gates or belongings so they can.
- Watch the hotspots: anyone eating, drinking, sucking thumbs or dummies, or touching their face in animal areas — gently redirect them to wash first.
- No food or drink in animal contact areas — politely ask visitors to finish snacks outside the pens.

## 5. If a visitor refuses to wash their hands

- Stay calm, friendly and polite — remind them it is a condition of their visit, agreed to in their waiver.
- Explain the why in one sentence: 'Our animals can carry germs that make people poorly — the wash takes 20 seconds.'
- If they still refuse, do not argue. Let a trustee or sanctuary manager know straight away — they will speak to the visitor.
- Never physically block anyone, and never shout. Record the refusal on an incident form if it continues.

## 6. Your station checks (every shift)

Handwashing stations must be ready before visitors arrive. As part of the daily checklist, confirm:

- Running water available and taps working
- Soap dispensers full
- Paper towels stocked, and spare stock accessible
- Bins present, not overflowing, and lids working
- Signs visible and clean

Report any station that cannot be used to a trustee immediately and direct visitors to the nearest working station.

## 7. Key rules to remember

Handwashing is mandatory — not optional. Running water and soap only; sanitiser gel does not count. Wash after every animal or fence contact, before eating, and before leaving site. Visitors wash too — every visit ends at the handwashing station. When in doubt, wash again and ask a trustee.

Related documents: RA031 Biosecurity, zoonoses and infection control; Health & Safety Policy section 10 (Zoonoses, biosecurity and hygiene); TR-01 Volunteer training and competence record; visitor waiver (handwashing acceptance). Based on HSE guidance for visitor attractions with animal contact (AIS23 / open farm industry code of practice).

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|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Volunteer name:<br>_____     | Signature: _____ | Date: _____ |
| Trainer / reviewer:<br>_____ | Signature: _____ | Date: _____ |