

HOUSTON MUSEUM *of* NATURAL SCIENCE

FIELD TRIP PREP GUIDE

2026-2027



www.hmns.org/fieldtrips



HOUSTON MUSEUM *of* NATURAL SCIENCE

Thank you for choosing the Houston Museum of Natural Science!

Here at HMNS, education is our passion, and we're thrilled to be a part of your educational journey! With world-class exhibition halls, immersive films, hands-on labs and workshops, and STEAM-based teambuilding activities, there really is no better place for your students to enhance their education.

Your field trip is in good hands with our Reservations team. You can take advantage of a personal Field Trip Coordinator (page 10), who can help you organize a trip that works for you and your students. Exclusive online curriculum is available at hmns.org/curriculum which will help ensure that your field trip is truly educational.

Each year, we publish our Educator's Guide, available online at hmns.org/educatorguide, which details all of the programs available to you and your students. Once you've used the Educator's Guide to choose your venues and activities, the Field Trip Prep Guide is your next step for creating a memorable experience. In this planner, you will find all the information you need to prepare for your trip to HMNS, including the **Required Teacher Admission** sheet that you must bring with you on the day of your arrival.

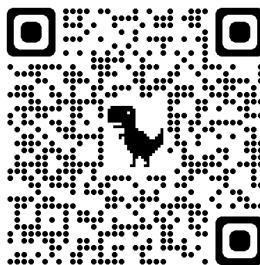
If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact our team at reservations@hmns.org.

Best,
HMNS Staff

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Museum Map:





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Required Teacher Admission Sheet

The following form **MUST** be brought completed with payment to the school check-in podium upon your arrival. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the field trip line at 713-639-4659.

School Information:

School Name: _____

Order Number: _____

Date of Field Trip: _____

Onsite Emergency Contact Name: _____

Final Numbers:

Students: _____

Adults (Chaperones/Teachers): _____

Total: _____

Onsite Emergency Contact Phone: (____)____-____

Bus Unloading and Check In:

Please arrive at least 15-20 minutes prior to your first timed entry. If students need to be divided into groups, this should be done before arrival.

- Buses will unload on Hermann Park Drive near the “Bus Unloading Zone” sign. Buses should **NOT** unload on Caroline Street. ([Bus Loading Zone Location](#))
- All lunches and backpacks must be left on the bus. Arrangements for lunch and pick up plans should be made with your bus driver prior to arriving at the Museum.
- Unload students and line them up at the “Teacher Reporting Point” by the front steps.
- Students and chaperones (including teachers and parents) should be counted. Money should be collected prior to arriving. **All cash payments must be consolidated into large bill before arrival. All adults participating on the trip are required to pay.**
- The group must have, or pay for, 10 or more students to receive the Field Trip Rate. Bus drivers wishing to participate in the Field Trip will be charged the Group Rate instead unless they are included in the original chaperone count. If they are included, they will receive the Field Trip Rate.
- The lead teacher for the field trip should bring this completed form and payment to the “School Greeter Booth” inside the main entrance before their group is allowed to enter the Museum.

Caroline St.

HMNS

Hermann Park Dr.

Chaperone Information:

- School must provide a minimum of 1 chaperone for every 10 students, which must be reflected on your invoice.
- Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and remain with students at all times.
- Students of all ages are **required** to stay with their chaperone at all times – if they do not, you may be asked to leave the museum without a refund.
- All teachers and chaperones included in the official count will pay the Field Trip rate. Adults **not** included in the count will need to purchase their tickets at the full rate, if available, upon arrival.
- **The lead teacher must inform all chaperones of the venue and entry times for your reservation.** Museum personnel are not allowed to give out this information for the safety of the students.
- Chaperones parking in the Museum Garage and planning to pay at the box office, should inform the box office attendant they are with a school for a reduced rate.

Lead Teacher Agreement:

By signing this document, I agree the student, chaperone, and teacher amounts are correct. I also agree to ensure that all teachers, parents, and chaperones visiting The Houston Museum of Natural Science have read the above information and the Museum Etiquette guidelines (page 3). I understand that a failure to follow the outlined procedures, or adhere to museum etiquette guidelines, may result in the school group’s removal from the Museum without a refund.

Lead Teacher Signature: _____



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Museum Etiquette Guidelines

Please review the following Museum Etiquette Guidelines with your students and chaperones.

- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Keep a safe distance from objects, walls, cases, artifacts, and photographs. The oils, salts, and acids in our sweat can damage works of art and artifacts. (Touching of exhibits is only permitted in the Cabinet of Curiosities.)
- Be respectful of Museum Staff, other school groups, and visitors to the Museum – this includes but is not limited to:
 - Being considerate when speaking to Museum Staff
 - Using a quiet voice when walking through the halls
 - Not using profanity or derogatory language
- Be aware this is a public institution and restrooms, exhibits and other facilities are not private to schools.
- Cell phones must be silenced while in the halls and theatres
- Food, drinks, and chewing gum are not allowed in the halls.
- HMNS will not accept any food deliveries on behalf of schools.
- Students are not permitted to climb onto exhibits nor run or jump in the halls.
- Students, of all ages, are not permitted to explore the museum on their own and must stay with a chaperone at all times.
- When visiting the Morian Overlook, please do not allow students to drop objects over the balcony into the Morian Hall of Paleontology.
- Please refrain from blocking exit and/or entryways throughout the Museum.
- While viewing exhibits, please allow space for other patrons to safely pass.

Teachers and chaperones are responsible for the behavior of their students and children during their visit to the Museum. We thank you in advance for ensuring that our Museum remains in exceptional condition and is safe for all visitors to enjoy.

Groups that do not follow the Museum Etiquette Guidelines may be asked to leave the Museum without a refund.

Museum Map:





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Field Trip Checklist

At least a Month prior to trip (we recommend booking well in advance):

- ☐ Fill out a Field Trip Request form: www.hmns.org/book

Two to four weeks prior to trip:

- ☐ Complete required school documentation (field trip permission forms, transportation forms, contracts, etc.).
- ☐ Secure chaperones for trip; at least one chaperone for every ten students. These chaperones must be included on your reservation. Groups should not exceed 10 students. **Chaperones must be 21 years of age or older.**
- ☐ Coordinate transportation with your district.
- ☐ Download online curriculum at hmns.org/curriculum.

The day before your field trip:

- ☐ Adjust final count of students, parents, teachers, and chaperones. Write this number on the **Required Teacher Admission Sheet** (page 2). All participants who are included in your school's payment (students, parents, chaperones, and teachers) should be counted on that sheet.
- ☐ We highly recommend including ALL chaperones on your field trip reservation for ease of entry. Adults **not** included in the chaperone count will need to purchase their own tickets at the **full rate, if available**, upon arrival at the Box Office. You must inform all chaperones of your venue and entry times for your reservation. Museum personnel are not allowed to give out this information for the safety of the students.
- ☐ Assign students to groups. One chaperone is required for every ten students. The group may not exceed 10 students.
- ☐ Prepare payment. Final payment is due upon check in. Cash payments **must** be consolidated into large bills.
- ☐ Review the Museum Etiquette guidelines with your students and chaperones (page 3).
- ☐ Ensure that all chaperones have a copy of the **Museum Map** and your field trip itinerary.
- ☐ Distribute curriculum to students along with necessary materials.

The day of your field trip:

- ☐ Ensure that all chaperones have a copy of the **Museum Map** and your field trip itinerary.
- ☐ Buses will unload on Hermann Park Drive near the "**Bus Unloading Zone**" signs ([Bus Loading Zone Location](#)). Lunches must be left on the bus unless prior arrangements have been made.
- ☐ Once unloaded, students will line up outside the main entrance at the "**Teacher Reporting Point**" while the lead teacher enters the Museum to check in.
- ☐ During check in, the lead teacher will provide a final count, payment, and the **Required Teacher Admission Sheet** (page 2).
- ☐ Once checked in, **chaperones** may lead their student group into the Museum. Remind chaperones that **they must remain with their student group at all times**, and they should **arrive at least 15 minutes early to each ticketed venue, show or docent tour.**

Safety Tip: Please bring student medical forms and all necessary medications to ensure a safe and enjoyable field trip!



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Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I pay for my field trip?

Field Trips may be paid for in advance by calling **(713) 639-4629 (Press 1 for tickets, then press 2 for all other tickets and information)**, by mailing a check, or on the day of the trip. If you call in advance to make payment, make sure to have your 7-digit confirmation number available – it is listed on the top right of your invoice. If you choose to pay on the day of the trip, the Museum will accept school district checks, credit cards, or cash (large bills only). A purchase order (PO) will **not** be accepted. Field Trips must be paid for in one transaction. All students and chaperones on the reservation should give their payment to one person who will present the money at the box office.

***If you pay with a school check, please make sure to write your 7-digit confirmation number on the check.**

Please mail checks to:

The Houston Museum of Natural Science
ATTN: School Services
5555 Hermann Park Dr.
Houston, TX 77030-1718

2. What if I have fewer than 10 students?

Groups of fewer than 10 students may still book a field trip; however, they will be charged for 10 students plus any chaperones if they wish to receive the field trip rate. Our representatives are available to help determine the most cost-efficient method for your group to visit the Museum.

For a confirmed field trip, the person who booked the trip should email reservations@hmns.org or call **(713) 639-4659** at any time prior to the day of arrival to add or subtract people from the reservation. Groups that fall below 10 students will be charged for 10 students plus chaperones in order to receive the field trip rate.

3. How many chaperones do I need?

We require **1 chaperone for every 10 students** (groups should not exceed 10 students) and this must be reflected on your invoice. Chaperones must remain with their students at **all times**. Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and must wear their chaperone sticker. All teachers and chaperones included in the official count will pay the field trip rate; those not included in the chaperone count will need to purchase their own tickets at the full rate, if available, upon arrival.

4. We would like our chaperones to pay for their tickets themselves. Can they pay for themselves?

You must have the minimum number of chaperones on your reservation (1 per every 10 students). We highly recommend including ALL chaperones on your field trip reservation, and coordinating payment prior to your arrival. This will ensure that they receive the field trip rate, and that you have chaperones for all of the bookings on your reservation.

If you have additional chaperones that are not included in your reservation, they will need to purchase their tickets ahead of time. Please note that they will **NOT** receive the field trip rate, and you must inform all chaperones of your venue and entry times for your reservation. For student safety, the Museum is not allowed to share that information. We cannot guarantee availability for the same tickets on your booking. If you change your booking, you will need to inform chaperones of the change in schedule. For all of these reasons, we highly recommend including ALL chaperones on your field trip reservation.

Please reach out to reservations@hmns.org for more information.

5. What do we do if the student number changes?

Before the trip, reservation numbers can be updated by emailing reservations@hmns.org. On the day of the trip, the final count of students, parents, teachers, and chaperones must be written on the **Required Teacher Admission Sheet** found on page 2.



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6. Can I change my reservation?

Adding or removing venues from a reservation requires a 24-hour notice, if available. After tickets have been printed, the reservation may not be changed.

7. Do you have curriculum for the venues?

The Museum offers customized TEKS-based curriculum, available at hmns.org/curriculum to accompany your field trip. These free units are designed to make the field trip experience educationally sound and fun and include a TEKS-aligned knowledge hunt and extension activities for grades K-8. High school curriculum is available, with a two-week notice, upon request. For questions, email educationquestions@hmns.org.

8. The Museum is so large. How can I focus my trip so my students get the most out of it?

Our Field Trip packages, available at hmns.org/ftpackages, allow teachers to theme their field trips based on a specific topic of their choice. Available on a first come first served basis, these packages help teachers align their trips to their curriculum goals.

9. Do you offer private restroom facilities for School Groups?

Unfortunately, we do not offer private facilities for school groups. The Houston Museum of Natural Science is a public institution and restrooms, exhibits and other facilities are not private to schools.

10. Can we see special/traveling exhibitions?

Absolutely! Visit our Exhibitions page at hmns.org/exhibits for more information about our current exhibits.

11. Are guided tours available?

Yes! The Museum offers Docent tours.

Docents are available to lead tours throughout the Museum. They are great for larger school groups and accommodate up to 10 people (including chaperones) per docent. Tours are approximately 30-45 minutes long. **A two-week notice is required. Cost: \$15 per docent. Docents are available between 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

12. Are there any hands-on programs for students?

Explore science, nature, and history in our interactive science labs which feature specimens, artifacts, and laboratory equipment.

Each lab lasts one hour and accommodates up to 25 students. If your group is interested in scheduling a lab, please visit hmns.org/booklab or contact reservations@hmns.org.

13. Are lunches available to purchase for school groups?

Yes, although the dining option located in the Museum is not directly affiliated with us, you may pre-order lunches from the Elements Grill by emailing your [order form](#) (select School Group Menu) to dining.hmns@gmail.com or by calling (713) 639-4699 to place your order.

14. Where do we eat lunch?

Lunches and coolers must remain on the school bus during the Field Trip. School groups may eat **either** on the bus, the hill between the Museum and Miller Outdoor Theater, or in Hermann Park. **School groups may not eat lunch at McGovern Centennial Gardens.** Classrooms for lunch space are available for a fee – space is subject to availability.

15. Do you offer any accommodations for chaperones and/or special needs students?

Yes! Please inform HMNS staff prior to your trip of any special requirements i.e. wheelchairs, private areas for medication administration, breastfeeding, etc. We will do our best to accommodate you. Also, visit hmns.org/accessibility for Sensory Guides and Visual Vocabulary Cards.

Have a question the FAQs don't answer? Contact us at reservations@hmns.org.



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Chaperone Schedule Template

CHAPERONE NAME: _____

STUDENT COUNT: _____

The Museum's Permanent Exhibit Halls include the following: Isaac Arnold Space Hall, The World Around Us, Vintage Texas Wildlife Dioramas, Matter & Motion, Alfred C. Glassell, Jr. Hall, Morian Hall of Paleontology, Foucault Pendulum, Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals, Farish Hall of Texas Wildlife, Fabergé, Strake Hall of Malacology, Frensley/Graham Hall of African Wildlife, Hamman Hall of Coastal Ecology, Morian Cabinet of Curiosities, McGovern Hall of the Americas, Hall of Ancient Egypt and the Wiess Energy Hall.

Your group's reservation must include tickets to these venues in order to visit them today. If you are scheduled to visit one or more of these venues, the time of your visit will be listed below.

Location		Time
ADDITIONAL VENUES <i>For Planetarium & Giant Screen tickets, arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled ticket time.</i>		
Planetarium	1st floor Grand Hall	
Giant Screen Theater		

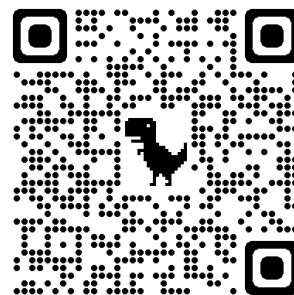
BUTTERFLY CENTER & SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS <i>Butterfly Center and Special Exhibit tickets are timed tickets. These venues must be entered at the time listed.</i>		
Butterfly Center	1st floor Grand Hall	
Extreme Animals	Lower Level	
King Tut's Tomb	3rd Floor	
Dead Sea Scrolls	3rd Floor	

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS		
Tour	Meet at the entrance of the following exhibit: _____	
Lab Class	Lower Level Classroom assignments will be listed on the TVs outside of the Education Office on the Lower Level.	
Expedition Center	Lower Level located near Space Hall	

Chaperone Information:

- A chaperone is required for every 10 students.
- Students of all ages are **required** to stay with their chaperone at all times.
- Basic Rules for your students (all rules are listed in the Museum Etiquette Guidelines):
 - Food, drinks, and chewing gum are not allowed in the halls.
 - Be respectful of Museum Staff, other school groups, and visitors to the Museum
 - Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
 - Students are not permitted to climb onto exhibits nor run or jump in the halls.
 - Keep a safe distance from objects, walls, cases, artifacts, and photographs.
 - Cell phones must be silenced while in the halls and theatres
 - When visiting the Morian Overlook, please do not allow students to drop objects over the balcony into the Morian Hall of Paleontology.
 - Please refrain from blocking exit and/or entryways throughout the Museum.
 - While viewing exhibits, please allow space for other patrons to safely pass.

Museum Map:



You can find a Museum map at hmns.org/visitormap or use the QR code above.



HOUSTON MUSEUM *of* NATURAL SCIENCE

2026-2027 LUNCH POLICY

The Museum requires *at least* one chaperone to accompany every group of ten students. Chaperones will be responsible for carrying lunches belonging to their group throughout their visit. Students are not permitted to carry lunches. If chaperones are spotted with these bags open and lunches out within any ticketed venue, they will be asked to leave.

If lunches are placed in non-sealable containers, there will be an area to store lunches available on a first-come, first-served basis. The designated area is **extremely limited**, and getting a spot is not guaranteed, so please plan ahead. Non-sealable containers, including boxes and baskets, as well as coolers, should be clearly labeled with the school's information and will be placed with the lunch area until you retrieve them.

Due to the high volume of field trips between March 5th and May 28th, we strongly recommend having chaperones carry the lunches for their group in sealed bags (ex: a backpack or zippered tote).

*****HMNS will not be responsible for misplaced or lost lunches.*****

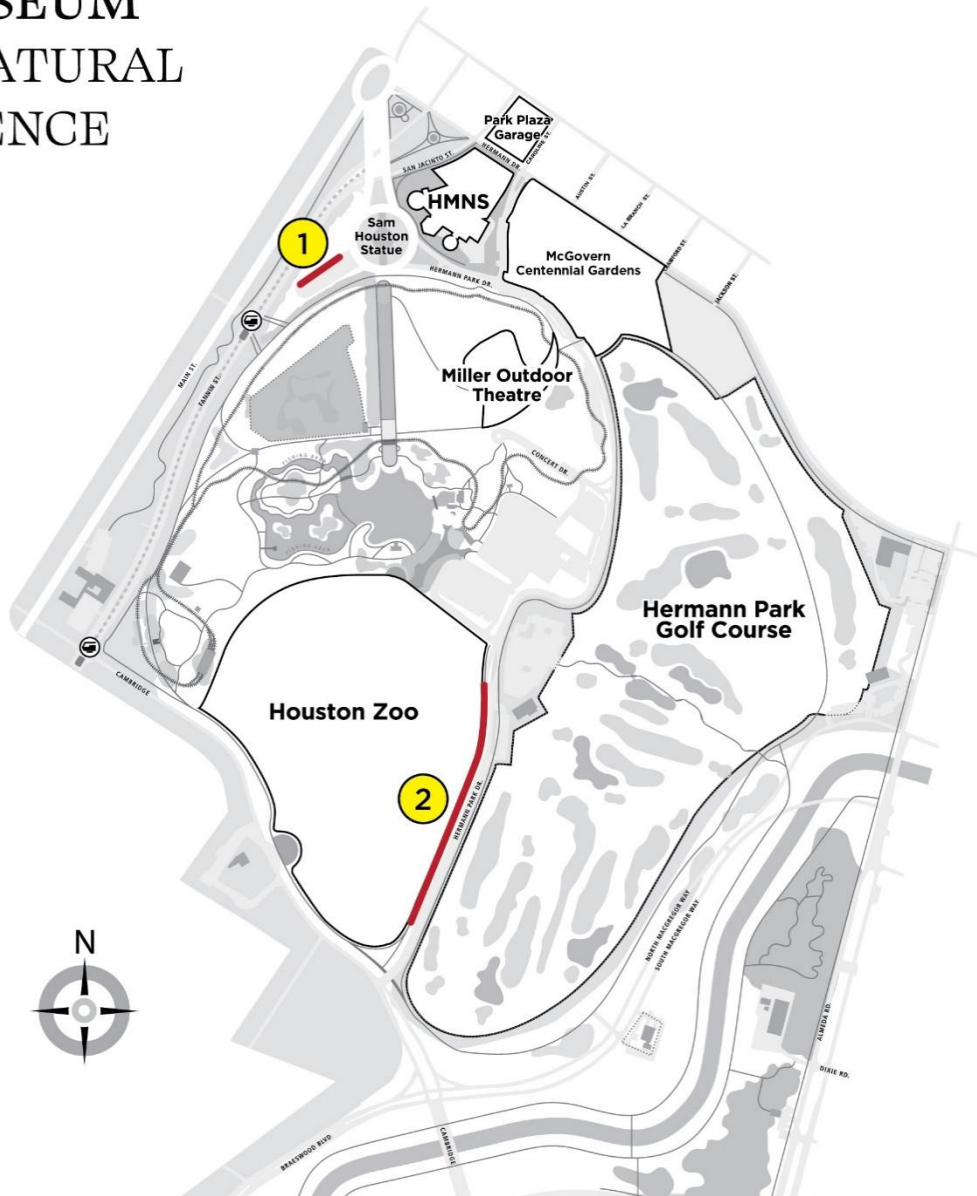
Any lunches remaining will be disposed of at close of business.

While we do have a space set aside to store lunches, this space is very small. Therefore, we respectfully ask that any **chaperones that are driving** meet with the school and store lunches in their vehicles to make them more easily accessible. Chaperones who park in our museum garage will receive a discounted rate.

***We strongly encourage schools to keep lunches on the bus if possible, as we cannot guarantee lunch storage availability on-site. Please note that space for lunch storage may occasionally be occupied for special exhibitions and may not be available during your visit. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact our main line at 713-639-4629**

Thank you!

HMNS Youth Education Staff



Bus Parking Areas (as directed): **

- 1 Sam Houston Parking Lot - 9 spaces designated "Bus Parking Only"
Parking in regular spaces not allowed. ***
- 2 Bus Parallel Parking along Golf Course Drive where designated.

* Parking areas subject to change as needed.

** Follow directions of HMNS Security and Park Rangers to designated areas.

*** **Parking in non-designated areas without directions from staff may result in parking citations issued to violators.**

Personal vehicles can be parked in the Museum's Parking garage. Chaperones parking in the Museum Garage should inform the box office attendant they are with a school for a reduced rate.



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HMNS Representative

During the school year, email is the best way to reach your Field Trip Representative. The next time you are ready to plan a Field Trip, they will be able to help you plan an itinerary that is ideal for your students! If your district is not listed below, feel free to contact us at reservations@hmns.org for more information.

Shannon Webster shannon.webster@hmns.org	Cathy Walton cwalton@hmns.org
Alief ISD Alvin ISD Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Fort Bend ISD Katy ISD Klein ISD Lamar CISD Magnolia ISD Royal ISD Spring ISD Spring Branch ISD Stafford ISD Tomball ISD Waller ISD Charter Schools Daycares Private Schools	Aldine ISD Angleton ISD Brazosport ISD Channelview ISD Clear Creek ISD Cleveland ISD Conroe ISD Crosby ISD Deer Park ISD Dickinson ISD Galena Park ISD Goose Creek ISD Houston ISD Huffman ISD Humble ISD La Porte ISD New Caney ISD Pasadena ISD Pearland ISD Charter Schools Daycares Private Schools