



MYSTIC AQUARIUM

Summer Camp Parent Handbook 2016



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to summer camp at Mystic Aquarium! This handbook contains information which will be helpful as you and your camper prepare for camp. Experiences and activities have been developed for your camper that will highlight the marine environment and its many inhabitants, ocean conservation and the exploration of local habitats. Our days will be filled with Mystic Aquarium exploration, animal interactions*, staff interactions, hands-on activities and field trips.

*Campers will not interact with marine mammals.

The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through conservation, education, and research.

The mission of the Mystic Aquarium Summer Camp program is to educate and motivate campers of all ages to care for and protect our ocean planet.

I am sure your camper will have a wonderful experience this summer while attending their Mystic Aquarium Summer Camp. I look forward to seeing them all enjoying what we have to offer them this season.

Becky Hirsh
Camp Director

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP

HOW DO I REGISTER MY CHILD?

Registration is accomplished on our website.

Please visit our website at www.mysticaquarium.org/fun-and-learning/camps

If you do not have computer access, or need assistance, registration can be done on the phone with our reservations department. 860-572-5955 ext 520

Once you have registered your camper, you will also need to complete the required camp paperwork and return it to the camp director at least 1 week prior to the first day of camp.

WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO TURN IN MY PAPERWORK EARLY?

If paperwork is not received in advance, or if you are providing medication, you must visit the table located near the membership booth on Day 1 of your camp week prior to signing in your camper. You need to be aware that campers will not be allowed to participate in camp unless all of their paperwork is complete. So if you happen to be missing a form, your camper will miss part, or all of their first day of camp as we work to get the necessary paperwork. To avoid this issue, please turn your forms in early. Thank you for your assistance with this.

REQUIRED CAMP PAPERWORK:

The following paperwork is required in order for your child to attend camp. Paperwork must be returned to the camp director at least 1 week prior to the start of the camp week. This allows the camp director to make certain that the packet is complete.

2016 Camper Information	Contact and emergency information	Signature required
Discipline Policy	Describes our discipline policy	Signature required
Medical Paperwork	Health history and vaccination record – school health record completed within 3 years is accepted.	Dr. signature required
Admin. Of Medication	Permission for aquarium staff to administer medication.	Dr. signature required
Release of Liability	Liability release form	Signature required
Model Release	Optional – Advertising and publicity consent and release form	Signature required
Lunch Order	Optional – You can order lunch up to 1 week in advance	Payment required
Itinerary	Listing of field trip, daily topics, special visits	Signature required

*ITINERARY: You will receive an itinerary separately, via email for all of our full day camps. This itinerary must be signed and returned 1 week prior to the start of the camp session. The itinerary provides you with an idea of what each day is about, if we have a special activity planned, what your child may need for that day and if they have a field trip. If there is a field trip, it will indicate when the bus will leave the aquarium and when the bus will leave the field trip site. This signed itinerary acts as a permission slip to attend these field trips. *** Please note, activities or trips may change due to unforeseen circumstances. If this occurs, the parents will be notified by the camp director.

Return all camp paperwork to:

Mystic Aquarium, ATTN: Becky Hirsh, 55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355

Email: bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org FAX: 860.572.5969

As a reminder:

On the first day of each camp week there will be a table set up near the membership booth for anyone who has not turned in the paperwork for that week, or to have medication checked in. We make every effort to work quickly, but there is usually a line and a wait at this table. Please avoid this wait by filing your paperwork in advance with the camp director as requested. Your camper will not be signed in until all of their paperwork is complete.

PAYMENT RECEIPT & TAX ID

RECEIPT OF PAYMENT FOR SUMMER CAMP AND FEDERAL TAX ID:

Many parents use their flexible spending account to pay for summer camp. The confirmation letter, which you will receive when you register your child is your receipt of payment for the camp session. Please inform the camp director when you bring your child to camp if you no longer have this receipt and she will arrange for you to receive one.

The federal tax ID for Mystic Aquarium is: 06-1480300

CANCELLATION POLICY

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR SUMMER CAMP:

Please contact reservations directly at 860-572-5955 ext 520 in regards to a cancellation.

Please do this as soon as you know you need to cancel.

Mystic Aquarium understands that sometimes cancellations may be necessary. Our cancellation policy is as follows:

30 days or more from the start of the camp week - 100% refund

29 - 8 days from the start of the camp week - 80% refund

7 days or less from the start of the camp week - No refund will be provided

ILLNESS POLICY

Call the camp director at 860-625-2104 prior to 7:30am of the absence.

We do request that you keep your camper home if they are ill.

When a doctor's note is presented the following day, we will provide a 100% refund for the camp day missed.

If you do not have a doctor's note we will refund 80% of the daily fee minus trip/supply fees.

CAMPER INJURY and ILLNESS DURING CAMP

IN THE CASE OF INJURY TO YOUR CHILD OR ILLNESS WHILE CAMP IS IN SESSION:

We will contact parents for every injury/illness, so please do not worry if we call.

In the event your camper is injured, or becomes ill while attending camp, the camp director will contact the emergency phone number which has been provided for that day on the morning sign in sheet. The camp director will explain the injury/illness, and how it was treated to the guardian. It will be determined at that time if the camper will stay with the camp, or be picked up.

At pick up time, camp staff will discuss with the guardian the injury/illness and verify the treatment.

CAMP SESSIONS BY WEEK

Dates of Camp	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-8	Ages 9-12	Ages 13-16	PAPERWORK IS DUE BY
June 20-24	Sea Stars “Fishing Camp”	Animal Adventure	Mystic River Adventure		June 13, 2016
June 27 – July 1	Sea Stars “The Ocean Rocks”	Sea Turtles 101	Aquarium Experience		June 20, 2016
July 4 – 8	Sea Stars “Marine Mammal Trainer for a Week”	Dino Sea	Aquarium Experience		June 27, 2016
July 11-15	Sea Stars “Go Wild! Explore Rainforests, Birds, Reptiles & Amphibians”	Animal Adventure	Girls in Science	Aqua Camp July 11-14 Overnight on 7/13	July 4, 2016
July 18-22	Sea Stars “Marine Mammal Trainer for a Week”	Dino Sea	Aquarium Experience	Environmental Conservation Camp	July 11, 2016
July 25- 29	Sea Stars “Fishing Camp”	Animal Adventure	Mystic River Adventure Marine Animals and Their Environment		July 18, 2016
August 1-5	Sea Stars “The Ocean Rocks”	Sea Turtles 101	Girls in Science	Aqua Camp August 1-4 Overnight on 8/3	July 25, 2016
August 8-12	Sea Stars “Marine Mammal Trainer for a Week”	Dino Sea	Mystic River Adventure	A Week in the Life of a Marine Biologist	August 1, 2016
August 15-19	Sea Stars “Go Wild! Explore Rainforests, Birds, Reptiles & Amphibians”	Animal Adventure	Aquarium Experience		August 8, 2016

CONTACT INFORMATION

MYSTIC AQUARIUM MAIN LINE NUMBER: 860-572-5955

Call the Mystic Aquarium main line and then dial the appropriate extension. You may also email the individual directly.

Name	Title	Phone Number or Extension	Email and other information
Aquarium Main Line		860-572-5955	
Reservations	Reservation issues and questions	Ext 520	reservations@mysticaquarium.org
Camp Cell Phone	Available after June 18, 2016 7:00am-5:30pm	860-625-2104	
Becky Hirsh	Camp Director	Ext 158	bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org
Kelly Matis	Alternate Camp Director	Ext 320	kmatis@mysticaquarium.org
MaryEllen Mateleska	Camp Nurse	Ext 156	mmateleska@mysticaquarium.org

Please contact the Camp Director first for any camp business. When in doubt, contact us if:

1. You are running late or there is traffic.
2. You unexpectedly need to pick your child up early.
3. Your child is not feeling well and will not attend camp that day.
4. You have a question about the activities.
5. Another person will be picking up your camper – they will need to have ID.
6. You have a complaint or suggestion.
7. Any other reason – when in doubt – PLEASE CALL.

Sea Star Campers Bathroom Requirements

As a requirement for enrollment all children need to be fully toilet trained. Sea Stars Camp is not licensed for under three endorsement from the State of CT (diaper changing) and the requirement for children to enter the program is that they need to be able to use the bathroom independently. Additionally due to the uniqueness of the environment, the amount of time that is spent visiting exhibits and partaking in special events, being able to use the bathroom independently is imperative and essential to be able to take full advantage of everything the aquarium has to offer. This means that a child:

1. Knows when they have to go to the bathroom
2. Can unfasten, pull down, pull up and fasten underwear and pants
3. Is able to get on the toilet, wipe themselves, flush the toilet and wash their hands.

Diapers or pull ups are not permitted. Staff will monitor and assist children in the bathroom when needed and the staff is fully aware that children are going to have accidents or might need assistance from time to time. If a child does have an accident, staff will handle it very discreetly. Children are always treated with the utmost respect.

WHAT WILL MY CAMPER NEED TO BRING?

Sea Star Campers (half day):

Your camper will need “play” clothes that can get dirty and closed toe shoes or sneakers as we visit many areas in the aquarium which can be wet and slippery.

Each child should bring a “child size” backpack or bag which they can store in their cubby.

Please send your child with a change of clothes; shirt, pants, socks and underwear in case their clothes become dirty or wet at camp.

Please dress your child in clothing that is easy for them to manage while using the bathroom.

Due to limited space in the classroom and cubbies we ask that you do not send any toys, stuffed animals or electronic devices to camp with your child.

Snack is provided by Mystic Aquarium, but if you prefer, you are more than welcome to send a snack and drink to camp with your child. Please be advised that there is no refrigeration available to store perishable snack items.

Due to serious allergies there are no peanut, nut products or items containing peanuts or nuts allowed at Sea Stars camp.

Full Day Campers:

Please refer to your camp itinerary for specifics about special items that your camper might need each day. Your camper will need appropriate outer clothing, closed toe shoes which can get wet, a change of clothing in case your camper may need them, a water bottle, sunscreen and a lunch (unless ordered ahead of time) every day. Campers will be given a camp hat on their first day of camp. The hat will remain at the aquarium until the last day when it is sent home with the camper.

Please do not send your camper with electronics, cell phones, personal sports equipment or toys to camp. If they must bring any of these items, they will be requested to keep them in their bags. Mystic Aquarium summer camp has a zero tolerance policy in regards to weapons. Absolutely no weapons of any type will be allowed.

SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT PROCEDURES AND LOCATIONS

SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT INFORMATION:

Please refer to your confirmation email to verify your camp dates.

- In the event your child is ill and will miss camp:
Please call the camp cell phone at 860-625-2104 prior to 7:30am and leave a message. After check in is complete, a camp staff member will call the parents of any camper not in attendance to verify that they are not attending that day, unless a message has been left on this phone.
- At drop off you will be asked to indicate a phone number which is best to reach you at for that day, and who we should expect to sign out your camper.
- For an adult picking up your camper who is not on the approved list, a note stating the date, unlisted adult's name, camper's name and your signature must be given to the Camp Director at drop off.
- Please remember that at sign out time, an adult will need to show identification and sign your camper out from camp each day. We will not allow any adult other than those listed on the sign out sheet to pick up your child. If there is an emergency and an adult not on the pickup list is sent to pick up a camper, the camp director will call the parents to verify permission.
- We will not allow a minor to pick up your child.
- Campers cannot drive themselves into camp each day. They must be signed in and out by a guardian.
- **Please park in our parking lot to pick up your camper. You cannot park directly in front of the aquarium at that time as it is an active fire lane.**

For specific information about times and locations of each camp, see below:

AGES 3-5

Sea Stars Camp:

Monday through Friday 8:30am-11:30am

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, nearest the membership booth, between 8:20-8:30am. You may park directly in front of the aquarium at this time. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, nearest the membership booth, at 11:30am. Campers will wait inside the main gate until they have been signed out. Once you have signed your camper out, we will allow the child to exit the facility. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

AGES 6-8

Animal Adventure, Sea Turtles 101, Dino –Sea:

Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:00pm

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, near the center window, between 8:20-8:30am. You may park directly in front of the aquarium at this time. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, near the center window, at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

Extended Day pick-up: For those campers registered for extended day, pick up will happen in front of the Aquarium admission gates, near the membership booth, at 5:00pm. If you are picking up prior to 5:00pm please notify the camp director in advance by calling 860-625-2104 so that we can have your camper ready for you.

AGES 9-12

Aquarium Experience and Girls In Science:

Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:00pm

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, near the right hand side, between 8:20- 8:30am. You may park directly in front of the aquarium at this time. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, near the right hand side, at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

Extended Day pick-up: For those campers registered for extended day, pick up will happen in front of the Aquarium admission gates, near the membership booth, at 5:00pm. If you are picking up prior to 5:00pm please notify the camp director in advance by calling 860-625-2104 so that we can have your camper ready for you.

AGES 9-12

Mystic River Adventure:

Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:00pm

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, near the right hand side, between 8:20- 8:30am. You may park directly in front of the aquarium at this time. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur at Mystic Seaport – Main Entrance near the gift shop admission gates (Rt 27, Mystic, CT) at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time. You will need to park in the parking lot across the street.

If you have a child in this camp and one at the aquarium, please pick up at the Seaport first, then come to the aquarium. We will wait for you, do not worry.

AGES 9-12

Marine Animals and their Environment

Monday through Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

Monday & Tuesday:

Camp admission will occur at the Project Oceanology building (Avery Point Campus, 1084 Shennecossett Rd, Groton, CT) between 8:50- 9:00am. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur at the Project Oceanology building (Avery Point Campus, 1084 Shennecossett Rd, Groton, CT) at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

Wednesday – Friday:

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, on the far right hand side, between 8:50- 9:00am. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, on the far right hand side, at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

AGES 13-16

Aqua Camp :

Monday and Tuesday, 8:30am -4:00pm, Wednesday 8:30am (overnight)-Thursday 8:30am

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, under the awning, to the right of the doors, between 8:20 - 8:30am. You may park directly in front of the aquarium at this time. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, under the awning to the right of the doors at 4:00pm on Monday and Tuesday, and at 8:30am on Thursday following the overnight. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

AGES 13-16

A Week in the Life of a Marine Biologist:

Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:00pm

Camp admission will occur at New England Science and Sailing (NESS) located at 70 Water Street, Stonington, CT between 8:20-8:30am. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, under the awning to the right of the doors, at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

AGES 13-16

Environmental Conservation Camp

Monday through Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

Monday - Wednesday:

Camp admission will occur at the Project Oceanology building (Avery Point Campus, 1084 Shennecossett Rd, Groton, CT) between 8:50- 9:00am Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur at the Project Oceanology building (Avery Point Campus, 1084 Shennecossett Rd, Groton, CT) at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

Thursday & Friday:

Camp admission will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, on the far right hand side, between 8:50- 9:00am. Your camp instructor will greet you with the sign in sheet. You must sign your camper in each day at this time.

Camp pick up will occur in front of the Mystic Aquarium admission gates, on the far right hand side, at 4:00pm. You must sign your camper out each day at this time.

EMERGENCY PICK UP DUE TO AQUARIUM EVACUATION

In the event that the camp programs must evacuate the aquarium facility, the instructors will bring the campers to the *Hilton Mystic* located across the road from the aquarium. Parents will then be called to pick up their campers. We will contact the number provided to us during the morning drop off first.

Mystic Hilton address for your GPS is: 20 Coogan Blvd, Mystic, CT 06355

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Children attending Summer Camp at the Mystic Aquarium are expected to:

- Be responsible for their actions
- Respect each other and the environment
- Base all interactions on honesty
- Care for themselves and others around them
- Make appropriate choices for themselves

Behavior which is considered to be unacceptable includes the following:

- Endangering the health and/or safety of a child, staff member, volunteer or animal
- Entering a building, enclosure, or fenced area without permission
- Stealing or damaging property
- Leaving the program area without permission
- Continuing to disrupt the program in any way
- The use of profanity, vulgar or obscene words and gestures
- Possession of a weapon
- Inappropriate touching of themselves or another child
- Bullying and mocking
- Any action which may make another camper uncomfortable

The following steps will be taken in the event that an unacceptable choice has been made:

1. Staff will give a verbal reminder and redirect the camper to a more appropriate behavior.
2. If it continues, staff will have a private discussion with the camper about the behavior. Staff will document the situation and include the problem, possible cause of the problem, and any corrective measures taken. Camp Director will be notified.
3. If behavior persists, the guardian will be notified at the end of the day, or sooner if necessary. Staff and Camp Director will ask for input from the guardian in regards to the behavior. Staff and Camp Director will check back with the guardian at the end of the following day to report on behavior.
4. If a problem persists, or becomes excessive, and the child continues to disrupt the camp program, the Camp Director reserves the right to suspend the child from the program for a period of time which will depend upon the severity of the issue.
5. If a child's behavior threatens the immediate safety of the individual, other children, or staff, the guardian will be contacted and expected to pick up the child immediately.
6. In extreme situations, expulsion from the program will be considered.

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION and INFORMATION:

- All fees for field trips are included in your camp fee.
- We do NOT visit the gift shops.
- All field trips will run on their scheduled date unless the weather is determined to be hazardous.
- Mystic Aquarium reserves the right to change a field trip destination as needed. Parents will be notified.
- We utilize a local school bus company to transport our campers on approved field trips with the exception of *Mystic River Adventure* and *A Week in the Life of a Marine Biologist*. These exceptions will utilize the local SEAT bus with Aquarium staff.
- We will review the bus rules listed below with our campers before each trip. I am asking you to also go over these rules with your child.
- At no time will the Mystic Aquarium transport your child in their private or company vehicle.

Bus Safety Rules

Walk quietly to the bus in a line. Absolutely no running.

Do not board the bus until you are told to do so.

Board one child at a time.

Two children to a seat, please, no more. The bus will not be loaded with more passengers than it is rated for.

Always sit on your seat, facing forward, feet on the floor when the bus is moving.

If a seat belt is available, buckle it.

No standing up on the bus.

Please use quiet voices so as not to distract the driver.

No hands or objects outside the window.

When riding a SEAT bus, please remember that this is public transportation.

Make sure you have all your belongings when you exit the bus.

Staff will open windows as needed.

Please note where emergency exits are – windows and doors and how to use them.

In the event of an emergency, remain calm and look to your instructor for guidance.

When getting off the bus, an adult and a volunteer will leave first then, 1 child will exit at a time. Campers wait on the sidewalk, away from the bus.

The final adult will not leave the bus until a headcount has been done and all children are accounted for.

All camp staff will ride the bus with the campers. The red cross trained camp staff are designated as the first aiders in the event of an emergency while on the bus.

Proposed Field Trips by Camp

Camp	Proposed Field Trip and Distance from Aquarium	Proposed Field Trip and Distance from Aquarium
Animal Adventure	Bluff Point State Park - 7 miles	Mystic Seaport – 1.5 miles
Sea Turtles 101	Bluff Point State Park - 7 miles	Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center – 1.5 miles
Dino-Sea	Bluff Point State Park - 7 miles	Peabody Museum – 55 miles
Aquarium Experience	Barn Island - 6 miles	Project Oceanology – 10 miles
Aquarium Mysteries	Bluff Point State Park - 7 miles	Argia Cruise – 2 miles
Aqua Camp	Barn Island - 6 miles	Argia Cruise – 2 miles