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Mystic Aquarium Mission
To inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through conservation, education, and research.

Sea School Mission and Philosophy
To inspire preschool-aged children to care about our ocean planet and develop a love of learning through hands-on, nature-based play experiences. Our classes revolve around the concept of learning through play, observations, and scientific inquiry. We strive to ignite a love of learning in all children while evoking curiosity and wonder about the natural world and sea life. Our curriculum is ingrained with values which will empower individuals to have a voice so they can advocate for themselves and others. Our goal is to help create memories, knowledge, and confidence that children will take with them long after they have graduated from our program.

Organizational Structure of Sea School
Kelly Matis, Vice President of Education & Conservation
Anne Marie Boroughs, Sea School Director
Zak Davis, Sea School Assistant Teacher
Mandy Castaldo, Early Childhood Educator

Important Contact Information
Mystic Aquarium
Sea School
55 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, CT 06355
860-572-5955 ext.0 (main reception desk)

Sea School Classroom at Milne Center
860-572-5955 ext.172
Fax: 860-572-5969
Cell: 860-625-2103
Sea School Staff and Licensing

The Sea School program is a licensed preschool under the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) # 16779 and complies with all state and local regulations. Staffing meets the criteria established by the State of Connecticut OEC, including current health records, complete background check which includes submitting fingerprints to the State of Connecticut Department of Health, clearance from the national child abuse registry through the Department of Children and Family Services, certified in First Aid and CPR, certified to administer medication to children, and annual professional development.

Sea School Director—Anne Marie Boroughs

Anne Marie was raised traveling the East Coast as a child of the U.S. Navy, but settled in Connecticut after high school. She graduated Cum Laude from The University of New Haven in 2006 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Art and a minor in Philosophy. She originally came to Mystic Aquarium in 2008 as one of the first Sea School Teachers. She then earned 15 Early Childhood Education credits and experience to obtain a Head Teacher Certificate for children ages birth to 5 years from the State of Connecticut OEC. Anne Marie has over 13 years of experience teaching young children and has held Head Teacher positions since 2011. She re-joined the Sea School Team as Lead Teacher in 2015 and obtained credentials to become Director in 2018. Anne Marie has taught in New London, New Haven, and Stonington at public and independent schools, including the Head Start
Extended Day Program. She has continually engaged in professional development, most recently working toward the CT Director’s Credential. She is trained in Conscious Discipline, Family Engagement, Teaching Resilience to Children Affected by Trauma and Childhood Adversity, Nature-Based Play, Math and Science in Nature, and current research of brain development in young children. At Sea School she led her team to achieve Top Honors of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ 2016 Education Award. During class, Anne Marie enjoys teaching the children love, empathy, and acceptance for self, others, and all living things. Outside of work, Anne Marie enjoys making music and spinning records with her son Harvey (Sea School and Head Start Alumnus), kick-boxing, caring for her succulents, bonsais and hermit crabs, SCUBA diving, snorkeling, and beach bummung.

**Sea School Assistant Teacher—Zak Davis**
Zak comes from a family who has spent generations as local Connecticut residents. He joined the Aquarium in 2012, working with Guest Services to run the frontline guest relations while training and educating new volunteers. He obtained a Bachelor's of English from Emmanuel College in Boston and has over 12 credits in Early Childhood Education. He dedicated several years to the study of education, music, and film & video production at the University of Rhode Island. He joined the Sea School Team in the fall of 2016 and spends his class-time reading as many books as possible to the children in between setting up discovery ramps, racing hot wheels, and building Legos. Zak is trained in Conscious Discipline, Lesson Planning, CT Early Learning and Development Standards, Family Engagement, and has recently earned a Head Teacher Certificate. He is trained to handle our reptiles at the Aquarium and enjoys taking the Sea Schoolers to meet all of our animal friends. In his free time, Zak enjoys reading, learning, making French-press coffee, catching Pokémon, and solving puzzles.

**Early Childhood Educator—Mandy Castaldo**
Miss Mandy grew up in Westchester County, NY. She spent her summers vacationing in Narragansett with family. After graduating high school, she and her family moved in Rhode Island full time. It was then that she attended the University of Rhode Island where she studied
Sociology and Human Development and Family Studies. She has worked in daycare and preschool centers as lead teacher in infant and toddler classrooms, as well as a float teacher for preschool age. Before coming to Sea School she spent two years as a Classroom Behavior Specialist for the Bradley School in New London. She spends her free time with her two daughters, ages 7 and 10. Whether it’s at cheerleading practice, gymnastics or hiking forest trails, they keep her very busy, and she wouldn’t have it any other way.

**Statement of Confidentiality**

Sea School staff members are required to practice the highest level of confidentiality in accordance with Mystic Aquarium policy. Staff is not permitted to share or discuss any confidential information about enrolled students and their families.

**Classroom Size and Ages We Serve**

Sea School is licensed to serve children ages 3 to 5 with a capacity of 20 children per class. Any child who has not turned 3 by the start of Sea School can still be enrolled in the program for a September start date, provided the child turns 3 on or before December 31st of that year.

**Admissions and Enrollment Procedures**

Students shall be admitted to Sea School without regard to race, creed, gender or national origin. The enrollment process begins in January/February for current students and their siblings. Once spaces are confirmed, enrollment will be opened to families on the waitlist, and then opened to the public. Registration is confirmed when a registration form and deposit are received. The deposit reserves the child’s space, is applied to the tuition, and is non-refundable.

**2019-2020 Session Fees and Payments**

Tuition is payable monthly, quarterly or in full. Families will be required to select a payment option at the time of registration.
Tuesday & Thursday         9:00am–1:00pm     Annual Tuition $3,000
Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:00am–1:00pm     Annual Tuition $4,500
Monday-Friday              9:00am–1:00pm     Annual Tuition $7,500

**Quarterly payments:**
All payments are due two weeks prior to the start of the upcoming quarter. Quarterly payment dates are noted on the annual Sea School calendar. If a student’s tuition has not been paid by the start of the quarter, that student may not attend school and another child may be admitted to fill the vacancy.
Payments are handled by the Mystic Aquarium reservations department: 860-572-5955 ext.520 or reservations@mysticaquarium.org.

**Withdrawals, Taking Time Off & Cancellation Policy**
Tuition is based on enrollment not attendance. Refunds will not be provided for any missed classes. Extreme circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and accommodated at the discretion of the Director.
If you withdraw your child from Sea School for any reason, one month’s notice is required and any tuition due during this time will still be charged. Families that have chosen to participate in the quarterly payment plan will not receive a refund after the quarter has started. If you elect to take time off from Sea School and discontinue making payments, then your child’s slot will be filled from the waiting list.

**Additional Fees and Aquarium Access**
All students must be covered under a Mystic Aquarium membership, as of their first day of school. This membership will allow your family access to the Aquarium outside of regular school hours.

Aquarium memberships must be purchased or renewed through the membership department. Please contact 860-572-5955 ext. 233 or visit http://www.mysticaquarium.org/get-involved/membership for pricing, or to purchase or renew a membership.
Accessing the Sea School Classroom

In order to give caregivers access to the classroom for drop off, pick-up and special Sea School events, all primary caregivers will need to arrive at designated times to enter at the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center (Milne Center). If arriving late, caregivers must use the Sea School Cell phone number 860-625-2103 to call or text upon arrival. All Authorized Pickup Persons will need to check in with a valid photo ID (Driver’s license, State ID, Passport).

Drop-Off Routine

The Sea School teachers will open the Milne Center door to the lobby greeting caregivers and children approximately 5 minutes prior to the starting time of class. The adult who drops off a child for school will be required to sign the child in, enter the time the child was dropped off and provide a phone number for the day on the daily sign in/out sheet. Children are welcomed inside to wait on a walking rope until everyone is signed in and accounted for. Once all children are signed in and a head count is completed, we’re ready to start our adventure at the Aquarium. Caregivers are welcome to accompany their child inside for drop off, but it is strongly advised to keep goodbyes brief.

We try to proceed with our day by 9:05am so if a student arrives late, caregivers are asked to call/text the Sea School cell phone 860-625-2103. Calling/texting ahead of time gives staff the opportunity to prepare for meeting caregivers at Milne Center. The buzzer is not for regular use by Sea School Families. We must use our cell phone or class phone and the buzzer should only be used if you don’t have a phone or you can’t get ahold of us.

Pick-Up Routine

Pick-up time is a very exciting time for both children and caregivers. Children are dismissed to caregivers from the classroom 1:00pm. A staff member will open Milne Center approximately 5 minutes before end of class. The designated pick-up person is required to sign his or her child out each day and show a photo ID, until the staff becomes familiar with all the new faces. Please do not block hallways or elevator.
Any concerns you would like to discuss about your child should be scheduled outside of classroom time. This is to ensure privacy for you and your child.

We will open the Milne Center approximately 12:55pm and expect all to be picked up by 1:15pm. Please call/text Sea School cell phone 860-625-2103 if running late otherwise we will defer to late pick up policy after 1:15pm.

Alternate Pick-Up Person

When an alternate caregiver will be picking up a child, please notify the staff as soon as possible. If the person picking up a child is not designated on the enrollment form, a parent or legal guardian must alert the teachers in writing. When arriving at the classroom, the alternate pick-up person will be asked to show a photo ID to the teacher before a child will be released.

*Sea School staff will not release a child to any person who is not designated as an alternate pick-up person and/or who has not been identified by the parent prior to pick-up as being authorized to pick up a child for that day.*

Late Pick-Up Procedure

Caregivers are expected to call or text the school if there is the possibility of being late for pick up. Please contact the staff as soon as possible by calling the classroom at 860-572-5955 ext. 172 or the Sea School cell phone at 860-625-2103. If a staff member cannot be reached, please contact use the buzzer to get in contact with a member of the Education Department.

If a student is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session and staff members have not received a phone call from the primary caregiver or designated pick-up for the day, the following protocol will be followed:

- Two staff members will remain with the child at all times.
- Staff members will attempt to contact caregivers at all available phones numbers.
- If after 20 minutes staff members are unable to contact the child’s caregivers, the Sea School Director will be notified and the emergency contact and release persons will be contacted.
• If emergency contacts/alternate pick-ups cannot be reached after 60 minutes, staff will contact the Stonington Police Department.

The Sea School Learning Environment

The Sea School program has a one-of-a-kind setting which provides preschoolers with the unique opportunity to learn and play while exploring the exciting world of marine life. We are able to visit behind-the-scenes areas, laboratories, exam rooms and exhibits. Special visitors, animal experts and trainers often visit us in the classroom for more in-depth, hands-on learning experiences. Whether inside or outside the classroom, the dynamic Sea School environment at Mystic Aquarium promotes self-discovery and imaginative play — all guided by teachers who inspire curiosity and creative thinking.

The Sea School curriculum is founded upon principles which encourage young children to explore, question and discover the world around them. Pre-school children develop and mature at very different rates, and their readiness for academic subjects vary based on their developmental stage as well as their unique learning style. Our program uses intentional teaching techniques that create individualized learning opportunities for each child. This play-based curriculum integrates all areas of learning including language and literacy, social-emotional, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), social studies, physical and cognitive development in a positive climate classroom. Our positive and conscious approach to discipline, classroom environment, and curriculum is designed to foster resiliency, confidence, and self-esteem in young children.

A Typical Day at Sea School

The Aquarium is a magical place filled with surprises around every corner. Children might see a penguin, watch belugas play, or even see a sea turtle swimming around on their way to the classroom. The routine and schedule is designed to incorporate learning opportunities in all areas of development. Our schedule and routine is predictable and consistent which makes children feel safe and comfortable, but still allows for the flexibility needed to take full advantage of the Aquarium — visiting exhibits, meeting an expert or trainer or seeing a show. Following is an example of a typical Sea School schedule for our four-hour sessions:
### Four-Hour Program Example Schedule (times include transitions): 9:00am - 1:00pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00–9:30am</td>
<td>Welcome, Greeting Time, Circle Time (Tomato Time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30am</td>
<td>Large and Small Group Activities, Music and Movement, Special Classroom Visitors, and Learning Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00am</td>
<td>Meal, Nutrition/Health Group Discussion, Read Aloud/Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am–12:30pm</td>
<td>Outdoor/Gross Motor, Exhibit Tour and Exploration (with a minimum of 60 minutes outdoor/gross motor physical activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30–1:00pm</td>
<td>Read Aloud/Literacy, Journals, Handwriting Without Tears, Home-to-School Connection and Good-Byes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conferences and Assessments

Sea School staff members observe a child’s progress daily. Types of documentation include work samples, photographs, videos and written notes. Activities and lessons are designed to facilitate the observation of a child’s progress in a natural setting. Conferences will be offered twice a year in December and March, as indicated in the Sea School calendar. Caregivers can request a meeting at any time.

### What to Bring to Sea School

Please send your child to school in “play” clothes that can get messy and closed toed shoes. Children can bring a “child-size” backpack or bag which they can store in their cubby. Children will have an additional drawer and shelf in their cubby for storing spare clothes and a pair of slippers or house shoes to wear in the classroom. Please insure your child has a full set of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, shoes and extra underwear) in the event that their clothes get soiled or wet at school.

*Teachers will assist children in changing clothes for a wet/BM accident to the best of our ability until a caregiver arrives. We will not change children out of wet/muddy clothes unless time permits.*
Meal-Time/Nutrition

Our 4-hour program includes meal-times. Please pack a healthy lunch with or without icepacks that does not require refrigeration or heating/cooking. Children can independently access their lunch when they are hungry and can eat as needed, providing they wash their hands and sit at a clean table. This aspect of our nutrition curriculum encourages children to know their body’s needs and avoids overeating and the development of poor nutritional habits. We will have small nutritional snacks available to supplement lunches. Water is always available throughout the day. Sea School has limited refrigeration available, so please keep this in mind when packing snack/lunch.

Sea School incorporates organically grown, healthy, and nutritious foods for supplemental snack as often as possible. We encourage families to do the same when providing lunches for their children. We align our nutrition curriculum to the NAP SACC program. NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care) is an evidence-based program for improving the health of young children through better nutrition and physical activity in early care and education programs. Planned nutrition education can include circle time lessons, story time, stations during center time, and gardening activities. In a healthy mealtime environment, children can choose what to eat from the foods offered and participate in group discussions about healthy choices. We encourage positive nutritional practices such as praising children for trying new foods, asking children about hunger/fullness before clearing plates, and avoiding the use of food as rewards. We also encourage families to participate in Home and Heritage activities by bringing in dishes from home and sharing their culture and home-life.

*You will be notified if your child’s class has a life-threatening food allergy. Otherwise there will be no prohibited foods.*

Personal Belongings

Sea School is not responsible for lost toys or items brought from home. Teachers will do their best to keep track of personal belongings; labelling your child’s things is encouraged. Art projects will be placed in the shelf at the top of the child’s cubby.
Family Involvement

We have an open door policy, meaning that caregivers can stop by the classroom and visit their child at any time. Our program provides ample opportunities for families to have a home-to-school connection and encourages the entire family to participate. Sea School Learning Activity Plans and class information is posted on the Communication Board in the classroom and on our classroom dojo app.

Toileting

All students should be potty-trained or at the end stages of potty-training in order to attend Sea School. The Sea School classroom is equipped with an age-appropriate bathroom facility designated just for students. Children have access to the bathroom at any time, and reminders will be given. When traveling to exhibits and areas outside the classroom, students will have access to the public bathrooms. Staff members will be present at all times while children are using a public bathroom. Sea School is not licensed for under-three endorsement (sections 19a-79-10) from the Office of Early Childhood which means that teachers are not permitted to change diapers/pullups or wipe a child, however we will assist a child in learning how to change and wipe themselves.

Preschoolers, even if fully potty-trained, have accidents sometimes. It’s expected, and we suggest being prepared for this daily by ensuring your child has spare clothes. We suggest dressing your child in ease-to-pull-up-and-down clothing, but we can help with buttons and zippers if need be. Per the state licensing regulations and Mystic Aquarium policies, the requirement for a child to attend Sea School is that they should be able to use the bathroom independently or have a caregiver nearby to assist in changing/wiping needs. Children at the end stages of toilet-training will be assisted toward independence and have a toileting plan communicated between the caregiver and staff. The bathroom has a privacy door and curtains in the stalls allowing teachers to audio monitor children while they are in the bathroom and available to offer assistance if need be. If a child has an accident, the primary caregiver will be contacted. Special needs will be considered on a case by case basis and accommodated at the discretion of the Director.
Outdoor Play

Children participating in Sea School have the opportunity to enjoy outdoor play in many different ways. The Sea School “Green” is an enclosed outdoor, natural play space just for Sea School students. In the Green, children have the opportunity to develop gross motor skills while running, balancing, and playing in an ideal natural environment. During Fall and Spring we will have the water table on and children will have access to dirt and mud. Outdoor play is an extremely important aspect of early childhood development and our program offers a minimum of 60 minutes combined outdoor/gross motor play daily. Physical development is incorporated on a daily basis into the schedule, even if it is just taking a walk to visit the outside exhibits, so please make sure your child is dressed for the season. *Prolonged exposure to temperatures less than 30 degrees could be harmful to very young children, so children will not be taken outside on extremely cold days. When temperature is above 50 degrees, we will venture out on rainy days unless there is an electrical storm or torrential downpour.*

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Celebrating birthdays and holidays at Sea School can be exciting and fun for everyone! We consider holiday celebrations as learning opportunities for children to discover diversities in cultures and traditions. Although we do not celebrate all holidays, we do learn about them while offering and encouraging families to share about their traditions, culture, and heritage. If you do not celebrate holidays or a particular holiday, please contact the Director for the best way to accommodate your family and child. *As a courtesy, please notify teachers in advance when planning to provide special treats. Please remember that we may have a food allergy in your child’s class and we encourage healthy, organically grown, artificial color free foods whenever possible.*
Weather Policy

School closings and delays due to inclement weather are made on a case by case basis. **Sea School will be closed if the Stonington Public Schools are closed.** When Stonington Public Schools are on a delayed schedule, class will begin at 10:30am unless the Aquarium is closed or delayed. Stonington Public Schools notifications go out on all news outlets, **but Sea School Preschool has set up notification only on NBC Connecticut.**

Please note that under the direction of the Aquarium, Sea School could be delayed or closed even if Stonington Public Schools are open. When there is the possibility of inclement weather, families will be notified as soon as possible. Snow days have been added into the allotment of school days on our academic calendar, so the last day of school will not change regardless of snow days. The following notification methods have been set up for your convenience by 7:00am:

**NBC Connecticut SCHOOL CLOSINGS:**
- [https://www.nbctoday.com/weather/school-closings/](https://www.nbctoday.com/weather/school-closings/)
- In the case of delays or school closings, NBC Connecticut can send you an email or text message alert directly to your mobile phone.
- We are registered as “Sea School Preschool”. You must go on-line or set up alerts for this notification.
- It is only through NBC Connecticut and will not be posted on any other news networks. You can also access it by searching “school closings CT” on your web browser.

Alternate notifications:
- If internet service is working, the Director* will post a notification on the Classroom Dojo App which alerts those who have accepted the app.
- If the outgoing Aquarium message indicates we are closed or delayed past 11am, school will be cancelled. Otherwise please call 860-572-5955 ext. 218 Education weather hotline for Sea School specific notifications.

*During inclement weather, all communications are made from a personal cell phone at the Director’s residence as the Sea School cell is only on during class hours and stays on site at the Aquarium.*
Positive Guidance Discipline Policy

At Sea School the goal is to create a classroom community where children and teachers work, play, and learn together. A positive approach to discipline involves compassion and respect for children while showing them that mistakes are a natural part of growth and development. By modeling appropriate behavior at all times, teachers develop an age and developmentally appropriate curriculum that is both child-centered and directed with the teachers acting as the facilitators. Research has proven that a nurturing, well-organized and stimulating environment is an important foundation for supporting positive interactions among children. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- A consistent routine and schedule will be established allowing children to feel safe in a predictable environment. Limits will be set and clear based on safety of the group, not convenience of staff.
- Children will be given logical and natural consequences in response to inappropriate behavior. For example: A teacher will say and model “when using scissors, you need to sit and hold them properly, like this”. If a child is not handling the materials safely, the teacher will model again and say “show me how to use the scissors safely”. If the child continues to be unsafe, then the teacher will say “you are showing me you are not ready to use scissors because you are not being safe. What would you like to do instead—play in the water table or read a story?”
- Classroom rules will focus on expected behavior to maintain a safe and positive environment (i.e. “we use our walking feet” as opposed to “no running”). Children will be given ample opportunities to learn expectations and practice.
- Well composed staff members “Teach Peace” by modeling respect, integrity, tolerance, empathy, compassion, and patience, and by using Conscious Discipline techniques to help children learn to resolve conflicts. During conflict, a teacher will intervene and model words and phrases and help the children develop coping strategies through the use of the peace process until children are able to resolve their own conflicts.

At any time, if a child’s behavior threatens the immediate safety of other children, teachers, interns, volunteers, animals or other Aquarium staff, caregivers will be contacted and will be expected to pick up the child immediately. The Director will facilitate meetings with
caregivers, the Education Consultant, and the Social Services Consultant to develop an action plan. The goal is to make Sea School a successful and positive experience for all participants. If the program cannot provide this with reasonable accommodation, withdrawal will be recommended. The Director reserves the right to suspend a child from the program for any period of time.

As stated in Section 19a-79-3a of the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Child Care Regulations, the Sea School staff strictly adheres to:
(B) Specifically prohibiting abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment and physical restraint unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people.

**Termination of Care Policy**

Mystic Aquarium and Sea School reserve the right to expel any person or family from a program who is disruptive, disrespectful, or who jeopardizes his or her safety or the safety of others. Refunds will not be issued for suspensions or expulsions.

**Special Medical Conditions/Allergies**

All Sea School staff is certified in CT Childcare CPR, First Aid, AED and Medication Administration. In accordance with the Five Right Practices of Medication, we will verify that the right child receives: the right medication, in the right dose, at the right time, by the right method and with the proper documentation.

Sea School will store and administer the following: prescribed inhalers only for the treatment of life-threatening asthma, Epi-Pens, and emergency oral medications (i.e., Benadryl) only if there is written consent and an authorization form signed by an authorized prescriber and parent or legal guardian for each medication. All medication submitted to Sea School must be in the original packaging and must be clearly labeled with the prescription label on the front of the medication. A food allergy, allergy or asthma care plan also needs to be completed by the child’s physician and provided by the parent or guardian. Under no circumstances will medication be accepted if all forms are not completed correctly.
Authorization to Administer Medication forms must include the following information:

- The child’s name, address and birth date
- The drug name, prescribed dosage and method of administration
- The time to be administered
- The side effects
- The prescriber’s name and address

Any time a medication is administered, accurate documentation will be added to the child’s file. Included in this documentation will be:

- The date the medication was administered
- The time it was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The signature of the staff administering the medication
- Any additional comments

Parents or guardians will be notified if a child has been administered any medication. At no time will an untrained staff member be allowed to administer medication.

**Exposure to Natural Elements Policy**

Sea School staff members do not apply any type of non-medicated/non-prescription topical lotion or spray to children (for example, sunscreen, tick/bug spray, moisturizers and lip ointment) without supply and instructions from caregivers. It is the caregivers’ responsibility to apply any type of non-medicated/non-prescription topical lotion or spray to children prior to the school day to reduce risk of exposure to sun and ticks while outdoors including playing in the outdoor, natural play space. With supply and instructions, Sea School staff may re-apply non-medicated/non-prescription topical lotion or spray. These items should not be accessible to children, so please notify staff if your child has them. If a tick is found crawling on a student, a staff member can remove it. If the tick is at all attached or embedded in the student, per state regulations, the caregiver will be contacted to remove the tick. It is the caregivers’ responsibility to check their child for ticks daily.
Physicals and Immunizations

All children who attend Sea School are required to have a current health assessment record on file which consists of a physical and a record of a child's immunization history signed by a licensed physician. Caregivers must provide evidence that a child has been examined by a registered physician. Caregivers must also submit an immunization record that includes the month, day and year of each immunization required as specified in subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of section 19a-79-6a of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Immunization requirements for children participating in licensed programs can be found at https://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/licensing/childcare/immunization_schedule.pdf. A copy of an updated physical needs to be provided prior to its expiration.

Flu Shot Requirement

Flu shots are required in all licensed childcare centers for all children under the age of 6 by January 1 of each year. When a parent or guardian objects to an immunization on religious grounds such objection must be accompanied by a signed waiver from the parent or guardian. Without this, a medical exemption, or a record that a flu shot was received, children may not attend school after January 1.

Bumps, Bruises, Scrapes & Splinters

All Sea School staff members are trained in First Aid. If a child receives a minor injury at school, staff will treat the injury, complete an “accident report” and notify the caregiver either during school or at the time of pick up. A copy will be provided to the caregiver upon request.

Per state regulations Sea School staff is not permitted to remove splinters or embedded ticks. If a splinter or embedded tick is found, then the caregiver will be contacted.

Any injury that is considered more serious, or requires additional medical attention, will require an Incident Report. This report will be completed by the staff and will indicate the time of the accident, how the accident occurred, the type of injury that was sustained, and the type of first aid treatment administered. This report will be signed by the staff member and filed with the Aquarium’s Safety Department. A copy will be provided to the parent or guardian and another will be held on file per licensing requirements. The State Department
will be notified within 24 hours if child requires medical attention. If the staff member
determines that the injury is an emergency, emergency procedures may include, but are not
limited to:
- Administering first aid
- Contacting caregivers
- Calling 911

If a staff member is not able to reach the caregivers, then the emergency contact and
release person designated on the enrollment form will be contacted.
If an ambulance is called and a child needs to be transported to an emergency medical
facility, and caregivers have not arrived to school, a member of the Sea School team will
accompany the child. Any expenses incurred by the emergency transportation or treatment
of the child are the responsibility of the caregiver.

**Sea School Health Policy**

In an effort to provide a healthy environment for all, please keep your child home if there are
any signs of illness. Children may not participate in school if they exhibit the following
conditions:
- Fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit), vomiting or diarrhea
  - a. Sending your child to school under fever reducing medication is prohibited
- Conjunctivitis unless medicated for 24 hours
- Any contagious illnesses
- Suspicious rashes, or lesions with bleeding or oozing
- Lice or other infestation
- Conditions preventing them from active participation (lethargy, sleepiness, constant
coughing, runny nose)

In order to minimize the spread of infectious illness, the Sea School staff members practice
several routines:
- Proper hand washing is practiced throughout class, before and after snack/meals, after
  the use of the bathroom, after visiting the Green and after visiting areas of the Aquarium.
• All surfaces including door handles, sinks, tables, chairs, toilets, toys and equipment are routinely sanitized with a biodegradable disinfectant.

• Staff members wear latex-free gloves for food preparation and clean up, assisting children in the bathroom, and cleaning tables, surfaces and toys.

• Anytime a child in attendance is confirmed to have a contagious illness where exposure to others is possible, all families will be notified with information regarding the illness and symptoms in accordance with an exposure action plan.

Evacuation Procedures

These procedures cover a potential evacuation needed in the case of a fire, active threat or severe incident. In the event that the group needs to evacuate the classroom, Aquarium staff from the education offices and neighboring classroom located next to the Sea School, will assist Sea School staff with moving the children out of the building. The teachers will help the children line up at the door, and the group will take walk straight down the hallway and take the stairs leading to the front of the building or they will use the secondary exit by taking a left and head down the outdoor stairway to the back of the building. The group will then follow the directions of Aquarium staff and will move to a safe location. Prior to leaving the classroom, the staff will perform a headcount and conduct a classroom sweep to ensure that all children are accounted for. Additional headcounts will be performed throughout the evacuation process. Once outside the building, a roll call will be conducted using the sign-in sheet. Once staff is given the all clear to return to the building, the group will return to the classroom and the process will be discussed. If the building is deemed unsafe to re-enter, the group will move to a safe location. The designated safe location for a campus wide evacuation is the lobby of the Hilton Hotel across the street from the Aquarium. Our Safety and Security Team will be notified and additional staff members will guard child in crosswalk in a 1:4 ratio. Caregivers will be notified. Sea School staff will utilize contact information from emergency cards to contact caregivers. Children may need to be picked up early in the case of an extended evacuation.

Shelter in Place Procedures

In the event the group needs to shelter in place they will move to a secure location without windows or external access. The group will be notified as per Aquarium safety policies and
will remain sheltered in place until the all clear is provided. Caregivers will be notified accordingly.

**Practice Drills**

All Mystic Aquarium staff members participate in practice drills of evacuations and shelter in place procedures in conjunction with local fire and police departments.

Sea School practices routine evacuation and shelter in place drills in accordance with OEC statutes and Regulations. The staff members teach and practice the routine with Sea Schoolers prior to having the first practice drill of the year. Caregivers will be notified at drop off if there is a planned drill.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Policies and Procedures**

The management of this program supports a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action if there is an allegation that a Mystic Aquarium staff member or volunteer has abused or neglected a child. Immediate action will be taken to suspend the person from duties involving any contact with children and youth. As well, our entire staff has the responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our program.

**Staff responsibilities:** As child care providers, we are mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm of any child. If abuse or neglect is suspected Sea School staff will follow regulations as stated in Sec. 17a-101 through Sec. 17a-101e of the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Child Care Regulations.

**Child Abuse is defined as:** A child who has had non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her, injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

**Child Neglect is defined as:** A child who has been abandoned, denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well-being. (CT GS 46b-120)
The following information was Published by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, 2013 [https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/1-DCF/FAQs](https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/1-DCF/FAQs):

The Department of Children and Families

DCF is a state agency that provides many services to help Connecticut’s children and youth and their families. The mission of the Department of Children and Families is to protect children, improve child and family wellbeing, and support and preserve families. These efforts are accomplished by respecting and working within individual cultures and communities in Connecticut, and in partnership with others.

Our Area Offices are open from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. weekdays. You can find Area Office telephone numbers and other information on our website www.state.ct.us/dcf. After 5:00 P.M. and on weekends and holidays, you may call the DCF HOTLINE at 1800-842-2288.

INFOLINE - a free, telephone information and referral service that can put parents in touch with all kinds of helpful programs and services in the community. INFOLINE can often help in a crisis, whether it is domestic violence, a runaway teenager, a mental health emergency or another problem. Call INFOLINE at 211.

Thank you for reviewing the Sea School Family Handbook. If you have any questions, or need any clarification, about anything contained in this handbook please contact the Director at the contact information found on page 4.
The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through conservation, education and research.