Academic Enrichment
Family Handbook
2020
Welcome to the Academic Enrichment Program at Mystic Aquarium! Mystic Aquarium is pleased to offer full-day academic enrichment programs led by experienced educators who will provide academic support and enrichment in a safe and fun learning environment. Educators will guide and support students during their real-time learning sessions and as they complete their assignments. When classes are not in session and assignments are complete, students will benefit from outdoor activities, guided Aquarium tours, animal interactions*, and a wealth of unique programming that also supports student’s physical fitness and social emotional learning.

As a state licensed childcare facility, Mystic Aquarium strictly adheres to all state guidelines for group size and COVID-19 safety. The classrooms in our Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center and campus green spaces are isolated from the general public and allow for separation of classes and social distancing. We accomplished a safe and successful summer camp season, and we are excited to provide this valuable program for parents and students during the school year.

*Students will not interact directly with the seals, sea lions, beluga whales or penguins. They will however have opportunities to interact directly with invertebrates, rays, sharks and reptiles.

Open to students in grades K-7
Monthly tuition includes 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5-day in-person options
Program begins September 14, 2020
Hours 8:30am to 4:30pm

Session/Monthly (4-week) tuition-
Daily/weekly purchases are not available, but you can enroll at any time needed, and monthly tuition may be pro-rated on a case-by-case basis.

Mystic Aquarium Members: ($70/day)
$280/month for 1 day/week; $560/month for 2 school days/week; $840/month for 3 school days/week;
$1,120/month for 4 school days/week; $1,400/month for 5 school days/week

Non-Members: ($80/day)
$320/month for 1 school day/week; $640/month for 2 school days/week; $960/month for 3 school days/week; $1,280/month for 4 school days/week; $1,600/month for 5 school days/week

Three Monthly Sessions:
Session 1 (September): 9/14/20 – 10/9/20
Session 2 (October): 10/13/20 – 11/6/20 (Not in session 10/12/20; price adjustment will be made for those enrolled on Mondays. In session 11/3/20.)
Session 3 (November): 11/9/20 – 12/4/20 (In session 11/11/20. Not in session 11/26/20 & 11/27/20; price adjustment will be made for those enrolled on Thursdays and/or Fridays.)
Additional sessions will be hosted as needed with a minimum enrollment.

The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through conservation, education, and research.
**INFORMATION FOUND IN THIS HANDBOOK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject or Topic</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Paperwork Information</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditations and Staff Training</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment Receipt and Tax ID Information</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Will My Student Need to Bring?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-In and Pick-Up Procedures and Locations</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancellation and Refund Policies</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Illness Policy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Information and Student Injury/Illness During the Program</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to Natural Elements</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather Policy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Evacuation Pick Up Information</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination of Care Policy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Abuse and Neglect Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mystic Aquarium Classrooms are located at Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center**
55 Coogan Blvd.
Mystic, CT 06355
Phone: 860-572-5955 ext. 431
Fax: 860-572-5969

This new, state-of-the-art building is dedicated to conservation education and aquaculture. The Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center is located next to the penguin exhibit but always remains locked and is not available to the general public. It has separate bathrooms and green spaces, as well. The classrooms are equipped with unique biofacts, invertebrate touch tanks and the latest in educational technology. Refer to the pictures below of our two classroom and green spaces. Each classroom will have a cohort of up to 14 students with two consistent instructors for each class, with
a ratio of 1:7 at maximum. We will keep siblings together in a class but will also do our best to have students together in similar grade-ranges and/or attending from the same school. Please review the COVID-19 Specific Information on page 9 for more information on classroom set-up and policies. We will request a copy of your child’s online learning schedule in advance, including what is expected of them at home – times when live class meets occur, regular/daily assignments that are due and any other helpful login/class links information that you can provide. Essentially the more information we have in order to assist your child when they are having difficulties logging in or staying on top of their schedule, the better, especially for younger students.
REGISTRATION

Registration is completed by contacting Amy Gollenberg at agollenberg@mysticaquarium.org or by calling 860-572-5955 ext. 159.
REQUIRED PAPERWORK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Information</th>
<th>Contact, emergency information and health history</th>
<th>Parent Signature required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Paperwork</td>
<td>Recent Physical and vaccination record – school health record completed within 3 years is accepted.</td>
<td>Doctor’s signature required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent &amp; Health Affirmation</td>
<td>Due to COVID-19/per CT Dept. of Health, this consent and health affirmation form must be read and submitted.</td>
<td>Parent Signature Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration of Medication (only if needed)</td>
<td>Permission for Aquarium staff to administer medication. All medication must be in original containers.</td>
<td>Doctor’s signature required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Online Learning Schedule</td>
<td>Daily schedule provided by your student’s teacher with times of when live meets/classes occur and regular, daily assignments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Plan of Care (only if needed)</td>
<td>Complete the Individual Plan of Care form for your student for special health care needs or disabilities.</td>
<td>Parent Signature Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Immunization Attestation (only if needed)</td>
<td>This form is required ONLY if the current Medical Paperwork falls outside of the 3-year requirement. (See note below.)</td>
<td>Parent Signature Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If the student’s physical expired during the State of Emergency, we will still accept it for the fall of 2020 season.

ACCREDITATIONS AND STAFF TRAINING

The health and safety of your student is of the utmost importance at Mystic Aquarium. We have been operating the only licensed preschool inside an aquarium in the U.S. for the past 14 years, called Sea School. Our Full Day Academic program will also be licensed under the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) # 16779 and complies with all state and local regulations. Program staffing meets the criteria established by the State of Connecticut OEC and are required to be screened and have successfully passed reference and background checks as well as certified in First Aid, CRP/AED and Medication Administration. All Education staff members are also required to be over the age of 21 and have experience working with youth. Each staff member receives extensive training in classroom management, developmentally appropriate curriculum, facility protocols for safety and performance, conduct working with children and child protection. As a state licensed childcare facility, we undergo an extensive review and inspection process to affirm that we exceed all state requirements for health, cleanliness, and food service as well as emergency management plans, health care, management, staff training and performance review.

Statement of Confidentiality

Education 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

MYSTIC AQUARIUM MAIN LINE NUMBER: 860-572-5955

Call the Mystic Aquarium main line and then dial the appropriate extension. Education Offices are staffed during regular business hours (8:00am-5:00pm), Monday through Friday. All calls and messages left on weekends, after hours and on holidays will be returned within the next business day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phone Number or Extension</th>
<th>Email and other information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Cell Phone</td>
<td>8:00am-5:00pm</td>
<td>860-625-2104</td>
<td>Please call this number first during program hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquarium Main Line</td>
<td></td>
<td>860-572-5955</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do not hesitate to contact us for any of the following:
1. You are running late or there is traffic.
2. Your child is not feeling well and will not attend the program that day.
3. You unexpectedly need to pick your child up early. (Please note: it may take more than 15 minutes to get your child to you in the event of an unscheduled early pick-up.)
4. You have a question about the activities.
5. Another person will be picking up your child – they will need to have ID.
6. You have a concern or constructive feedback.

**PAYMENT RECEIPT & TAX ID**

Many parents will use their flexible spending account to pay for childcare. The confirmation letter, which you receive via email when you register your student, is your receipt of payment for the program session. If you need a receipt from the Program Director, please notify the Director on the first day of your monthly session.

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

**WHAT WILL MY STUDENT NEED TO BRING?**

- Typically, every day, your child will need appropriate clothing that they typically wear to school for both indoor and outdoor activities. As well, closed-toe shoes, a change of clothing in case your child may need them, a water bottle, bug repellant, lunch and a snack.
- Each student must bring the laptop/Chromebook issued by their school every day of their program along with the charging cord and headphones, and their portable personal school supplies designated as required by their school/teacher to have while at home.
- The lunch must include a cold pack to keep perishable items cool.
- Please do not send your child with other electronics*, cell phones, personal sports equipment, plastic straws, live animals or toys to the program. If they must bring any of these items, they will be requested to keep them in their bags.
- Please do not send anything that could possibly be viewed as a weapon. Absolutely no weapons of any type will be allowed. Mystic Aquarium programs have a zero-tolerance policy regarding weapons.

*The only exception is the required laptop/Chromebook issued by their school in order to conduct online lessons and school meetings.

**CHECK-IN AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES AND LOCATIONS**

- All check-in and pick-ups of students will occur at the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center, located at the eastern end of the Mystic Aquarium campus.
- You will need to park in the parking lot for all Check-In and Pick-Up times. Please plan accordingly.
- At check-in, you will be asked to indicate a phone number to reach you for that day on the sign in sheet, and who we should expect to sign out your student at pick-up.
- Medications for any student will be turned in to the appropriate staff.
• Your child will be given a temperature scan and will be asked a set of questions regarding health and potential exposure to COVID-19 per recommendation of Connecticut State Department of Public Health.
• Once a student is checked-in, the student will be moved to the inside of the building. In order to minimize stress and health and safety for all students, parents will check-in their student(s) and will not follow the group to the classroom. If you are concerned about this procedure, please contact the Program Director prior to the first day of the program.
• All adults need to show identification at pick-up to be able to sign their student out from the program each day. We will not allow any adult other than those listed on the sign out sheet to pick up your child unless a previous arrangement has been made. If there is an emergency and an adult not on the pickup list is sent to pick up a student, the Program Director will call the parents to verify permission.
• For any adult who is not on the approved pickup list submitted prior to the program who will be picking up a student; provide a note stating: the date, unlisted adult’s name, student’s name and your signature. This must be given to the Program Director at morning drop off.
• No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to be given to any adult or to sign out a student.
• For the safety of your student, they must be signed in and out each day. If this is not possible, please contact the Program Director prior to program starting to discuss your options.

CANCELLATION and REFUND POLICY

Monthly fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. Fees will not be pro-rated due to regular school schedules such as “no school” days of Teacher PDs or non-paid holidays, nor for a day missed due to minor/non-COVID-19-related illness. Withdrawal due to COVID-19 illness, required quarantine, or your child’s school returning to full-time in person sessions will be honored on a pro-rated basis to the end of the corresponding monthly session.

For refunds regarding withdrawing a student for any other reason must be requested in writing and be at least two weeks prior. Contact the Program Director at agollenberg@mysticaquarium.org regarding cancellations and refunds. We will need to have the request in writing. Please do so as soon as you know you need to cancel. Refunds will be considered on a case by case basis at the Program Director’s discretion for students cancelling their program, leaving early or not attending the program under extenuating circumstances.

GENERAL ILLNESS POLICY

Call the program cell phone at 860-625-2104 prior to check-in at 8:25am and leave a message if your child is ill or will miss the program. After check-in is complete, a staff member will call the parents of any student not in attendance to verify that they will not attend the program that day, unless a message has been left on this phone.

To provide a healthy learning environment for all, please keep your child home if there are any signs of illness. Students may not participate in the program if they exhibit any of the following conditions:
• Fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit) within the past 24 hours of the program’s start time.
• Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours of the program’s start time.
• Any contagious disease.
• Suspicious rashes or lesions with bleeding or oozing.
• Lice or other infestation. A doctor’s note verifying no infestation is required to be able to return to the program.
• Conditions preventing a student from active participation such as lethargy, sleepiness, constant coughing and runny nose.
• Has been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person within the past 14 days.
COVID-19 SPECIFIC INFORMATION

In accordance with the State of Connecticut, Mystic Aquarium strictly adheres to all state guidelines for COVID-19 safety:

- Each class will have a maximum of 14 students.
- Each morning all staff and students will be screened for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, and to confirm temperature below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Staff and students who have a temperature greater than 100 degrees will not be permitted into the program.
- If a student develops any symptoms during the day, they will be immediately relocated to a dedicated area to await pick-up.
- Classes will be kept separate from one another and adhere to the Connecticut Department of Education’s guidelines for public schools with established socially distant workspaces.
- Students will be required to bring their laptop/Chromebook and supplies with them as designated by their school district, as well as lunches, snack and face coverings.
- Staff will always wear face coverings while working with students.
- Mystic Aquarium will mirror the Stonington Public School policy for students regarding wearing face coverings in the classrooms. Additionally, students are required to wear face coverings when not in their dedicated learning spaces. Exceptions will be made for anyone with documentation that wearing a face covering would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition.
- Increased vigilance will be given to our already thorough cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- Instructors will teach and reinforce good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing. Sanitation policies will include handwashing/sanitizing before all snacks, meals and upon re-entry into the classroom. Any specialized learning tools used by Mystic Aquarium will be sanitized in between uses.

STUDENT INJURY and ILLNESS DURING PROGRAM

In the event your child is injured, or becomes ill while during the program, the Program Director or Educator will contact the emergency phone number which has been provided on the morning sign-in sheet. The staff member will explain the injury/illness, and how it was treated. It will be determined at that time if the child will stay for the duration of the program or leave early. If the student is ill, pick up time will be discussed. At pick up time, staff will discuss with the guardian the injury/illness and verify the treatment. Any child sent home due to an illness must remain symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the program, unless given written permission by a physician.

EXPOSURE TO NATURAL ELEMENTS POLICY

Mystic Aquarium 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 permission, 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 program day to reduce risk of exposure to sun and ticks while outdoors. If given written permission, supply and directions staff will apply the non-medicated/non-prescription topical lotion or spray to non-sensitive areas while in view of other staff. 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
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.

**WEATHER POLICY**

School closings and delays due to inclement weather are made on a case by case basis. This program aligns with, and **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. Please note that under the direction of the Aquarium, this program could be delayed or closed even if Stonington Public Schools are open but our operations are closed. In this case, families will be notified as soon as possible.

**EMERGENCY PICK UP DUE TO AQUARIUM EVACUATION**

In the event that the programs being held at Mystic Aquarium must evacuate the facility, the educators will bring the students to the Mystic Hilton located across the road from the aquarium. Parents will then be called to pick up their students. We will call the phone number provided to us during the morning check-in first.

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

**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

You are required to initial that you have read and understand our policy on the program forms. Take note what is considered as acceptable behavior and explain it to your student so that our programs will be enjoyed by all.

Children attending the Academic Enrichment Program 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 considered to be unacceptable includes the following:

- Endangering the health and/or safety of a child, staff member, volunteer, intern or animal
- Entering a building, enclosure, or fenced area without permission
- 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
- Stealing or damaging property
- Inappropriate touching of themselves or another child
- We have a zero tolerance for bullying, humiliating or degrading. Any student who is witnessed by staff bullying, humiliating or degrading another student during the program will be immediately expelled from the program.
- We have a zero tolerance for violence. Any student who is witnessed by staff purposefully hitting, kicking or causing injury with the intent to harm another student or staff member during will be immediately expelled from the program.
- We are all aware of sibling interactions; please note that in order to be fair to every student, siblings are expected to adhere to our rules when in the program together.
- Any action which may make another student uncomfortable
The following steps will be taken in the event that an unacceptable choice has been made:

1. All unacceptable choices will be documented on a discipline sheet, including all staff behavior re-directions, discussions with parents, and discussions with the Program Director.
2. Initially, staff will give a verbal reminder and redirect the student to a more appropriate behavior.
3. In the event that there is a second incidence of unacceptable behavior, staff will have a private discussion with the student about the behavior within the sight of another staff. Staff will document the situation to include the problem, possible cause of the problem, and any corrective measures taken. Program Director will be notified.
4. If unacceptable behavior persists, the guardian will be notified at the end of the day, or sooner if necessary. Staff and Program Director will ask for input from the guardian in regards to the behavior. Staff and Program Director will check back with the guardian at the end of the following day to report on behavior.
5. If unacceptable behavior persists, or becomes excessive, and the child continues to disrupt the program, the Program 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.
6. 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.
7. Expulsion from the program will be considered by the Program Director on a case by case basis. There will be no refund offered for an expelled student.

TERMINATION OF CARE POLICY

Mystic Aquarium reserves 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.

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:

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.