



PROTECT OUR OCEANS®

# MYSTIC AQUARIUM

## Summer Camp Parent Handbook 2021



Welcome to summer camp at Mystic Aquarium! With health and safety as our number one priority, we are happy to provide unique and memorable summer camp experiences. Mystic Aquarium offers the perfect environment to enjoy and explore animals while having outdoor adventures in nature. In addition, each camp will have its own dedicated classroom within the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center, which is separated from the general public, to continue learning and exploration. In accordance with the State of Connecticut requirements for youth camps, Mystic Aquarium has established stringent guidelines to ensure camper and educator safety. This handbook contains information which will be helpful as you and your camper prepare for camp. Mystic Aquarium Summer Camps are fully licensed by the state of Connecticut and are also accredited by the American Camp Association. Our amazing adult staff are eagerly awaiting the excitement of camp and are all trained for those unexpected emergencies (CPR/AED/First Aid), should they arise.

***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 enjoy this camp season.

Becky Hirsh  
Camp Director

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# REGISTRATION FOR CAMP

## HOW DO I REGISTER MY CHILD?

Registration is completed online at [www.mysticaquarium.org](http://www.mysticaquarium.org). If you need assistance, please contact the Education department at [educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org) or call 860-572-5955 ext. 431.

**In an effort to consolidate and ensure camper health information security, we use the electronic health record system CampDoc.com for all required paperwork. The Camp Director will send you a welcome email when your CampDoc login credentials are available; you will not be able to log into CampDoc until you receive this email. All registered campers will then receive a follow up email from CampDoc.com with detailed instructions on how to submit required health forms and paperwork. The website is secure, encrypted, and password protected. If you have used CampDoc.com in the past, the previous year's information will be visible, and you will be able to update it as needed. All camp paperwork is due no later than one week prior to the start of your camp week session in order to prevent your child from missing out on any camp time.**

## CAN I CHANGE MY CAMP SESSION AFTER I HAVE ALREADY REGISTERED?

Yes, camp session dates can be changed with at least two weeks advanced notice prior to the start of the camp session, and as space allows. We will need to have this in writing. Please contact the Education department at [educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org) with your request.

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

If paperwork is not received at least one week in advance, or if you are providing medication for your camper, you will finalize the paperwork with the camp instructors after all other campers have checked in. **Campers will not be allowed to participate in camp unless all their paperwork is complete.** If there are any forms missing, your camper will miss part, or all the first day of camp as we work to get the necessary paperwork completed.

Forms submitted to CampDoc.com or the Camp Director less than a week before camp starting may not be available at check-in, resulting in a delay to your camper attending camp. To avoid this issue, turn your forms in at least one week prior to the start of your camp week. Thank you for your assistance.

## WHAT IF MY CAMPER'S PHYSICAL EXPIRED DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY?

If the camper's physical expired during the State of Emergency, we will still accept it for the 2021 camp season. The parent will need to complete a Health Attestation in place of the physical. This policy will be revised in accordance with the Office of Early Childhood's recommendations.

### REQUIRED CAMP PAPERWORK FOR MYSTIC AQUARIUM CAMPS

Camper Information	Contact, emergency information and health history	Parent Signature required
Medical Paperwork	Recent Physical and vaccination record – school health record completed within 3 years is accepted.	Doctor's signature required
Administration of Medication	<u>If Applicable.</u> Permission for Aquarium staff to administer medication. <b>All medication must be in original containers.</b>	Doctor's signature required
Individual Plan of Care	<u>If Applicable.</u> Complete the Individual Plan of Care form for your camper for special health care needs or considerations.	Parent Signature Required
Informed Consent and Camper Health Affirmation	Completed by all	Parent Signature required
Family Camp Forms	Contact, emergency information and health history of child	Parent Signature required

**\*ITINERARY:** All camp participants will receive an itinerary via email prior to the start of camp. The itinerary provides an outline of possible activities, including planned special activities and items your child may need for that day. Please note that activities may change due to unforeseen circumstances. If this occurs, the parents will be notified by the Camp Director or via a text through the CampDoc system.

## ACCREDITATIONS AND STAFF TRAINING

The health and safety of your camper is of the utmost importance at Mystic Aquarium summer camps. To ensure the highest standards are being met, Mystic Aquarium summer camps are accredited through the American Camp Association ([www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)) as well as licensed by the State of Connecticut (<https://www.ct.gov/oec>). In order to obtain certification as a state licensed youth camp, 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. Accreditation through the American Camp Association is a voluntary process that goes above and beyond the state licensing requirements and demonstrates Mystic Aquarium’s commitment to ensuring your child is in a safe, nurturing environment. Only 53 camps in Connecticut are accredited through ACA.

All camp counselors and staff employed by Mystic Aquarium summer camps are required to be over the age of 21 and have experience working with youth. Each staff member is certified in First Aid, CRP/AED and Medication Administration. All summer camp staff members are screened and have successfully passed reference and background checks. Additionally, camp staff members receive extensive training in classroom management, developmentally appropriate curriculum, facility protocols for safety and performance, conduct working with children and child protection.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**MYSTIC AQUARIUM MAIN LINE NUMBER: 860-572-5955**

Call the Mystic Aquarium main line and then dial the appropriate extension. Camp Offices are staffed during regular business hours (7:45am-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.

Name	Title	Phone Number or Extension	Email and other information
<b>Camp Cell Phone</b>	<b>7:45am-5:00pm</b>	<b>860-625-2104</b>	<b>Please call this number first during camp hours</b>
Aquarium Main Line		860-572-5955	
Becky Hirsh	Camp Director	Ext 158	bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org
MaryEllen Mateleska	Alternate Camp Director	Ext 156	mmateleska@mysticaquarium.org
Kelly Matis	Alternate Camp Director	Ext 320	educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org
Education Dept.		Ext 431	educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org

Do not hesitate to contact us for any of the following:

1. You are running late or there is traffic.
2. Your camper is not feeling well and will not attend camp that day.

3. You unexpectedly need to pick your camper up early. (Please note that it may take more than 15 minutes to get your camper to you in the event of an unscheduled early pick-up as the campers move throughout the Aquarium)
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 concern or constructive feedback.

## PAYMENT RECEIPT & TAX ID

### **RECEIPT OF PAYMENT FOR SUMMER CAMP AND FEDERAL TAX ID:**

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

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

## CANCELLATION and REFUND POLICY

**Contact the Education department directly at [educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org) regarding cancellations and refunds.** We will need to have your request in writing as soon as you know you need to cancel.

Our standard refund/cancellation policy is as follows:

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

29 - 15 days from the start of the camp week - 80% refund

14 days or less from the start of the camp week – For 2021, due to COVID-19 circumstances, refunds requested for cancelling camp, leaving camp early or not attending camp under extenuating circumstances, within the 14 day time frame prior to a camp's start date, will be considered on a case by case basis at the Camp Director's discretion. A minimum of 20% of the camp fee will be withheld by the aquarium, depending on the circumstances.

## GENERAL ILLNESS POLICY

**Call the camp cell phone at 860-625-2104** prior to check-in at 8:15am and leave a message if your camper is ill or will miss camp for the day. After check-in is complete, a camp staff member will call the parents of any camper not in attendance to verify that they will not attend camp that day, unless a message has been left on this phone.

To provide a healthy camp environment for all, please keep your camper home if there are any signs of illness. Campers may not participate in camp if they exhibit any of the following conditions:

- Fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit) within the past 24 hours of the camp's start time.
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours of the camp'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 camp.
- Conditions preventing a camper 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 requirements for youth camps, Mystic Aquarium has established the following guidelines to ensure camper and instructor safety for this summer:

- Campers are required to have the Informed Consent and Camper Health Affirmation completed for the first day of camp.
- Camper families will abide by the CT Travel Advisory.
- Camp lunches, provided by caregivers, are required to include an ice pack to keep the lunches cool. There are no coolers available during camp for lunches.
- Our camp group size is regulated by the CT OEC and will adhere to current guidelines. At present, they will have a maximum of 16 campers with dedicated instructors. Each camp group will be completely independent and will not mix with other camp groups.
- **Morning check-in** will occur at the Main Gate to the Mystic Aquarium.
- Each morning all staff and children will be screened for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, and to confirm temperature below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Staff or children who have a temperature greater than 100 degrees will not be permitted into the program.
- Staff will record the camper's temperature (Pass/Fail), time, phone number for the day, pick up information and initial for the sign in.
- **Afternoon pick-up** will be at the Milne Center. Please have an ID ready.
- If a camper develops any symptoms during the camp day, they will be moved immediately to a dedicated, isolated area to await pick up.
- Staff will always wear face coverings while working with campers. Campers are required to wear face coverings when they are out of the classroom, but for comfort may remove them when they are in their dedicated classroom. Exceptions will be made for anyone with documentation, as outlined by State regulations, that wearing a face covering would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition.
- Staff will teach and enforce good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing.
- Increased vigilance will be given to our already thorough cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- Most full day camps will conduct a field trip that requires transportation to a local estuary, campers will social distance on the bus. We will also take advantage of a wealth of outdoor exhibits and natural areas that exist in and directly around the Aquarium.
- As much as possible, camps will take advantage of private time at the Aquarium, prior to opening for the public, to visit exhibits.

## CAMPER INJURY and ILLNESS DURING CAMP

### IN THE CASE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS WHILE CAMP IS IN SESSION:

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

## CAMP SESSIONS BY WEEK

Camp Dates	Animal Spotlight Toddler & Caregiver	Family Camp PreK-K & Caregiver	Family Camp Grade 1-3 & Caregiver	Family Camp Grade 4-6 & Caregiver	Entering PreK-K Camps	Entering Grade 1-6	Entering Grades 7-10	Paperwork final due date
June 21 – 25						Aquarium Stars		June 14
June 28 - July 2	Wed 1 6/30				Marine Mammal Mania	Junior Aquarium Careers		June 21
July 7–9	Wed 2 7/7					Aquarium Fun Wed-Fri		June 30
July 12-16	Wed 3 7/14	Sharks and Minnows				Eco Heroes	Marine Bio 101	July 5
July 19-23	Wed 4 7/21				Water World	Aquarium Stars		July 12
July 26-30	Mon 1 7/26		Seals and Pups			Junior Aquarium Careers		July 19
Aug 2-6	Mon 2 8/2			Sail Away	Marine Mammal Mania	Eco Heroes		July 26
Aug 9-13	Mon 3 8/9	Sharks and Minnows				Aquarium Stars	Marine Bio 101	Aug 2
Aug 16-20	Mon 4 8/16		Seals and Pups			Junior Aquarium Careers		Aug 9
Aug 23-27						Eco Heroes		Aug 16

## **Animal Spotlight Topics – Toddler/Caregiver Program**

### **Monday Animal Spotlight:**

Topics: Hermit Crabs, Coral Reef, Ocean Camouflage and a Day at the Beach

### **Wednesday Animal Spotlight:**

Topics: Fish, Octopus, Ocean Movement and a Day at the Beach

Day at the Beach will be held at Bluff Point if weather and circumstances allow.

## **EXPOSURE TO NATURAL ELEMENTS POLICY**

Mystic Aquarium camp staff members are not permitted to 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 camp day to reduce risk of exposure to sun and ticks while outdoors. If written permission, supply and directions are provided, camp 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.

## **WHAT WILL MY CAMPER NEED TO BRING?**

- ❖ Every day, your camper will need appropriate clothing; closed toe shoes which can get wet, a change of clothing in case your camper may need them, a water bottle, and a lunch. Please check your itinerary to see if you need anything special.
- ❖ Hiking and field trip to Bluff Point days: Your camper will need appropriate clothing; closed toe shoes which can get wet, a change of clothing in case your camper may need them, a water bottle, sunscreen, bug repellent and a lunch.
- ❖ Please apply sunscreen and bug repellent prior to dropping your camper off.
- ❖ The lunch must include a cold pack to keep perishable items cool.
- ❖ Day Camp campers will be given a camp hat on their first day of camp. At the end of each day hats will be placed on a table until the next day; no hats will be stacked or stored touching each other. The hat will remain at the aquarium until the last day of camp, when it is sent home with the camper.
- ❖ Please do not send your camper with electronics, cell phones, personal sports equipment, plastic straws, live animals or toys to camp. 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 summer camp has a zero-tolerance policy regarding weapons.
- ❖ Caregivers attending the Family Camps should consider the activities and plan accordingly as far as clothing is concerned. We request that you keep your phone at a minimum level of volume to prevent too many interruptions from happening.

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

- All check-in will occur at the Front Gate of the Aquarium and pick-up of campers will be at the Milne Center, located at the eastern end of the Mystic Aquarium campus.
- Medications for any camper will be turned in to the appropriate counselor.
- 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 camper at pick-up.
- Once a camper is checked-in, the camper will be moved to the inside of the front gate of the Mystic Aquarium. In order to minimize stress for all campers, parents will check-in their camper at the front and will not follow the camp to the classroom or morning activity. If you are concerned about this procedure, please contact the Camp Director prior to the first day of camp.
- All adults need to show identification at pick-up to be able to sign their 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 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 camper, the Camp Director will call the parents to verify permission.
- For any adult who is not on the approved pickup list submitted prior to camp who will be picking up a camper; provide a note stating: the date, unlisted adult's name, camper's name and your signature. This must be given to the Camp Director at morning drop off.
- No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to sign in or sign out a camper.
- For the safety of your camper, they must be signed in and out each day. If this is not possible, please contact the Camp Director prior to camp starting to discuss your options.

## EMERGENCY PICK UP DUE TO AQUARIUM EVACUATION

In the event that the camp programs being held at Mystic Aquarium must evacuate the facility, the instructors will bring the campers to the *Mystic Hilton* located across the road from the aquarium. Parents will then be called to pick up their campers. 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

**SEE BELOW FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT TIMES AND LOCATION OF CHECK-IN AND PICK-UP FOR EACH CAMP:**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Program/Camp</b>	<b>Days of the Week &amp; Hours</b>	<b>Check-In Time &amp; Location</b>	<b>Pick-Up Time &amp; Location</b>	<b>Extended Day</b>
Toddlers & Care Givers	<b>Animal Spotlight Monday or Wednesday Sessions</b>	Monday or Wednesday 1:00pm-2:00pm Weeks 1-3	12:45pm Main Entrance of the Milne Center	N/A	N/A
Toddlers & Care Givers	<b>Animal Spotlight Monday or Wednesday Sessions</b>	Monday or Wednesday 1:00pm-2:00pm Week 4	12:45pm Bluff Point State Park Groton, CT	N/A	N/A
Family Program Entering PK-K and their Caregiver	<b>Sharks and Minnows</b>	Monday-Friday 8:30am-11:30am	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	N/A	N/A
Entering PreK – K	<b>Marine Mammal Mania, Water World</b>	Monday-Friday 8:30am-11:30am	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	11:30am Front of the Milne Center	N/A
Family Program Entering Grade 1-3 and their Caregiver	<b>Seals &amp; Pups</b>	Monday-Friday 8:30am-11:30am	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	N/A	N/A
Family Program Entering Grade 4-6 and their Caregiver	<b>Sail Away</b>	Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:00pm	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	N/A	N/A
Entering Grade 1-6	<b>Aquarium Fun</b>	Wednesday -Friday 8:30am-4:00pm	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Front of the Milne Center	5:00pm Front of the Milne Center
Entering Grade 1-6	<b>Aquarium Stars, Eco Heroes, Junior Aquarium Careers</b>	Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:00pm	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Front of the Milne Center	5:00pm Front of the Milne Center
Entering Grade 7-10	<b>Marine Bio 101</b>	Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:00pm	8:15am Front Gate of the Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Front of the Milne Center	N/A

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

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

### **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 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 camper who is witnessed by staff bullying, humiliating or degrading another camper during camp will be immediately expelled from camp.
- We have a zero tolerance for violence. Any camper who is witnessed by staff purposefully hitting, kicking or causing injury with the intent to harm another camper or staff member during camp will be immediately expelled from camp.
- We are all aware of sibling interactions; please note that in order to be fair to every camper, siblings are expected to adhere to our rules when in camp together.
- 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. All unacceptable choices will be documented on a discipline sheet, including all staff behavior re-directions, discussions with parents, and discussions with the Camp Director.
2. Initially, staff will give a verbal reminder and redirect the camper 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 camper 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. Camp 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 Camp Director will ask for input from the guardian regarding the behavior. Staff and Camp 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 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.
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 Camp Director on a case by case basis. There will be no refund offered for an expelled camper.