



Sea ★ School

Family Handbook 2022-2023

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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 left our program.

Organizational Structure of Sea School

Kelly Matis, Vice President of Education & Conservation

Anne Marie Boroughs, Sea School Director

Zak Davis, Sea School Teacher

Erin Adams, Sea School Teacher

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

VP Education & Conservation

Kelly Matis

860-572-5955 ext. 320

kmatis@mysticaquarium.org

Sea School Director

Anne Marie Boroughs

860-572-5955 ext. 303

aboroughs@mysticaquarium.org

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 CT Childcare CPR, First Aid, AED and Medication Administration, and annual professional development.

Sea School Director—Anne Marie Boroughs

Anne Marie grew up on the East Coast in a U.S. Navy family and joined the Aquarium in 2008. They graduated Cum Laude from The University of New Haven in 2006 with a Bachelor of Fine Art and minor in Philosophy and Education, and then obtained the CT Directors Credential for Early Childhood in 2018. Anne Marie's passion is teaching peace, love, and empathy by showing children the joy of accepting themselves and others for who they are while gardening, exploring nature, making art (or anything messy), and blowing bubbles. If there are rocks, sticks, pom poms, pennies, flowers, or shells in your child's pockets—it is probably because Anne Marie said it was okay.



Sea School Teacher—Zak Davis

Zak is a CT local who joined the Aquarium in 2012. He obtained a Bachelor of English from Emmanuel College in Boston and has since obtained credentials in Early Childhood Education. He dedicated several years to the study of education, music, and film & video production at the University of Rhode Island. Zak joined the Sea School Team in the fall of



2016 and spends his class-time reading as many books as possible to the children, racing hot wheels, building Legos, drawing, and patiently finding answers to every single question the children ask. He is also the teacher most likely to demonstrate proper stunt rolls while attempting various physical feats.

Sea School Teacher—Erin Adams

Erin hails from Rhode Island but found her home in CT before joining the Aquarium in 2021. She graduated from the University of Hartford in 2014 earning a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education for Birth to Kindergarten. Erin enjoys craft-making with the children, capturing memorable moments with photos and videos, and keeping us on track so that we get the most out of every experience Sea School and the Aquarium offers. Her no-nonsense approach makes her the teacher most likely to keep our feet on the ground as we reach for the stars.



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

Sea School does not and shall not discriminate based on, specifically but not limited to race, creed, gender or sex, color, ancestry, nationality, disability, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, 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 non-refundable deposit reserves the child's space unless the family withdraws prior to enrollment, in which case the spot will be offered to the next family on the waitlist.

2022-2023 Session Fees and Payments

Tuition is payable in full, 10 monthly payments, or 3 installments. Families will be required to select a payment option at the time of registration.

Tuesday & Thursday	9:00am–1:00pm	Annual Tuition \$3,750
Monday, Wednesday & Friday	9:00am–1:00pm	Annual Tuition \$5,610
Monday-Friday	9:00am–1:00pm	Annual Tuition \$9,000

Monthly payments are due the 15th of each month August through May. Installment payments dates are due on or before the 15th of August, November, and February. Payments must stay current for child to continue attending and to avoid 10% late fee.

Payments are handled by the Director.

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 tuition will not be refunded. Families that have chosen to participate in the installment or full payment may receive a pro-rated refund at the Director's discretion. If you choose 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

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)*. The Milne Center is not open to the public and requires staff badge access to enter. 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

Sea School teachers will open the Milne Center front door to caregivers and children between 8:50-9am. The adult who drops off a child for school will need to verify health status/exposure in accordance with current COVID-19 mandates, give any pertinent information regarding care for the child, and sign any required forms. Children are welcomed inside the lobby to hold onto the walking rope until everyone is signed in and accounted for. Once all the children are signed in and a head count is completed, we are ready to start our adventure at the Aquarium. **Caregivers are strongly advised to keep goodbyes brief.**

For late arrivals, caregivers should 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 or making other arrangements.

The Milne Center doorbell is not for regular use by Sea School Families. We must use our cell phone or class phone and the doorbell should only be used if you do not have a phone or you cannot get ahold of us. Please do not ask custodians or other Aquarium staff to enter the building.

Pick-Up Routine

Pick-up time is an exciting time for both children and caregivers, but safety must remain our top priority. Children are dismissed to caregivers **from the classroom** at 1:00pm. A staff member will open Milne Center between 12:50-1pm. Caregivers/alternate pick-up person will be required to show a photo ID unless staff recognizes them.

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.

Please call/text Sea School cell phone 860-625-2103 if you are running late, otherwise we will defer to late pick up policy at 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. Caregivers/alternate pick-up person will be required to show a photo ID.

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/texting the Sea School cell phone at 860-625-2103. If a staff member cannot be reached, please use the Milne Center doorbell to contact a member of the Education Department.

If a child is not picked up and staff members have not received a phone call/text by 1:15pm from the primary caregiver or designated pick-up for the day, the following protocol will be initiated:

- Two staff members will remain with the child at all times.
- Staff members will attempt to contact caregivers/emergency contacts at all available phone numbers.
- If caregivers/emergency contacts cannot be reached by 2pm, 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 can 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 vastly different rates, and their readiness for academic subjects varies 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.

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 by appointment only during non-holiday school closures, as indicated in the Sea School calendar. Parents can request a meeting at any time.

Support Services and Special Education Resources

If you suspect your child will need support services (like Speech and Language or possible disability) the **Child Find** number is best for expediting the process.

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) www.cpacinc.org

*For assistance in referring your child for an evaluation, you may call the statewide **Child Find** Number 1(800) 445-2722.*

State Education Resource Center (SERC) www.ctserc.org 1-860-632-1485

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Bureau of School and District Improvement Bureau of Special Education www.ct.gov 1-860-713-6910

A Typical Day at Sea School

The Aquarium is a magical place filled with surprises around every corner. The routine and schedule are designed to incorporate learning opportunities in all areas of development. Our schedule and routine are 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

9:00–10am	Welcome, Greeting Time, Daily Adventure (tour of exhibits)
10-10:30am	Meal, Nutrition/Health Group Discussion, Read Aloud/Literacy
10:30-11:30am	Table Activities/Art, Indoor Learning Centers
11:30-12:30pm	Large and Small Group Activities, Music and Movement, Outdoor Learning Centers (with a minimum of 60 minutes outdoor/gross motor physical activity)
12:30pm-1pm	Finish Lunch, Journals, Handwriting. Pickup time starts at 12:50

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. Please ensure your child has a full set of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, shoes, and extra underwear) if 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.***

Mealtime/Nutrition

Our 4-hour program includes mealtimes. Please pack a healthy lunch with or without icepacks that does not require refrigeration or heating/cooking. Children can independently access their lunch during mealtimes and eat until they are full. Teachers sit with the children and discuss nutrition and “listening to their bodies”. This aspect of our nutrition curriculum encourages children to know their body’s needs and avoid overeating and the development of poor nutritional habits. In a healthy mealtime environment, children can choose what to eat from the foods offered and participate in group discussions about healthy choices. Water is always available throughout the day.

Sea School aligns 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. We encourage positive nutritional practices such as praising children for trying new foods, asking children about hunger/fullness before cleaning up, 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 strongly encouraged.

Family Involvement

Our program provides many opportunities for families to have a home-to-school connection and encourages the entire family to participate. Learning plans, newsletters and opportunities will be communicated in numerous ways (in person, on the Dojo App, or via email).

Toileting

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 routinely. When traveling to exhibits and areas outside the classroom, students will have access to the public bathrooms. Staff members will always be present 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. Teachers will assist children in changing clothes for a wet/BM accident to the best of our ability until a caregiver arrives.**

Preschoolers, even if fully potty-trained, have accidents sometimes. It is expected, and we suggest being prepared for this daily by ensuring your child has spare clothes. We suggest dressing your child in easy-to-pull-up-and-down clothing. Children at the end stages of toilet-training will be assisted toward independence and have a toileting plan communicated between caregivers 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 unless assistance is needed.

Outdoor Play

Children participating in Sea School have the opportunity to enjoy outdoor play in many ways. The Sea School “Green” is an enclosed outdoor, natural play space just for Sea School students. On the Green, children can 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 daily 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 young children, so children will have*

limited time outdoors on extremely cold days. When the 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 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. **In most cases 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 CT.**

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.nbcconnecticut.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 can go on-line or set up alerts for this notification.

<https://my.textcaster.com/asa/default.aspx?ID=651c5aed-b306-472c-9b67-8d79ecb9f5dc>

- 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, teachers develop an age and developmentally appropriate curriculum that is both child-centered and directed with teachers as 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 the 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 safely, 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 many 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 using 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 the program who is disruptive, disrespectful, or who jeopardizes their safety or the safety of others. Refunds will not be issued for suspensions or expulsions.

Sea School Health Policy

To provide a healthy environment for all, please keep children home if they or anyone in their household have symptoms related to communicable illnesses. Children will be sent home or excluded from Sea School if they exhibit any of 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)
- Exposure or suspected exposure to a COVID-19 positive person within the past 5 days

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) implements a system of strategies to support the safe and healthy provision of childcare during the pandemic. Childcare and youth camp settings are highly regulated regarding health and safety and operate with pre-COVID-19 practices including hand washing, management of ill children, and cleaning and sanitation that support their ability to meet enhanced requirements in response to the pandemic. Since March 2020, licensed childcare providers, including youth camps, have been required to continue to comply with all licensing requirements unless a specific waiver has been put into place as outlined in OEC's Memos regarding COVID-19 response (See <https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/memos/>). To minimize the spread of infectious illness, the Sea School staff members practice several routines:

- Daily health screening of children and staff.
- The requirement for staff is to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Children 6 months and older can get vaccinated, and children 5 years and older can get boosted. To keep classrooms operating and the children and staff safe, it is important to increase rates of child vaccination. Masks are strongly recommended for unvaccinated individuals.
- Group sizes no greater than 20 children (effective March 29, 2021).

- Regular hand washing by staff and children with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Proper hand washing is practiced upon entering the classroom, before and after snack/meals, after the use of the bathroom, after visiting the Green and after visiting areas of the Aquarium.
- Staff covering coughs and sneezes with tissues, or the corner of the elbow and children are encouraged when appropriate to cover coughs and sneezes in the same manner.
- 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.
- Licensed childcare providers are also required to comply with enhanced COVID-19 requirements put into place by the OEC that may be increased or relaxed over time. These enhanced requirements are informed by recommendations of public health authorities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH). These recommendations are based on the best currently available scientific evidence on COVID-19 risk and spread.
- In February 2020, COVID-19 was added to the List of Reportable Diseases. Those required to report such diseases must report cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the DPH Epidemiology and Emerging Infection Program (860-509-7994) and the local department of health in the town of residence of the case-patient by telephone on the day of recognition or strong suspicion of the disease.

Special Medical Conditions/Allergies

All Sea School staff are 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 for the treatment of 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 [immunization schedule.pdf \(ctoec.org\)](#). 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 unless they have a medical exemption. 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/CPR/AED for Adults and Children. If a child receives a minor injury at school, staff will treat the injury, complete a Sea School Accident/Incident 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 are 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 a Mystic Aquarium Accident/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 members 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 a 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 at 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.

Evacuation Procedures

These procedures cover a potential evacuation needed in the case of a fire, active threat, or severe incident. If the group needs to evacuate the classroom, Aquarium staff from the education offices and neighboring classrooms 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, then 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 children 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 childcare providers, we are mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm to 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 them, 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, medically, or morally allowed to live under circumstances, conditions, or associations injurious to their 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)

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.

DCF 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 3.



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



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