



PROTECT OUR OCEANS®

# MYSTIC AQUARIUM

## Summer Camp Caregiver Handbook 2026<sub>version 2.17.26</sub>



Welcome to summer camp at Mystic Aquarium! This handbook contains information which will be helpful as you and your camper prepare for camp. 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 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. 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/Medication), should they arise.

***The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to protect aquatic life and empower communities to save our oceans.  
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 as they enjoy this camp season.

Becky Hirsh  
Camp Director

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Call the Mystic Aquarium main line and then dial the appropriate extension. Camp Offices are staffed during regular business hours (7:45am-4:30pm), 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 Office Extension	Email and other information
<b>Camp Cell Phone</b>	<b>7:45am-5:00pm</b>	<b>860-625-2104</b>	<b>Please call or text this number first during camp hours. This phone is not on when camp is not in session.</b>
<b>Aquarium Main Line</b>		<b>860-572-5955</b>	
Becky Hirsh	Camp Director	Ext 158	<a href="mailto:bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org">bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org</a>
MaryEllen Mateleska	Alternate Camp Director	Ext 156	<a href="mailto:mmateleska@mysticaquarium.org">mmateleska@mysticaquarium.org</a>
Education Dept.		Ext 431	<a href="mailto:educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org">educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org</a>

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.

## 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>). 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 82 camps in Connecticut are currently 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 of rescue inhalers, Epi-pens, and oral medication. 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.

## REGISTRATION FOR CAMP

### HOW DO I REGISTER MY CHILD? WHEN IS MY CAMPERS PAPERWORK DUE?

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. Camp registration for each week will close 2 weeks prior to the start of camp. If you are trying to register after this time for a particular week, contact [educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org) or 860.572.5955 ext. 431 to inquire about availability. Each camp is tailored to a specific grade range; please register your camper for the grade range that they are **entering** during the next school year. **Campers who are registered for a different grade range than identified on their paperwork will be placed in the appropriate camp if space is available, or their fee refunded.**

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 from the Camp Director. All registered campers will then receive a follow-up email from CampDoc.com with detailed instructions on how to log in, submit required health forms, and complete the paperwork, including the new Plan of Care form. The website is secure, encrypted, and password protected. If you have used CampDoc.com in the past, most of the previous year's information will be visible, you will need to confirm this information. Some information will need to be updated from the previous year.

**All camp paperwork is due no later than two weeks prior to the start of your camp week. Campers who do not have all forms completed prior to the first day of camp will not be allowed to participate in camp, per state licensing requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, a signed physical form, and any necessary medication forms. Questions regarding this policy can be answered by [bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org).**

**Campers attending joint camps with Mystic Seaport Museum or Project Oceanology are required to have all of their paperwork, including medication forms and care plans, submitted to CampDoc no later than 2 weeks prior to the beginning of their camp week. Failure to do so may result in the loss of Monday at camp.**

## PAYMENT RECEIPT & 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. All refund requests must be made in writing and as soon as you know you need to cancel.

The Mystic Aquarium will provide a full refund for any camp that we cancel for any reason.

No refunds will be issued for non-attendance once a camp session starts.

No refund will be issued for a camper who is asked to leave camp for behavioral reasons.

Refunds will be considered at the discretion of the Camp Director, in the event of illness.

**Our standard refund/cancellation policy is as follows, once we receive your request:**

31 days or more from the start of the camp week - 80% of the camp fee will be refunded. A 20% admin fee is not refunded.

30 days or less from the start of the camp week – There is no refund offered for requests made during this time. Please contact the Camp Director directly to discuss your options.

## 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. All rescheduling and cancellation requests must be made in writing; please contact the Education department at [educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:educationinfo@mysticaquarium.org) with your request.

## REQUIRED CAMP PAPERWORK FOR MYSTIC AQUARIUM CAMPS

Camper Information	Contact, emergency information and health history	Parent Signature required
Medical Paperwork	Recent Physical <b>and</b> vaccination record – school health record completed within 3 years is accepted. Childhood vaccinations must be up to date.	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. You must also have your care/action plan.</b>	Doctor's signature required
Plan of Care	All campers have a Plan of Care form as part of their camp paperwork on CampDoc to be completed.	Parent Signature Required

### Camper information

This form provides Mystic Aquarium the information we need to provide a safe and engaging environment for your camper.

### IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

All campers are required to be up to date on all child and adolescent immunizations as posted by the CDC and Office of Early Childhood in Connecticut. While it is recommended that campers receive vaccinations against the Flu and Covid 19, they are not required.

### PHYSICAL OR HEALTH FORM

All campers are required to have a completed health physical to be dated within 3 years of the start date of their camp session. We accept the Mystic Aquarium form and school health forms.

### ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

All campers needing rescue medication or maintenance medication to be given during camp hours by camp staff are required to have a completed Administration of Medication form signed by the campers physician. **All medication must be in original containers. The prescription label must be attached. You must also have your care/action plan.**

### PLAN OF CARE

The purpose of this form is to provide the camp with information that will allow the staff to provide a quality camp experience to your camper as required by the State of Connecticut. If your camper does not require additional assistance during camp, you will indicate so and provide a signature.

## MUST I TURN IN MY PAPERWORK BEFORE CAMP STARTS?

All camp paperwork is due no later than two weeks prior to the start of your camp week. Campers who do not have all forms completed prior to this date will risk missing their first day of camp due to incomplete forms. Campers missing any forms as of the first day of camp will not be allowed to participate in camp on Monday. This includes, but is not limited to, camper information, a signed physical form and vaccination record, and any necessary medication forms or care plans. Questions regarding this policy or assistance with uploading forms, please contact [bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org).

## STAFF TO YOUTH RATIOS and SUPERVISION

Ages 3-5	1:6 ratio	Ages 6-8	1:9 ratio	Ages 9-16	1:9 ratio
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Mystic Aquarium takes camper supervision very seriously. We will stay within required ratios for supervision at all times. Mystic Aquarium will add additional staff or adult volunteers to a program to provide support to campers as necessary. Mystic Aquarium camp staff have been trained on working with youth and how to prevent being alone, one-on-one, with a minor for the safety of both the minor and the adult. Mystic Aquarium camp staff are also Mandated Reporters for the State of Connecticut as required for our license.

## TRANSITIONS DURING CAMP

Mystic Aquarium camps are based at the Mystic Aquarium's Milne Center, located by the penguin exhibit. Although every camp day is different; there are many adventures throughout the Aquarium. Each camp will have at least five transitions in and out of the classroom area each day. An example of a camp day schedule includes:

- 9:00 Check in
- 9:30AM Watch a penguin session and speak with a penguin trainer at the Penguin Exhibit
- 10:00AM Penguin class in the classroom
- 10:45AM California Sea Lion show in Marine Theater
- 12:00PM Lunch in Classroom
- 12:30PM Green Exploration
- 1:15PM Activity on adaptations of dinosaurs in the classroom
- 2:00PM Craft in classroom
- 2:45PM Visit World of Wonders exhibit
- 3:30PM Journal/Dinner Talk
- 4:00PM Leave for the day

Campers are prepared for all transitions but if your child has difficulty with transitions, you must indicate this on our Plan of Care for your child when you are completing the camper forms on CampDoc. Campers are provided with a visual and verbal outline of the day each morning, they are informed as to when an activity is ending and when the next activity will begin. When transitioning from one area in the Aquarium to another, campers are reminded to stay with the group and listen for instructions.

In the event that an individual camper refuses to transition to another location with the camp, the emergency contact will be called to pick up the camper for the day. Should this behavior become consistent, the camper will not be allowed to attend the rest of camp.

## SUPPORT STAFF DURING CAMP

Parents of campers who require one on one support staff during school, must send your camper with an external support staff so that the camp experience is more rewarding.

## WHAT COMMUNICATION SHOULD A GUARDIAN EXPECT FROM THE CAMP DIRECTOR?

The Camp Director will keep you informed of all important camp matters in a timely fashion. We have found that when information is emailed out too soon, it tends to get lost in the email shuffle. However, please feel free to reach out to the Camp Director with any questions [bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org).

**CampDoc Information:** Our CampDoc portal will be available no later than the middle of February for you to complete the camp forms. Once this is ready, you will be sent an email to the address you provide at registration that will explain the process. If someone other than you is completing the forms, we will also need their email. Please send this information to [bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org). This email will also contain this handbook as an easy reference.

**Welcome Letter:** Beginning in May, an email will be sent to every guardian welcoming you to camp. This email will be sent to the email address that was provided during registration. It will have a reminder of your camp session dates, a reminder of when forms are due, information about the check in and pick up location and process, what your campers will need for camp, dates of planned trips off Aquarium grounds, reminders regarding the Individual Plan of Care form and medication forms, our illness policy, our cancellation policy, and camp contact information.

**Camp Forms Reminder:** Three weeks prior to the start of the camp week, the Camp Director will send an email to anyone who is missing any forms or information. This email should be acted upon ASAP. Camp forms are required to be at the camp no later than two weeks before the first day of camp.

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

**Behavior Issues or Illness:** The Camp Director will immediately reach out to the guardian regarding behavioral issues or illness during camp. Minor injuries (i.e., scraped knee, paper cut, splinter, etc.) or behavioral challenges (i.e., refused to eat lunch, spoke out in camp, etc.) will be addressed with the guardian at pickup at the end of the day.

## BATHROOM REQUIREMENTS

**Campers in all camps must be toilet trained and able to use the bathroom independently to attend any camp at Mystic Aquarium.**

**As a requirement for enrollment**, all children need to be fully toilet trained. The camp is not licensed for an under-three endorsement (sections 19a-79-10) from the Office of Early Childhood which means that staff are not permitted to change diapers/pullups or wipe a child, however they may assist them verbally as to how to clean themselves and change their clothes. The requirement for children to enter the program is that they are able to use the bathroom independently. Due to the uniqueness of this environment, the amount of time that is spent visiting exhibits and partaking in special events, being able to use the bathroom independently is imperative and essential to being able to take full advantage of everything the Aquarium has to offer.

We do suggest that you consider the practicality of the clothing a camper wears to camp. The clothes should be easy to take off and put back on by the child while in the restroom. One-piece outfits are not recommended for camp.

This means that a child:

1. Knows when they need to use the bathroom.
2. Can unfasten, pull down bottoms and underwear.
3. Can get on the toilet and wipe themselves.
4. Pull underwear up and pull up and fasten bottoms.
5. Flush the toilet and wash their hands.
6. In the event of an accident, the camper must be able to change clothes and clean themselves up.
7. Diapers or pullups are not permitted.

Staff are always monitoring campers via sound while using the restrooms. All staff are aware that campers of any age may have an accident and will assist by providing clean clothes for the camper, assisting with buttons or zippers as needed and providing items the camper may use to clean themselves up. This is done with respect and discreetly so as not to embarrass the camper.

In the event a camper has a bathroom accident and the camper is not able to fully clean themselves up and change clothes, the Camp Director will call the guardian to come in to assist the camper according to regulations. Should a health emergency occur, the staff will step in at that point.

Special needs campers will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## HEALTHCARE POLICY

Mystic Aquarium Summer Camp has the safety and wellbeing of your camper at the forefront of our programming. Camp staff will review all camper medical forms prior to the beginning of the camp week. Any questions that arise will be presented to the Camp Director to inquire about with the guardians. During the camp week, guardians will be contacted by either the acting Camp Director or a direct camp counselor (if off site) regarding camper illness. The acting Camp Director will contact the guardian regarding any injury during camp. Contact the Camp Director with any questions.

## GENERAL ILLNESS POLICY

**Call or text the camp cell phone at 860-625-2104** prior to check-in at 8:45am 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 guardian 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. **DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE PHONE TO REPORT A SAME DAY ABSENCE. DO NOT SEND AN EMAIL TO THE CAMP DIRECTOR TO REPORT A SAME DAY CAMPER ILLNESS.**

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° F -must stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever resolves without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours of the camp's start time.
- Conjunctivitis – red, itchy eyes, discharge, until under medication for 24 hours.
- Persistent cough or congestion that is not due to a documented condition.
- Any contagious disease.
- Suspicious rashes or lesions with bleeding or oozing. Rashes can be an initial sign of a viral illness.

- 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.
- Receive a positive test for or are experiencing lingering symptoms (cough, congestion, runny nose, lethargy, etc.) related to COVID, RSV, and/or Flu. Children must stay home until their fever is resolved without the use of medication, and then wear a mask until all symptoms are resolved. If a child will not continuously wear a mask, they must stay home until all symptoms are resolved. They must also meet the return to camp requirements stated below.

## **RETURN TO CAMP REQUIREMENTS**

- Camper is symptom free for a full 24 hours and can fully participate in all program activities.
- Camper has an official care plan in place, due to a documented health condition identified by a physician. Examples include acid reflux, allergies, asthma, chronic cough, etc.
  - Symptoms of documented conditions could also be due to a communicable illness, so must be monitored.
- Campers have a physician's note indicating they were seen by medical personnel, can return to camp with no restrictions, and their symptoms are not contagious.
  - Even with a physician's return to camp note, if the child has a lingering cough, runny nose, or congestion, they must wear a mask.

## **CAMPER INJURY and ILLNESS DURING CAMP**

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 members 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, depending on the situation. 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.

## **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 camper, a staff member can remove it. If the tick is attached or embedded in the camper, per state regulations, the caregiver will be contacted to remove the tick. It is the caregivers' responsibility to check their child for ticks daily.

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

- **Please make every effort to arrive on time for the start of camp. Based on our experience, campers who arrive late are frequently worried about missing activities, meeting up with their group late, and feeling rushed – this can result in the camper feeling anxious at the start of their camp day.**
- Check-in and pick-up of campers will occur at the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center, located at the eastern end of the Mystic Aquarium campus, except for Mystic River Adventure, Marine Animals and Their Environment and Environmental Conservation Camp. See pages 13 and 14 for this information.
- Medications for any camper will be handed in to the Camp Director on Monday morning prior to check-in. Inform the Camp Director if you need the medications back every day or if they may stay at the camp for the week.
- 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 at which to reach you for that day on the sign in sheet, and who we should expect to sign out your camper at pick-up.
- Guardians of campers registered for Extended Day will be asked if they are picking up before 5:00pm. If so, what time can we expect you?
- Campers will be screened for wellness. Campers who appear ill will not be allowed to attend camp that day.
- Once a camper is checked-in, they will be asked to join the group. To minimize stress for all campers, guardians will check-in their camper 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.
- If you have an anxious camper, please do not wait for your camper to go inside after they are checked in. This tends to make the camper more anxious. Please say goodbye and let us take care of your child. We are wonderful at creating a distraction and your child will recover quickly.
- **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 pick-up 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 pick-up 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. Contact the Camp Director to add more people to your list.
- No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to check in or pick up 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 the camp starting to discuss your options.

## EMERGENCY PICK-UP DUE TO AQUARIUM EVACUATION

If 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. Guardians 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

## CHECK-IN AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES FOR PROJECT OCEANOLOGY

- Morning Check-In will normally take a little longer the first day.
- Check-in will take place at the curbside around the circle adjacent to the Project Oceanology building. Please remain in line as **each camper is checked in from their vehicle** and pull up accordingly to the next available staff member.
- Please have any medication ready for check-in if applicable.
- Camp staff cannot check in campers before 9:00am.
- It is important to note that campers cannot be dropped off. The daily wellness screening outlined below requires parents and campers to remain in their vehicle until our camp staff clears the camper to attend camp.
- The first car in line will begin the check-in process. Please be patient and remain in your vehicle. All campers will be screened for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress. This screening process will take place in the vehicle each day.
- **Please be mindful of the side road between Project Oceanology and Marine Science buildings. As you pull up in line for check-in, be sure to keep that space clear.**
- Once all campers have been checked in, we will begin our activities for the day.
- **If your child has seasonal allergies, they must be indicated on the health form.**
- **Afternoon Pick-Up:** Afternoon curbside pickup will take place at 4:00 pm in the same location the camper was dropped off in the morning; around the circle in front of the Project Oceanology building. All parents/caregivers will be asked to remain in their vehicle until their turn in line.
- **A camp staff member will approach the vehicle and ask for photo ID** and confirm that the person is listed as authorized to transport before the camper is released. At that point the camper will get into the vehicle. Please note additional people can be added to the list of those authorized to transport list prior to pick up by alerting Project Oceanology staff or calling the front office.
- No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to sign in or sign out a camper.
- Campers cannot drive themselves to camp. They must be signed in and out by a guardian.

## WHAT CAMPS AND PROGRAMS ARE WE OFFERING?

### Traditional Camps:

These camps are held solely at the Mystic Aquarium and may include one field trip to a local estuary. Check-in and pick-up will be at the Milne Center, Mystic Aquarium each day.

Entering Grade Level	Camps Involved
PreK-K	Marine Mammal Mania, Shark Club, Water World, Feathery Friends There are no field trips for these PreK-K camps.
Grades 1-3	Aquarium Stars (Initial week is 4 days), Totally Turtles, No Bones About It, Aquarium Steam There is a field trip with each camp.
Grades 4-6	Eco Heroes (Initial week is 4 days), Fishy Science and Art, Mysterious Sea There is a field trip with each camp.
Grades 7-10	Marine Bio 101, Animal Care Camp

### Extended Day for Traditional Camps:

Extended Day is offered for some weeks of our traditional camps Grades 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 4:00pm-5:00pm, for an additional fee. Campers must be registered in advance. Extended Day is offered: June 15-18, July 6-10, August 10-14.

### Partner Camps:

These camps are held jointly with either the Mystic Seaport Museum or Project Oceanology at Avery Point. They do not have a field trip and check-in and pick-up differs from our traditional camps.

**Mystic Seaport:** All campers are required to be up to date on all child and adolescent immunizations as posted by the CDC and Office of Early Childhood in Connecticut. It is recommended that campers receive vaccinations against the Flu and Covid 19, but they are not required.

**Project Oceanology:** All campers are required to be up to date on all child and adolescent immunizations as posted by the CDC and Office of Early Childhood in Connecticut. It is recommended that campers receive vaccinations against the Flu and Covid 19, but they are not required.

Entering Grade Level	Partner Camps Involved
Grades 4-6	Mystic River Adventure, Marine Animals and Their Environment
Grades 7-10	Environmental Conservation

- **MYSTIC RIVER ADVENTURE:**

1. All check-in of campers for the Mystic River Adventure camp will be at the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center, located at the eastern end of the Mystic Aquarium campus unless informed otherwise. 55 Coogan BLVD, Mystic, CT 06355
2. Pick up will be at the Mystic Seaport Museum main entrance (by the tugboat and gift shop) at 4:00pm. Parking at the Mystic Seaport Museum is in the main parking lot, please plan accordingly. 75 Greenmanville Ave, Mystic, CT 06355
3. Have a child in the Mystic River Adventure camp and another camper at Mystic Aquarium that same week? We request that you pick up your camper for the Mystic River Adventure camp first, then come to the Aquarium to collect your other child. Please let your second camper know the procedure.

- **MARINE ANIMALS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT**

- **Monday-Wednesday:** Check-in and pick-up of campers will be at the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center, located at the eastern end of the Mystic Aquarium campus.  
55 Coogan Blvd, Mystic, CT 06355
- **Thursday and Friday:** Check-in and pick-up of campers will be at Project Oceanology, Groton CT.  
You will receive specific information regarding Project Oceanology in your *Welcome Letter* prior to camp starting that will include what your camper will need and their check-in and pick-up processes.  
1084 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340
- Have a camper in camp at Project Oceanology and one at the Aquarium? Because Project Oceanology has boat activities, check-in/pick-up of your camper at Project Oceanology needs to occur first. After check-in at Project Oceanology, come to the Aquarium with your other camper. We will be expecting them. Please let your second camper know they will not miss anything in camp. At the end of the day, after you pick up your camper at Project Oceanology, come to the Aquarium and pick up your second child. Please let your second child know the procedure.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION CAMP**

- **Monday-Wednesday:** Check-in and pick-up of campers will be at Project Oceanology, Groton CT.  
You will receive specific information regarding Project Oceanology in your *Welcome Letter* prior to camp starting that will include what your camper will need and their check-in and pick-up processes.  
1084 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340
- **Thursday and Friday:** Check-in and pick-up of campers will be at the Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center, located at the eastern end of the Mystic Aquarium campus.  
55 Coogan Blvd, Mystic, CT 06355
- Have a camper in camp at Project Oceanology and one at the Aquarium? Because Project Oceanology has boat activities, check-in/pick-up of your camper at Project Oceanology needs to occur first. After check-in at Project Oceanology, come to the Aquarium with your other camper. We will be expecting them. Please let your second camper know they will not miss anything in camp. At the end of the day, after you pick up your camper at Project Oceanology, come to the Aquarium and pick up your second child. Please let your second child know the procedure.

## CAMP SESSIONS BY WEEK

<b>Camp Dates</b>	<b>Entering PreK-K Camps</b>	<b>Entering 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>	<b>Entering 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>Entering 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>Paperwork final due date</b>
<b>June 15-18</b>	Marine Mammal Mania 1 Mon-Thurs June 15-18	Aquarium Stars 1 Mon-Thurs June 15-18 <i>(Extended Day Available)</i>	Eco Heroes 1 Mon-Thurs June 15-18 <i>(Extended Day Available)</i>		<b>June 1</b>
<b>June 22-26</b>	Shark Club 1	Totally Turtles 1	Mystic River Adventure 1		<b>June 8</b>
<b>June 29- July 3</b>	Water World 1	No Bones About It 1	Fishy Science and Art 1	Animal Care Camp	<b>June 15</b>
<b>July 6-10</b>	Feathery Friends 1	Aquarium STEAM 1 <i>(Extended Day Available)</i>	Mysterious Sea 1 <i>(Extended Day Available)</i>	Marine Biologist 101 1	<b>June 22</b>
<b>July 13-17</b>	Marine Mammal Mania 2	Aquarium Stars 2	Eco Heroes 2		<b>June 29</b>
<b>July 20-24</b>	Shark Club 2	Totally Turtles 2	Marine Animals & Their Environment	Environmental Conservation Camp	<b>July 6</b>
<b>July 27-31</b>	Water World 2	No Bones About It 2	Mystic River Adventure 2		<b>July 13</b>
<b>Aug 3-7</b>	Feathery Friends 2	Aquarium STEAM 2	Mysterious Sea 2	Marine Biologist 101 2	<b>July 20</b>
<b>Aug 10-14</b>	Marine Mammal Mania 3	Aquarium Stars 3 <i>(Extended Day Available)</i>	Fishy Science and Art 2 <i>(Extended Day Available)</i>		<b>July 27</b>
<b>Aug 17-21</b>	Shark Club 3	Totally Turtles 3	Eco Heroes 3		<b>Aug 3</b>

## CAMP PROGRAMS

### Entering PreK-K

Each PreK-K Camp is a half-day, weeklong experience specifically designed for campers entering pre-K or Kindergarten. You may have a hard time deciding which one of our four exciting weeks to choose!

- **WATER WORLD**

This camp is all about water. What lives in it, where is it found and how do we use it. This camp will be onsite at the Aquarium, no field trip.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm: June 29-July 3, July 27-31

- **Marine Mammal Mania**

This exciting week is all about marine mammals. This camp will be onsite at the Aquarium, no field trip.

Holiday Week Schedule: Monday – Thursday, 9:00am-12:00pm: June 15-18

Full Week Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm: July 13-17, August 10-14

- **SHARK CLUB**

Not in the “club” yet? Come join us and become a member. This camp will be onsite at the Aquarium, no field trip.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm: June 22-26, July 20-24, Aug 17-21

- **FEATHERY FRIENDS**

If penguins are birds, why can't they fly? Come learn about the cool birds that live near water. This camp will be onsite at the Aquarium, no field trip.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm: June 16-20, July 14-18

### ENTERING 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> GRADE

These camps are specifically designed for campers entering Grades 1-3. There are four exciting camps to experience.

- **AQUARIUM STARS**

This camp looks at the many animals and people who make Mystic Aquarium such a wonderful place. This camp will take a trip to Bluff Point State Park.

Holiday Week Schedule: Monday – Thursday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 15-18 (Extended Day Available)

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 13-17, Aug 10-14 (Extended Day Available)

- **TOTALLY TURTLES**

Join us as we jump into the world of the turtle! This camp will take a trip to Bluff Point State Park.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 22-26, July 20-24, August 17-21

- **NO BONES ABOUT IT**

Did you know that a 600 pound octopus can fit through a hole the size of a quarter? Let's learn about inverts! This camp will take a trip to Bluff Point State Park.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 29-July 3, July 27-31

- **AQUARIUM STEAM**

Aquarium science and art, how fun! This camp will take a trip to Bluff Point State Park.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 6-10 (Extended Day Available), Aug 3-7

## ENTERING 4<sup>TH</sup>-6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

These camps are specifically designed for campers entering Grades 4-6. There are several choices to select from.

- **ECO HEROES**  
Our focus will be on the local ecosystems from streams to ponds to the estuaries. This camp takes a trip to Bluff Point State Park.  
Holiday Week Schedule: Monday – Thursday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 15-18 (Extended Day Available)  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 13-17, Aug 17-21
- **FISHY SCIENCE AND ART**  
Have fun combining science and art to see what happens. Learn how the Aquarium uses both! This camp takes a trip to Bluff Point State Park.  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 29-July 3, Aug 10-14 (Extended Day Available)
- **MYSTERIOUS SEA**  
The ocean is involved in a great deal of mysteries from what lies below to sea monsters of the past. Let's learn about some of these mysteries and connect them to now. This camp takes a trip to Bluff Point State Park.  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 6-10 (Extended Day Available), Aug 3-7
- **MYSTIC RIVER ADVENTURE**  
This camp provides your camper with the unique opportunity to see the Mystic River from above and below as they also learn to sail. This is a joint camp with Mystic Seaport Museum. Check in is held at Mystic Aquarium. Pick up is at Mystic Seaport Museum.  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 22-26, July 27-31
- **MARINE ANIMALS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT**  
This camp is held at both organizations, three days at Mystic Aquarium then two days at Project Oceanology, and is specially designed for young, inquisitive marine biologists. This is a joint camp with Project Oceanology. Camp is held Monday -Wednesday at Mystic Aquarium and Thursday-Friday at Project Oceanology.  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 20-24

## ENTERING 7<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

These camps are specifically designed for campers entering Grades 7-10. There are several choices to select from.

- **MARINE BIO 101**  
So, you want to be a Marine Biologist? Do you know what the next steps are in your journey? This camp will take a trip to Barn Island.  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 6-10, August 3-7
- **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION CAMP**  
In this week-long program, campers participate in three days of research and exploration aboard Project Oceanology's vessels to discover life in and around Long Island Sound. Then, they spend two days at Mystic Aquarium exploring the work being done to protect the many varied species we have at the Aquarium. This is a joint camp with Project Oceanology. Camp is held Monday-Wednesday at Project Oceanology and Thursday-Friday at Mystic Aquarium.  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: July 20-24
- **ANIMAL CARE CAMP**  
Do you have a teen that is starting to think about careers and is possibly considering becoming a member of the husbandry team here at Mystic Aquarium?  
Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm: June 29-July 3

## EXTENDED DAY

Need help with hectic schedules? Let your full day camper enjoy an extra hour of activities including a variety of crafts, games, and touring the Aquarium. Please let us know if you are picking your camper up early. Available for select camps during the following weeks: June 15-18, July 6-10, August 10-14.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, 4:00pm-5:00pm

## WHAT WILL MY CAMPER NEED TO BRING?

Remember to label all items brought to camp by your camper. This is how we know what belongs to whom. We make every effort to find lost items. Labeled items are sometimes easier to find.

- ❖ Every day, your camper will need appropriate outer clothing, closed toe shoes which can get wet, a full change of clothing including shoes, a water bottle, sunscreen and insect repellent. Full-day campers will also need lunch, and snacks. Half day camps will not need lunch, but they will need snacks. Please check your itinerary to see if you need anything else on a particular day.
- ❖ Hiking and field trip to Bluff Point or Barn Island days: Your camper will need appropriate outer clothing, closed toe shoes which can get wet, a full change of clothing including shoes, a water bottle, sunscreen, bug repellent, lunch, and snacks.
- ❖ **Mystic River Adventure** campers will need the following each day for their time at the Mystic Seaport Museum. Appropriate outer clothing, sweatshirt, closed toe shoes which can get wet (croc or old sneakers are fine, NOT FLIP FLOPS), a full change of clothing including shoes, a refillable water bottle, a brimmed hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, towel, and a bag for wet items. Swimsuits are optional. Campers will also need lunch, and snacks.
- ❖ **Environmental Conservation and Marine Animals and Their Environment** campers will need the following for camp when they are at Project Oceanology: hat, bathing suit (when at Project Oceanology), towel, closed toe water shoes (crocs or old sneakers, not flip flops), sweatshirt, appropriate outer clothing, a full change of clothing including shoes, a refillable water bottle, sunscreen and bug repellent. Campers will also need lunch, and snacks. Optional items are sunglasses, notebook and goggles/snorkel.  
Environmental Conservation and Marine Animals and Their Environment campers will need the following for camp when they are at Mystic Aquarium: closed toe water shoes (crocs or old sneakers, not flip flops), sweatshirt, appropriate outer clothing, a full change of clothing including shoes, a refillable water bottle, sunscreen and bug repellent. Campers will also need lunch, and snacks.
- ❖ Camper lunch containers must include a cold pack to keep perishable items cool.
- ❖ Please apply sunscreen and bug repellent prior to dropping your camper off.
- ❖ Campers will be given a camp hat on their first day of camp at Mystic Aquarium. At the end of each day at the Aquarium, hats will be placed on a table until the next day. The hat will remain at the Aquarium until the last day of camp, when it is sent home with the camper. If your camper is leaving camp before the last day, please let the camp staff know in advance.
- ❖ Do not send your camper with electronics, cell phones, personal sports equipment, plastic straws, live animals, alcohol, drugs of any type or toys to camp. If they must bring any of these items, they must keep them in their bags. Alcohol and drugs will be given to the Camp Director.
- ❖ Do not send anything that could possibly be viewed as a weapon of any type. Mystic Aquarium summer camp has a zero-tolerance policy regarding weapons.

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

Grade Level	Program/Camp	Days of the Week & Hours	Check-In Time & Location	Pick-Up Time & Location	Extended Day Pick Up
Traditional Camp Entering PreK – K	<b>Marine Mammal Mania, Shark Club, Water World, Feathery Friends</b>	Monday-Friday 9:00am-12:00pm	8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	12:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	N/A
Traditional Camp Holiday Week (6/15-18) Entering PreK – K	<b>Marine Mammal Mania</b>	Monday-Thursday 9:00am-12:00pm	8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	12:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	N/A
Traditional Camp Holiday Week (6/15-18) Entering Grade 1-6	<b>Aquarium Stars (Grades 1-3) Eco Heroes (Grades 4-6)</b>	Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm	8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	5:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium: Weeks of June 15-18, July 6-10, August 10-14
Traditional Camp Entering Grade 1-3, 4-6	<b>1-3: Aquarium Stars, Totally Turtles, No Bones About It, Aquarium STEAM 4-6: Eco Heroes, Fishy Art and Science, Mysterious Sea</b>	Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm	8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	5:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium: Weeks of June 15-18, July 6-10, August 10-14
Traditional Camp Entering Grade 7-10	<b>Marine Bio 101 Animal Care Camp</b>	Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm	8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	N/A
Partner Camp Entering Grade 4-6	<b>Mystic River Adventure</b>	Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm	8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	4:00pm Mystic Seaport Museum	N/A
Partner Camp Entering Grade 4-6	<b>Marine Animals and Their Environment</b>	Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm	Monday-Wednesday 8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium Thursday-Friday 8:45am Project Oceanology	Mon-Wed 4:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium Thurs-Fri 4:00pm Project Oceanology	N/A
Partner Camp Entering Grade 7-10	<b>Environmental Conservation Camp</b>	Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm	Monday-Wednesday 8:45am Project Oceanology Thursday-Friday 8:45am Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	Mon-Wed 4:00pm Project Oceanology Thurs-Fri 4:00pm Milne Center Mystic Aquarium	N/A

## POSSIBLE LUNCH PURCHASE OPTIONS

Camp lunches, provided by caregivers, are required to include an ice pack to keep the lunches cool. There are limited coolers available during camp for lunches.

**Mystic Aquarium does not provide lunch for campers.** Below is a list of some, but not all, local places where you may purchase a lunch for your camper before you drop them off. Mystic Aquarium is not endorsing any of these locations, we are only providing you with some local options.

McQuade's Marketplace: 14 Clara Drive, Mystic, CT 860.536.2054 Opens at 7:00am

Big Y: 79 Stonington Road, Mystic, CT 860.536.5813 Opens at 7:00am

Mystic Market East: 63 Williams Ave, Mystic, CT 860.572.7992 Opens at 8:00am

## ADDRESSES OF CAMP INVOLVED PROPERTIES

<b>Mystic Aquarium</b> 55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355	<b>Mystic Seaport Museum</b> 75 Greenmanville Ave, Mystic, CT 06355	<b>Project Oceanology</b> 1084 Shennecossett Rd #1, Groton, CT 06340
<b>Bluff Point State Park</b> 55 Depot Rd, Groton, CT 06340	<b>Barn Island</b> 249 Palmer Neck Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06378	<b>Mystic Hilton</b> 20 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

**Guardians are required to initial that you have read and understand our policy on the CampDoc forms. Take note of what is considered as acceptable behavior and speak with your youth prior to attending the first day of programming.**

**Youth attending Summer Camp at the Mystic Aquarium are expected to:**

- Be responsible for their actions.
- Respect each other and the environment
- Respect the rights and dignity of all fellow campers and staff.
- Base all interactions on honesty.
- Care for themselves and others around them
- Make appropriate choices for themselves.
- Be kind to each other.
- Not use cell phones or other electronic devices during programming, unless they are provided by camp staff.
- Follow the rules as set by the camp on the first day together.

**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 zero tolerance for bullying, humiliating, or degrading. Any youth who is witnessed by staff bullying, humiliating, or degrading another youth during camp will be immediately removed from camp.
- We have zero tolerance for violence. Any youth who is witnessed by staff purposefully hitting, kicking, verbally threatening, or causing injury with or without the intent to harm another youth or staff member during camp will be immediately removed from camp.
- We are all aware of sibling interactions; please note that to be fair to all youth, siblings are expected to adhere to our rules when in camp together.
- Any action which may make another youth uncomfortable.
- In the event that an individual youth refuses to transition to another location with the camp, the emergency contact will be called to pick up the youth for the day. In the event of repeated instances of refusal to transition, the youth will be requested to no longer attend the camp.

**The following steps will be taken if 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 youth to a more appropriate behavior.
3. If there is a second incidence of unacceptable behavior, staff will have a private discussion with the youth 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 youth continues to disrupt the camp program, the Camp Director reserves the right to suspend the youth from the program for a period which will depend upon the severity of the issue. There will be no refund issued for behavior related removals from camp.
6. If a youth's behavior threatens the immediate safety of the individual, other children, or staff – this includes any hitting, pushing, throwing items, verbal threats or kicking of any staff or youth, the guardian will be contacted and expected to pick up the youth immediately. We have a strict no violence policy and this youth will not be allowed to return to camp.
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 youth.

### **CELL PHONE ELECTRONICS POLICY**

The use of cell phones and electronics by youth during the program is prohibited. In the event that youth are noticed using cell phones or electronics, that are not provided by camp staff, during Summer Camp, the following steps will be taken:

1. The youth will be directed to put away the cell phone or electronic device.
2. If the use continues, the device will be collected and given to the Camp Director for safe keeping and the youth's guardian will be contacted. The device will be returned to the guardian at the end of the day.

Note: Electronic devices needed for health monitoring, translation or another use, must be approved prior to the camp session by the Camp Director.

## **QUICK TIPS**

- We fill some camps very quickly, so register early.
- Log into your membership to receive your best price. We cannot honor memberships purchased after you have purchased a camp.
- Ask your camper if they want to attend a particular camp – “Will you be okay with sailing along with other campers on a sailboat?”
- Have your campers paperwork completed on CampDoc before it is due.
- Do not wait till the last minute to schedule your campers physical, if they are due.
- Read the information sent to you from the Camp Director. It will answer many of your questions. If you still have questions email or call the Camp Director. [bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org) 860.572.5955 ext. 158
- Make sure any medication coming in is in its original packaging with the label attached and the medication forms and care plan have been turned in.
- Send your camper with lunch and snacks that they will eat. Remember that ice pack!
- Please be patient on Monday as we gather our campers on that first day each week.
- Every day, your camper will need:
  - appropriate outer clothing
  - closed toe shoes which can get wet
  - full change of clothing including shoes
  - water bottle lunch -half day camps will not need lunch, but they will need snacks.
  - snacks.
  - Half-day camps will not need lunch, but they will need snacks.

- Hiking and field trip to Bluff Point or Barn Island days:
  - Your camper will need appropriate outer clothing
  - closed toe shoes which can get wet
  - a full change of clothing including shoes,
  - A water bottle
  - sunscreen
  - bug repellent
  - lunch
  - snacks.