

Sea Camp 2012 Parent Handbook



I. Operating Information

1-1. Purpose

Sea Camp is an educational day camp sponsored by the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) – Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) - Marine Education Center (MEC). It is designed to foster an awareness and understanding of the coast's fragile marine and aquatic environments among children ages 6 to 13. Sea Camp is conducted at the Marine Education Center and located on the campus of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. The MEC is the educational and outreach extension of The University of Southern Mississippi- Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

Activities are held both at the MEC and in the field. The number of field trips depends on the age of the child. Children age 6 and above will cruise on the *R/V Sea Explorer* pontoon boat. Children age 8 and above will also visit Ship Island, where they are often delighted by the sight of dolphins leaping through the water. Children age 12 and above tour also get the opportunity to tour the Pascagoula River. Children are bused to and from all field trip activities not within walking distance. All water vessels are Coast Guard certified. Safety is **always** a top priority. Swimming is not allowed, and shoes (closed-toe shoes during field trips) must be worn at all times.

Children will participate in a grant that MEC has received called Mississippi Marine Debris Removal and Prevention Project. Campers will help to restore and conserve our island and to educate others of the importance of proper trash disposal. Participants will foster awareness to others and will lead to a cleaner earth for future generations. Everyone will be given proper directions as to what is appropriate to pick up along with protective gloves.

1-2. Facility Location and Contact Information

Sea Camp is located on The University of Southern Mississippi- Gulf Coast Research Laboratory at 703 East Beach Drive, Ocean Springs, MS 39564. The facility's phone number is 228-818-8890 and hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

1-3. Services provided and hours and days of operation

Sea Camp is a Coastal Sciences Summer Camp. Routinely, Sea Camp consists of 3 to 4 classes for children ages 6-13, subdivided by age into groups which are 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, and 12-13. Classes for 12-13 year-olds are scheduled on an as-needed basis annually. All classes meet from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

1-4. Registration

Students arrive Monday morning between 8:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Parents and children will gather under the large tent in front of the MEC each morning. The tent is accessed from the designated parking areas. Teaching Assistants are seated at tables under the tent where they complete registration (receive money, provide receipts and collect any missing paperwork). During check in you will sign your child in and will receive 2-3 "Dash Cards." These "Dash Cards" will be helpful in picking up and dropping off your child the rest of the week. The tent is divided into section A-D, each marked with an appropriate sign. Once students have completed registration, they will be escorted by the Aides and Volunteers to their seats. Instructors are available to talk with parents and children during registration.

1-5. Tuition

The cost per week for age groups is as follows:

6-7 year-old campers:	\$210.00
8-11 year-old campers:	\$235.00
12-13 year- old campers:	\$275.00

The cost listed above includes all instructional materials; all field trip transportation, admission fees; art supplies; class photo; and t-shirt.

A \$50 non-refundable pre-registration deposit is required. The deposit will be applied toward the total due. Registration fees may be paid in full during pre-registration, if desired. **All fees must be paid by May 11, 2012.**

1-6. Refund Policy

Refunds for paid tuition balances will be made if requested in writing, by fax, by email or in person at the MEC office according to the schedule below. If a student is registered for a camp session and becomes unable to attend, full credit can be obtained if applied to an alternate session of Sea Camp 2012. This refund will apply **ONLY** if space is available in the Sea Camp session. Refunds in the form of a personal check may take up to 8 weeks for processing.

We reserve the right to grant exceptions to this stated policy in certain situations.

Time of Request - Refund/Credit for Tuition Balance

- At least 15 days before start of the requested camp session - 100%
- 7 - 14 days before start of the requested camp session - 50%
- Less than 7 days before start of the requested camp session – No refunds

II. Arrival and Departure Procedures for Students

2-1. Arrival procedures

Parents may drop off children between 8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (except on Thursday field trip days, and then by 7:30 a.m.), Monday will be the only day you will need to sign your child in under the large tent in front of the MEC. The remainder of the week please display your “Dash Card” in your window. You will drop your child off with a Sea Camp Staff Member each morning behind the MEC. When pulling onto the Gulf Coast Research Lab, make an immediate left after the guard house, and follow the drive between the two houses onto the gravel drive keep moving at a slow speed until stopped by a staff member or traffic. Having your “Dash Card” easily displayed for the Sea Camp Staff Member will be helpful. This allows Sea Camp Staff to see what group the child is in. Your child will then be escorted to their appropriate room.

2-2. Signing Students Out

Parents can “sign out” children between 3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (except on Thursday field trip days, and then by 3:45 p.m.) **To pick up your child there will be no need to get out of your car.** When pulling onto the Gulf Coast Research Lab, make an immediate left after the guard house, and follow the drive between the two houses onto the gravel drive keep moving at a slow speed until stopped by a staff member or traffic. Having your “Dash Card” easily displayed for the Sea Camp Staff Member will be helpful. **A Staff Member will be there to collect your signature.** Children will wait in assigned room

until parent/ guardian or designated person comes to pick up individual(s). There will be no need for you to get out of the car. Parent/guardians will then continue on the gravel drive, back to the main road. A Sea Camp Staff Member will direct you back to the campus exit.

Requirements:

***A signature is required by the parent/guardian or designated persons.**

*A parent/guardian or designated person picking up a child **must** be listed on the child's "Deliver and Receive" section on their Required Parental Authorization Form.

***A valid driver's license with a photograph (or appropriate identification) is required for signing out a child.**

2-3. Early Check Out

For early "check out" the parent/guardian or designated persons must enter the administrative office located in the MEC.

III Program and Activities Information

3-1. What to bring

- Students should bring his/her own lunch and two snacks and two drinks each day.
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent
- Closed toed shoes (Crocs™ or sneakers)
- One towel
- Small, easily carried backpack
- Reusable water bottle
- Swimsuits are encouraged on Island days

3-2. Discipline

Discipline Problems

The Instructor has direct disciplinary authority over a camper. Instructors handle minor disciplinary infractions by enforcing "time-outs" or by simply talking to the camper and determining the problem. The students will be asked what rule(s) they have violated and if he/she would still like to continue the camp. Should a major discipline problem occur, the Instructor will involve the Director who will take appropriate action. If the problem persist after corrective measures are implemented, the parent or guardian will be contacted and the student will be permanently removed from the program. No tuition refunds will be granted.

3-3. Off-Site Transportation/Safety Policies

FIRST STUDENT school bus rental and MEC bus will be utilized for scheduled field trips.

3-4. General Safety Procedures

Sea Camp staff are certified in First Aid and CPR they have also gone through a background check. Sea Camp does not allow swimming at any time during camp. There are times when staff and campers wade in the water for seining, sieving, marsh walks, and beach walks. Fishing from a pier or from the MEC's pontoon boat, *Sea Explorer*, are activities included in the weekly schedule.

The following Safety Procedures will be observed at all times:

- **ALL** staff and **ALL** campers will wear **closed-toe shoes** on the beach, in the water, on the fishing pier, and on all watercraft;
- **ALL** campers will wear a Coast Guard approved life vest (secured and/or fastened) during outings on the MEC's pontoon boat, *Sea Explorer*;
- **ONLY** campers ages 12 and older will kayak. **ALL** campers will wear a Coast Guard approved life vest (secured and/or fastened) during outings in one of the MEC's kayaks;
- **ALL** staff shall be responsible for enforcing general safety rules.

IV. Health and Emergency Procedures

4-1. Medication Storage/Administration

Medication is not administered to a child without obtaining a parent/guardian's signature on the required Medication form. Sea Camp Teaching Assistants are responsible for maintaining any medications a student may need. Tylenol may be administered to a child only after checking the camper's registration form. **Parents should discuss any medication issues with Instructors and/or Camp Director.**

4-2. Medical Crisis

Should an emergency situation arise, the Director or the child's Instructor will attend to the child while the parent is notified. If complications occur, the child will be taken to the hospital or clinic until the parent(s) arrive(s). If parent(s) are unreachable the teaching assistant will then proceed to the emergency contact list until someone is notified.

4-3. Medical Crisis Exemptions

If your child is exempt from medical care on religious grounds you **MUST** provide the name, address, and phone number of a certified practitioner to be contacted in the event of a medical emergency. This information must be provided prior to your child's involvement in Sea Camp.

4-4. Reporting Child Abuse

The staff of Sea Camp has a legal obligation to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect. The Health Care Regulation provides guidelines on identifying abuse and neglect. Any suspected abuse or neglect will be brought to the attention of the Director immediately.

4-5. Background Check

All Sea Camp employees are required to pass a background check prior to working for the MEC. Your child's safety is very important to us.