

## Mini-Camp 2021 Parent Packet



### Camp Philosophy

Our camps and camp environments are designed to support inclusive and collaborative learning, promote STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) exploration and discovery, and empower campers to reach their full potential.

### Prior to Camp

- If you have not already done so, please complete your camper's online registration (including all medical, liability, and photo permission releases) no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday of the week before your camp begins.
- Review the important information and guidelines addressed in this letter.

### Mini-Camp Contact and Emergency Numbers

Campers may not receive direct phone calls during camp hours. If you need to reach a camper, or you have an emergency during camp hours (9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.), please call or contact Camp staff at these numbers:

(361) 881-1218      Nicole Gaertner, Education Manager

(361) 881-1252      Katherine Dion, Camp Specialist

*In case of severe weather, please call Nicole Gaertner at (361) 244-2404 for instructions on early release, camp cancellation and/or change in pick-up locations.*

### Mini-Camp Location

Camp activities, including drop off and pick-up, will be conducted at the Aquarium, located at 2710 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, TX 78402 (adjacent to the Harbor Bridge).

### Daily Check-in and Check-out

- Check-in and Check-out are conducted under the blue tent tops on the side lawn behind the ticketing booth. In the case of inclement weather, check-in and check-out will be in the Aquarium lobby.
- All ages may check-in on your Mini-Camp date(s) between 9:45-10:00 a.m. Early arrivals will not be signed in until 9:45 a.m. Camp begins promptly at 10:00 a.m. Late campers should report to the information desk inside the aquarium lobby entrance.
- *Only adults on the Pick-up Permission List with a VALID ID will be permitted to pick-up campers.*
- All grades check-out at 3:00 p.m. Please arrive promptly to sign-out and pick-up your camper. Late fees may be charged for excessive late pick-ups.

### **Camper Dress Code**

Please dress your camper(s) for activities that include getting dirty, creating art projects, conducting science experiments, and being active in the aquarium. Camp activities will take place both inside and outside the Aquarium. Clothing should be appropriate for daily weather and classrooms that can be chilly. Footwear should be comfortable, close-toed (**no sandals, flip-flops, etc.**) and fit properly. Please do not dress your camper in the following: skirts or dresses (unless wearing shorts underneath), open-toed shoes (sandals, flip flops, etc.), or clothing that's too big or too small (this can be a safety hazard during play and activities).

### **What to Bring to Camp**

- For Splash Park: Swimsuit, rash guard or t-shirt, towel, sunscreen (not including fall camp)
- Water bottle – *Campers will have access to water throughout the day, and will be encouraged to refill their bottles or cups.*
- Lunch & afternoon snack – *Lunches should not contain items that require refrigeration or heating, as these options will not be provided.*
- Bug spray
- Hat
- Tote bag or backpack
- Light jacket or sweatshirt
- Face covering (Covid-19 protocol)

*All items should be labeled with the camper's name. Please be sure to check that your camper has all of their belongings at the end of each day. The Aquarium is not responsible for lost or stolen items.*

### **What Not to Bring to Camp**

- Electronic devices or toys of any kind
- Money to purchase lunch, snacks, beverages, or gift shop items at the Aquarium store, as campers will not be allowed to shop.

### **Mini-Camp Bullying Policy**

To ensure all our campers have a safe, enjoyable experience at Mini-Camp, please share the following information with your child.

- Do not to participate in or initiate bullying.
- Mini Camp has a strict no bullying rule; no form of bullying (physical, verbal, etc.) will be tolerated.
- Parents will be contacted if bullying does occur and the offending camper may be asked to leave camp for the day (dependent upon offense and at discretion of camp staff). Refunds will not be issued if your child is asked to leave camp due to behavioral issues.
- We encourage parents and campers to report bullying immediately.

### **Mini-Camp Corrective Action and Discipline Policy:**

Positive reinforcement approaches and strategies will be used to promote and support respectful and positive behaviors during camp. When disruptive or negative behaviors do arise, camp staff may use the strategies below to address the issue.

- Re-explain and describe expected behaviors and actions during camp activities, including cause and effect of behaviors and actions
- Model for and directly instruct/guide correct behaviors and actions of campers
- Discretely speak with camper about behavior or action, jointly agree on approved/correct behavior expected in future
- Re-direct camper behavior to positive and appropriate behavior, either in same situation/location or to an alternative place or activity (e.g., instead of not sharing pencils at table, ask camper to help pick up puppets)
- Stand next to camper or ask student to sit/stand next to camp staff

Should additional corrective action be necessary, or if disruptive or negative behaviors persist or accelerate, parents/guardians will be notified during the day or during pick-up and these steps may be taken (as appropriate):

- Removing participation in a camp activity, or “privilege” (e.g., playing a game or touching an animal);
- Taking a “time out” from camp activities and spaces by sitting with one of their camp counselors, or with another camp counselor/staff, on the side from fellow campers
- Contacting parents/guardians immediately for a phone conversation with camper, and/or immediate pick-up of camper
- Elimination from camp (no refunds will be granted if this occurs)

We respect and understand each child is an individual. We recognize each camper will respond to and engage in camp in different ways. We aim to provide the most positive and enjoyable environment for all our Mini Camp campers. **If you have specific strategies for communication during tough or emotional moments that work best with your camper, please share these with Mini Camp staff during check-in.** We try to accommodate and include best practices and strategies whenever we can.

### **Cancellation/Refund Policy:**

A cancellation notice must be received at least 30 days prior to start date for a 50% refund. We do not offer refunds or pro-rated fees due to illness or weather conditions.

Cancellation notice must be submitted in writing (or via email) to:

Nicole Gaertner  
Texas State Aquarium  
2710 N. Shoreline Blvd.  
Corpus Christi, TX 78402  
[ngaertner@txstateaq.org](mailto:ngaertner@txstateaq.org)