



Chincoteague Bay Field Station Summer Camp Parent Guide



Chincoteague Bay
Field Station

Greetings from Chincoteague Bay Field Station!

On behalf of Chincoteague Bay Field Station, let me welcome you and your child to camp!! This is always an exciting time for us, as we transition from our field trips with the School Programs to our amazing camps. If this is your first camp with us ... welcome! To all of you returners ... welcome back! We are excited to be sharing a summer of science, fun, and new friendships with each and every one of you.

Children and educators from all over the country come together in our summer sessions to discover and celebrate the natural environments around them and to share ideas and passions for the sciences with each other. We offer endless possibilities for exploration, new accomplishments, and fun.

We hope that you and your child are as excited as our staff about the upcoming summer and we look forward to meeting you!

Jackie Knoll
Director of Summer Camps
Chincoteague Bay Field Station
spsc@cbfieldstation.org

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Important Information | 2 |
| Field Station Rules | 3 |
| Directions | 4 |
| Nearby Hotels | 4 |
| Campus Map | 5 |
| Packing for Camp | 6 |
| Items Not Allowed at Camp | 6 |
| Opening Day | 7 |
| Closing Day | 7 |
| Typical Daily Schedule | 8 |
| Dorm Assignments | 8 |
| Meals | 8 |
| Camper Code of Conduct | 8 |
| Discipline | 10 |
| Refund Policy | 10 |
| Spending Money | 10 |
| Ship Store | 10 |
| Laundry/Lost and Found | 11 |
| Visitation/Phone Calls | 11 |
| Communication with Camper | 11 |
| Photo Updates | 12 |
| Weather Related Emergency | 12 |
| Medications/Health Care | 12 |
| COVID-19 | 12 |
| Camp Health Form | 13 |
| First-Time Camper/Homesickness | 14 |
| Partnering with Parents | 15 |
| Letter to Counselors | 15 |
| Letter Outline | 16 |

Important Information

Chincoteague Bay Field Station

34001 Mill Dam Road

Wallops Island, VA 23337

Office Phone: (757) 824-5636, ext.100

After Hours Emergency Phone: (757) 824-5636

Email: info@cbfieldstaion.org

Opening Day Check-In: Sunday, 3:00 - 4:30

Closing Day Check-out: Friday, 3:00 - 4:30

Field Station Rules and Information for Participants

1. Please respect others as well as their rights and properties.
2. Please follow all safety rules and make a special effort to be safety conscious.
3. Report any illness, accident, etc., immediately to your camp counselor and educator so that appropriate action may be taken.
4. NO Cell Phones or other handheld electronic/internet devices.
5. NO alcoholic beverages, smoking, or drugs are permitted on Field Station property (including campus, boats, and vehicles) at any time. Violation will result in dismissal from the program without refund.
6. Do not leave station without permission from your educator.
7. Please do not remove anything from the lab.
8. No intervisitation allowed between dorms.
9. Avoid excessive noise. ALL campers must be in their dorms by 10:00PM. Quiet hours are from 10:00PM to 7:00 AM.
10. Campers are responsible for damages to the dorm or facilities and will be billed for these damages and subject to disciplinary action.
11. A clean-up period will be conducted before you leave. Campers are responsible for cleaning all areas used during their stay. Instructors will hold a cleaning and damage inspection on the last day of the program.
12. Keep perishable items (food, shells, organisms) out of the dorms. All biological samples should be kept in the labs.
13. Do not wash mud or sand down any drains. Please use the hose to get the majority of the mud off of yourself/your clothes and then the designated outside showers for rinsing off. Use clothes lines to hang wet, dirty clothing. Wear your swimsuit in the outdoor showers.
14. Do not wear swimsuits or muddy clothes into the cafeteria.
15. Shoes must be worn on station and on field trips at all times.
16. Please make a special effort to use the sidewalks and stay off the grass in heavy use areas.
17. Campers are allowed in the following buildings only: assigned dorm units and lab, cafeteria during regular meal hours, and the Ship Store. No food or drink may be removed from the cafeteria. Do not enter or stay beyond meal times.
18. Meal Times
 - Breakfast: 8:00-8:30AM
 - Lunch: 12:30-1:00PM
 - Dinner: 5:15-5:45PM
19. The Field Station will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen items.
20. This is your field experience. Please participate and contribute questions and ideas to make the program enjoyable for you and your fellow campers. Take care of yourself: drink water, wear sunscreen and correct clothing etc. and most of all...Have Fun!

Directions

From the South

Headed North from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, drive 73.5 miles on Route 13 (Lankford Highway). Turn Right on VA-175E at T's Corner in Oak Hall. Drive for 2.7 miles. Turn left onto Mill Dam Rd. (just after the Sunoco gas station), drive for 0.6 miles before arriving at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station on the Left.

From the North

Headed South from Salisbury, MD, drive approximately 35 miles on Route 13 (Lankford Highway). Turn Right on VA-175E at T's Corner in Oak Hall. Drive for 2.7 miles. Turn left onto Mill Dam Rd. (just after the Sunoco gas station), drive for 0.6 miles before arriving at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station on the Left.

Once On Campus...

Check-in runs from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm in the lobby of Red Knot Residence Hall (map below). Field Station staff will be there to help answer any final questions you might have and to settle your camper in!

Nearby Hotels for Parents

Fairfield Inn and Suites, Chincoteague, VA **P:** (757) 336-0043 (15 minutes away)

Hampton Inn and Suites, Chincoteague, VA **P:** (757) 336-1616 (15 minutes away)

Comfort Suites, Chincoteague, VA **P:** (757) 336-3700 (15 minutes away)

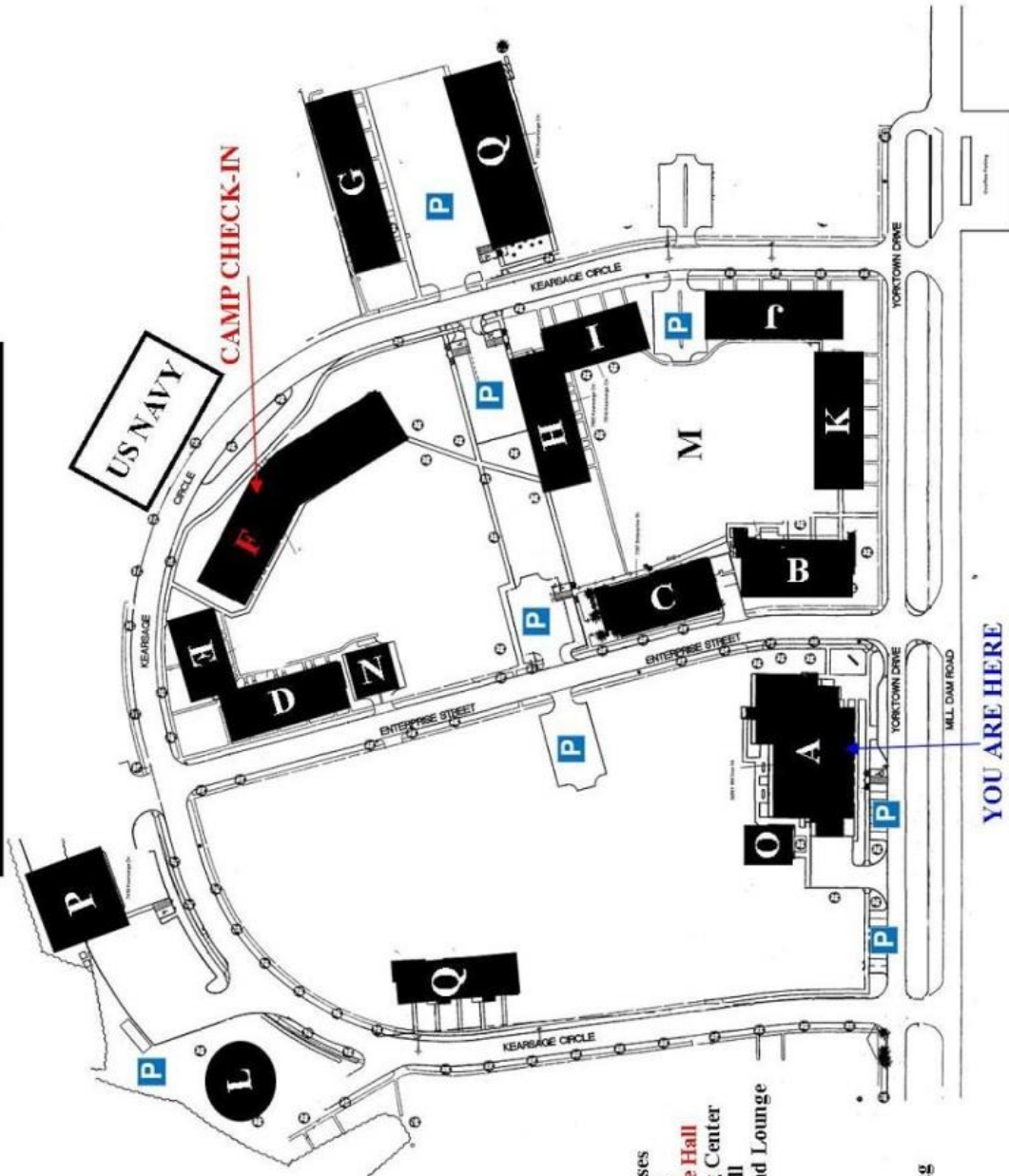
Waterside Inn, Chincoteague, VA **P:** (757) 336-3434 (15 minutes away)

Best Western, Chincoteague, VA **P:** (757) 336-6557 (20 minutes away)

Holiday Inn Express, Pocomoke City, MD **P:** (410) 957-6444 (20 minutes away)

Bed and breakfast facilities on the Eastern Shore can be found through Virginia's Eastern Shore Bed and Breakfast Association (www.coastalvirginiabnb.com).

CBFS Campus MAP



Map Key

- A..... Education Center
- B..... Salicoma Suites
- C..... Dining Hall
- D..... Terrapin Townhouses
- E..... Coquina Commons
- F..... Red Knot Residence Hall**
- G..... Loblolly Learning Center
- H..... Horseshoe Crab Hall
- I..... Limulus Library and Lounge
- J..... Blue Crab Hall
- K..... Lady Crab Hall
- L..... Campfire Ring
- M..... Sports Field
- N..... Basketball Court
- O..... Pompano Pavilion
- P..... Maintenance Building
- Q..... Staff Housing

Packing for Camp

If possible, campers should use a large duffel bag for packing. Place a list of items inside of the duffel bag so that educators can help campers maintain their possessions. Every camper should bring:

- Reusable Water bottle
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Plastic bags to put dirty/wet items
- Sleeping bag or twin bed linens
- Pillow and pillowcase
- Washcloths and Towels (at least 3: one for using outside and two for showering)
- Toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, hairbrush, deodorant, etc.)
 - Please include a shower caddy/container so camper can easily bring toiletries to and from bathroom to limit items left in shared spaces
- Flashlight
- Clothing for six days (plus a few extras)
 - Shirts
 - Shorts
 - Long pants (required for getting into the marsh)
 - Underclothing
 - Swimsuits (at least 2, 1 to get muddy)
 - Closed-toed athletic/tennis shoes
 - Secure shoes that has laces that can get muddy (for the marsh)
 - Secure shoes that can get wet (sandals with straps, Chaco's, water shoes, etc)
 - Flip-flops
 - Sweatshirt and raincoat (or any other layers they might need)
 - Masks (suggested to pack at least 10, so 1 or 2 can be used each day)
- Optional Items
 - Disposable camera
 - Books, comics, or magazines
 - Rainy day games, cards
 - Stationery/stamps

Items Not Allowed at Camp

- Cell Phones
- Handheld electronic/internet devices (In addition to these items being costly and unsecured at camp, the content of material accompanying them is often not suitable to be shared with other campers.)
- Weapons of any kind including but not limited to, firearms, explosives, bows, knives, and other blades.
- Illegal drugs/alcohol
- Nut products (Some campers experience severe food allergies. We encourage food-free care packages.)

Chincoteague Bay Field Station is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items in the camper's possession.

Non-Discrimination and Inclusion Statement

Chincoteague Bay Field Station (CBFS) is dedicated to providing outstanding multi-disciplinary, educational and research opportunities for all and does not discriminate in providing services on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification or expression, or any other basis proscribed by law.

Opening Day

Opening Day is an exciting time for everyone involved! Campers get to move into their dorms, meet their fellow campers, and start learning about the interesting environments they will be visiting throughout the week. As parents, you too get to meet your child's counselors, and get a first-hand look at where your child will be creating memories throughout the coming week. Campers can check in at the Red Knot Lobby on **Sunday between 3:00 and 4:30**. Participants must be signed in at the start of each camp session by the person dropping them off and signed out by a legal parent/guardian, or other authorized person on their registration form.

Field Station staff will be on site to answer any questions you may have, go over any important medical information for your child, and distribute schedules and information sheets. These sheets include information on contacting your child during the week, emergency contact information, and reminders about closing day.

Once your child is checked in, they will meet their camp counselor who will help move them into their dorm. You are welcome to accompany your child to help him/her get settled into their new home for the week. By 4:30 parents should depart. Campers will then begin their Opening Day activities.

Closing Day

On Closing Day, campers head out to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge for a day at the beach! After a day swimming, picnicking, and having fun in the sun, the group will return from the beach to clean and check out of their dorms. They will be back on campus around 2:30pm. **Pick-up begins at 3:00pm and lasts until 4:30pm.**

Participants will only be released to authorized and confirmed persons pending the person's name and signature given during Opening Day. In emergency situations students may be released to an adult not listed as an approved sign-out on the registration form, at staff discretion, if and only if a listed parent or guardian can be contacted at a listed number to give a verbal confirmation to camp staff. In the unforeseeable event you could be late picking up your camper please call the on-call phone number listed on Page 2.

After you return home and have had time to talk with your camper about camp, we will be sending out a quick online survey for you to fill out. Please take a few moments and give us your feedback! If your child loved their experience here, please share information about the possibility of coming here for a field trip with their Science teacher.

Typical Daily Schedule

7:30 am Rise and Shine

8:00 am Breakfast

9:00 am Morning Class

12:30 pm Lunch at the cafeteria

1:30 pm Afternoon Class

5:15 pm Dinner

6:30 pm Evening Programming

8:30 pm Cabin Time and Field Games

10:00 pm Lights Out

Meals

Our dining hall staff provides campers and staff members alike with a healthy variety of delicious meals. From grill-outs to hot breakfasts, fresh fruits and veggies to after-dinner treats, the dining hall always has something hearty and nutritious to munch on. Is your child a vegetarian or does he or she have any other special dietary needs? CBFS works hard to accommodate dietary needs, restrictions and allergies. When registering your child, make sure to mention any dietary needs, restrictions and allergies. Food Service will prepare alternative entrees only for campers who inform CBFS staff of their restriction prior to the start of their week at camp. Food Service will do its best to accommodate allergies. Alternative options will be made for a participant if the meal contains the allergen. CBFS campus including the Dining Hall is not a peanut-free campus and cannot guarantee peanut free options. If your child has a severe peanut allergy, please contact the Director of Summer Camps to discuss your options.

Dorm Assignments

Campers are assigned to dorms by camp and age level. Dorm assignments will be given upon arrival on Opening Day. If you have a housing request for campers of the same age and sex, we will be happy to try and accommodate your request.

Camper Code of Conduct

Each member of the Chincoteague Bay Field Station camp community is expected to conduct him/herself according to the highest standards of conduct, attitude and morality while participating in a program with CBFS. The Camper Code of Conduct sets forth CBFS's expectations for the behavior of our campers. It is predicated on an "honor system" that stresses personal responsibility, mutual respect and trust. Any camper found to be in violation of any portion of the Code of Conduct while attending CBFS either on or off campus, would be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The Camper Code of Conduct covers, but is not limited to, the following issues:

- 1) Alcohol and other drugs
- 2) Sexual harassment and Sexual behavior
- 3) Verbal, emotional and physical harassment and Bullying

- 4) Personal Presentation and Inappropriate language
- 5) Off-Campus Behavior
- 6) Curfew and Boundaries
- 7) Honesty

Drugs and Alcohol

Chincoteague Bay Field Station strictly prohibits the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in any form and by any means. The use of such substances while at camp (either on or off camp property) by any participant will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Behavior

Chincoteague Bay Field Station intends to provide an environment free of sexual harassment and sexual behavior. Sexual harassment is prohibited by state and federal laws and includes prohibited conduct by males toward females, females toward males, females to females, males to males, campers to campers, staff to campers, campers to staff, and staff to staff. Behavior that constitutes sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, pressure for sexual activity, demeaning sexual propositions, exposing oneself, making sexually explicit or suggestive remarks about another person, sexually oriented jokes or personal questions, and other verbal content or physical contact that results in an individual feeling uncomfortable or threatened. Sexual behavior between campers or between a camper and staff member is strictly prohibited.

Verbal, Emotional, and Physical Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying or intimidation by campers toward other campers or staff will not be tolerated. Harassment and bullying are viewed as an expression of power over or against another person. Behavior that constitutes harassment and bullying includes comments which are demeaning with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, color or disability, hazing, stalking, or other intimidating conduct; uninvited or unwanted physical conduct (e.g. hitting, grabbing, pushing, and pinching); pressuring others to perform demeaning, humiliating or dangerous acts.

Personal Presentation and Inappropriate language

All campers are expected to maintain commonly accepted standards for appropriate dress. Overly revealing clothing or clothing containing inappropriate pictures, language, symbols or suggestions is disallowed. Chincoteague Bay Field Station reserves the right to require a change of clothing if such clothing is deemed not to be in accordance with this policy. Campers are prohibited from using profane and/or vulgar language.

Off-Campus Behavior

Chincoteague Bay Field Station expects campers to conduct themselves with propriety both on and off campus. Campers are expected to follow the same rules and conduct while they are off-campus. Campers may not leave the camp property except on organized camp trips or with their parent(s) or guardian(s).

Curfew and Boundaries

It is the responsibility of each camper to make his/her whereabouts known to his/her counselors at all times. Campers are expected to adhere to bedtimes/lights out as defined for each age group.

Unsupervised departure from cabins after lights-out is strictly prohibited.

Honesty

It is the expectation of Chincoteague Bay Field Station that all campers and staff will respond honestly and completely to any inquiries regarding possible violations of the Code of Conduct.

Discipline

On Opening Day, campers will discuss the camper code of conduct and rules for their time at the Field Station. These rules are strictly enforced to promote the security and happiness of every camper or participant coming to campus. If there is an ongoing behavioral problem with a camper, the first step will be a discussion with the camper about their improper behavior and how to fix it. A verbal agreement of better behavior will be made between counselors and the camper. If the behavior continues, a written contract addressing the behavior of the camper and the consequences of their actions will be signed. Counselors will also contact parents/guardians to make them aware that there is an issue. If the improper behavior is not fixed, the camper will be sent home. Early dismissal from camp for behavioral issues will not warrant a refund. The same will be true of voluntary early departures. We have a zero-tolerance policy against physical abuse, verbal abuse or any kind of harassment. Any participant that engages in any form of harassment, aggressive physical contact or word use may be removed immediately from camp without other warnings. Any camper found to be in violation of any portion of the Code of Conduct while attending CBFS either on or off campus, would be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal.

Refund Policy

Registration for a camp at Chincoteague Bay Field Station requires a non-refundable deposit. If you decide to cancel your registration, you will be refunded all but the non-refundable deposit. CBFS is happy to accommodate a switch in a camper's session dates at no charge as long as the new session has availability. After June 1st, refunds are reviewed on a case by case basis. Early dismissal from camp for behavioral issues will not warrant a refund. The same will be true of voluntary early departures.

Spending Money

Campers will not need any spending money for camp-related activities during the week of camp. However, if they would like to bring money for laundry, ice cream, or for purchasing items in the camp store, they may. The counselors will collect spending money on Opening Day and store it in a lock-box for safe keeping. It will be accessible at the camper's request.

Ship Store

The Ship Store is open throughout the week, from 8:30-4:30. It is full of all sorts of goodies, including sweatshirts, hats, candy, toys and games, local art, postcards, etc. Campers are welcome to visit the store during their off time if they want to purchase souvenirs or snacks. If you'd like to send your child to camp in style, we offer some of our most popular apparel items online:

www.cbfieldstation.org/ships-store

Laundry/Lost and Found

Laundry is provided for campers at a cost of \$1.25 per load (in quarters). Any lost items are collected periodically throughout the week and sent to the front desk in the Education Center. Campers are welcome to check the lost and found at any point throughout the week to try and find misplaced items. The shipping of found items after the camper's departure may be arranged at your expense.

Visitation/Phone Calls

Due to issues with homesickness, we do not allow students to have their personal cell phones with them during the week. We keep your child focused on activities and involved with new friends, making a phone an unnecessary distraction. **Please respect our no phone policy.**

We do not have a visitation day at the Field Station. However, we encourage parents to tour the facilities and meet the counselors on both Opening and Closing Days.

If there is an emergency and you need to contact your child while they are at camp, please call the office – (757) 824-5636 – during business hours (8:00 am-4:30 pm). If it is outside of those hours, and you are having an emergency, you can call our emergency on-call phone – (757) 894-7708 – to speak to a senior staff member.

Communication with your Camper

There is nothing like snail mail for a kid at camp! Mail is brought to campers every evening just before dinner and the excitement you can see in each child's eyes as they open their mail is unbeatable. If you would like to send a letter / postcard to your child while they are here, please address it as follows:

Camper Name

_____ Summer Camp (which camp they are in ... Budding Coastal Explorers, etc.)
34001 Mill Dam Road
Wallops Island, VA 23337

You may also leave a note or postcard for your child at check-in. Counselors will deliver it to them later in the week.

Emails can be sent to **diane@cbfieldstation.org** (ATTN: Camper's Name & Summer Camp) and will be printed out and given to your child before dinner as well.

Photo Updates

Interested in seeing what your child is up to during his/her week at camp? Feel free to check out current camp activities on any of our social media outlets.

Follow:

Facebook www.facebook.com/Chincoteague-Bay-Field-Station

Instagram @cbfieldstation

Flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cbfieldstation/albums>

Weather Related Emergency

Chincoteague Bay Field Station staff keep a close watch on any weather systems affecting the area. While we will go out in rain, we always have special indoor activities planned if the weather is deemed unfit for outdoor activities. If boat trips are postponed, we will do our best to reschedule the trip during your program.

Medications/Health Care

Campers are required to have a completed camp health form on file. Health forms can be found in this packet or on our website. Campers check in all of their medication with the counselors on Opening Day. Medication will be kept in a lock-box with the counselors at all times so that it is on hand when needed. On Opening Day, parents will fill out a medication form describing when their child should receive his/her medication. Counselors will distribute medication accordingly. Medication will be returned to parents/guardians during pick-up on Closing Day. All Field Station staff members are First Aid/CPR certified and carry a first aid kit with them wherever they go. Counselors oversee any minor treatments that a child may need during the week (cuts, blisters, sunburn, insect bites, etc.). In case of an emergency, the NASA medical team will respond as well.

COVID-19 Information

The health and safety of our campers and staff remain our highest priority. CBFS is following all state and national CDC guidelines, and COVID-19 protocols are subject to change. In addition to extra cleaning and sanitation, the structure of our overnight camps will be different in 2021.

Summer camp will utilize cohort, or household, groups based on dorm assignments. Each household group will consist of a maximum of 6 campers and 1 educator. Campers will live with their household group, eat meals as a group, and do all daily activities as a group. Because of this, there will be a set schedule for camp instead of offering our typical “build your own adventure” style of summer camp.

All staff and participants must wear a mask indoors and in times when physical distancing is difficult. Please pack plenty of masks for your child in case some get wet and/or dirty. If a participant or staff member does get sick, we have a response plan in place and will communicate with parents directly if needed. A more detailed description of our COVID-19 protocols can be found on our website.



Camp Health History Form

Required for all Adults and Minors

Please copy and return completed form to school staff as soon as possible

Camp Name _____ Camp Dates: _____
 Participant name _____ Age _____ Male _____ Female _____
 Birth date _____ Race _____ (for reporting purposes only) Parent/Guardian _____
 Home address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____
 Home phone () _____ Work phone () _____ Fax () _____
 Cell phone, or other () _____ E-mail address _____

—The Chincoteague Bay Field Station does not discriminate against applicants by race, creed, sex, or national origin.—

Medical information

If case of an emergency, please notify:

1st priority: Name _____ phone () _____ relationship to student: _____
 Alternate: Name _____ phone () _____ relationship to student: _____

Health history (Check all that apply, giving approximate dates or details in blank space provided)

_____ Frequent ear infections _____ Heart defect/heart disease _____ Hay fever _____ Penicillin _____ Allergies _____ Convulsions
 _____ Diabetes _____ Other drugs _____ Bleeding/clotting disorders
 _____ Food (please give type and describe severity) _____
 _____ Insect stings (please describe severity) _____
 _____ Recent injuries (please list) _____

Do we have permission to administer: Acetaminophen? _____ Ibuprophen? _____ Benadryl? _____

List all medications brought to MSC: _____

Is the student taking any medications? Please list dosage, etc.: _____

Do You wear contacts? _____ YES _____ NO Do you wear glasses? _____ Yes _____ NO

Swimming ability: _____ Non swimmer _____ Beginner _____ Intermediate _____ Advanced

Surgery or serious injuries (dates): _____

Chronic or recurring illness: _____

Other diseases or details of above: _____

Name of family physician _____ Name of dentist/orthodontist _____

Do you carry family/hospital insurance? _____ Yes _____ No

Policy name and group number: Carrier _____ Group or Policy number _____

Restricted activities _____

Important Please notify us if the student is exposed to any communicable disease during the three weeks prior to camp.

Suggestions from parents: _____

If your child needs to be picked up by anyone other than school, are there any pick up restrictions? _____

Add us to your mailing list so we can receive a program brochure and other announcements and information about MSC.

No, I do not want to be added to your mailing list at this time.

Parent/Participant Authorization: To the best of my knowledge, this health history is accurate, and the person herein described has permission to engage in all prescribed program activities except as noted by me and the examining physician. I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the school teacher or the Field Station staff to order X-Rays, routine tests, and treatment for the health of my child, and in the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the school teacher or Field station staff to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injection and/or anesthesia and/or surgery for my child as named above I am familiar with the activities in which a participant of the Field Station will engage and I (or my child) am physically capable of participating in such activities. I, the undersigned, agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Chincoteague Bay Field Station from all claims, damages, losses, injuries and expenses arising out of, or resulting from, my presence or participation in activities or programs of the Field Station. I further agree not to sue or assert any claim for damages from the Field Station, regardless of whether such claim is for personal injuries or property damage. I grant permission for image and likeness (e.g. photo, name, quotes) of my child to be used in publications by the Field Station. This form is also used for diversity reporting.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

First-Time Campers/Homesickness

Homesickness is a common occurrence in people of all ages. It is a natural response to being separated from the normal routine a child experiences at home and from loved ones with whom they find support. Parents/guardians can help their child adjust to camp by following simple steps outlined in an American Camp Association publication, written by University of California Psychologist Chris Thurber:

- Encourage your child's independence throughout the year. Practice separations; a sleepover at a friend's house can simulate the camp environment.
- Involve your child in the process of choosing a camp. The more that the child embraces the decision, the more comfortable the child will feel at camp.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.
- Reach an agreement ahead of time regarding phone calls home. If your child's camp has a no phone calls policy, honor it.
- Send a note or care package ahead of time to arrive the first day of camp. Acknowledge, in a positive way, that you will miss your child. For example, you can say, "I am going to miss you, but I know that you will have a good time at camp".
- Talk candidly with the Camp Director to obtain his/her perspective on your child's adjustment.
- Don't bribe. Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's new-found confidence and independence.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal.
- When a "rescue call" comes from the child, offer calm reassurance and put the time frame into perspective. Avoid the temptation to take the child home early.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.
- Trust your instincts. While most incidents of homesickness will pass in a day or two, Thurber's research shows that approximately 7% of cases are severe. If your child is not eating or sleeping because of anxiety or depression, it is time to go home. However, don't make your child feel like a failure if his/her stay at camp is cut short. Focus on the positive and encourage your child to try camp again next year.

Chincoteague Bay Field Station Staff are well-trained at helping homesick campers adjust to life away from home. We keep them active and involved through team-building, field trips, fun games, etc. With your help, we know we can help your child have an amazing experience at camp.

Partnering with Parents

The staff here at the Field Station is dedicated to making sure that every camper coming through our doors has an enjoyable experience and learns something new during their time here. To ensure that every child gets the care and comfort that they need, we request that parents share appropriate information about their child that may impact how we instruct, work with, or care for that child. You may fill out any details you feel are important on our health forms. Feel free to attach an additional sheet if you need more space. This information will help the staff better prepare for your child's needs. Camp staff will review this information prior to camp check-in. All forms will be kept in our confidential files.

Letter to Counselors

Attached is a prompt for your camper to send a letter to their future counselors. They may use this prompt or write their own letter answering some of the questions we listed for them. This allows the counselors to learn a bit about your child before they arrive so that they are more prepared for homesickness, can work on creating free time activities your camper will enjoy, etc. It also allows your camper to feel more comfortable with and supported by his/her counselors from the moment he/she arrives on campus.

Letter to My Counselors

Dear Camper,

This is a confidential information form between you and your counselors. The purpose is to let the counselors know a little more about you before you arrive at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station. We hope you are as excited about camp as we are. We look forward to your arrival!

Best,
Summer Camp Staff

Name: _____

Camp: _____

Age: _____

First time at Camp? _____

I am coming to camp because...

Circle One: I am EXCITED / NERVOUS about attending camp this summer. Why?

I want to learn these skills at camp:

My expectations for my counselors are:

Describe yourself in a few sentences:

Is there anything else you want to share with us?

Signature: _____

Date: _____