



## Camp Policies

A number of policies are in place for the safety and well-being of your child. Please read these policies and return the signed statement at least one week prior to camp. Please keep a copy for yourself.

### Department of Family Protection and Services

**Discovery Camp** at the Museum of Nature & Science are part of MNS, which is in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, and licensed by the State of Texas through the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

- A DFPS evaluation of **Discovery Camp** – including the department’s fire inspection report, sanitation inspection report, verification of liability insurance, letter of compliance, and list of snacks served – are available for parents to review.
- A copy of the minimum standards is also available for review, or can be found on the DFPS website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)
- The law requires that we report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to DFPS or a law enforcement agency. The local office of the DFPS is located at 8700 N. Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, TX, 75247 and the phone number is 214-951-7902. The Abuse and Neglect Hotline number is 1-800-252-5400. Call this number to make confidential reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- MNS is designated as a gang-free zone. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.
- Consumer product safety recalls can be accessed at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). This site gives information on recalled children’s products as well as other consumer products. You can also access this site clicking the link on the school’s Web page, [www.natureandscience.org/education/sp\\_School.asp](http://www.natureandscience.org/education/sp_School.asp).

**Discovery Camp** parents are welcome to visit at any time. If you would like to visit a class, please talk with our Camp Coordinator to make arrangements. You may be required to complete volunteer forms and meet MNS volunteer requirements, including submitting a background check.

## **Our Teaching Methodology**

Discovery Camp focuses on various subjects through hands-on experiments, unique demonstrations, exploring MNS exhibits, problem solving, and other engaging program activities. This programming is designed to spark children's imaginations and inspire them to continue lifelong engagement in science.

## **Basic Nuts and Bolts for *Discovery Camp***

The Discovery Camp program runs in March for Spring Break and early-June through late-August for Summer. When the dates are set, they will be posted on the MNS website.

## **Spring Break and Summer**

(all times are Monday-Friday)

### ***Discovery Camp***

Camp Hours: 9:15am – 3pm

### ***Discovery Camp, Jr.***

Camp Hours: 9:15am – Noon

Before Care and After Care is available for ***Discovery Camp*** only - for an additional fee.

**Before Care:** 8am – 9:15am

**After Care:** 3pm – 5:30pm

## **Lunch and Snacks**

Lunch and snacks are a critical part of your child's experience at camp. ***Discovery Camp*** parents are responsible for providing a small snack and a nutritious, full lunch for their child each day. Discovery Camp Jr. campers will not need to bring a lunch, but are responsible for bringing a snack for camp. Please make sure all food items do not need refrigeration or microwave heating. A reusable water bottle is also suggested to keep your child hydrated throughout the day.

## **Registration & Forms**

Parents and guardians can register their child (or children) one of the following ways: online, by phone through the MNS Reservations Office at 214-428-5555 and Press 8, faxing your completed registration form (including payment) to 214-428-4310, or mailing your completed registration form (including payment) to MNS.

Upon successful enrollment, you will receive a confirmation email within 2 weeks including important information and forms that must be completed prior to your child's attendance at camp.

Camps are filled on a first-come, first-served basis with registration open to members for a given time prior to registration for non-members.

Children must be at least 3 years old and fully potty trained to attend Discovery Camps. You may be requested to provide proof of age, such as a birth certificate. We strictly enforce grade level requirements. Grade level groups correspond to the grade your child will be enrolled in for the 2011-2012 school year.

Medical and Participant Release forms must be filled out completely and returned at least two weeks prior to the start of camp. Please use this form to let us know about your child so we can provide a positive experience for him/her. You may fax this form to 214-428-4310, attention Reservations.

### **Cancellations, Exchanges & Refunds**

Registrations are not transferable from one child to another.

Patrons can transfer the registered child from one camp to another if the request is made at least 14 calendar days before the first day of the original camp session and if space is available.

Patrons who withdraw from camp more than 60 days prior to their session will receive a full refund.

Patrons who withdraw from camp 60 days to two weeks prior to their session will receive a 50% refund of the cost of the dropped camp. To withdraw from camp, patrons must contact the Registration Department by phone no later than 10 working days prior to the first day of camp at 214-428-5555, x8. Once your withdrawal from camp is processed, you will receive written confirmation (along with refund, if applicable) by mail.

**Please note: MNS reserves the right to cancel camps that do not meet minimum enrollment. If a camp is canceled by MNS, patrons will receive a full refund.**

### **Illness/Medication/Special Needs**

#### **Illness**

Please keep children home if they have a fever, skin rash, and/or discharge from the eyes, ears, nose, or any other visible signs of illness. Children may return to camp after they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours and/or have been to the doctor and the doctor has cleared the child to return. If you have visited the doctor, please bring a note from the doctor stating that your child is cleared to come back to camp. We record attendance each day, so please call or email us if your child will not be attending camp because of illness or other reasons.

In the event your child becomes ill at camp or has an accident that requires a doctor's attention, we will notify you. If you cannot be reached, we will call the individuals listed on your emergency form. For the comfort and wellness of your child, we will expect you to pick your child up within one hour of that call.

If a child has an accident that causes a scrape, bump, etc., we will take care of the "boo-boo" and notify you when you pick up your child or by phone/email the same day. In case of a medical emergency during camp, staff will call 911 and notify you immediately.

#### **Special Needs and Medications**

MNS is happy to accommodate children with limited special needs. In order for us to be able to help your child have an enjoyable experience at camp, we ask that you notify the Camp Coordinator of your child's needs one week prior to the first day of camp. Please notify us of any allergies, accessibility concerns, behavioral, psychological or emotional conditions or other special needs using the form provided upon registering for camp.

If your child has a severe allergy and is susceptible to anaphylactic shock, you are required to provide epinephrine (adrenaline) injections to the camp staff. Prior to attending camp, the Medical History and Participant Release Form must be completed. Campers may be required to have TB, immunizations and/or hearing and vision results.

While we hope to offer these camps to as wide a range of children as possible, it is not possible for us to offer one-on-one care.

## **Pick Up and Drop Off Procedures**

Parents and guardians must walk their children into the museum to drop off their children with the Discovery Camp staff person. If you are dropping off or picking up your child from the classroom, you must show your state or federal issue photo identification and be on the list of people to pick up your child. No exceptions to this rule – just because your child’s instructor knows who you are, please be prepared to show ID to any member of camp staff. Upon dropping off or picking up, you will be asked to sign your child in and out of camp.

**Please do not pull into the circular drive in front of the Science Building, as this is a restricted Fire Zone.**

## **Comments, Concerns, or Complaints**

We welcome letters, emails, phone calls with suggestions, comments or accolades. As a parent or guardian, we encourage you to express any concerns you might have involving your child. Please approach the classroom teacher first – most questions or situation can be resolved at this level. The Camp Coordinator will become involved only if appropriate, and generally after it has been addressed with the camp teacher. If the situation remains unresolved, or it is otherwise appropriate, the museum’s Director of Education will step in to try and find a solution. A survey will also be distributed at the completion of camp to record your comments.

## **Discipline & Guidance**

Discipline and guidance are important to a child’s personal growth and comprehension of acceptable behavior, self-control, self-esteem, and self-direction. Positive guidance is generally our approach, which may include:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior
- Reminding the children of behavior expectations daily with clear, positive statements
- Redirection using positive phrases
- Using brief supervised separation or “time-out” from the group when appropriate for the child’s age and development, approximately 1 minute for each year of the child’s age
- Encouraging the children to use “their words” to ask, discuss, or let another child know how they are feeling. Helping them learn the right words, how to use them and when to use them
- Reasonably involving the children in creating the rules for the classroom
- Treating each child with respect and dignity. This models appropriate behavior and encourages the children to treat their friends the same way

### **The following types of punishment are specifically prohibited:**

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument

- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriate lengths of time for the child's age and development
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child

### **General Camp Rules**

- Keep hands, feet, and other body parts to yourself
- Treat others with respect
- Respect MNS property
- Use appropriate language
- "Walking" feet
- "Inside" voices
- Share toys, materials, and equipment
- Take turns
- Listen to the teachers and follow instructions
- Participate in activities
- Use toys and materials properly
- Everyone cleans up
- Wash hands after using the restroom, touching animals and before eating
- Cover sneezes/coughs with your elbow or shoulder
- Personal items, such as video games, are restricted
- Weapon-play or imaginary weapon-play is not allowed

**Campers are expected to follow all rules at all times, including during field trips.**

If your child is having trouble following rules and/or his or her conduct is disrupting the learning process or safety of others in the class, we will notify you, and work with you to help alleviate the problem.

MNS reserves the right to dismiss students from camp at any time due to behavioral problems. If this occurs, any tuition paid for time not attended will be refunded. If a child accidentally or intentionally damages, destroys, or otherwise harms MNS property or the property of another child or person, you may be required to pay for the repair or replacement of the item/s.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **REGISTRATION**

#### ***How can I be sure to get the camps I want?***

The best way is to become a Museum of Nature & Science member and register online during priority registration (typically 2 weeks prior to open registration). Please visit [natureandscience.org](http://natureandscience.org) or call 214-428-5555 x 1462 to purchase, renew or upgrade a membership online.

#### ***How can I find out which camps are filled?***

Camp sessions with online enrollment ([natureandscience.org](http://natureandscience.org)) are updated in real-time, and the number of spaces available is listed next to the name of each camp session on the online registration page. If the number of available spaces is 0, the camp is full. If you are registering by phone then the attendant should be able to provide up-to-date enrollment information.

#### ***What is the best way to register a carpool so that all children have classes the same week?***

Register online at the same time on the same day in the early morning and be sure to register children in same class (choose class A or B). Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that all children will get the camp group they want with their carpool group or friends, and we cannot make exceptions to allow more children into the camp sessions. We also cannot rearrange classes to place your child with a specific group of individuals.

#### ***May I register my child for an older age group?***

No, we strictly enforce grade level requirements. Grade level groups correspond to the grade your child will be entering for the 2011-2012 school year.

#### ***I just need Before or After Camp Care for one day. Can I do that?***

Yes, but we require you to pay for the entire week. If you don't sign up for either of these, but have your child show up anyway, you will be billed for the entire week of before or aftercare.

### **CAMP DAY**

#### ***How should my child dress for camp?***

Your child should wear comfortable clothes that may get messy. For both Discovery Camp and Discovery Camp Jr., please provide a spare set of clothes for the week in case of accidents. For safety, we require closed-toe shoes. Campers may also need a sweater in case the camp room is cool. A specific list of clothing and other items will be outlined in your camp registration packet. Your packet will be mailed to you after you successfully enroll your child in camp.

#### ***What are the qualifications of your teachers and assistants?***

The majority of our teachers are certified school teachers, others are science professionals. The majority of our teaching assistants are participants in our youth volunteer program. All camp teachers are certified in basic CPR/First Aid.

#### ***What is the typical class size?***

Though class sizes will range, they will be no smaller than 10 and no larger than 20. This helps ensure that your child has the individualized attention he or she needs to enjoy his/her experience.

#### ***How are campers supervised?***

Parents or guardians are required to physically sign campers in and out of camp every day. Campers are supervised at all times and are escorted on restroom breaks.

***What are the behavior expectations for campers?***

Camper expectations are posted in each room and are emphasized throughout the week. In the event of a severe behavior problem, we will call you to pick up your child. At our discretion, your child may or may not be allowed to return to camp the following day.

***Who can I contact during the day if I need to leave an emergency message concerning my child?***

Please call the Education Office at 214-428-5555, extension 8 and a staff member will deliver your message to the appropriate person. If your child has a cell phone with him/her, it needs to be turned off during the camp day. Please do not call your child's cell phone during camp.