



## Field Trip Planning Guide

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The Ty Warner Sea Center, part of The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, fulfills the mission of the Museum to inspire a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. Students are invited to use their natural curiosity to learn from exhibits and from direct engagement with docents and touchable materials. *We attempt to create experiences that cannot be duplicated in the classroom:* we aim to provide experiential connections to your lessons through our unique resources and setting. Although we lead your group's program, you are critical to the success of the field trip.

## Successful Field Trips—The Teacher is the Key!

Several key elements are necessary in providing a memorable learning experience for your students. Here are a few things we have learned in our 30+ years of providing school field trips:

***Students who know what to expect learn more than students who are overwhelmed by the novelty of the experience.***



**What you can do: Orient your students to the Sea Center before arrival.**

- If most of your students have never visited the Sea Center before, show them the school field trip orientation video on our website.
- For student groups more familiar with the Sea Center, share previous experiences: "What do you remember about visiting the Sea Center?"

***Students who understand the overall plan for their field trip before they arrive are more likely to learn than those who do not know what to expect.***



**What you can do: Let students know...**

- The anticipated travel time.
- The types of activities they will be doing at the Sea Center.
- If and when they'll go to the Gift Shop.
- When and where they will have lunch.
- When they will be leaving the Sea Center

***Students learn and remember more when teachers use structured pre- and post-activities.***



**What you can do: Link learning in the classroom** with the unique learning opportunities at the Sea Center. Your goal might be introduction, culmination, or enrichment depending on your curriculum objectives.



## Designing the Learning Experience

There are three different program types offered at the Sea Center; most visiting groups participate in two programs during their visit.

### Available Programs

- **Self-guided Tour** (one hour or more depending on additional program)
- **Discovery Lab** (one hour)
- **Outdoor Nature Exploration** (one hour)

### Self-guided Tours

Sea Center tours are typically scheduled for one hour blocks but students can spend up to two hours exploring the Sea Center in small groups with their chaperones. The Sea Center accommodates up to 80 students indoors at one time during the Self-guided Tour.

With the exception of the Self-guided Tour, our programs can only accommodate one class at 10 am and one class at 11 am. Therefore, the number of classes coming on the field trip will determine, to some extent, what combination of programs is possible.

Two classes can alternate activities. For example, each class may spend one hour touring the Sea Center and another hour in an Outdoor Nature Exploration.



***“Docents kept students attention at all times with hands-on activities. The short segments and small groups were very nice.”***

Teacher, Grade 1

### Fees and the Museum Access Fund

Fees are kept as low as possible thanks to contributions from our generous donors. Schools with a 50% or greater enrollment in the federal Free or Reduced Price Meal Program may apply for scholarships through the Museum Access Fund (MAF).

This fund was created to provide access to the Museum programs for low-income schools. Donations also enable us to provide programs at a reduced class rate (instead of the Museum’s higher non-school group rate) to those schools which do not qualify for the MAF.

### Bringing a Home School Group

Although our programs were each originally designed for a specific grade level, we encourage home school groups to experience all of our offerings if the following conditions can be met:

- A minimum of 10 students
- No non-participating siblings (including babies and toddlers)
- A maximum of a 3 year span in age or grade
- Parents assume the chaperone responsibilities outlined in this guide during the visit

### Important:

Please do not create student worksheets for use during a Sea Center tour. We have found that students are more engaged when they can pursue their own interests and interact with docents at the exhibits.



## Scheduling the Visit

### Reservations

**As soon as possible in the school year, book your visit.** To register your group, call 805-962-2526 ext.108

For voicemail, leave the following information: teacher's name, best contact number, and the best time to call between 1 and 5 pm, Monday through Friday. You will receive a call to confirm the details of your visit. **Your visit is confirmed when you receive the confirmation packet by email.**

If several classes from one school are attending together, please assign one teacher to act as Lead Teacher with Sea Center staff throughout the registration process and on the field trip day.

To book your reservation, be prepared with the following information:

- Your desired date
- Alternate date(s)
- Your school's address and phone number
- Your grade level
- Total number of classes
- Expected number of students
- Expected number of adults (limited # free)
- **Lead teacher's contact information: cell number during trip, extension at school, email address**
- **Names and email address for every teacher on the trip**
- The programs you would like to book
- Whether or not you will want to eat lunch on the Sea Center grounds

**Book your transportation with your bus provider or arrange parent drivers.**

### Expect Confirmation by email:

- Field Trip Confirmation Packet— Check your field trip confirmation to make sure the information and dates are correct. To make corrections, call 805-962-2526 ext 108 or email [abereda@sbnature2.org](mailto:abereda@sbnature2.org).
- Museum Access Fund application—If your school has a 50% or greater enrollment in the federal Free or or Reduced Price Meal Program, you may qualify for this scholarship program.
- Teacher Planning Pass—Use your confirmation letter as a free planning pass to familiarize yourself with the Sea Center before your class visit. It is good for your immediate family or you and one guest.

**If your school server blocks email attachments, please give us an alternate email address.**



***“Students really enjoyed the touch tanks, especially the interesting facts they learned about sharks and how humans impact the ocean.”***

Teacher, Grade 5



## Preparing for the Visit

Once you've identified your learning goals and selected your programs, it's helpful to provide your students with some pre-visit activities to help them prepare for their adventure. There are a number of pre- and post-visit activities on our website; our downloadable Teacher Guides have vocabulary, concepts to know, and key questions as well as classroom activities.

### Teacher Guides

#### Outdoor Nature Exploration:

- What Lives at the Beach (Grade K/1)
- Investigating the Sandy Beach (Grade 2)
- Coastal Bird Adaptations (Grade 3)
- Ocean Food Chains (Grade 4)
- Shifting Sands (Grade 4)
- Walking the Watershed (Grade 5)
- Beach Profiling (Grade 6)

We also strongly recommend that you follow our **Pre-Visit Timeline & Checklist** to ensure that you and your students are well prepared for your trip.

This timeline includes important information about essential trip logistics to help you organize your group visit. We know that field trip mornings can often be stressful for teachers.

The **Organized Checklist** includes trip day suggestions and important information about arrival procedures.

We also encourage you to download our more specific **Directions and Arrival Procedures**. We hope you will find these items useful in making your field trip morning more enjoyable.



Watch the motion in the wave tank.

### Visiting the Sea Center Store

Decide before your visit if students will be permitted to visit the Sea Center Store to shop for souvenirs. Notify staff of your decision at the beginning of your visit. Please remember that students must be accompanied by a chaperone while shopping. No more than 10 students are allowed in the store at a time. Unless all students have money to spend, it is best to avoid the store. Students can shop with their families on a return visit.



***“The students really like the Wet Deck and finding microscopic sea creatures.”***

Teacher, Grade 4



## Behavior Expectations

In addition to your own requirements, please review the Sea Center's Behavior Expectations with your students and chaperones.

- Students will watch for and stay with their chaperone.
- Students and their assigned chaperone will stay together as a group at all times.
- Students will be courteous and respectful of other visitors by talking quietly and walking through the Sea Center. No running.
- Students will treat the Sea Center animals, exhibits and building with care.
- Students and adults will keep food, drinks, and gum outside the Sea Center.
- With the teacher's permission, ten students at one time accompanied by a chaperone may shop for souvenirs in the Gift Shop.
- Students outdoors will respect the animals in this natural habitat by using quiet voices. Birds and sea lions don't appreciate screaming.

## Chaperone Requirements

One chaperone is admitted free for every 5 to 8 students and for every special needs student. Every parent in attendance **must be a chaperone with a designated group**. The parents' role as chaperones during your Sea Center visit is vital in helping us provide a rich educational experience for your class.

If additional adults are needed as drivers, admission is \$6 per person, as shown on your Education Group Confirmation form.

Please note: You must make a single payment for all additional adults. Multiple payments are not possible at the discounted rate.

Siblings of students are not allowed on class field trips.

***"We loved the various stations and the amount of time at each station kept the students engaged."*** Teacher, Grade K

## Preparing Chaperones

Not only are chaperones responsible for the behavior of the students, they shape each student's learning experience during the Sea Center visit. If you prepare your chaperones BEFORE they arrive, your students' learning experience will be much better.

In addition to the following tips, we strongly recommend you provide your chaperones with our **Chaperone Information Guide** in advance of the trip.

- Let your chaperones know what learning activities you have planned for your students and explain their role in those activities.
- Provide each chaperone with a list of students for whom they are responsible and provide each chaperone with the **Chaperone Information Guide**. Introduce chaperones to their students.
- Encourage chaperones to ask open-ended questions while exploring exhibits. Give them examples.
- Provide chaperones with suggestions and procedures for managing student behavior.
- Explain the schedule for the day and how you will communicate with one another once you have arrived at the Sea Center.
- Be sure your chaperones know the times and places to meet while at the Sea Center.
- Let the chaperones know whether or not your students will be allowed to visit the store.
- If your chaperones are driving, provide them with maps and parking information.



# Secrets to a Great Field Trip Experience

## #1—Arriving on Time

Please plan to arrive no later than 9:45 am. Each program requires a full hour. The Sea Center opens at 10 am. If you are coming on a long bus ride, please arrive in time for students to take a restroom break prior to 10 am.

If you want to eat a snack before going through the Sea Center, we recommend that you arrive by 9:30 am in order to be ready for activities at 10 am. You cannot bring food, drink, or gum into the Sea Center.

For more detailed information, download our **Arrival Procedures**.

## #2—Assigning Student Groups at School

We expect student groups to be assigned prior to arriving at the Sea Center. Please remember that we require at least one chaperone for every five to eight students.

The teacher may be counted as a chaperone. We have found that a group size of five working with one chaperone is most effective.

## #3—Name Tags

All students must wear name tags that include the school name and the name of the teacher. Listing the student's name on the name tag is especially helpful. We recommend name tags that adhere to the students' clothing or hang around the neck.

## #4—Planning Communication

Communication between chaperones and teachers is vital to a well-organized field trip. Please be sure to provide all your chaperones with the lead teacher's contact information. Collect the chaperones' cell phone numbers as well.

Using cell phones to coordinate locations and instructions is encouraged; no other cell phone usage is permitted. Please ask your chaperones to take calls only from the teacher or in an emergency situation.

## #5—Knowing Emergency Procedures

Students should know that they can ask for help from anyone wearing a Sea Center name badge.

In the rare event of an emergency requiring the evacuation of the Sea Center, the staff will lead students to the closest exit and to the parking lot.

Please be prepared to follow all instructions from the our Emergency Response Team representatives.



***"I loved the free exploration time on the beach: great directions, group work, and sharing at the end."*** Teacher, Grade 2



## What Not to Bring

We have found that certain distractions consistently prohibit meaningful learning experiences for visiting students. We strongly discourage you from bringing:

- **Too many adults with no responsibilities**  
Chaperones have important responsibilities and need to perform their duties. Extra adults with cell phones and cameras become distractions at best.
- **Siblings in strollers**  
Our Sea Center is small. Navigating strollers and tending to young children while trying to supervise students detracts greatly from possible experiences.
- **Hungry students**  
Students who are hungry can't concentrate. Encourage students to eat breakfast in spite of their excitement, eat a snack en route, or arrive early to eat a snack if the students' normal lunch time will be delayed.
- **Large backpacks**  
They are unnecessary for your visit and are not encouraged during field trips. They take up too much space.
- **Clipboards**  
Students need free hands to interact with the exhibits.

**Student with cameras**—These are allowed but not recommended. Students who spend their time taking pictures tend to miss positive, interactive experiences with the exhibits and with our docents. Posing for pictures disrupts the learning experience.

**Adults with cameras**—If your chaperones have cameras, please encourage them to photograph the students engaged in activities and not posing for the camera.

## After the Field Trip

After your visit, please take time to complete the program evaluation and return the completed form in the envelope provided with the form.

We greatly value your input; we read every evaluation and use the feedback to adapt to your needs.

Student letters are also appreciated. We are interested in knowing what students remember about the experience, what they learned, and how their attitudes toward the natural world have been affected. These letters are also important in evaluating the success of our programs and in attracting donors.



**Along with your evaluation form and envelope, you will receive a pack of Free Family Passes to distribute to your students following your visit.**

We hope that you will encourage your students and their families to use them at either the Sea Center or the Mission Creek Campus. A family visit following a school trip is a wonderful time for your students to share what they've learned.

To help you connect your students' field trip experiences to their classroom learning, we have developed a series of **Teacher's Guides** which include both pre- and post-visit activities.

Post-visit activities are a great opportunity to reinforce your students' recent experiences as well as build upon them.



# Download

from the Sea Center website:

- **Pre–Visit Timeline & Organized Checklist**
- **Chaperone Information Guides**
- **Directions to the Sea Center and Arrival Procedures**
- **Local Picnic Opportunities**

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