

# Teacher & Chaperone Sheet

Dear Chaperone,

Your role as a chaperone is crucial while your group visits the Maine State Aquarium. You will have the opportunity to help us make your group's visit a fun, memorable and educationally rewarding experience. Keeping students busy and engaged is the key to a successful visit.

The information on this sheet will help you guide students through the Aquarium. As a chaperone, you will be responsible for ensuring that Aquarium rules are followed. The best way to do this is to keep the students actively learning, and to make sure that they know the rules before the trip, with consistent reminders during your visit. **Remember- it is your responsibility to model good behavior and encourage active participation while at the Aquarium facility.** AQ Staff are not responsible for student behavior, but have the right to ascertain when behavior is not appropriate for our facility and will act accordingly.

## Rules:

1. **RUNNING is NOT allowed** in the building or on the Aquarium porch for safety reasons.
2. **TAPPING or BANGING** on the glass is **NOT allowed**. Animals are disturbed and stressed when this occurs and can lead to resulting health issues and even death.
3. There is **NO CLIMBING** on exhibits. Steps are provided in appropriate locations.
4. **ANIMALS & INFORMATIONAL TAGS** must **remain** at their **exhibit locations**.
5. **MISHANDLING or MOLESTING** animals will not be tolerated. We have specific guidelines on how to hand animals, including with **2 HANDS** while **IN THE WATER**.
6. **SHARKS & SKATES** are **NOT to be pulled on or stopped** from **swimming**. You may touch with **2 FINGERS ONLY**.
7. **ALL TRASH** must be placed in the appropriate **trash, dumpster, or recycling bins**.
8. **CHILDREN MUST REMAIN** with Chaperones at all times.
9. There is a **DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA** for those that need it. Please place butts in the appropriate container and **NOT** on the ground.
10. **NO FEEDING** of aquarium or local animals. **Human food is not animal food** and must remain in your car, bus, or designated storage area.

**The Aquarium Staff have the right to ask anyone not following these rules to leave the aquarium facility.** It is our duty to protect our animals and other guests and will do so with warning, and then with removal. If a situation warrants immediate dismissal due to a safety issue for either a person or an animal, a chaperone will be required to accompany the offending student out of the facility. *If it becomes a group issue, consideration will be given to removing a group from our acceptance list the following year.*

## Your role as a chaperone:

Children will be fascinated by the animals in the Aquarium. They will become most interested in the touch tank and the shark tank spending only a few seconds at the other tanks. The best service that you can provide is to focus their attention on the tanks located in the rock wall and get them to look, think, and ask questions. You do not need to know the answer to all of their questions but say "I don't know - how could we find out?" (Further observation? Other students? Graphic panels? Aquarium Guide? or Research?)



### **At any tank you can ask the students to:**

- **Identify** the animals by using the species labels near each tank.
- **Observe** the animals in the tanks. Find the ways that they are adapted to feeding, moving, holding on, protecting themselves, and to their environment. Find an animal that is camouflaged.
- **"Adopt"** one animal and watch it for three minutes. How did it behave? How much time would it take scientists to observe an animal and become an expert on every aspect of its behavior?
- **Guesstimate** and then count how many animals are in each tank. This might take a few minutes as many animals may be hiding!



### **At the aquaculture tank (mussels, oysters, and salmon), you can ask the students:**

- What is aquaculture?
- Why are we farming the ocean?
- What are the pros and cons of farming the ocean?
- Has anyone ever eaten a sea farmed animal? Does it taste any different?

😊 **At the shark tank**, the students can get up close and personal with the sharks and skates *but do not allow them to grab these fish by their tail or fins. A 2-finger touch is all that is allowed.*

- What are these small sharks called? Why are they called that? How do you know they are sharks?
- Gently touch the sharks skin- what does it feel like? Did it feel like you thought it would?
- If a skate is swimming at the surface, **gently touch it using 2 fingers**. Does it feel like the shark? What are the holes behind its eyes used for?
- A skate's egg case is often called a mermaid's purse; can you find one in the facility? How old do you think the baby inside is? What is it doing?

😊 **At the touch tank**, the students may pick up and release the animals gently. Support them with 2 hands and hold them in the water at the tank.

🐟 Discover **Mollusks**: A mollusk is a soft-bodied animal usually with some kind of shell. Can you find them all? *Ex. Moon Snails, Mussels, Surf Clams, Scallops, and Oysters.*

- **Moon Snail**: What is the gooey, muscular part? Touch its foot until it pulls it completely into its shell.
- **Scallop**: What are all of the blue and black dots on the inside of the scallop? Why does it clap its shells and squirt water? *Be careful not to point the opening at your face, students have gotten saltwater in the eye because of this.*

🐟 Discover **Arthropods**: An arthropod is a jointed-bodied animal with an exoskeleton. Can you find them all? *Ex. Horseshoe crabs, Hermit crabs, Lobsters, Shrimp, and Barnacles.*

- **Horseshoe Crab**: Watch it carefully- what is the tail used for? How are its claws different then a lobster or a crab? *(When holding, make sure to support both sections of the body)*
- **Lobster** *(Hold carefully, supporting its middle)*: What are the antennae used for? Why do you think their claws are banded?
- **Crab**: Identify the green crab, rock crab, hermit crab, and toad crab. *(Be careful, they all have claws!)* Which one is living in a snail's shell? Which one looks like a spider? What is different about the way that they move?
- **Barnacles**: Can you find some of these? Watch them carefully, how do think they get food?

🐟 Discover **Echinoderms**: An echinoderm is a spiny skinned animal, sometimes with hidden or soft spines. *Ex. Seastar, Sea Urchin, Sand Dollar, and Sea Cucumbers.*

- Other than spines, what else do these animals have in common? Compare.
- **Sea Star**: How many suction cup tube feet does it have? What do you think the orange spot is for? Can you find the eyes located at the tip of each arm?
- **Sea Urchin**: What are all the spines used for? Can you find its mouth and teeth?
- **Sea Cucumber**: What does it feel like? Can you find 5 rows of tube feet? How does the cucumber change shape? Why is it squirting water? *Please do not squeeze these animals, they are fragile.*

#### SEVEN ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES FOR CHAPERONES:

1. **Encourage students to explore and make their own discoveries and connections.**
2. **Focus your students with particular themes, concepts, or activities.**
3. **Take time to really look at each exhibit with observational periods and reflection. Children often miss what is happening in the tanks because of overexcitement and rushing.**
4. **Get interested! If you appear interested, students will be too. If you appear bored, so will they.**
5. **Ask questions! Our educators and volunteers are more than happy to assist you and your students with any questions that you might have.**
6. **Give feedback about your visit to our facility. Did you particularly enjoy a program or staff member? Is there something in particular you didn't see that you want to? Using this feedback helps us to improve from year to year.**
7. **Have fun! Our small educational facility can be a great time and a positive learning experience!**

