



**GUEST INFORMATION PACKET**  
**2026-2027**

# Welcome

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**Thank you for booking your sleepover adventure with us! We are excited for you to join us at ZZZ's by the Sea.**

As you prepare for your adventure, please review all program and participant information contained within this packet.

If you have any questions about your sleepover or information contained in this packet, please contact our Education Sales Coordinator at 228-241-1218.

## Sleepover Introduction

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### **What to Expect**

Sleepovers are a guided experience with knowledgeable aquarium staff and volunteers. Groups remain together with aquarium staff through engaging evening and morning activities. This program also includes admission into the aquarium the following day for participants to further enjoy the aquarium at a self-guided pace during regular public hours.

### **Sleeping Locations**

Guests will have the opportunity to sleep in one of our amazing galleries in Aquatic Wonders:

- Swirl Tank
- Shark Window
- Big Window
- Grouper and Eel grotto

*Groups will have the opportunity to choose their sleeping areas but for larger groups that wish to remain together, your choices may be limited due to group size.*

### **Departure**

When departing, please make sure that you have collected all your belongings. Any items left by guests will be placed in the Aquarium's lost and found located at Ticketing.

After morning activities end, guests are welcome to visit the gift shop, do a self-guided tour of the campus or depart. For guests that wish to explore the park after opening, all personal items will need to be moved to your vehicle between 7:15-8:00 a.m.

## Safety and Security

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**SAFETY** is the number one priority at Mississippi Aquarium. Everyone, staff, and guests are responsible for safety. The following policies and procedures are set for the safety of guests, staff, and animals at the Aquarium. Staff will go over emergencies, fire drills, emergency exits, and all other requirements at the beginning of the sleepover.

Aquarium staff and security officers are always available during sleepovers. Staff sleep in separate areas than guests; however, they are accessible throughout the night. The Aquarium has 24-hour onsite security. Please do not be alarmed when you see a uniformed staff member or security officer passing through the building. Security makes regular rounds throughout the facility during the night.

Main aquarium gates are locked after 4:30 p.m. Entrance into the Aquarium after 4:30 p.m. will require a Guest Experience staff member or security officer escort.

To ensure the safety of our guests, the following protocols are in place for ZZZ's by the Sea:

- Sleepover guests under 18 must be accompanied by an adult 18+ and older.
- Smoking is strictly prohibited on campus, which includes electronic and vapor cigarettes.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in sleepover programs.
- During any sleepovers, guests who are behaving inappropriately or violating safety protocols may be asked to leave.

Please note, the following items are NOT permitted inside Mississippi Aquarium:

- Weapons, including but not limited to guns and knives
- No outside food or beverage including alcoholic beverages, is permitted
- Matches/Lighters
- Chewing gum
- Fishing poles
- Pets or emotional support animals are not allowed on aquarium grounds.
  - Service animals are permitted in all areas on campus except the aviary. If you have questions about our service animal policy, please contact us.

If there is an emergency and you need to contact someone attending the sleepover, please contact our security office at 228-669-2824.

## Packing for Your Adventure

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The secret is to pack light. We suggest:

- Sleeping mats
- Sleeping bags
- Blankets
- Pillows
- Sweater or Hoodie
- PJs
- Toothbrush and other small toiletries
- Battery powered phone chargers

*\*Note: Due to the cool temperatures of our galleries, we highly recommend bringing warm clothing to sleep in.*

Air mattresses are permitted, however electrical outlets are limited or not available in certain galleries. We strongly encourage inflatable beds that do not require electricity or an air mattress with a battery operated pump.

If you need to charge electronic devices, we recommend you bring a portable charger. For guests who need an electrical outlet for medical reasons, such as a CPAP machine, please contact us in advance to ensure you are placed near an outlet.

For some, sleeping away from home can be difficult. We suggest that you bring eye masks and earplugs if you are sensitive to light and sounds.

Recommended items to leave at home:

- Toys
- Flashlights
  - For the safety of our animals, *flashlights are not permitted during sleepovers.* Lighting in sleeping areas will be reduced
- Valuables:
  - Tablets
  - Laptops
  - Video games

# Guest Arrival and Parking

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## Directions

Mississippi Aquarium's physical address is:

**2100 E. Beach Blvd. Gulfport, MS 39501**

If you are arriving by **personal vehicle**, please park in the CTA (Coast Transit Authority) parking garage east of the Aquarium. CTA security officers monitor the parking garage 24 hours a day.

The parking garage is located at:

**1401 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. Gulfport, MS 39507**

For the safety of your vehicle and belongings, please make sure to leave all valuables out of sight!

## Luggage

Please make sure to bring all your luggage and other needed items with you to check in. Items will be placed inside the main sleepover building until activities for the night have finished. You will not return to your vehicle until the next morning.

## Check-in

Check-in begins at 6:45 p.m. at the front entry plaza of the Aquarium, west of the CTA parking garage. If you are participating in the sleepover, please arrive no later than 7:15 p.m. to ensure you can unpack all gear and attend the safety briefing promptly at 7:15 p.m. All guests participating in sleepovers must attend the safety briefing.

Luggage should be brought to the main ticketing entrance when you check in. Aquarium staff will meet group leaders or individuals in the plaza and direct guests to the appropriate location.

## Orientation

Our sleepover program begins promptly at 7:15 p.m. You'll meet our talented staff and volunteers during orientation and learn all about your sleepover. Make sure you arrive with plenty of time to be here for the meeting. It's information you don't want to miss!

## Snack and Breakfast

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A late-night snack and light breakfast will be provided. Personal drinks and food items are not allowed into the Aquarium except for dietary or medical needs. We recommend bringing a refillable water bottle or canteen. We have filtered water stations throughout campus to refill water bottles.

*Please note, straws and glass containers are not allowed in the Aquarium.*

We ask all participants to plan accordingly and eat dinner before arriving at the Aquarium. **Dinner is NOT included in the sleepover.**

### **Special Diets/ Snacks:**

- Guests with special dietary needs should contact the aquarium one week in advance of the program date.
- Outside food and drinks are not permitted unless there is a special dietary and medical need.

If you have dietary or allergy questions, please contact us at least one week in advance of your program date.

# Sleepover Schedule

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## Evening

6:45–7:15 p.m. – Check-In

7:15–7:30 p.m. – Welcome/Orientation

7:30–9:30 p.m. – Activities/Snack

9:30 – 9:45 p.m. – Nighttime Orientation

9:45 – 10:30 p.m. – Quiet Time

10:30 p.m. – Lights Out

## Morning

6:30–7:15 a.m. – Rise and Shine

7:15–8:00 a.m. – Breakfast

8:00–8:20a.m. – Animal Spotlight (Aviary)

8:20-8:35a.m. - Animal Enrichment (Dolphin habitat)

8:35–8:55 a.m. – Reef Talk (Aquatic Wonders, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor)

8:55 – Gift Shop, Self-guided Tour, Departure

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **Can I leave Aquarium during the overnight?**

Guests are more than welcome to leave the program at any time. Aquarium gates and entrances are locked after 4:30 p.m. Entrance or exit from the Aquarium between 6:45 p.m. - 9:00 a.m. will require escort by MSAQ staff. Please bring any medical items or medications you may need with you. There are no refunds for leaving the program early. Security officers will be available for any guest that needs to leave due to an emergency.

## **Will food be available?**

Outside food and drinks are not permitted on sleepovers unless required for dietary or medical purposes. A late night snack and continental breakfast is included in your sleepover. We encourage guests to bring a refillable water bottle. Straws, alcohol, and glass bottles are not permitted on campus.

We do not provide dinner at sleepovers, so we encourage all participants to eat before arriving at the Aquarium.

If you or your child has a food allergy or other need, please contact us **one week** in advance of your sleepover date. There is no guarantee that a change will take place, but we will try to accommodate reasonable requests when given ample notice.

## **Can I bring electronics?**

Sleepovers are packed with fun activities to keep you busy all evening and morning. We strongly encourage you to leave expensive electronics or other items at home. Mississippi Aquarium is not responsible for items that are stolen, left behind, damaged, or accidentally taken.

## **Are there bathrooms or showers?**

Bathrooms are available throughout the sleepover in both the Changing Tides and Aquatic Wonders buildings. There are no showers on site, so please plan accordingly.

## **When should I arrive? Can I arrive late?**

Check-in for Zzz's by the Sea starts at 6:45 p.m. Early arrivals will have to wait for staff to arrive to be checked in. The program starts promptly at 7:15 p.m. with a mandatory safety meeting for all chaperones and children staying overnight.

Guests who arrive after 7:15 p.m., please call 228-669-5835 to reach a sleepover team member.

**What should we bring?**

- Sleeping mats
- Sleeping bags
- Blankets
- Pillows
- Sweater or Hoodie
- PJs
- Toothbrush and other small toiletries
- Portable battery chargers

**Will we get to tour the park or see animals?**

Absolutely! You will be escorted through the park for activities at various habitats.

**Will the gift shop be open?**

Yes, participants can visit the gift shop before they exit the Aquarium.

**What is the minimum age?**

The minimum participant age is 5.

**What is the maximum group size?**

The maximum group size currently is 50 participants.

**Are electrical outlets available?**

Electrical outlets are limited or not available in all sleeping areas. For guests who need an electrical outlet for medical reasons, such as a CPAP machine, please contact us in advance to ensure you are placed in an area with outlets.

**Where will we sleep?**

All sleepover participants will have the opportunity to sleep in one of 4 amazing galleries in Aquatic Wonders.

**Can I bring an air mattress?**

Yes. An air mattress is permitted, however, electrical outlets are limited or not available in certain galleries. We strongly encourage an air mattress with a battery operated pump.

**I do not want to sleepover. Can I drop my children off, so I don't have to attend?**

Sleepovers are designed as a group and family experience. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times during the sleepover. Mississippi Aquarium requires at least one adult (18+ or older) for every 5 children present. Children 17 years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult.