

Sleep with the Fishes FAQs

Sleep with the Fishes Overview

What is Sleep with the Fishes?

Sleep with the Fishes is a structured educational adventure designed for children ages 8 to 17 (grades 2 – 12) with an emphasis on elementary school aged children. Build your adventure with your choice of hands-on activities, an evening walk in the Wetlands, an animal encounter, and much more. Plus, you'll get to literally "Sleep with the Fishes"!

Will we be the only group there?

Not necessarily. We can conduct two sleepovers every night. You may see another group during the evening activities and mealtimes. We will do our best to keep your visit as private as possible. You will have your own separate sleeping area.

What is the sleepover schedule?

Our sleepover activities and schedules are subject to change due to weather, animal needs, or any unforeseen circumstances without notice. For this reason, we do not hand out schedules. However, below is a general outline of a sleepover schedule. Your sleepover host will update the chaperones during the Chaperone Chat on the schedule for the night of your sleepover.

7:00-7:30PM Check-in

Welcome & Chaperone Chat

Wetlands Trail Walk

Pizza snack and bathroom break

Activity One

Activity Two

Prepare for lights out

Lights out

Next morning Wake Up

Breakfast

Animal Encounter

Private touch habitat time before The Aquarium opens

9:30AM Sleepover ends

Tour Aquarium on your own (approx. 2 hours to see everything) with your included admission.

What do we bring?

We suggest the following items for students and adults:

- ✓ Sleeping bag, mat or air mattress, and a pillow. (Outlets are available)
- ✓ Carts to carry sleeping gear to and from your car.
- ✓ Warm clothing. The Aquarium is chilly at night.
- ✓ Toiletry items. (There are no showers available)
- ✓ Refillable water bottles
- ✓ A camera (no flash photos are permitted at night)
- ✓ Appropriate sleep attire

For adults only in addition to the above:

- ✓ Emergency contact information for all students
- ✓ Flashlight

What do we leave at home?

- Anything of personal value that could get lost like portable game systems. There won't be time for that anyway!
- Outside food or beverages
- Siblings/Children under the age of 8.

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

What happens if there is extreme weather like a tropical storm or hurricane?

If we must cancel your sleepover due to extreme weather, you will be given a choice to reschedule with no additional charge or a full refund of any amount paid. The Florida Aquarium monitors weather closely. We will contact you if changes need to be made due to extreme weather conditions.

SLEEPOVER POLICIES

What are the sleepover guidelines for all participants?

- ❖ Students must always be supervised by an adult participant from your group.
- ❖ There should be no running or rough play in any part of the Aquarium.
- ❖ All garbage must be disposed of in the appropriate receptacles. This will help keep our animals safe.
- ❖ Shoes must be worn while walking anywhere in the Aquarium.
- ❖ Groups must stay together, especially during tours and at mealtimes.
- ❖ The Florida Aquarium has 24/7 monitored cameras throughout the campus for everyone's safety.

Is there a code of conduct?

The Florida Aquarium expects all participants (students and adults) to behave in a courteous and respectful manner. Any bullying or aggressive behavior towards a participant or The Florida Aquarium staff will result in immediate dismissal without refund for the group.

All participants are expected to follow all instructions and safety guidelines given by our sleepover team. If behavior becomes a safety issue the group will be asked to leave, and no refund will be given.

Are we free to roam The Florida Aquarium on our own?

For the safety of all participants and our animals, no one should be "roaming" the Aquarium. The behind-the-scenes areas are prohibited, without being accompanied by a staff member. You may leave your sleeping area with a chaperone to visit the restroom. Please only use the restroom assigned to your group.

Are we able to leave the sleepover and come back later?

Once the program begins, participants will not be able to leave until the conclusion of the sleepover. If someone leaves, they will not be re-admitted to the sleepover. This is for everyone's safety.

Participants that cannot stay the night should not participate in the sleepover. This is disruptive to the group and our staff is not always available to escort someone to the exit during the sleepover. If you have participants that cannot spend the night you may want to consider our "Adventures After Dark" program.

Anyone not spending the night will not be able to participate in the morning activities. If they want to join the group after 9:30am, they are free to do so after purchasing a general admission ticket.

ARRIVAL

What time do we arrive?

Check in for your sleepover is between 7:00pm and 7:30pm. Your program will begin promptly at 7:30pm. We are in the Channelside District of downtown Tampa. There may be a lot of traffic. We recommend checking on events that may be happening downtown and at the port. Please plan ahead to make sure you are on time. Late arrivals will disrupt your sleepover program and portions of your sleepover may be missed. Early arrivals cannot be accommodated.

Where do we park?

When you arrive at The Florida Aquarium drive to the circle in front of the Aquarium. You may drop off your sleeping gear and receive your parking pass. Parking is free for sleepover participants in the surface lot north of the Aquarium starting at 7:00pm. Drivers will need to complete a liability form to receive a parking pass. Please have your license tag number available.

Please be sure to go to the front circle first to get your parking pass and drop off your sleeping gear.

What is the Chaperone Chat?

This is the time that the sleepover team will meet with all adult participants to review the evenings schedule and expectations for Chaperones. Chaperones should be prepared to:

1. Stay with the group for the entire program.
2. Supervise students throughout the night.
3. Manage the behavior of all participants, especially when requested by the Aquarium sleepover team.
4. Ensure that all participants follow all safety guidelines.
5. Refrain from tobacco use, electronic cigarette use, and consumption of illegal drugs and alcohol. The Florida Aquarium is a smoke free facility and smoking is prohibited on the entire campus.

ACTIVITIES

Are we able to pick our activities?

Yes, you can choose two activities. You will be choosing your activities on your Sleepover Details Sheet due 14 days prior to your event. You may pick from the below list:

- *Squid Dissection* (All Ages) – Explore the inner and outer workings of an amazing aquatic creature! Join a knowledgeable instructor for a guided look inside a squid. Guests will use dissection tools to investigate a squid with their lab team.
- *Sea Turtle Rescue* (Elementary) – Experience what it takes to save a stranded sea turtle. Our expert instructors will guide guests step-by-step through a mock sea turtle rescue. Guest will also learn about required veterinary care and rehabilitation as well as the release process followed by The Florida Aquarium's Sea Turtle Conservation Program.
- *Fish Identification* (All Ages) What makes a fish a fish? Learn about fish anatomy and then use this newfound knowledge to identify fish around the Aquarium. Plus, you'll discover the important roles that fish play in Tampa Bay.
- *Corals Alive* (Elementary) What exactly is coral? Is it an animal, a rock, or a plant? Discover all of this and more with a fun, interactive game and tour of the coral living at the Aquarium. Learn about how The Florida Aquarium is helping these important animals in the wild.
- *Shark Senses* (Elementary) How well do you measure up to a shark? Guests will have an opportunity to compare human vs shark senses through a variety of games and experiments. This immersive experience will highlight what it takes to be the top predator.
- *Behind the Scenes Tour* (All Ages) Ever wonder what it takes to operate a REALLY big fish habitat? Go behind the scenes and get an in-depth look at our animal wellness program. Visit areas otherwise not seen by the public like our commissary and reef deck. An Aquarium instructor will provide narration and answer questions throughout the tour.

FOOD

Can we bring our own food?

The Florida Aquarium does not allow any outside food to be brought in. If you have special dietary needs, please contact our Education Department via email at education@flaquarium.org or call 813-273-4015.

Is there any food included with the Sleepover?

The sleepover will include an evening snack and breakfast.

The evening snack is 1 slice of cheese pizza per person. This is a snack, not dinner. We advise you to have dinner before you arrive. You will be given the opportunity to order extra pizza before your sleepover if you like.

A cold breakfast in the morning is provided. Breakfast includes: Cereal (Cheerios (gluten free), Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Frosted Flakes, Frosted Mini Wheats, and Lucky Charms), Pop Tarts (Brown Sugar Cinnamon & Strawberry), and beverages (Orange Juice, Apple Juice, Coffee, 2% Milk, and Almond Milk).

All snacks and meals will be eaten in an outside venue.

SLEEPING LOCATIONS

Where will we be sleeping?

We have two locations that we use for sleepovers. Your sleeping area will be assigned to you a few days before your sleepover. This assignment will be made according to your group size, animal care needs, and other events in the Aquarium. The Florida Aquarium reserves the right to change sleeping locations without notice due to unforeseen circumstances.

Are we sleeping on the floor?

Everyone will be sleeping on the floor. You may bring air mattresses or mats. Please keep in mind that you will have to keep fire exits, and pathways open so large air mattresses are not advised. No cots or tents are allowed.

Can we leave the sleeping area during the night?

You may only leave your sleeping area to use the restroom with a chaperone. You will be assigned a restroom by our sleepover team. Please make sure your group is using only the restrooms assigned to you.

Will Aquarium staff be sleeping in our sleeping location?

Our staff will remain on-site but will not be sleeping in the same area as your group. They can be reached in an emergency.

Are there showers available?

There are no shower facilities available during the sleepover.

SLEEPOVER CONCLUSION

What time does our sleepover end?

Your sleepover ends at 9:30am. Your group will have admission to The Aquarium for the remainder of the day.

Aquarium staff will not be available to monitor students for any late pickups.

Is there a place to store our sleeping gear?

There is no place to store your sleeping gear while you explore the Aquarium after your sleepover. You will be asked to take your gear to your cars before breakfast in the morning. The Aquarium Staff will not be available to help with this process.