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## **Overnight Handbook**

Everything you have ever wanted to know about overnights at The Children's Museum of New Hampshire, but were afraid to ask!

### **Get Curious!**

An Overnight at the Children's Museum of New Hampshire combines a memorable camping experience with creative learning in a hands-on museum. Campers can experience the arts, science and world cultures through special workshops while enjoying the chance to bunk down for the night amongst the museum's many exhibits. This handbook is designed to help you prepare for your overnight program and get excited to have a great experience with your group!

### **Be Prepared!**

Remember the days of childhood sleepovers on your bedroom floor? Being too excited to go to sleep, trips to the bathroom in the middle of the night, and waking up tired the next day may be part of your overnight experience. A memorable, fun and bonding experience for the children you chaperone is a positive outcome as well. Please come to the overnight well rested, expecting to mingle with adults and children who you may not know, carrying a comfortable pillow, sleeping bag and camping pad or small inflatable mattress (for adults only).

### **What is my role as chaperone?**

Just because you are attending an overnight at a children's museum, that doesn't mean that you won't find plenty to enjoy as an adult. We encourage all chaperones to explore the museum's exhibits and participate in workshops right alongside the children they are with. Chaperones are responsible for supervising campers at all times, including during the overnight hours when sleeping. Both men and women may be chaperones at any overnight program. Chaperones may not leave the museum grounds during an overnight event. Adults are not permitted to bring unregistered children, or children not in grades 1 – 6. If a chaperone cannot attend for any reason, the organization can find a replacement.

### **When should we arrive and how to we register?**

The overnight program officially begins at 7 pm. You should arrive at the main museum entrance between 6:15 – 6:45 pm. Campers are not admitted prior to 6:15 pm.

At the registration area in the museum lobby, adult leaders must check in their groups. Each group will turn in Overnight Attendance Form listing the names and emergency contact information for each person attending the program. The leader will be given a schedule of events, a program evaluation form and a sleeping assignment for their group. Overnight staff will lead the group to a place to store their gear and show the group leader the assigned sleeping area.

### **What should we bring?**

An indoor sleeping bag and pillow for all, as well as a camping pad or air mattress for adults only is recommended. Due to space constraints, we ask that children do not bring air mattresses to the museum. (Please note that museum staff will ask adults to set up air mattresses in places that do not block access to exits, bathrooms or pathways.) Each person should try to pack all their belongings together, even putting a change of clothes and a plastic bag with toiletries rolled inside a sleeping bag. Please have each person label belongings with their group and individual name.

Comfortable shoes and clothing are a must for everyone! Encourage everyone to dress in layers and wear something they wouldn't mind sleeping in. This makes getting ready for bed a breeze and saves a considerable amount of time spent in the bathrooms.

Even though we provide an evening snack and breakfast, having so much fun sometimes makes for thirsty campers. We suggest that all campers bring their own refillable water bottle, labeled with their name and group name. Campers may also wish to bring money for gift shop purchases. The museum carries a variety of souvenirs and exhibit-related items.

At least one adult leader and chaperone should have cell phones with them and turned on at all times and give these phone numbers to all parents of children with your group in the case of an emergency. Please put all cell phones on vibrate mode during the sleeping hours.

### **What should we leave at home?**

Please do not bring hair dryers, curling irons, alarm clocks, electronic toys, music, or alcohol. If bringing in any outside food, please refrain from eating foods that contain peanuts or nut products. Although visitors are not allowed to eat or drink in the museum exhibits, staff are happy to show areas where you may eat. Some campers may wish to bring flashlights, but these should remain in their sleeping bags and not be used to disturb others after lights-out.

### **What is the schedule for the event and what sorts of activities will we do?**

The overnight program includes an opening orientation, three staff-led exhibit-based workshops focusing on the arts, math/science and world cultures, evening snack, time to explore the museum's exhibits, and breakfast. See the sample schedule on this page for more information. Your schedule may vary.

#### **Sample Schedule**

6:15 – 6:45 pm	Arrive and Register
7 pm	Orientation
7:15 pm	Free Exploration
8 pm	Two Hands-on Workshops
9 pm	Snack
9:30 pm	Third Hands-on Workshop
10 pm	Explore and Set Up Camp
11 pm	Lights Out
6:45 am	Wake Up
7 am	Breakfast
7:30 am	Shop Open, Project Area Open, Visit Favorite Exhibits
8:45 - 9 am	Departure – Get Free Passes, Turn In Evaluations

### **Where do we park?**

First of all, we encourage all overnight participants to carpool as much as possible. The closest over night parking is in the parking lot just past our building -- the first left turn off Henry Law Avenue. Parking is also available on the downtown streets of Dover. Please look at posted signs to ensure that you have parked in a place suitable for over night parking and check that you bring all gear with you.

### **What kinds of food do you provide for snack and breakfast?**

Snack consists of mix-your-own snack mix using cereal, pretzels, raisins, chocolate chips and crackers, as well as juice, water and a coffee/tea station for adults. Breakfast items include muffins, mini-bagels, cream cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit, granola bars, juice, milk and coffee/tea for adults. We make all efforts to stay away from serving food products containing peanuts and tree nuts. For those with food allergies, we suggest you read all food packaging and bring your own snacks/breakfast if needed.

### **What about dinner?**

You should plan to eat dinner before you arrive at the museum if at all possible. Campers may bring in dinner and eat in the designated picnic area between 6:15 and 6:45 pm. We can provide you with names and phone numbers for local pizza parlors, but suggest that if you choose to go this route, you place your orders in advance and request a specific pick-up or delivery time to ensure you have time to eat before the program begins.

### **What is involved in setting up camp?**

After all the scheduled evening activities are done, it is time to set up camp. This involves gathering your group and laying out their stowed gear in your assigned exhibit area. Overnight staff will circulate to answer any questions you have and point out your location in relation to bathrooms and emergency exits. They will also make sure that no camper has placed herself/himself in a walkway or blocking an exit to the building.

This is a great time to everyone to use the bathrooms and wind down from their exciting evening. We ask that once the main exhibit floor lights go out, that campers remain quietly at their campsites for the night. Night lights, exit lighting, bathrooms and other common areas will remain lit throughout the night.

In the morning, staff will turn on lights to signal the morning wake-up call. Campers will be asked to stow all their gear until departure to allow everyone access to enjoy the exhibits some more before leaving.

## **Emergencies**

### **Medical Emergencies and First Aid**

All groups attending an overnight must designate their own first-aid person and bring their own first-aid kit and medications for members of their organization as needed. (Refrigeration for medications is available). The museum does not supply first-aid staff or supplies for these events. If a medical emergency arises during an event, please notify your first-aid person and a member of the museum staff immediately. Dover's Wentworth-Douglass Hospital is only minutes away. The group leader should have the emergency contact numbers for everyone in their group.

### **Family Emergencies**

As explained above, each organization should provide two of the chaperone's cell phone numbers to all parents whose children are attending the overnight event in the case of a family emergency. Those phones should be left on during the duration of the event, but placed on vibrate mode during the sleeping hours so as not to disrupt other campers.

### **Building Emergencies**

The museum building is equipped with heat and smoke detection systems, as well as a sprinkler system. Once all participants arrive for an overnight event, the museum is locked for the night, barring entry but not preventing anyone from exiting the building in the case of emergency. Museum staff are trained in emergency exit procedures and share the exit plan with all participants during the evening orientation.

### **Overnight Rules and Guidelines**

- Children in grades 1 – 6 can participate.
- Children must be chaperoned at all times.
- Participants are not allowed to leave the building except in the case of an emergency.
- Smoking is prohibited in the museum.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the exhibits.
- Please be courteous to all attending and remain quiet during “lights out.”
- For everyone’s safety, no running in the museum.