

VIMS SUMMER CAMP 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a list of Frequently Asked Questions about the VIMS 2017 Summer camp programs.

- **How much do the summer camps cost?**
All of the summer camps are free.
- **Why is there a lottery system as opposed to signing up first come, first serve?**
The lottery system was implemented in 2010 to make the application fairer for all students, schools, and families. Everyone has equal time to find out about the camps and get their applications turned in.
- **Why do you ask on the application if our student had attended camp last year?**
Because of the popularity of the VIMS Summer Camps, and in an effort to reach more students every year, students are no longer allowed to repeat the same camp. For example, if your student attended Sea Squirts camp last year because they were entering 1st grade, and now they are entering 2nd grade and still eligible for Sea Squirts camp, they will not be accepted to attend. This will not affect your chances of being selected if your student has aged up into a different camp. For example, if your student attended Sea Squirts camp last year because they were entering 2nd grade, and now they are entering 3rd grade and eligible for Bay Buddies, their prior camp attendance will not affect their preference in being accepted.
- **What are the times of the camps?**
The Sea Squirts, Bay Buddies, and Chesapeake Champions camps run from 9am-4pm. Estuary Explorers will run from 9am on Monday, July 24th through mid-day on Saturday, July 29th.
- **Where do the camps take place?**
The Sea Squirts, Bay Buddies, and Chesapeake Champions camps are held at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, VA. Estuary Explorers will leave from VIMS in Gloucester Point, but we will spend the week at the VIMS Eastern Shore campus in Wachapreague, VA.
- **Can I sign up my student for the same camp, two years in a row?**
No.

- **Which camps are day camps and which are overnight?**
Only the Estuary Explorers camp for rising 7th and 8th grade students is overnight.
- **The dates for the Estuary Explorers camp include 6 days. Is that a typo?**
No. The Estuary Explorers camp will leave VIMS in Gloucester Point, VA on Monday, July 24th and will travel to the VIMS Eastern Shore Lab in Wachapreague, VA where we will stay for the entire week. Students must be picked up by their parents on Saturday, July 29th after giving a presentation on the final day of camp.
- **I have multiple students in the same age group. Is it possible to sign up all of my students for the same camp?**
You may sign up as many students as you would like for a camp. However, each individual student must be selected by either the lottery system (for grades 1-4) or application process (for grades 5-8) in order to be able to attend the camp. That is, if one of your students is selected for a spot in the camp, it does NOT guarantee that their sibling/friend also has a spot.
- **I have students in different age groups. Can my 7th grader attend the 4th grade camp so that they can attend camp in the same week?**
No. All students must apply for the camp designated for their own age group.
- **Why are there two sessions of the Bay Buddies camp and not two sessions for other age groups?**
Last year, the demand for a camp for the 3rd and 4th grade age group was the highest. We are offering two sessions of the Bay Buddies camp to accommodate that demand. Due to time limitations of staff and space in the summer, we are not able to offer additional sessions of any other camp.
- **When I turn in my application, does that guarantee my student a spot in the camp?**
No. Turning in an application does NOT guarantee your student a spot in the camp. For the Sea Squirts and Bay Buddies camp, the application enters your student into a lottery for camp spots. For the Chesapeake Champions and Estuary Explorers, the essay will be used by a review panel to select students for the camp. By April 10th you will receive an email notifying you if your student was selected (either through the lottery system or application process) for a spot in the camp.
- **Why do you ask for an adult reference's name for the Estuary Explorers camp?**
Adult references are requested only for the Estuary Explorers camp in case the review panel would like to contact a reference for more information on the student during the selection process. References will only be contacted if more information is needed. References do not need to submit a written reference, and do not have to be the student's teacher.

- **When will I know if my student is selected for camp?**
All students will be notified by April 10th if they were selected for camp.

- **I completed the online application for Chesapeake Champions. Is that all I need to do?**
No. For Chesapeake Champions and Estuary Explorers, there are Statement of Interest essay questions that must also be answered and emailed to cbnerreducation@vims.edu. These questions must EACH be 150 words for Chesapeake Champions, and 250 EACH for Estuary Explorers. This is the primary way that we select students for these two camps so please encourage your student to spend some time working on their essays.

- **I accidentally closed the window including the required Statement of Interest essay questions. Could you resend the questions and word requirements?**
 - **Chesapeake Champions** – Part 1 of your camp application has been submitted. Thank you. To complete your application, please email your responses to the following essay questions to cbnerreducation@vims.edu by April 1st at 11:59PM. *Answers to EACH QUESTION should be a minimum of 150 words.* Submissions that do not arrive by April 1 at 11:59PM, or that do not contain the minimum word requirement will not be considered. Please be sure your student includes their name at the top of each page of their responses. Please note that applicants will be selected primarily by their responses to these questions. Please use as much detail as possible as it will likely be a very competitive year for applications. You will be notified by April 10th, 2016 if your student(s) was or was not selected for camp.
 - Why are you interested in marine science?
 - How will you use or share the information you learn about at camp (personal, at your school, at home, in your community)?
 - What characteristics do you have that would make you a good camper?

 - **Estuary Explorers** - Part 1 of your camp application has been submitted. Thank you. To complete your application, please email your responses to the following essay questions to cbnerreducation@vims.edu by April 1st at 11:59PM. *Answers to EACH question should be a minimum of 250 words.* Submissions that do not arrive by April 1 at 11:59PM, or that do not contain the minimum word requirement will not be considered. Be sure student includes their name at the top of each page of their responses. Please note that applicants will be selected primarily by their responses to these questions. Please use as much detail as possible as it will likely be a very competitive year for applications. You will be notified by April 10th, 2016 if your student(s) was or was not selected for camp.

- Why are you interested in marine science, and the Chesapeake Bay in particular?
 - How will you use or share the information you learn about at camp (personal, at your school, at home, in your community)?
 - What characteristics do you have that would make you a good fit for this week-long overnight camp?
- **I'm interested in the Junior Counselor positions. Who is eligible for those positions?**
Junior Counselor positions are open to any student that is entering high school or above. We are accepting students in college. There is no longer a requirement to have attended our summer camps in the past.
- **How are Junior Counselors selected for camp positions?**
Junior Counselors must complete several steps to be considered for a week-long position as a Junior Counselor. First, JC's must complete an application by the camp deadline (April 1st). JC's must also submit an essay response to the question posted on the camp website by April 1st. Lastly, JC's are interviewed (in person or via Skype for those that are far away from VIMS). JC interviews are 10 minutes, and allow the CBNERR educators to meet the student in person. In cases of high numbers of applicants, CBNERR may decide to make cuts to the applicant pool prior to interviews, based on the essay responses.
- **Who is leading the camps? Have all staff completed a background check?**
All education staff (and interns) working with the students during day camps and overnight camp have completed a background check. There are two full-time staff that will be in attendance during the camps, Sarah Nuss and Kristen Sharpe. Both are seasoned full-time educators at the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Sarah has been leading camps for the past 15 years, and Kristen has been leading camps for the past 4 years. In addition, each year we take on education interns, typically college students who are interested in marine science education. They receive training and guidance from the full-time staff prior to camp beginning. We also have Junior Counselors (typically high school students) that volunteer during the camps.
- **We do not live in the Gloucester area. Are we still eligible to apply for camp?**
Yes. While we do accept a certain percentage of campers from the Gloucester/Mathews region, we do accept applications from students out of the area, and even out of state. We accept a certain percentage of local students because our funding comes from private donors that wish to give back to the local community.