Important Homeschool Safety Information Fall 2020

Dear Homeschool Family:

Mass Audubon has made changes to homeschool this fall to reduce the possibility of transmission of COVID-19 among children, staff, and their families. Please continue reading so you are ready for the first day of homeschool.

Homeschool Groups and Class Experience
Though we will still take part in much of the usual nature play, exploration, and learning experiences as before, this fall the series class program will have some changes from years past. Groups will be no more than twelve people, including the Mass Audubon instructors. Groups will not mingle with one another during the program. While the Chickadee class is still an adult/child program, with an adult staying with their child for the class, the older groups are now DROP-OFF ONLY and we are not able to accommodate adults or siblings coming along for the class. The entire class program will now be held outside with no time spent in buildings except for bathroom breaks and in case of sudden bad weather.

Screening
To minimize the spread of COVID-19 participants and staff are required to take part in health screening each time they come to class. This screening is a digital form asking several questions about the health and possible exposure of your family. The link will be sent to you after you sign up. We will also have physical paper forms available in the event that you forget to submit your form before drop-off. Families will be asked to monitor their health prior to class and will be asked to keep their children home if they suspect a household member is sick or has come into contact with someone with a positive case of COVID-19. Families (except for enrolled adults in the Chickadees program), contractors, delivery people, and other sanctuary visitors will be asked not to enter the program area. If they do need to enter the program area, they will need to go through the screening process. Bathrooms are not available for anyone other than signed-up participants who have gone through screening.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up
Each homeschool group (Chickadees, Red-Tailed Hawks, and Great Blue Herons) will have a specific drop off and pick up spot to reduce interaction between families and to streamline the screening process. Locations will be marked with signs when you arrive.
Masks and Hand Cleaning
A *face covering must be worn* at all times during the program including pick up and drop off. When participants need to remove their masks to take a drink or water or take a breather, they will be asked to move at least six feet apart from each other. Staff will wear masks at all times.

Staff will help homeschool students with proper mask use, hand cleaning, and social distancing. Families must provide permission for their child(ren) to use hand sanitizer. This will be demonstrated and talked about on the first day of the program with gentle reminders throughout the program as needed.

Bad Weather Days
Homeschool classes will be cancelled due to bad weather. In the event of a bad weather day (thunderstorms, severe cold, steady showers). You will be contacted by email if class will be canceled and we will attempt to cancel the day before when bad weather is in the forecast. Should the weather look uncertain but class has not been canceled, you can call 978-887-9264 to find out if class will be held.

Cleaning Intensified
Cleaning procedures will be intensified at Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary and will follow the recommendations of the Topsfield Board of Health and Centers for Disease Control (CDC). All staff will be trained in proper cleaning procedures. Materials and equipment will be sanitized after each use and will be utilized in a way that minimizes sharing and encourages distancing.

Communication
If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a student at our homeschool classes, families, staff, and the local board of health will be notified immediately. To protect privacy, the name and age of the person will not be disclosed. The notification will be sent by email to all participants. Mass Audubon has developed plans for identifying, handling, isolating, discharging, and transporting sick, symptomatic, and exposed children or staff.

COVID-19 Oversight
Cori Brauer, Education Coordinator, will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and oversight of COVID-19 procedures and policies. Questions and concerns about these procedures and policies should be directed to Cori at cbrauer@massaudubon.org

Scott Santino, Camp Director (ssantino@massaudubon.org) or Amy Weidensaul, Sanctuary Director (aweidensaul@massaudubon.org) will be responsible for COVID-19 oversight if Cori Brauer is not available.

Thank you so much for helping us to keep our program safe!

Sincerely,

*Cori Brauer*