



Smithsonian Environmental  
Research Center

**SERC Education Field Trip Policies**

All visitors and program participants must adhere to SERC’s safety policy and follow instructions from SERC staff and volunteers. SERC reserves the right to end the field trip at any time, and your group will be invoiced for the entire trip, if participants persist in unsafe or disrespectful behavior after a verbal warning.

**Participant/Student Group Size-** Please limit the number of students to 60 per field trip. Larger groups will be considered on a case-by case basis. If you have a mixed age group we reserve the right to adapt content and activities for the ages and safety of the group.

**Student Numbers-**Please realize that we carefully plan our program content, safety, materials and staffing based on the number of students you provide, and that are in your field trip confirmation form.

- We don’t have infinite elasticity and fluidity, we prepare your program based on the numbers you give us.
- We realize that student numbers fluctuate.
- Reduced numbers are not a concern as long as you pay the minimum program fee.
- We will contact you two weeks before your program to confirm student numbers and times as stated in your original confirmation form.
- If student numbers go above the limit of 60 we reserve the right to change your program to accommodate the new numbers.
- Changes may include shortening stations, eliminating stations, or asking ½ the group to hike while the other ½ do rotations and then swapping.
- If you bring more than the number stated, when contacted two weeks before your trip, then you will be charged a \$18/student surcharge on top of the normal student fee.

**Chaperones-** Please bring the minimum number of chaperones listed below (though more are encouraged), teachers also count as chaperones. **If you have an odd number of students PLEASE ROUND UP the number of chaperones that you will need. The head teacher should not be counted in chaperone numbers and should plan to float.**

Grades	Number of Chaperones Required
Pre-K -3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 adult per 5 students
4 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	1 adult per 10 students
Special Ed	1 adult per 5 students

Grade	Minimum # Chaperones	# People Per Canoe (combinations)
3-5 <sup>th</sup>	1 adult per 2 students	2 students + 1 chaperone
6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	1 adult per 4 students	2 students; 1 student & 1 chaperone; or 2 students & 1 chaperone

**\*Max of 22 participants on any one canoe trip**

**Jr. Counselors and Counselors in Training (CIT) as Chaperones-** You may bring up to 5 Jr. Counselors per visit (ages 17 and younger). After five they will be counted as program participants and must pay the program fee. All Jr. Counselors and CITs must be clearly distinguished from campers either through shirts, clothing, or nametags.

**Program Deposit-** There is a \$100 program deposit (per day) required to hold your date/time. Deposits are non-refundable (except in emergencies or cancellations decided by SERC staff) and goes towards your total program fee. Once you tentatively book your program **you have 10 business days to pay the program deposit or your date/time will be freed up for other groups.** You may pay by cash, credit card, or check. Call (443) 482.2216 to pay by credit card.

**Invoicing-** We require **Payment in Full within 10 business days AFTER you attend your field trip date** or a \$30 late fee will be added to your account.

**Late Arrival-** If your group is more than 30 minutes late then we reserve the right to delete activities from your trip or shorten stations in the interest of time. There will be no refunds or reduction of fees in this circumstance.

**Cancellation-** To cancel a reservation, please notify us at least five business days in advance by contacting (443) 482.2216 or [McDonaldK@si.edu](mailto:McDonaldK@si.edu). **If your group does not give five days' advance notice of cancellation you will be charged and invoiced for the entire program fee.** With less than five days' notice we cannot fill your date and time slot, and we must cover our staff's time and the expenses that are lost. Weather-related school closures are unavoidable and school groups will not be charged a cancellation fee.

**Arrival and Departure-**You must indicate your expected arrival and departure time when you register. Please notify us at (443) 482.2216 if you cannot make your assigned time.

**Accessibility-** Our facility is wheelchair accessible and handicap parking is offered on-site (must have a hang tag or license plate). Accommodations can be made for most activities. We also have a beach wheel chair available.

**Allergies and Medication-** If your students have any allergies, or you have special medical concerns (such as touching shellfish, oysters, crabs, etc.), you must inform the program director when you book your program. You will also be asked to identify the one person(s) that will have any medication for your group or the students that have special needs.

**Cell Phones and Electronics-** SERC is a wet environment, cell phones and electronics may get damaged. SERC is not responsible for electronic devices, or their damage, during programs. All students must keep cell phones off and packed away. They will not be allowed to take them to stations. Adults may bring their cell phones, at their own risk, but must keep them turned off or on silent in their pockets or bags. Cell phone picture taking is permitted as long as it is not distracting to the program.

**Drinking Water-** SERC education programs are mostly outside. If you will be going on a hike or canoe trip we require that every participant have a refillable water bottle of at least 8oz or more. SERC does not provide water bottles for participants. If your group/participants show up without a water bottle they will not be allowed to participate in the programs and you will be asked provide a chaperone to sit with the students that are not participating. Those students not participating will still be charged for the program. If it is over 80°F and your students are participating in Estuary Chesapeake or rotation stations it is strongly suggested that students also have refillable water bottles, if they do not then SERC staff reserves the right to take time from station rotations for water breaks.

**Weather-** If you have an outside activity planned, please make sure students are dressed appropriately for weather conditions, including extra water and sunscreen, rain coats, etc. If it is lightly raining we will still continue with programs. If there is heavier rain, or small craft advisory, we may, at SERC's sole discretion, cancel the program or offer alternative activities or dates.

**Canoe Trips-** For students to participate in canoeing or kayaking they should be able to swim. We also require that air and water temperatures, combined, meet at least 100°F.

**Send Payment to:** *Checks may be made out to SERC.*

Education Program Coordinator  
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center  
Edgewater, MD 21037

**Need more information?** Contact Karen McDonald, (443) 482.2216 or [McDonaldK@si.edu](mailto:McDonaldK@si.edu)

# HOW MUCH TIME YOU HAVE DETERMINES HOW MANY ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO FOR SHORELINES AND EXPLORING NATURE

- **Groups of 15-30 students** requires **at least 2** hours to allocate to the day's program.
- **Groups of 31-49 students** requires **at least 2.5** hours to allocate to the day's programs
- **50-60 students** requires that you have **at least 4** hours to allocate to the day's programs.
- **Canoe Excursions** require at **least 3 hours** and may have no more than 22 participants total per trip.

## GROUPS OF 50-60 STUDENTS (You must have at least 4 hours)

### 4.5 hours-

- **4 stations**
- 30 minutes for intro/getting on and off bus
- 30 minutes for lunch (25 eat, 5 minute walk)
- 3.5 hours for rotations (210 minutes)
  - 45 minute activities (5 minute walk time)

### 4 hours-

- **4 stations**
- 30 minutes for intro/getting on and off bus
- 30 minutes for lunch (25 eat, 5 minute walk)
- 3 hours for rotations (180 minutes)
  - 40 minute activities (5 minute walk time)

## GROUPS OF 31-49 STUDENTS (Must have at least 2.5 hours)

### 3 hours (with lunch)-

- **3 Stations**
- 30 minutes for intro/getting on and off bus
- 30 minutes for lunch (25 eat, 5 minute walk)
- 2 hours for rotations (120 minutes)
  - 35 minute activities (5 minute walk time)

### 2.5 Hours (without lunch)

- **3 Stations**
- 30 minutes for intro/getting on and off bus
- 2 hours for rotations (120 minutes)
  - 35 minute activities (5 minute walk time)

## GROUPS OF 15-30 TO STUDENTS (Must have at least 2 hours)

### 2 hours-

- **2 Stations**
- 30 minutes for intro/getting on and off bus
- 1.5 hours for rotations (90 minutes)
  - 40 minute activities (5 minute walk time)