

# ASAC Parent Handbook



Thank you for choosing the Aquatic Science Adventure Camp for your child this summer! No matter what program they are signed up for, they can look forward to a fun time filled with science and water activities.

The Aquatic Science Adventure Camp is one of the longest-running science summer camps in Texas. Since 1988, the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center at Texas State University in San Marcos has hosted thousands of campers from across the state to come experience the wonder of discovery and the thrill of adventure! During this weeklong camp, campers will have the chance to learn through exploration and hands-on activities related to water and the environment. We believe in the power of experiential learning and self-directed discovery. Whether it's on a bug hunt in the creek or getting dirty in a cave, all our activities are designed to engage our campers' minds and bodies and impart a lasting understanding of the world around them. Our goal is for campers to have the chance to experience what real scientists do for a living and learn in a university environment using professional-grade equipment. Our motto is "real science, real fun!" for a reason!

This document will provide important information about participating in an ASAC program as well as information specific for each camp type. Please look over this information before coming to camp. If you have any questions, you may reach out to [EARDC\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:EARDC_education@txstate.edu) or call 512-245-6176.

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## Camp Descriptions

Camp sessions vary year to year, so make sure to check the website for the schedule.

**Overnight Expedition Camps** – The overnight camp runs from Sunday afternoon through Friday afternoon. Campers will spend the first part of the week on the main Texas State University campus staying in a residence hall. The last 3 days of camp are spent at scenic University Camp, a Texas State-owned property located along the shores of the beautiful Blanco River. Campers will experience a wide variety of exciting, educational activities including river rafting, scuba diving, exploring a wild cave, and even a natural water slide! Throughout the week, campers will engage with our knowledgeable staff by participating in scientific investigations related to water and the environment.

**Explorer Day Camps** - We offer a week-long day camp for campers who would like the camp experience without an overnight component. The camp runs from 8:30am to 5pm Monday-Friday and features many of the daytime science and recreational activities from the overnight camp including river rafting, caving, scuba diving, and more. Lunch is **not** provided during camp.

**Nature Adventure Half-Day Camp** – This camp is for 6-8 year old campers and runs 8:30 am to 12 pm, Monday through Friday. Campers will participate in science and nature activities that are all about fun.

**Discovery Day Camps** –Discovery Day Camp is a single day that runs 9am to 4pm. Activities vary from year to year so make sure to check the website for activity schedules. Lunch is **not** provided; campers will need to bring their own food for the day.

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## Information for All Camps

### Registration

Camp registration opens mid-January through our website: <https://www.eardc.txst.edu/>. Most camps will require a deposit to hold a spot for your child and full payment will be due a month before the camp begins.

### Camp Visitation

Visits to camp are not allowed except in emergencies. Phone calls are also discouraged because we have found that this disrupts the camp experience and can exacerbate homesickness issues.

### Cancellations

There is a mandatory \$100.00 cancellation fee for overnight sessions and the week-long day camp sessions if cancellation is made at least one month prior to the beginning of the session. If cancelling within one month of the camp program no refund will be given. Once the camp session has started, refunds will **not** be given in the event a camper is withdrawn due to homesickness, discipline issues or other reasons.

**EARDC reserves the right to cancel any session which does not have a minimum of fifteen (15) participants registered 3 weeks before the session start date.** In the event of EARDC cancellations, all money will be refunded.

### Registration

Each camper must complete all consent, release, and medical history forms included in registration. Campers will be unable to attend camp with incomplete forms.

### Camp Safety & Staff Training

We take safety very seriously and all activities will be facilitated by experienced and appropriately licensed staff. ASAC administrative staff are certified in First Aid and AED/CPR. All swimming/aquatic activities are supervised by a certified lifeguard. Our staff have all been background and reference checked and are required by the State of Texas to take the Safe Camps child abuse prevention training.

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## Ability to swim

Each participant will be required to take a simple swim test upon arrival. **Due to the nature of the camp, the ability to swim and tread water is mandatory for all campers.** Campers who are poor swimmers will be required to wear a life jacket during any swimming activities or be required to sit out of the activity, depending on the nature of the activity. The swim test consists of being able to swim 20 feet in a flowing river without stopping or touching the bottom. It is required that all campers wear life jackets during the raft trip and snorkeling. Lifeguards will administer the swim test and be present for all swimming activities.

## Physical requirements

Although the level of physical activity at the camp is not excessively challenging for a healthy child, several of the camp activities do require a considerable amount of walking. We suggest that students who are enrolled in the camp be accustomed to at least a moderate level of physical activity.

## Camp Participation

All activities are 'challenge by choice' - we do not force participation. However, we are not able to provide alternate activities for campers who do not desire to participate. Your camper should WANT to come to camp. Please do not sign up campers that are unenthusiastic about our camp.

## Schedule

A general schedule is available online to gain an understanding of the type of activities that camp offers. A detailed schedule of activities will be given to each camper, campers are responsible for readying themselves for each day's activities and ensuring they have the appropriate clothing and equipment for the day. Minor schedule changes may be necessary due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

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## Cell Phone Policy

**We ask that campers leave cell phones at home.** While we understand that cell phones and mobile technology are a fact of life, they can be a distraction for campers, detract from other campers' experience, and be misused (e.g. consuming/sharing inappropriate content). Camp is also very active and many of our activities take place in or near water.

Families will receive a phone number in their registration packet so that campers may be contacted in the event of emergency. You can text this number for non-emergencies as well. The EARDC office can be contacted at (512) 245-2329 during business hours for non-emergency inquiries. Additionally, camp staff will have cameras on hand so that campers can request pictures taken and shared, and campers may bring a camera-only camera.

If you still choose to have your camper bring a cell phone to camp the following rules will be applied:

- Camper agrees to take full responsibility for their phone and phone usage
- Camper agrees to use their phone only when given explicit permission (mainly to call or text home in the evening)
- Camper agrees not to consume or share inappropriate content (including music and videos), engage in virtual bullying, or use phones during scheduled activities.

\*\*\*Camp and camp staff are not liable for damaged, lost, or stolen cell phones. Failure to comply with phone rules may result in confiscation of phone or expulsion from camp.

While we sympathize that our cell-phone use policy may cause anxiety for some parents, we ask that parents please provide campers with a good example of following camp rules by respecting the cell phone policy. Mobile device usage can 'sabotage' a campers' overall experience at camp. Please don't hesitate to contact us at [eardc\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:eardc_education@txstate.edu) for questions or concerns about our mobile use policy.

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## Packing Lists

Packing lists for each camp are available on our website. These are guides to help campers be appropriately prepared for camp.

## Medication/Health

If your child needs to take medication while at camp, please make sure to fill out the necessary medication forms. The following are the procedures concerning medication at camp:

1. Parents/Guardians must provide written authorization for the administration of any over-the-counter medication to their camper by completing the Over-the-Counter Medication Waiver (this form is part of the registration process).
2. ASAC staff may administer over-the-counter medications with parental or guardian written authorization. Prescription medications that cannot be self-administered may not be administered by program staff. Special arrangements can be made with the Texas State Student Health Center for administration of prescription medications during normal hours of business. Program participants will incur additional charges for this service.
3. During check-in campers will turn in all medication (prescription and over the counter) for safekeeping in locked storage unless designated by the parent on the Prescription Medication Waiver that the camper should self-carry their own emergency use medication.
4. Each prescription medication needs to be listed in the Prescription Medication Waiver form. Over-the-counter medication will need to be approved on the Over-the-Counter Medication Waiver.
5. **Medication must be in the original container** and administered according to the prescriber instructions on the label. Any variation from prescription label instructions must be authorized in writing by the prescriber.
6. Expired over-the-counter medication will not be administered.
7. During check-in, the health officer will meet with each camper with medication to review where it will be held.
8. Medication will be stored in the Education Office or with the Health Officer. During days at University Camp, medication will be held onsite by a staff member.

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9. Camp staff will carry any emergency medications, and the medication will travel with the camper unless designated by the parent on the Prescription Medication Waiver that the camper should self-carry their own emergency use medication.
10. We do everything in our power to ensure your camper has a safe and fun camp experience. In the event a camper requires medical treatment, we will notify you immediately and transport the camper to the Student Health Center at Texas State University, or if more serious medical treatment is required, the Emergency Room at the Central Texas Medical Center (CTMC).
11. The Student Health Center at Texas State University will not treat campers unless they are prepared to pay for their medical services at time of treatment. The Student Health Center will accept cash, check, Discover, American Express, MasterCard, and Visa credit cards. MasterCard and Visa debit cards are also accepted.

## Food/meals

If your child is attending a camp that provides meals, please contact us if your child has food allergies or a restricted diet. Ordering food to be delivered by a third party is not allowed (ex. Doordash).

## Discipline

Campers are expected to follow campus rules and regulations, to respect university property and facilities and to respect the persons, dignity, and property of other campers. **Parents/guardians will be billed for any damage caused by their children.** Campers will be expected to participate in all scheduled class and recreational activities and to conform to acceptable rules of conduct as outlined in the behavior policy to be signed by campers and guardian during registration. Failure to do so may result in the camper being expelled from the camp. Campers who violate the rules outlined in the behavior contract or fail to follow staff instructions will be given a verbal warning. On the second infraction, parents will be notified. If a third incident occurs, parents will be asked to come get their camper **WITHOUT A REFUND!** This is for the safety of all campers and staff. **Due to the nature of many of the activities at the camp, failure to comply with staff instructions could result in danger to campers or others.**

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## Camp Specific Information

### **Overnight Expedition Camps**

#### **Mail for Campers**

Campers may receive letters or gift packs. These can be left with camp staff upon registration (recommended) or mailed to the address below. Please note that mailed items must be received before Wednesday afternoon to guarantee receipt by campers. Please note "Prohibited Items" in the packing list.

Send to:

Camper's Name  
c/o EARDC Aquatic Science Adventure Camp  
601 University Dr.  
(248 FAB)  
San Marcos, TX 78666-4684

#### **Meals**

Tentative mealtimes are:

- Breakfast: 8:00 - 9:00
- Lunch: 12:00 - 1:00
- Dinner: 6:00 - 7:00

We take food safety very seriously, so please let us know if your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions. Meals will include a combination of on-campus dining halls and picnic or continental-style breakfasts and lunches. Vegetarian options are always available, and we can accommodate most dietary restrictions with advance notice. Healthy balanced food options are always available and encouraged, but your camper will ultimately decide what they eat.

#### **Housing**

##### Campus Dorms:

Campers will stay in double occupancy rooms with community bathrooms for each hall in one of the dorms on campus. Specific dorm building is assigned late spring.

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## University Camp Lodges:

During the days that campers are at University Camp in Wimberly, they stay in the Bluebonnet and Juniper Lodges. Lodges consist of bunk beds and have air conditioning.

## Overnight Supervision:

Campers will be closely supervised by the camp directors, teachers, and counselors. Camp staff will stay in the dorms and lodges with campers and will help supervise recreational activities and evening activities. Camp staff staying in the dorms will be assigned a separate room from campers. At University Camp, when possible, campers will be supervised by same-sex staff. In the event this is not possible, staff will sleep in a room physically separated from campers. All staff are required to pass a background check, complete child safety training, and abide by the camp sexual abuse prevention policy (available upon request).

## Bedding:

Campers need to bring linens (twin XL size), pillow, blanket, bath towels, and a swimming towel. A sleeping bag may be used instead of linens if desired. Campers may also want to bring ear plugs if they are light sleepers.

**Linen services are not provided.**

## Room Damage:

Campers will be responsible for ensuring their room and surrounding area are clean upon check-out of the dorm. A cleaning fee will be charged to campers if their assigned areas are not properly cleaned at check-out. Any damage caused by campers to university facilities including dorms, classrooms, equipment, or vehicles will be charged to campers. Any lost keys will be charged to campers (fee \$50).

## **Packing**

Campers should pack light, and everything should fit inside their luggage! Plastic bags do not make good luggage! Campers that must carry many separate items are much more likely to misplace important items. We recommend 1 suitcase or duffel and 1 backpack that can double as a day pack. If things don't fit inside, you might be over packing. Giant trunks that your camper cannot manage by themselves are not appropriate. A packing list can be found on our website.

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## Spending Money

Campers do not need money while at camp. Campers may bring spending money for vending machines if desired (no more than \$30 please). **Campers are expected to be responsible for their own spending money while at camp.**

## Arrival/Departure

Overnight Camp check-in is Sunday afternoon at a residence hall on the main Texas State campus. Overnight Camp pick up is Friday from 4-4:30 p.m. at the Freeman Aquatic Biology Building. Detailed instructions for check-in and pick-up will be emailed out one month before the start of your camper's session. Please contact [EARDC\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:EARDC_education@txstate.edu) if you have not received this information before your camp session starts.

## Meals – Example menu, may vary year to year

Overnight Expedition Camp Menu

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast		<b>Continental Breakfast:</b> Cereal, bagels & cream cheese, oatmeal, fruit (cuties, bananas, apples), yogurt, breakfast bars	<b>Continental Breakfast:</b> Cereal, bagels & cream cheese, oatmeal, fruit (cuties, bananas, apples), yogurt, breakfast bars	<b>Continental Breakfast:</b> Cereal, bagels & cream cheese, oatmeal, fruit (cuties, bananas, apples), yogurt, breakfast bars	<b>Taco Cabana Breakfast Tacos</b>	<b>Pancakes and Scrambled Eggs</b>
		Drinks: Milk (2% & Almond), Apple Juice, water	Drinks: Milk (2% & Almond), Apple Juice, water	Drinks: Milk (2% & Almond), Apple Juice, water	Drinks: Milk (2% & Almond), Apple Juice, water	Drinks: Milk (2% & Almond), Apple Juice, water
Lunch		<b>Dining Hall</b> (Meal options vary; always salad bar, pizza, and soda)	<b>Dining Hall</b> (Meal options vary; always salad bar, pizza, and soda)	<b>Dining Hall</b> (Meal options vary; always salad bar, pizza, and soda)	<b>Sandwiches:</b> PB & J or meat options (fruit, veggies & hummus, chips, pickles)	<b>Sandwiches:</b> PB & J or meat options (fruit, veggies & hummus, chips, pickles)
Dinner	<b>Taco Cabana Tacos:</b> Beef, shredded chicken, bean & cheese (fruits, veggies, chips)	<b>Dining Hall</b> (Variety of options, varies meal to meal, always salad bar, pizza, and soda)	<b>Dining Hall</b> (Variety of options, varies meal to meal, always salad bar, pizza, and soda)	<b>Pizza Night</b> (variety of pizza options, salad, fruit, assorted chips)	<b>Hot Dogs</b> (beef or vegetarian hotdogs, condiments, baked beans, veggies & hummus, chips)	
Evening Snack	<b>Cracker Packs</b>	<b>Ice Cream Sandwiches/Popsicles</b>	<b>Popcorn</b>	<b>Snack Packs</b> (pretzels, Goldfish, Cheez-its, fruit snacks)	<b>Smores</b> (Marshmallows, graham crackers, chocolate)	
Always available	Granola bars, apples, oranges	Granola bars, apples, oranges	Granola bars, apples, oranges	Granola bars, apples, oranges	Granola bars, apples, oranges	Granola bars, apples, oranges

Meals always have vegetarian options. Please email [EARDC\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:EARDC_education@txstate.edu) if alternative food options are needed (i.e. gluten-free, dairy-free, or vegan).

## Explorer Day Camp

### Arrival/Departure

Check in for explorer camp sessions is from 7:45-8:30 at Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. **Check-in instructions and driving directions will be emailed out one month before the start of each session.** Please contact [EARDC\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:EARDC_education@txstate.edu) if you have not received this information before your camp session starts.

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Explorer Day Camp pick up is from 4:30-5:00 at the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. We are aware of the traffic nightmare that often exists on I35 so please allow extra time for traffic and if you are running late for pick up, **please call us as soon as possible so arrangements can be made for a later pick up!**

## Meals

Campers will need to bring their own sack lunch and any snacks they may want throughout the day. Please do not pack food that requires heating.

## Nature Adventure Half-Day Camp

### Arrival/Departure

Camp check-in and pick-up will occur at the Freeman Aquatic Building. Camp runs 8:30am - 12pm each day or 12:30pm – 4pm depending on which session you signed up for. **Check-in instructions and driving directions will be emailed out one month before the start of each session.** Please contact [EARDC\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:EARDC_education@txstate.edu) if you have not received this information before your camp session starts.

## Discovery Days

Discovery Day Camps change year to year, make sure to check the website for current year's programming. Camp runs from 9am to 4pm and campers must bring their own lunch and any snacks they may want during the day.

### Arrival/Departure

Camp check-in and pick-up will occur at the Freeman Aquatic Building. **Check-in instructions and driving directions will be emailed out one month before the start of each session.** Please contact [EARDC\\_education@txstate.edu](mailto:EARDC_education@txstate.edu) if you have not received this information before your camp session starts.