

Barrier Island Environmental Education Program



St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center

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Program Goals

- To introduce students, teachers, and chaperones to various ecological concepts such as habitats, adaptations, variety, similarity, behavior, communities, conservation etc.
- To help children overcome fears associated with the outdoors by teaching them how to better understand nature and to recognize that we are a part of it.
- To spark students' interest in science using hands-on, experiential learning.

Organization

Barrier Island Environmental Education Program is a non-profit educational service for public and private school youth. It was developed with the guidance and strength of St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center. The past and present support received from participating schools proves its value and makes its continuing existence possible.

Physical Set-Up

The Barrier Island program is held on site at St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center, located on Seabrook Island, 25 miles south of Charleston, South Carolina. This site encompasses nearly 300 acres of pristine maritime forest, salt marsh, and a mile of beachfront. Participants sleep in climate-controlled cabins located within the dunes. Groups of up to 160 people can be accommodated. The dining hall is a short walk from the cabins. While nature provides the main classroom setting, other classroom buildings include a herpetarium, aquarium, and recreation hall. An activity field is available for outdoor recreation.

Staff

The staff includes the director, administrator, and a teaching staff (Naturalists) of college graduates. Naturalists take the children, in groups averaging between 10-17 students, through their morning and

afternoon classes. These classes have been pre-selected by their classroom teachers. St. Christopher maintains full-time administrative, food service, housekeeping, and maintenance staffs.

Teacher Involvement

Each participating school is required to always have at least one teacher on-site. The visiting teachers, with the help of parent volunteers, supervise the children 24 hours a day, during classes, overnight in the cabins, and during brief free periods during the day. We strongly encourage follow-up studies and activities after a Barrier Island trip.

Experiential Education

Barrier Island is one of a few programs in the Southeast which offers opportunities in experiential outdoor education. The value of educational trips is difficult to measure, and often underestimated. The firsthand educational experience gained on a worthwhile trip can seldom be duplicated in the classroom. Sometimes classroom learning is restricted to memorizing and learning from books; experiential education provides students with opportunities to put into practice the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.

Curriculum

The Barrier Island curriculum is designed to be an extension of the classroom curriculum. Although the classes, for the most part, are based on local barrier island ecology, they deal with universal concepts and touch on many subject areas – science, history, and physical education. All the classes are activity oriented. Participation of the entire group keeps everyone interested whether the group is involved in a scientific experiment on the beach, collecting samples from the pond, playing a game illustrating food webs, or playing Hide and Seek to demonstrate the importance of camouflage. With this approach, children learn to find answers to their questions through their own efforts.

Schools Using Bus Transportation

It is our policy that you bring at least one vehicle to be used in case of an emergency. If the bus driver(s) want to eat a meal or stay overnight at Barrier Island, arrangements must be confirmed IN ADVANCE with Teri. See website for cost for drivers – meals and lodging are a separate charge.

Appropriate School Conduct

At Barrier Island, we want to create a place where everyone can learn, have fun and enjoy their time! Many weeks throughout the year, there will be more than one school visiting at a time. We expect students, teachers and chaperones to respect one another and respect other visiting schools. We prioritize each school's experience. Bullying and racism will not be tolerated and will be addressed by the Barrier Island Director immediately. Misconduct could result in an early dismissal from the program.

Barrier Island Teacher Checklist

2 Weeks after reservation is made:

- Confirm that you received your contract with Teri, Barrier Island Administrator. The non-refundable deposit amount and due date are listed on the contract. Sign and return the contract with the non-refundable deposit by this date.

3 Months in advance:

- If your original numbers have dropped significantly (below 70%), or if you need to cancel your reservation, this is the last date that you can do so without penalty beyond your deposit. *NOTE: if you cancel your reservation or significantly reduce your number within 90 days of your scheduled visit, you will be responsible for a payment equal to 70% of the latest agreed-upon numbers received by the 90-day deadline.*

1 Month in advance:

- Reservation Information Form due (make sure to include tentative number of participants)
- Copy of certificate of school liability insurance due
- Send Participation forms home with students to be completed by parents/guardians.
- Curriculum Request due.
- Confirm final numbers of boy, girl, adult male, and adult female participants with Teri.

2 Weeks in advance:

- Fax/email Dietary Issues Form
- Fax/email Behavioral/Developmental/Physical Concerns Form
- Call/email and confirm classes, numbers, field groups, table groups, and cabin groups (see next page for further instructions.) Make us aware of any last-minute changes and special needs/concerns.
- Design nametags with participants' name, cabin, table, and field group assignments. Please make nametags semi-permanent/waterproof since they will be worn during all activities. Contact Teri if you would like a nametag template sent to you.

Arrival at Barrier Island:

- Bring Barrier Island Participation Forms with you to hand in as soon as you arrive. **EVERY PERSON ATTENDING IS REQUIRED TO TURN IN A SIGNED PARTICIPATION FORM (STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENT CHAPERONES, ADMINISTRATORS)** If your school needs access to this information while on-site, please make copies to keep with you.
- Final Payment is due upon arrival.

Instructions for Group Assignments

Assigning Groups

Two weeks before your trip, Lori will send you an email with how many field groups, table groups, and cabin groups you are allotted. This information will go on each participant's nametag. Please do not assign students to any groups before receiving the group assignment email from Teri.

Field Groups

Named by letter: A, B, C, etc. These are the groups that the students are in during their classes and evening activities. They usually consist of 10-17 students and must have at least 1 adult.

Table Groups

Named by number: 1, 2, 3 etc. These are the groups you will sit with in the dining hall. There is a maximum of 10 people per table and must have at least 1 adult.

Cabin Groups

Lori will give you specific cabin names. These are the groups you will be sleeping with. Three cabins hold 8 people, 1 holds 16 and 13 holds 10 people and must have at least 1 adult. However, we strongly recommend 2 adults per cabin.

We will do our best to honor your requests for the numbers of groups, but please be flexible, and do not begin assigning participants into groups until you have confirmed everything.

Teacher Information

Even after you arrive at Barrier Island, with checklist completed and children in tow, your job is not finished. YOU are the primary educator and leader for your students, and they will pattern their response to this program after yours. We require teacher/chaperone participation in all our classes, and you and your chaperones are responsible for the students outside of class/activity times. This type of outdoor, experiential education offers unique opportunities for students and teachers to interact and to see each other in an educational environment outside of the classroom. You set the example.

Safety and Supervision Policy

All schools are required to provide adequate chaperones to supervise free time, cabins, and help with class supervision. A chaperone is any person screened by the school to be competent in a supervisory role for students (i.e., 18 years or older, with a background check on file with the school.)

For safety reasons, we require that at least one chaperone accompany all classes. Although Barrier Island staff is trained to handle discipline problems, chaperones are required to help in discipline. Any training or help you can give your chaperones prior to their trip to help them deal with children that require more attention and/or distract from class will be very helpful.

These are our recommended supervision ratios:

- Overnight:** 2 chaperones/10 students
- Classes:** at least 1 chaperone/15 students (in addition to the Naturalist)
- Mealtimes:** at least 1 chaperone at each table (tables seat 10 currently)
- Free time:** 1 chaperone/10 students

In addition, we require that at least one teacher from each school be present and on the property at all times. Teachers and other adult chaperones from your school are needed to supervise children when they are not involved in Barrier Island class or activities (e.g., overnight in cabins, before and after meals, between classes, etc.) We ask that one adult sit at each table during mealtimes to assist the Barrier Island staff with supervision. Prior to each meal, we will have a moment of silence for those that would like to have personal prayer, reflection, or quiet time.

NOTE: Swimming is not permitted. There are times when wading is allowed during certain classes, but children should not go in past waist-deep at any time.

Evacuation Policy

Since we are located on the southern coast of SC, although it is rare, there may be occasions when a hurricane approaches our location. Once a hurricane is three days out from Camp St. Christopher, we will issue an evacuation of all guests. With this in mind, all three-day field trips will never need to be evacuated because the trip will be cancelled before you arrive.