

ZOO CAMP INFORMATION

Everything you need to know.

Coming to Zoo Camp? Here's everything you need to know in one easy place.

We are committed to providing an inclusive, safe, fun, and educational experience for our campers while ensuring the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and animals.

WHAT TO BRING

- A completed **Camp Participant Form** and signed **Waiver** (page two of the form) for each camper **must be handed to camp staff on the first day of camp.** *Do NOT email us your form in advance.* Without the form and waiver, we cannot admit a child to Zoo Camp.
 - If you do not have access to a printer: we can provide a blank printed copy of the Camp Participant Form when you arrive at camp – please plan to spend a few extra minutes filling it out when you get here.
- **Backpack Containing at least:**
 - **Lunch and 1-2 snack items.** Lunch and snack are NOT provided. We encourage the use of reusable lunch bags and containers – we work hard to keep single-use plastic out of the zoo. Camp participants will not have the opportunity to purchase food from the Plaza Café or any food carts at any time during camp programs.
 - **A refillable water bottle.** There are water bottle filling stations throughout the Zoo grounds and in each learning space.
 - **Clothing appropriate for weather and outdoor activities**, including comfortable, water resistant, closed-toed footwear. We recommend bringing layers to stay comfortable in our unpredictable weather!
 - **Masks will not be required for campers.** However, we will support any camper who chooses to wear one. If you wish for your camper to wear a mask during camp, please pack 1-2 clean face masks to change throughout the day as needed. Let your camper's instructors know your preferences for reminding your camper to wear their mask.
 - Each camper will have a cubby or designated area to store their backpack and any other belongings.

- **Cameras are welcome.** Phones will be allowed for taking pictures and communication with family members/guardians only.
- **Prescription Medication.** If children require prescription medication during camp hours, you must provide written instructions on the [Camp Participant Form](#) for medication time(s) and amount(s). Staff will not physically administer the medication; we will provide the opportunity for the child to take the medication.
 - If your child has an **EpiPen**, please bring it in a clear bag labeled with your child's name.
- **Hand sanitizer** if desired. Instructors also will keep some on hand and there will be some in each learning space.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Gum
- Games or toys
- Sandals/open-toed shoes

DRIVE-THRU CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT

- Only authorized adults or teens listed on the Camp Participant Form will be allowed to sign-out a child, after providing **photo identification**. This is done for your child's safety, and **photo identification is required every day!**
- Follow signs to **ZOO CAMP CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT** area. Please note, Zoo Camp Check-In/Check-out area is not at the front gate entrance.
- Please stay in your vehicle (if getting to the Zoo by car) during check-in/check-out unless directed by staff.
- **Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium (PDZA) is a No-Idle Zone.** During drive-thru check-in/check-out, please be a Polar Bear Pal and turn off your engine if you are waiting for more than 30 seconds, except if needed for child safety. [Learn more about the Polar Bear Pal program and other conservation initiatives.](#)

DRIVE-THRU CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT TIMES

Camp	Age/Grade Graduated	Check-In
Tiny Explorers	4- & 5-year-olds	9:15 - 9:25am
Little Explorers	Kindergarten Graduates	9:15 - 9:25am
Junior Explorers	1st-2nd Grade Graduates	8:55 - 9:05am
Wild Explorers	3rd-4th Grade Graduates	8:40 - 8:50am
Science Explorers	5th-7th Grade Graduates	8:25 - 8:35am
Eco Explorers	8th-11th Grade Graduates	8:25 - 8:35am

LATE PICKUP FEE

After a 10-minute grace period after the end of the check-out window, a late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute per child will apply. For example, if the checkout window ends at 3:10, and a child is picked up at 3:33, \$13.00 would be charged. This fee is applicable each program day.

DIRECTIONS TO THE ZOO

[GOOGLE MAP TO ZOO](#)

Pearl Street northbound to Mildred Street Entrance:

- Follow Pearl Street northbound.
- Turn left on North 51st Street and drive to Mildred Street.
- Go around the right-hand curve, down and up the hill and turn right into the park.
- Make another right turn at the stop sign.
- Follow signs to drive-thru **ZOO camp check-in/check-out.**

Schuster Parkway to Mildred Street Entrance:

- From I-5, take exit 133 for I-705 and follow signs to Schuster Parkway, then Ruston Way.
- Follow Ruston Way for 2.8 miles along the waterfront, and at the second traffic circle take the second exit onto North 51st Street.
- Continue straight at the traffic light.
- Continue straight at the stop sign.
- Go around the right-hand curve, down and up the hill and turn right into the park.
- Make another right turn at the stop sign.
- Follow signs to drive-thru **ZOO camp check-in/check-out**.

Pearl Street Entrance:

- Not recommended for easily locating the camp check-in/check-out area.

Taking Pierce Transit Bus to the Zoo:

- Take Route 10 PT DEFIANCE via PEARL ST.
- Get off at Pearl St & Park Wy Stop ID: 2151.
- Use caution – walking route from this stop to **ZOO camp check-in/check-out** area travels along trafficked route without sidewalks.
- From the bus stop, walk towards the traffic circle and turn left.
- Follow the road uphill past Northwest Native Garden (on the left), then turn right to follow signs to **ZOO camp check-in/check-out**.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMODATIONS

- Metro Parks Tacoma strives toward providing inclusive programs to all community members. People of all abilities are invited to consider registering for any recreational program Metro Parks Tacoma has to offer provided they meet the minimum eligibility requirements. We can usually build customized support to suit your needs.
- If you need special assistance, please fill out the [Accommodation Request Form](#) at least two weeks in advance of your scheduled camp date.

CHANGES, CANCELLATIONS & CONTACT INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Visit the [Camp Webpage](#).

Questions:

- Call the zoo's main line at **(253) 404-3800**. Press 0 (zero) to bypass the menu or leave a message. Administrative office hours are 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday.
- Email pdza.camps@pdza.org. Allow at least 1 business day for a response.

If you are **running late** for check-in or check-out or if your **camper will be absent** that day:

- Please call or text camp staff at **(253) 888-2746**. This phone is only checked during camp operating hours (8:30 am – 4:30 pm).

You will receive more details and any updates in an email at least one week before your camp session.

SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM CANCELLATION POLICIES:

- Please notify us as soon as possible if your child is no longer able to attend so that we can offer the spot to another child.
- No refunds for cancellations made less than 14 days prior to the program start date.
- For cancellations requested more than 14 days prior to the program start date an 80% refund will be given.
- Camp date changes (if available) will be charged a 20% rescheduling fee.
- PDZA reserves the right to cancel any program. If it is necessary for PDZA to cancel a program, all program fees will be refunded.
- Contact us at pdza.camps@pdza.org for cancellation or change requests.

DEVELOPING BEHAVIOR

USING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

We are committed to providing an inclusive, safe, fun, and educational experience for all our campers while ensuring the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and animals. Our camp staff are trained to utilize ***Restorative Practices***. This means that:

- We will use community building techniques to partner with campers to create positive relationships.
- We will work as a community to address conflict or negative actions by providing opportunities and guidance for campers to repair harm and restore relationships rather than through punishment.
- Community behavioral agreements will be discussed at the beginning of each camp day.
- Steps will be taken to seek mutually beneficial and camper centered resolution when actions negatively affect one's own or others' experiences.

If resolution cannot be achieved and a camper's actions continue to pose risk to the safety or wellbeing of themselves or others, we reserve the right to require an adult to come pick up the camper.

WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO

- Turn away a camper at check-in at the discretion of a PDZA representative.
- Isolate and require an adult to come pick up a camper that has shown any symptoms of COVID-19 or other contagious illnesses. This is at the discretion of the Camp Coordinator and the Camp Instructors leading the camp session.
- Require an adult to come pick up a camper whose behavior is posing risks to the safety and wellbeing of others or is interfering with camp operations. This is at the discretion of the Camp Coordinator and the Camp Instructors leading the camp session.