



Thank you for booking your field trip to Ripley's Aquarium of Canada. We look forward to welcoming you and your students!

Our Education Team is here to assist you. Please let us know prior to your visit if you have any concerns that are not addressed in the following Q & A.

## Most Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### Q. What suggestions do you have, to make the most of our visit?

The following ideas have proven effective with other school groups:

- Print the Aquarium map ahead of time for all supervisors and volunteers indicating on each map the time and location of their specific workshop or tank talk. Lunch times and locations can also be marked on each map.
- Plan to attend one of the daily dive shows; show times are 11:15, 1:15, 3:15, 5:15 and 7:15. *(Show times and locations are subject to change. Please confirm on the day of your visit to avoid disappointment.)*
- For easy student recognition you may find it helpful to have all students wear the same colour shirt, or provide each student with similar bandanas or glow sticks.
- Prior to your visit please check out "Teacher Resources" on our website. Scavenger hunts and worksheets are available for students to use during their visit. Don't forget to provide pencils and encourage students to take time to observe the animals closely.
- Your Aquarium experience can be captured in a group photo and shared with the students digitally. Take a look at Photo Offer posted in the Teacher's Resources.
- Goodie Bags can be purchased by students. Each goodie bag contains a stuffed animal, a bag of shark's teeth, large post card and a Ripley's Aquarium pencil. Please order goodie bags ahead of time by notifying the Education Department of the number you require. Your order will be ready for easy

pick up on the day of your visit, upon exiting the aquarium via the gift shop. We ask that you please pay separately for goodie bags at Ripley's Cargo Hold.

- Teachers who have booked a field trip to the Aquarium are able to preview the facility prior to their scheduled visit by presenting their confirmation letter at the guest service desk for one complementary admission. This offer applies only to the teacher, and not any guests they bring with them.

#### **Q. Does the Aquarium have a CODE OF CONDUCT?**

Our code of conduct requires that all animals and other Aquarium guests be treated with respect. Students must be supervised at all times, inside and outside of the Aquarium.

The Aquarium reserves the right to remove students engaging in any of the following inappropriate behaviour:

- Running, rough-housing or playing tag.
- Loud, profane or inappropriate language.
- Banging on tanks, defacing or damaging Aquarium property.

*Please note:*

- Chewing gum is not permitted in the Aquarium.
- When at touch tanks, follow the instructions provided by Aquarium staff regarding touching animals.

## **BOOKING CHANGES**

#### **Q. When should I let you know that my numbers have changed?**

We ask you to notify us immediately if you have any significant increases or decreases to your numbers. All increases or date changes are subject to availability.

About a week to ten days prior to your scheduled booking, a reminder of your upcoming visit will be sent out via email. It is at this time that we ask you to please finalize your numbers so an updated invoice can be generated and sent back in time for your administration to issue a school cheque for the amount owing.

To avoid any overpayments, please contact us with your most up to date numbers a minimum of three working days prior to your visit.

If you are paying by credit card or purchase order (TDSB schools ONLY at this time), small booking adjustments can be made on the day of your visit. TDSB purchase orders must be received in advance of your visit date.

## ANNUAL PASSES

**Q. A student has an annual pass to the Aquarium, can this be applied to our school visit?**

No, coupons, passes or annual pass discounts cannot be applied to a school visit.

## PAYMENT

**Q. Do you require a deposit?**

No, deposits are not required.

**Q. Do we pay in advance of our trip?**

Full payment of the amount shown on your invoice is due upon arrival on the day of your visit. Please note that evening or weekend visits will require prepayment.

## PAYMENT POLICIES

- Payment methods include Visa, MasterCard, American Express, exact cash and school cheques made payable to Ripley's Aquarium of Canada.
- We do not invoice schools.
- Some school boards are moving to an electronic payment system via Purchase Orders. Please inquire with your school administrator. Purchase orders are only accepted from TDSB schools at this time.
- No refunds for overpayment will be made.

## CANCELLATION POLICIES

- Please notify us immediately if you are unable to attend on your scheduled date.
- If your trip must be cancelled due to bad weather, we will try to reschedule your visit, subject to available dates.

## CHAPERONE RATIOS

### **Q. How many supervisors/chaperones/volunteers do I need to bring?**

Our complimentary chaperone ratio is based on student numbers and grade levels. Please note that if your student numbers change, supervisor ratios will be adjusted accordingly.

Primary (JK to Grade 3): 1 adult per 4 students  
Junior (Grade 4-6): 1 adult per 6 students  
Intermediate (Grade 7-9): 1 adult per 8 students  
Senior (Grade 10-12): 1 adult per 15 students

### **Q. I have extra chaperones/volunteers/parents who would like to come. How much is their entrance fee?**

Any additional adults above the complementary chaperone ratio will be given a 15% discount when they are added to the school invoice for a total of \$28.82 per person (including HST).

General admission will be charged if the additional chaperone(s) are not included on the school invoice.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

### **Q. What is your disability access policy for special needs students?**

If a student requires one-on-one supervision in the classroom, the support person will be given complimentary admission. The student will be required to pay.

We ask that you please indicate in advance how many of your total number of students are special needs and will require support.

*Please note: Your special needs support people are in addition to your complimentary supervisor ratio.*

The aquarium's accessibility bill of rights can be found at:

<https://www.ripleyaquariums.com/canada/visit/accessibility-bill-of-rights/>

### **Q. Can any of your workshops be modified to accommodate special need students?**

The Education staff are willing to make minor modifications to programming to accommodate special

needs students. In order to do so, please share your requested modifications and information on how best to support the needs of your students in advance of your booked visit.

**Q. Do you have adult change tables or family washrooms?**

The Aquarium has a family washroom with a change table. If this is something that you require please speak with your Educator upon arrival. This washroom is located near Shark Touch, and is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. It cannot be booked in advance.

**Q. I have a student who has a service animal. Will their support animal be permitted in the aquarium?**

The Aquarium welcomes service animals and ask that they be well identified as working animals.

## ARRIVING AT THE AQUARIUM

**Q. Where do school groups enter?**

The Aquarium has a designated bus drop off and pick up zone on the north side of Bremner Boulevard. School groups enter the aquarium via the side entrance door which is accessed by the ramp leading up from the sidewalk.

During your visit, buses must find alternative parking. Buses that remain in the drop off are subject to ticketing by the City of Toronto.

**Q. Will someone be meeting us when we arrive?**

Yes, a member of the Education team will greet your bus, review behaviour expectations with the students, and outline what they can expect from their visit.

**Q. When do we pay for our school visit?**

You must pay on the day of your visit. We ask that one teacher enter the Aquarium and complete the payment transaction at the guest service desk while the students disembark and line up on the ramp, ready for entrance.

**Q. Where does our bus park?**

Bus parking on Bremner Boulevard is not permitted as the areas in front of the Aquarium is designated as a pick up and drop off zone and is strictly enforced by the city. Please be sure to inform your bus driver that if they park their bus or leave it unattended on Bremner Boulevard they run the risk of being ticketed.

A “pay and display” parking lot is located across from the Rogers Centre on the south side of Bremner Boulevard, between Spadina Avenue and Rees Street. It is a five-minute walk to the Aquarium from the parking lot.

Please contact the lots directly to inquire about availability and cost.

**Q. Does the Aquarium have in and out privileges?**

There are no in and out privileges. Once your school has been checked in, we ask that you remain in the Aquarium. Exceptions can be made for supervised groups of students leaving to eat lunch outdoors when weather permits.

## HOLDING ROOM FOR STUDENT BELONGINGS

**Q. Is there somewhere to store student’s coats, lunches and backpacks?**

School groups have the exclusive use of our “holding room”. Each school is assigned a coat rack for storage of coats, lunches and backpacks, however space is extremely limited, so please have students pack light.

Any items left behind at the end of your visit will be turned in to the Aquarium’s lost and found department. Please contact them for any missing items.

We ask that you do not leave any valuables in the holding room as it is not locked. The Aquarium is not responsible for lost or stolen items as belongings are left at the owner’s risk.

Schools visiting in the afternoon or evenings will not have access to the holding room. The Aquarium does have a public coat check and for a small fee items can be stored.

## LUNCH

**Q. Where do we eat lunch?**

The Aquarium does not have a dedicated lunch room, however, each school visiting over the lunch hour will be assigned an eating area and lunch time. These details will be communicated via email one week prior to your visit.

*The Aquarium is committed to policies, initiatives and programs that integrate environmentally conscious practices into the aquarium’s daily operations. We strongly encourage students to bring litter-less lunches and refillable drink bottles.*

*We also ask that each school please leave designated lunch areas tidy when finished, ensuring students use the proper waste and recycling containers located throughout the aquarium. Other schools will be using these same areas for their lunch.*

**Q. Can we buy our lunches at the aquarium?**

The Aquarium has a small café with seating reserved for paying guests. Students are welcome to use the café seating if they are purchasing their lunches.

The café menu is posted on our webpage. Click on the word “Visit” in the blue bar at the top of our web page and select “Dine and Shop” from the drop down menu.

**Q. Do you have other lunch options?**

The Aquarium offers pre-ordered food vouchers. The order form is located under “Teacher Resources” on our website. Food voucher orders must be submitted one week prior to the scheduled visit. Pre-payment is required.

Your pre-ordered food vouchers will be available for pick up at the guest service desk when you check in on the day of your scheduled visit. You are responsible for passing them out to your students. Students then take their voucher to the café and selected from a limited menu.

**Q. Can we eat our lunches outdoors?**

Weather permitting, yes. Please advise our staff on the day of your visit if you would like to eat outdoors and they will explain the procedure.

Please note, students are not permitted to exit by themselves as teacher supervision is required at all times.

**Q. We are coming from out of town, can you recommend a restaurant close by?**

If you wish to eat lunch before or after your visit, there are many popular restaurants on Front Street such as Boston Pizza, Cora’s, Jack Astor’s, Loose Moose, Tim Horton’s and Casey’s. Many school have enjoyed eating at Medieval Times, the Old Spaghetti Factory or the CN Tower. Reservations are recommended.

## PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

**Q. What educational programs do you offer?**

The Aquarium offers two types of programs, classroom workshops and tank talks. Please note that at this time all programming is in English only.

## 1. Workshops

The Aquarium has two classrooms that each accommodate a maximum of 30 students and 6 adults.

All workshops are based on the current education curriculum and run approximately 45 minutes. Please check our website [ripleysaquariumofcanada.com](http://ripleysaquariumofcanada.com) for the workshop descriptions.

Workshops are priced at \$14.50 per student, plus HST and include the entrance fee to the Aquarium.

## 2. Tank Talks

Tank talks are conducted by our Educators in front of the Kelp Forest and are designed to engage the students in observing the animals in the tank and their habitat, all while discussing conservation, and environmentally conscious practices. Tank talks run 25 minutes and can accommodate up to 35 students. If you have larger numbers, please consider multiple talks.

Tank talks are priced at \$12.50 per student, plus HST and include the entrance fee to the Aquarium.

## SELF GUIDE OPTION

**Q. I am not interested in programing, so can we just come and walk around the Aquarium on our own?**

Many school choose the self-guide option and pair it together with the scavenger hunt or worksheet. These can be found under “Teacher Resources” on our webpage.

Plan on spending between 2 to 2 ½ hours to walk through the entire aquarium. Please note that once you have entered the Aquarium you are welcome to stay as long as you like.

The self-guide option is priced at \$10 plus HST per student.

## BOOKING INFORMATION

**Q. What is your booking process?**

Please fill out our on-line field trip booking request form located on our website. Click on the word “Education” at the top of our webpage and select “Fieldtrips” from the drop down menu.

An acknowledgment will be sent out upon receipt of your request.



Once our scheduler has entered the booking information, an invoice will be generated and sent out in a confirmation email.

Payment is not required until the day of your visit (unless you are visiting in the evening or weekend).

**Q. When should I let you know about any changes in my numbers?**

Approximately one week to 10 days prior to your visit a reminder email will be sent out. It is at this time we ask you to please finalize your numbers so an updated invoice can be emailed to you.

Please notify us immediately of any significant increases or decreases in numbers. Any date changes and increases in numbers are subject to availability.

## WORKSHOP INFORMATION

**Q. Where do I find the confirmation of my workshop(s) or tank talk(s)?**

Your invoice is your confirmation. A copy of your invoice is sent as an attachment with your confirmation email. The invoice provides the date of your visit, arrival time, and the classroom location of your booked workshop(s) or tank talk(s).

**Q. We have booked multiple classroom workshops; how do we divide the children between the workshops?**

The Aquarium has two classrooms that can accommodate a maximum of 30 students and 6 adults each. (The minimum number of students required for a workshop is 15).

Below are some examples of how to divide larger numbers:

- 60 grade one students would be provided with two grade one workshops of 30 students each.
- 78 students, would be provided with three workshops. It is up to the individual teacher(s) to divide their students accordingly; for example: 3 workshops with 26 students each or 3 workshops with their original class numbers such as 22, 27, and 29 students.

**Q. We booked a classroom workshop; where do we meet?**

The designated workshop meeting spot is at the bottom of the stairs outside the holding room overlooking the Dangerous Lagoon.

We ask that you gather the students at the base of the stairs a few minutes prior to your assigned workshop time as indicated on your invoice. Your Educator will meet you and lead the group up the stairs and into the appropriate classroom when they are ready to start.

**Q. We have a tank talk program, where do we meet?**

Your tank talk location(s) and time(s) is indicated on your invoice.

If you have multiple sessions, please divide the students between the sessions as evenly as possible and have the students meet **at the talk location** as indicated on your booking invoice at the assigned time.

Aquarium staff would be pleased to provide directions to your Tank Talk location, or you can refer to their location on the Aquarium map. (see “Teacher Resource” page on website)

Printed maps are available at the Guest Services desk upon arrival.

**Q. How do I know what time of my workshop or tank talk?**

Time and location of your selected program(s) is printed on your invoice. You will receive a copy of your invoice in your confirmation email.

## GOODIE BAGS

**Q. How do we take advantage of the “Goodie Bag” offer?**

We ask that orders be placed in advance with the education department via email or by calling 647-351-3474 ext. 2648. Goodie bags will be available for pick up on the day of your visit when exiting through the gift shop. Payment must be provided at the time of pick up. See “Teacher Resources” for the order form.

Distribution of the goodie bags may be done on the bus or back at school prior to the end of the school day.

**Q. How do we pay for the “Goodie Bags”?**

We ask that goodie bags be paid for separately from your school booking. This payment can be made at Ripley’s Cargo Hold. Payment can be made in advance, or on the day of your visit by credit card, cash or a separate school cheque made out to “Ripley’s Aquarium of Canada”.

## DEPARTING

**Q. Where do we exit?**

All aquarium guests exit through the Cargo Hold gift shop, including school groups. It is a two minute walk back to the ramp area where the bus drop off and pick up zone is located.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### **Q. Do you provide any financial support for low income schools?**

The Aquarium offers a “Sea Scholars” program for low income schools; visit our website at [ripleysaquariumofcanada.com](http://ripleysaquariumofcanada.com) for the application details and deadlines.

### **Q. Is it true that schools can book sleepovers at the aquarium?**

If your school is interested in a sleepover, please contact the education department at 647-351-3474 ext. 2648 regarding available dates.

Sleepovers require a minimum of 50 participants, to a maximum of 75, and require a 1:8 supervisor ratio.

### **Q. Can we book a guided tour through the Aquarium?**

The Aquarium is designed as a self-guide venue, and as such we do not offer guided tours.

### **Q. How long should we plan to spend at the Aquarium?**

A typical school visit begins with an arrival time between 9:30 and 10:30 am and a departure between 1:30 and 2:00 pm.

### **Q. Is any of your programming provided in a different language?**

At this time, we can only provide programming in English.

### **Q. What can we expect to see at the Aquarium?**

The Aquarium has over 16,000 aquatic animals in nine galleries, over 100 interactive displays, four touch tanks (horseshoe crabs, bamboo sharks, stingrays and cleaner shrimp), a 90 meter glide path under Dangerous Lagoon, and a large play area for younger children which includes a water table and a submarine with many interactives.

### **Q. I hear you have dive shows. Do we need to make a reservation? Also can you tell me how much they are and how long they run?**

Our dive shows are regularly scheduled throughout the day, starting at 11:15 am. Show times and locations are posted in the lobby on the large screen by the Guest Services desk and throughout the Aquarium.

The free show is an interaction between the diver and the educator and run approximately 15 minutes; no reservations are required.

The Aquarium also offers daily “Aquarist Talks” where students can observe an animal being fed and can ask questions of our Husbandry staff. Please see monitors inside the Aquarium on the day of your visit for times and locations.

**Q. Is the Aquarium wheelchair accessible?**

The entire Aquarium is built on a ramp system both inside and out.

Outside there are two ramps, one accesses the front entrance and the second ramp accesses the side entrance. Once inside the Aquarium, you will follow a path that spirals down as you walk through the galleries, and then heads back up to the main level as you finish your Aquarium experience.

**Q. Can I rent a wheelchair at the Aquarium?**

Wheelchairs are free of charge and available at the Guest Service desk upon check in. You will be required to leave a piece of identification while you are using the wheelchair. We do not take reservations in advance.

**Q. One student has a service animal, will the animal be permitted in the Aquarium?**

All service animals are welcome at the Aquarium; we ask that they be clearly identified as working animals.

**Q. Do you have a lost and found?**

Any item left behind after a school visit will be turned into the Aquarium’s lost and found department. Please check at the Guest Service desk when inquiring about lost items.

## TEACHERS

**Q. Do teachers get a discount at the Aquarium?**

The Aquarium does not offer any direct teacher discounts. Please check the Ontario College of Teacher’s website <https://www.oct.ca> for any member perks that are being offered in conjunction with the Aquarium.

**Q. How do I find out what is going on at the Aquarium?**

Sign up for our teacher-specific newsletter for exclusive offers from Ripley's Aquarium of Canada. The sign up form can be found on our website [ripleysaquariumofcanada.com](http://ripleysaquariumofcanada.com) at the bottom of the Field Trip webpage.

**Q. Does the Aquarium hold any teacher nights?**

The Aquarium hosts at least one teacher open house per school year, providing teachers with the opportunity to view the venue, and consider programming for the school year.

Sign up for our teacher newsletter to receive alerts to when this night will be held.

**Q. How do I get notified of the date of your next Teacher's Night?**

Information regarding the teacher open house will be posted in our monthly teacher newsletter which is sent out to all registered teachers. You can also request an invitation by sending an email to [education@ripleysaquariumofcanada.com](mailto:education@ripleysaquariumofcanada.com) from your board email address. Invitations will be sent out once the dates for the Teacher Appreciation nights have been finalized.

**Q. I have booked a field trip; can I come ahead of time to check out the Aquarium facilities?**

Teachers who have booked a field trip to the Aquarium will be able to view the facility prior to their scheduled visit by presenting their confirmation letter at the guest service desk for one complementary admission. This offer applies only to the teacher, and not any guests they bring with them.

**Q. If I have other questions who can I contact?**

Please call the Education Department at 647-351-3474 ext. 2648 and we will do our best to address your questions.