



MARINE SCIENCE MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

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Dr. Nicholas J. Spera, *Principal*
Colleen E. Hardison, *Assistant Principal*

September 16, 2019

Dear MSMHS Family,

Given the nature of our courses at MSMHS, including Marine Studies I, Marine Studies II, ECE Marine Science, and ECE The Sea Around Us, it will be necessary to go on a number of field trips during the 2019-2020 academic year to collect data and experience the greater ocean environment. Some of the potential destinations include the Poquonnock River in Groton, Bluff Point in Groton, and Mamacoke Island in Waterford, to name a few.

Significantly, at MSMHS we plan to stress the dangers of ticks [e.g. the deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) which carries Lyme Disease] and aggressive mosquitoes [e.g. the black tailed mosquito (*Culex melanura*) which hosts Eastern Equine Encephalitis, or EEE] found in the salt marshes, fields, and woodlands adjacent to or in the tidal estuaries. We will require every student to check themselves for these arthropods during and after each field trip and to follow a recommended prevention/precaution protocol. The following is a paraphrased list of safety measures from UCONN's Tick Management Handbook, the Tick Brochure published by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, and Ledge Light Health District's Mosquito Borne Disease fact sheet from their website:

- Wear light-colored clothing
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Clothing material should be tightly woven.
- Use mosquito repellent when necessary – in a safe manner according to the label instructions.
- The use of DEET or permethrin repellants greatly enhances protection if applied as a lotion or spray on clothing or non-facial exposed skin.
- When self-examining your body for attached ticks, pay special attention to places that are hard to see or reach (i.e. the head, neck, groin, armpits, and knee cavities).
- Any attached ticks should be removed with thin-tipped tweezers held parallel to the skin. Grasp the tick by the mouthparts, as close to the skin as possible, and slowly but firmly pull outward or upward.

The use of repellents containing DEET (diethyltoluamide) or permethrin is totally up to you and your child and is NOT a requirement to participate in any field or outdoor activities. Moreover, DEET and permethrin repellants are specifically designed to protect against both ticks and mosquitoes that may carry bacteria, viruses, and protozoans. Consumer Reports testing indicates that products containing 25% to 30% DEET typically provide at least several hours of protection. Research states that additional DEET percentage increases your exposure without improving the repellency. The highest concentration is 30% per the National Capital Poison Center.

Thank you for your attention to this important and urgent matter. If you have any question do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nicholas J. Spera
Principal

We believe that effort creates ability and that all students can succeed.