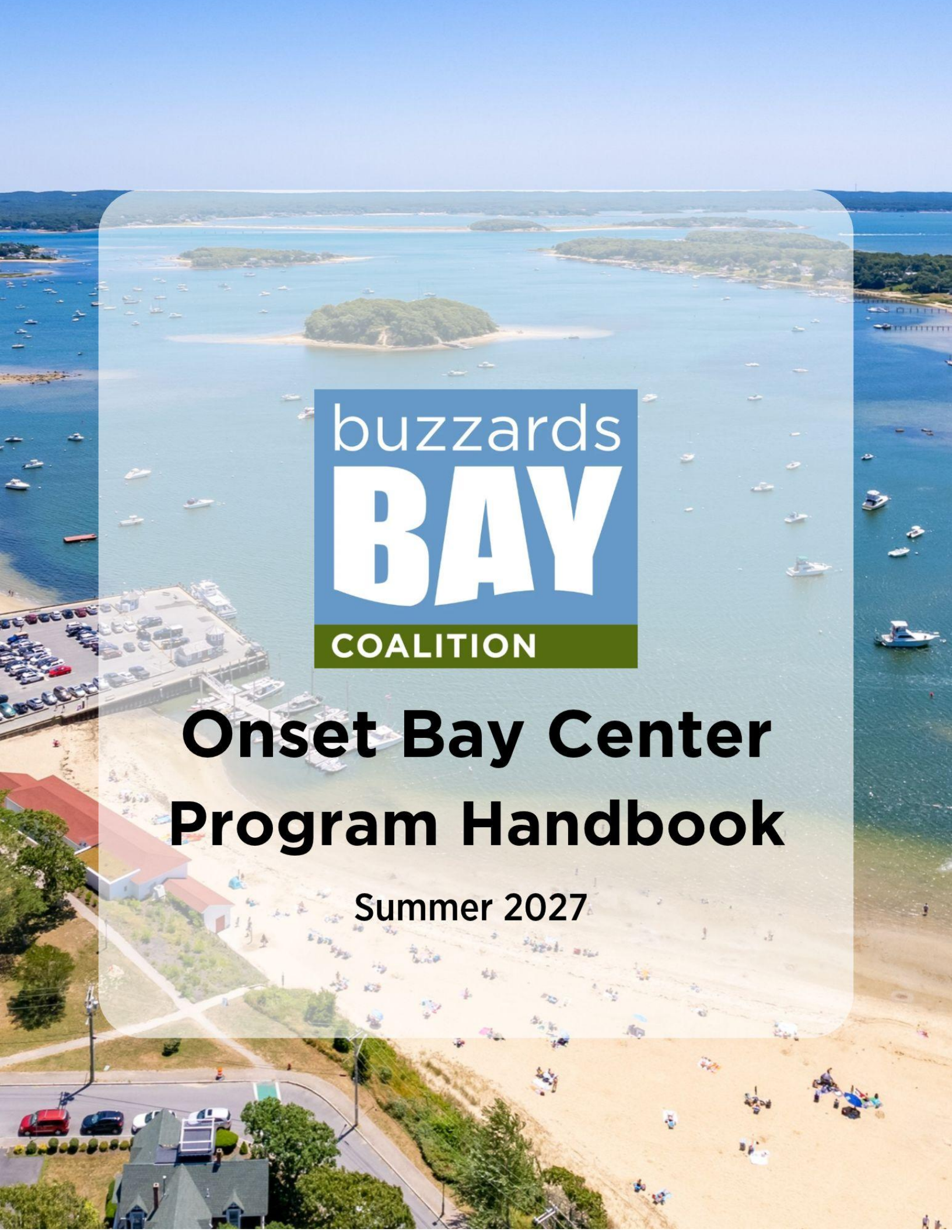


buzzards BAY COALITION

Onset Bay Center Program Handbook

Summer 2027



Dear Parents, guardians, and families,

We are so excited that you have chosen the Onset Bay Center as part of your children's summer adventure! Our staff is committed to ensuring that the activities your children participate in are safe, fun, and filled with a lifetime of memories on Onset Bay.

We ask that you please take the time to go over this handbook with your children to ensure the best possible summer experience. This handbook provides important information to help prepare you and your children for their time with us. It includes information about our camp program, policies, and procedures.

If you have questions after reading through the handbook, please don't hesitate to contact Angie Weldon, the Onset Bay Center & Camp Director, at 508-999-6363 ext. 283 or via email at weldon@savebuzzardsbay.org.

We cannot wait for this summer's adventures out on the water!

Sincerely,

The Onset Bay Center Staff

ALL religions, races, countries of origin, sexual orientations, genders, ethnicities, immigration status, and abilities are welcomed at the Onset Bay Center.

Onset Bay Center
2027 Summer Camp Programs

This document serves as a guide for all participants of OBC programs and outlines behavior expectations, water safety precautions, items to bring each day, and prohibited items/actions.

Important contact information:

Angie Weldon
Onset Bay Center Director, Camp Director
Office Phone: 508-999-6363 ext. 283
Email: weldon@savebuzzardsbay.org

TBD Summer 2027
Head Counselor
Office Phone: 506-999-6363
Email:

Site Phone (will be answered at all times, in case someone is not available in the office)
Call or Text: 774-503-6396

** To aid our efforts to keep our programs as screen-free as possible, please communicate directly with OBC staff if you need to get in contact with your child while in our care. Please encourage your child to do the same while in program. Our team will always allow your child to make a call home when needed, and it helps our program run more efficiently if all communication goes through our office.

Arrival and Departure

We ask that all participants arrive on time and are picked up promptly to each session. Arriving late disrupts the program and distracts other participants. Please let us know if you will be late with a quick call or email. Please do not arrive more than 5 minutes early for drop-off or pick-up at the end of the session. If early pick-up is necessary, please contact us to coordinate (see policy below).

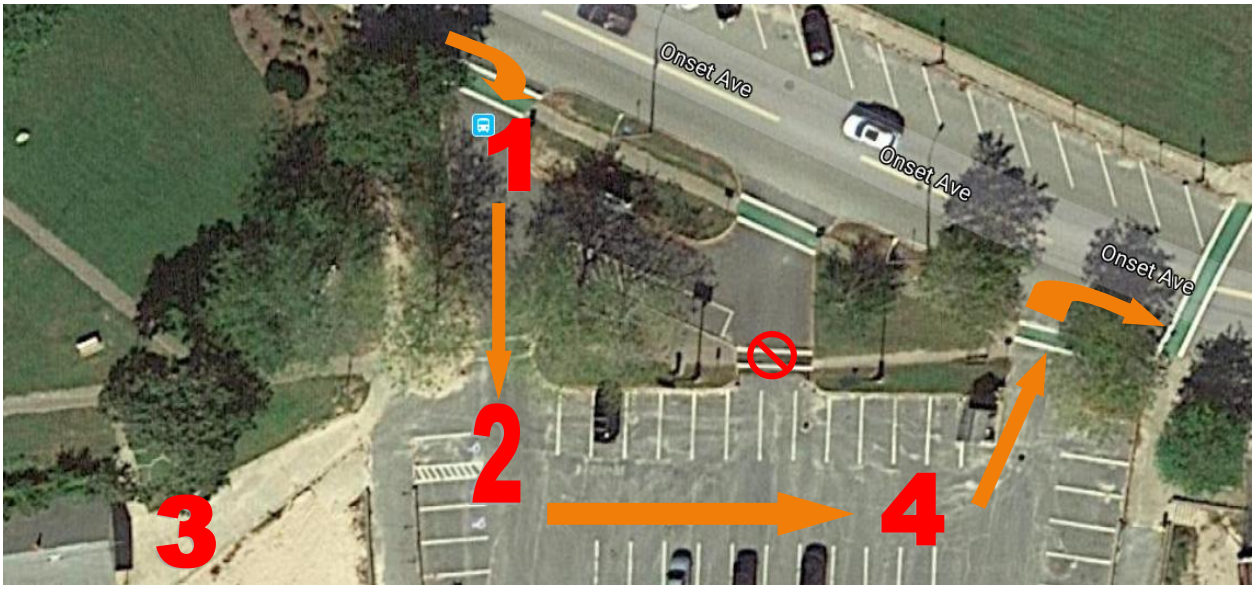
Children should arrive ready to go, with sunscreen applied and appropriate clothing on.

Program	Drop Off Time	Pick Up Time
Bay Explorers Camp	8:45 AM	4:00 PM
Sailing Camp	9:00 AM	4:00 PM
Young Explorers Camp	9:00 AM	11:45 AM
Waterfront Training Academy, Year 1 Cadets & Year 2 Ambassadors	8:45 AM	4:00 PM

Each session starts at the Onset Bay Center located at 186 Onset Avenue, Onset, MA. Guardians will be asked to drop off children at the Onset Bay Center flagpole gathering spot, where OBC staff members will be stationed to greet their groups. Your children will be ready for pick up at the same location at the end of their program. We check ID's for all persons picking up children in our care before dismissing them and will only dismiss children to adults listed on their registration form. Please make all authorized pickups aware that they will need to show identification at pickup. To alter your child's list of authorized adults for pickup, please contact weldon@savebuzzardsbay.org.

No child will be permitted to walk home unless a parent has expressly given permission. If you would like to give permission for your child to walk home, please contact weldon@savebuzzardsbay.org.

Please see the map on the next page for instructions on where to meet for drop off and pick up.



1- Pull into the Onset Pier.
2- Please pull forward to park and drop off your child. Town parking attendants ask that cars do not stop and block the entrance for other vehicles to let children out of their cars, but rather cycle through the lot to briefly stop, or find a parking space if spending a longer period of time.
3- Children will gather by the flagpole at the center at the beginning and end of each session.
4- Remember to pull up to not create a line of traffic behind you or park if you need to spend an extended period of time at drop off/pick up. Continue this direction to exit the lot.

What to Bring to the Onset Bay Center:

(Every child will have a cubby to use for the week at OBC)

The Onset Bay Center will provide all equipment, supplies, and life jackets to program participants.

Mandatory Items to Bring: (We highly recommend labeling all items with child's name!)

- Weather appropriate clothing: There may be some rainy and cool days where we will still be out on the water. Bring several layers to ensure children are comfortable in all conditions.
- Bathing suit, sun shirt, and appropriate swimwear for water sports. Please wear the clothes you plan to wear for activities and apply sunscreen prior to arrival.
- Secure closed-toe shoes that can get wet- Crocs, water shoes, Keens, or old sneakers are perfect. No flip flops during water activities. All participants wear shoes when on land to avoid hazards.
- Towel
- Sunscreen. Staff will remind and encourage children to re-apply throughout the day. OBC will have additional sunscreen on hand in case children run out.
- Water Bottle. Staff will remind and encourage children to refill throughout the day.
- Breakfast and lunch are provided at no cost for all full-day participants! Weekly menus will be available in advance of the program start. Participants are welcome to bring their own lunch and snacks if desired.

Recommended Items:

- Hat and/or sunglasses
- Extra change of clothes
- Snacks

Items to Avoid:

- Jewelry
- Electronics (Including Phones)
- Toys

Where We Operate:

Please see the maps on the following pages with marked locations in which our programs operate within Onset Bay! All areas are within VHF radio range of the Onset Bay Center and are approved locations for program staff and participants.

Onset Bay Center

All participants begin and end their day at the Center, at the base of our operations. Participants each have their own designated cubby space, where they may store their personal items during the day and their assigned PFD for the week while in program. All items will be cleared out of cubbies at the end of each week. The Center also functions as our gathering space for groups as they prepare for their day, play group games, and do introductory lessons such as sailing theory before heading out onto the beach. All paddle crafts launch from the boathouse on the lower level of the Center, using the paddle lane on Onset Beach. The center is not open to members of the public during program hours.

Onset Beach

Onset Beach is a public beach owned and operated by the Town or Wareham and the Department of Natural Resources. OBC uses the area right in from of the center for a paddle lane to launch our crafts. Occasionally, groups may travel with their staff down Onset Beach for an activity such as sand play or beachcombing.

Burgess Point

Buzzards Bay Coalition's land and trail system on Burgess Point offers a unique opportunity for activities such as landing paddle crafts, trail walks, our orienteering course, a less-crowded beach area for beach games and beachcombing, shellfishing in shallow water designated as an educational shellfishing zone, a dock and bridge for crabbing, and more! Much of the land is under conservation protection and features diverse habitats for coastal animals including grassland, salt marsh, pine oak forest, and osprey pole nesting sites. The shallow, protected water just off the coast of Burgess Point functions as a perfect site for paddle games, skills development, and launching for sailboats for different sail drills.

Wickets Island

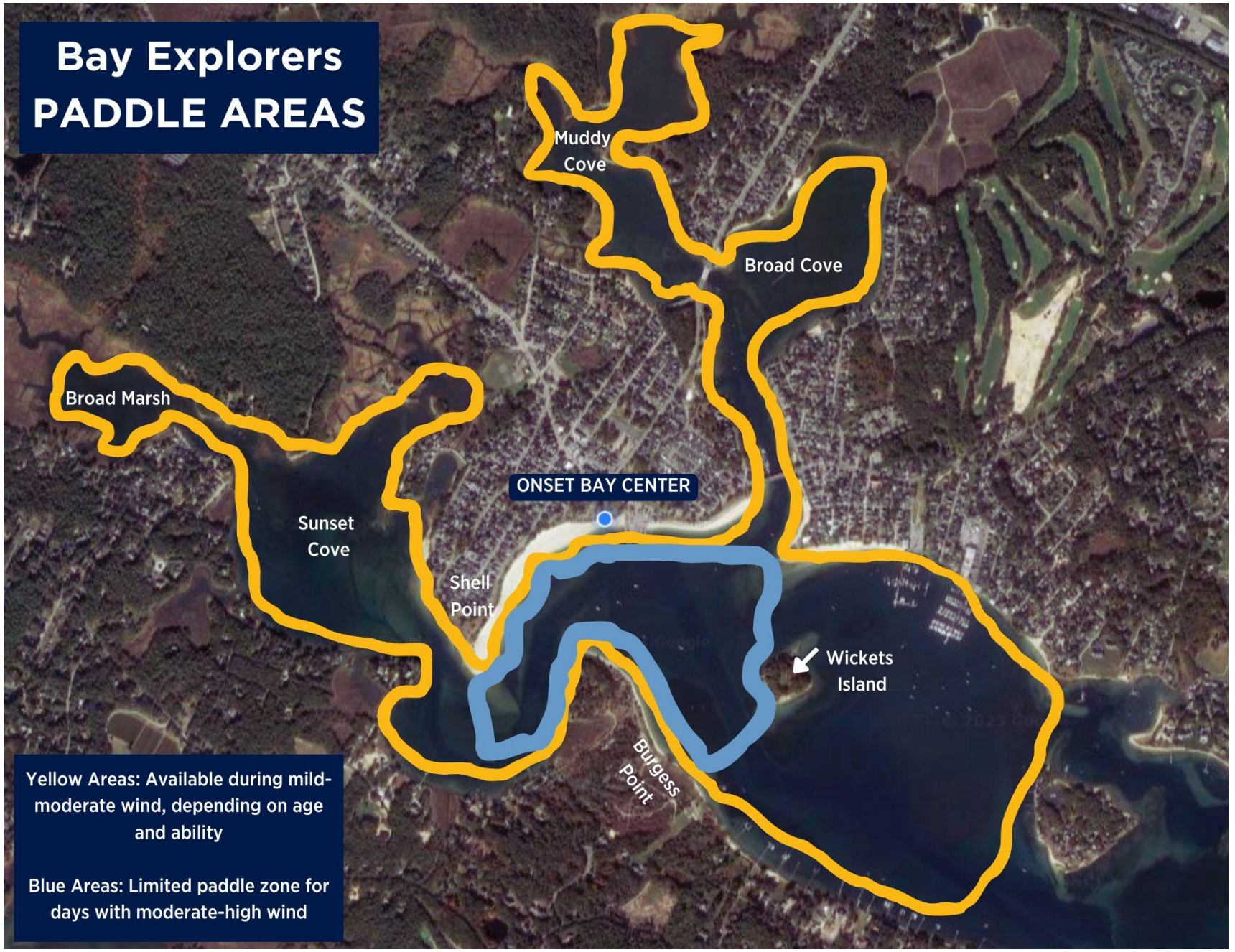
The jewel of Onset Bay, Wickets Island is an amazing location sitting 40ft above Onset Bay. From the top, participants enjoy a look out area facing back toward the Center as well as toward the Cape Cod Canal and bridges, a grassy field, and landmarks of the island that teach about the history of Wickets and how it has evolved over time. Favorite Wickets Island activities include circumnavigating the small island by water and by land, fishing and crabbing on the dock and pier, and field games up top!

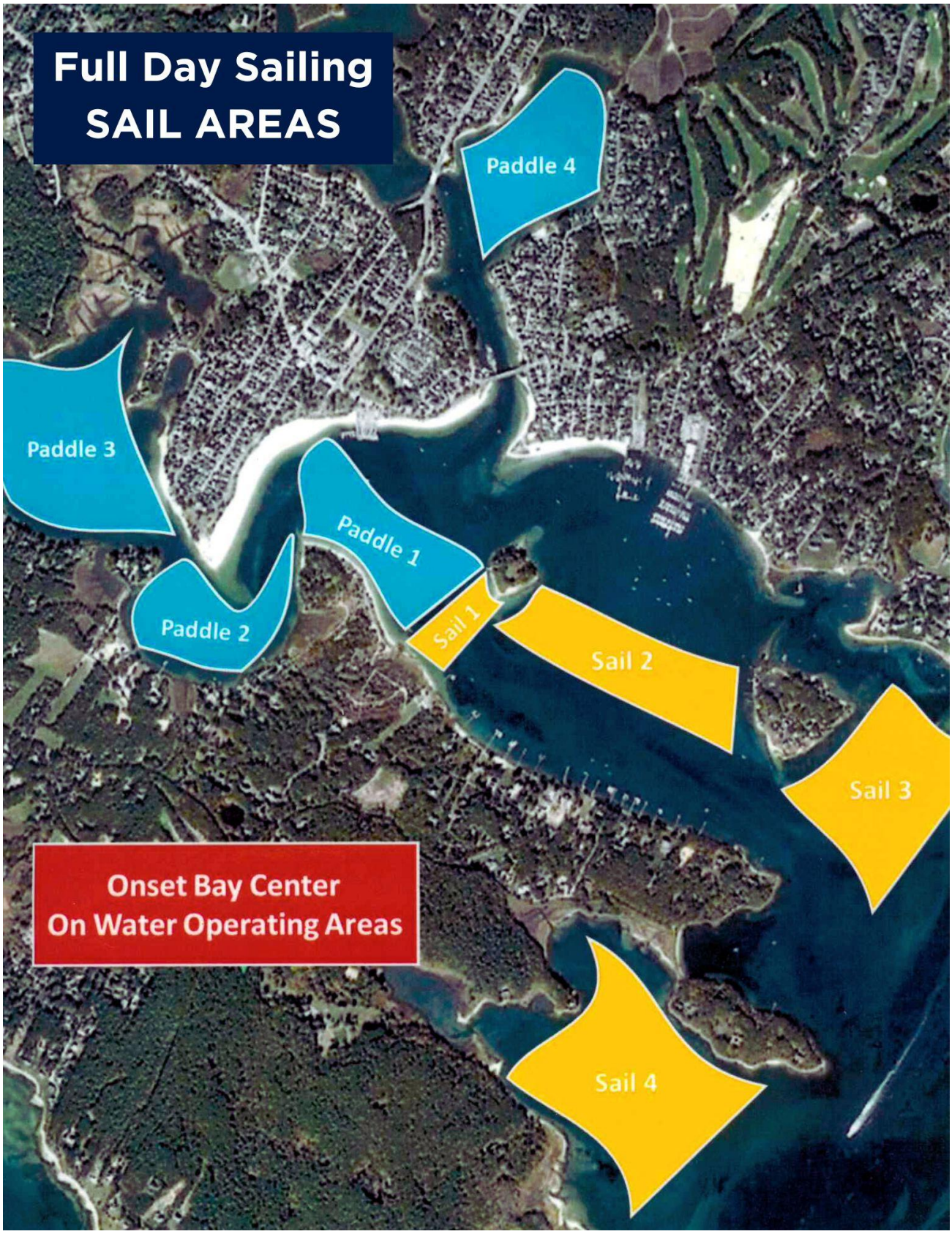
Floating Docks

Just off the shore of Burgess Point sit our 3 floating docks on moorings, which house our RS Quests and RS Zests sailboats. Our Sailing program participants travel by our licensed launch boat, Bufflehead, to the docks to begin their on-the-water activities.

Paddle & Sail Areas

The maps below mark our designated paddle and sail areas that our program participants use throughout the week. Participants have the opportunity to explore different areas within our bay including salt marshes and nearby coves. Sailing groups move between sail areas to catch the best winds, set up varied sailing courses, and practice different sailing skills.


Bay Explorers
PADDLE AREAS
Muddy Cove
Broad Cove
Broad Marsh
ONSET BAY CENTER
Sunset Cove
Shell Point
Wickets Island
Burgess Point
Yellow Areas: Available during mild-moderate wind, depending on age and ability
Blue Areas: Limited paddle zone for days with moderate-high wind


Full Day Sailing
SAIL AREAS
Paddle 4
Paddle 3
Paddle 1
Paddle 2
Sail 1
Sail 2
Sail 3
Sail 4
Onset Bay Center
On Water Operating Areas

Other Policies:

Electronics/Cell Phones

Participants are asked to leave all electronics on shore or at home. Apart from the occasional visual experiences aligned with the program, OBC is screen-free. The Onset Bay Center is not responsible for electronics lost to water. We will ask participants to keep all electronics onshore and out of sight in one of the cubbies at the Center. Supervising staff have watertight bags for their personal cellphones in case of emergencies but use waterproof radios to regularly communicate with other staff & local officials. Thank you for partnering with us to keep camp a place where we step away from the distraction of screens and focus on true connection and fun!

Schedule Changes / Late Arrivals & Early Dismissals

Due to the nature of our programs, we try to limit late arrivals and early dismissals to aid in the flow of the day for each of our groups. However, we understand managing your family's schedules can be difficult! Please reach out in advance if you need to adjust your child's schedule for the day or week so we can work to find the best solution for your family and our program! Lunch times, typically 11:30am-1:00pm for campers, is a great time for planned early dismissals, as groups are land-based during that window of time. We cannot accommodate early dismissals after 3:30pm. Please communicate all absences with our office.

Water Safety Regulations

All program participants, including staff, are required to wear a PFD (personal floatation device) at all times while on a boat, dock or in water over 2ft in depth. This is the law for anyone under the age of 12. Children will only go in the water when supervised by staff.

All participants participate in water confidence and PFD checks on the first day of programs, as long as weather conditions are safe to do so. This consists of a safety brief and a check for water confidence, to verify that children are comfortable wearing an appropriately fitted PFD in the water. Bay Explorer groups, who participate in swim lessons and activities, supervised and facilitated by American Red Cross certified Lifeguards and Water Safety Instructors, will participate in a swim assessment at the start of programs to determine swim levels, relevant for lessons and guarded free-swim opportunities. PFDs are not worn during the swim assessment or during structured swim instruction periods, both of which are done under the supervision of Lifeguards and Swim instructors. Any camper who is designated as a “swimmer” during their swim assessment may choose to remove their PFD during guarded free swim periods. We ask that participants communicate personal limitations and let an OBC staff member know when they notice water hazards (hazardous underwater animals, natural features, etc.).

All OBC staff leading groups of children hold current First Aid and CPR certifications. All staff undergo CORI / SORI and reference checks prior to hire with our organization, and are trained according to their in-program responsibilities.

Grouping & Ratios

Children are grouped by age in a group of 10 participants, with a minimum of 2 staff members assigned to each group. Children remain in their group for the majority of their week, excepting lunch times and elective activity times, where they may intermix with other groups. If you would like to request that your child be grouped with a friend, please do so in advance on your registration form or by contacting weldon@savebuzzardsbay.org, and we will do our best to group them together. It is unlikely we will be able to honor grouping requests made at the program start time, rather than in advance.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency (extreme weather, incident on the water, incident on the beach, etc.), OBC staff will work quickly and efficiently to get each group to safety and shelter in place at the Onset Bay Center facility or our locations at Burgess Point and Wickets Island, when appropriate. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible once the site is secured. Please use the contact information above to contact the OBC Manager with any concerns during these times

Cancelation Policy

Onset Bay Center will issue a full refund for cancellations more than one month from the start of the program. Those who cancel within one month from the start date will receive a 50% refund.
Cancellations that occur within one week or during the session are not subject to a refund.
Special consideration will be given to any cancellations due to medical concerns.

Discipline

The Onset Bay Center staff expects that all participants will be respectful toward others and the environment and show responsibility for their belongings and for their actions during our programs. We believe in positive reinforcement, and we look for ways to foster and highlight excellent behavior among our participants.

The following actions may take place if behavior becomes an issue:

- Verbal warning and reminders from OBC Staff
- Temporary removal from program (5-minute break)
- Problem-solving conference with OBC lead staff and participant
- Call home to parent/guardian
- Removal for remainder of the day to complete a reflection
- A Behavior Contract and meeting with parent/guardian
- Removal from current and future OBC programming if behavior persists

The following are behaviors that will not be permitted and may result in the termination of your participation at OBC:

- Unsafe behavior
- Bullying
- Derogatory language & swearing, or inappropriate language, behavior, or contact
- Fighting, hitting, kicking, or causing physical harm to self or others
- Bringing weapons or dangerous objects
- Smoking or vaping