

**Thank you for choosing to share your family's birthday with us.
Below is information that will help you plan for that special day.**

Reservations and Payment

Do you have to be a member to book a party?

- Non-Members are welcome to reserve a party! However, if you *ARE* a member, then you would be eligible for a \$25 discount!

When are parties available?

- Birthday parties are available for reservation on a **first come, first serve** basis. McWane Science Center Hours of Operation on weekends are: Saturday 10:00AM-6:00PM and Sunday 12:00PM-6:00PM. Itty Bitty Magic City will close at 5:45PM each day.
- Available Party Times
 - o **Saturday: 10am, 12pm, 2pm**
 - o **Sunday: 12pm, 2pm**

I want to reserve a party! What should I do first?

- Parties may be reserved online at <http://www.mcwane.org/learn/kids-family/birthday-parties/> or by calling 205-714-8323. McWane Science Center requires payment in full at the time of reservation.
- After speaking with our birthday department or submitting a request online, a Birthday Party Contract will be emailed to you. Please complete and return the Birthday Party Contract via mail, fax, or email to finalize your birthday reservation.
- **A reservation is not confirmed until a signed birthday contract is received. Contracts must be received a minimum of two (2) week in advance of your scheduled party. Failure to receive contracts within two (2) weeks may result in a cancelation of your birthday time slot.**
- Birthday Parties may be reserved a minimum of two (2) week in advance.

I've turned in my contract and paid my reservation in full...Now what?

- Our McWane Birthday Party Assistant will contact you the week before your scheduled party date to confirm all your details and answer any questions you may have. You may contact the Birthday Office at 205-714-8323.

When is my final guest count due?

- You will be contacted approximately seven days before your event date and we will go over your party details at that time. Any last-minute changes must be in by noon the Wednesday before your party. Please understand that it is better to tell us more guests than you expect than less. We only count who shows up. If you tell us 17 kids, then we are prepared for 17 kids (staffing, table settings, STEM programs & favor bags). If only 13 shows up, no problem, you will only be charged for the 13. We would rather be prepared than have unexpected guests.

What is included in my party?

- We have two (2) Birthday Party Packages available, but they all include one (1) hour in a private Birthday Party room with a Birthday Host, all day admissions for up to twenty-five (25) guests to the Adventure Halls, and a special gift for the Birthday child!

Can I book 1 party for multiple children?

- A birthday party is reserved for 1 birthday child at a time. *Special consideration may be allowed for twins or triplets.*

Can I reschedule my birthday party?

- Cancellation of your party will result in a 50% cancellation fee. Should your party be cancelled within 7 days prior to the event, no refunds will be issued. In the event that McWane Science Center is closed due to act of war or nature, parties will have an opportunity to reschedule within 1 month of the originally scheduled party date, or a refund minus any actual expenses incurred by McWane Science Center will be issued. Reschedule dates are based on availability.

Can I have my birthday party in Itty Bitty Magic City?

- Itty Bitty Magic City is reserved for children ages Kindergarten and below. To book a party in Itty Bitty Magic City, you must select the *Itty Bitty Birthday Party* package. NOTE: Only 2 parties are allowed at a certain time in Itty Bitty, as we only have 2 classrooms for the parties. The website will be up-to-date for this to reserve.
- Admission into the play area of Itty Bitty Magic City before, during, or after the scheduled party time is based on available occupancy for qualifying families and their siblings ONLY. No other children over Kindergarten age will be permitted in Itty Bitty Magic City.

Can I pick (or know) which STEM/Little Labs program is happening for my party?

- We cannot guarantee which STEM/Little Labs program will happen at each party. Think of it as a surprise for you and your guest!

Party Time!

It's party day! Where do I park?

- Birthday guests may receive complimentary parking in our Parking Deck when available. The parking deck entrance is located on 2nd Ave N. There is also offsite parking and street parking available on weekends.

I'm here! What do I do now?

- Take the elevator to the lobby where a McWane Birthday Host will meet the birthday family at the member check-in desk. This is easily identifiable as a "Birthday Banner" will be placed next to the desk. He/She will greet you **fifteen (15) minutes** before the scheduled start of your party to take you to the room for set-up. You **will not** be able to enter the party room prior to this time. Your party guests should wait in the lobby until the start of the party. The host will escort the party guests to the party room at your scheduled party time.

What happens if we (the guardians of the birthday child) are late?

- Late party arrivals risk a compromised time schedule. No refunds are available for late arrivals. A party will be considered canceled if the Birthday family doesn't arrive within **twenty (20) minutes** of the designated party time. Please contact the Birthday department at 205-714-8323 if you suspect you will be later than expected.

What time should my Birthday Party guests arrive at McWane Science Center?

- We ask that the Birthday Party guest arrive no later than 10 minutes after the party has begun. However, please encourage all your guests to be on time so they will not miss any part of the birthday party. All parties will begin and end at their scheduled time regardless of late arrivals. Time in the party room will last a maximum of 60 minutes. Late guests need to go to the group-check in counter (located across from the lobby elevators) to be checked in and directed to the party room.

Can I come earlier to explore the museum if I have a party later in the day?

- Yes! You are welcome to come early and explore. Guests may check in prior to their scheduled birthday party time at our group check-in counter to receive a Birthday Party Guest Sticker.

Can McWane store our items?

- McWane Science Center is not able to store **any** items before or after any party. Items must be left in a vehicle until the scheduled party time and taken back to a vehicle at the end of the party. This includes celebratory cake you may have brought in/bought from McWane Science Center for the party.

Can I decorate the party room?

- All decorations must be approved by the Birthday Department. Tabletop decorations are permitted. Decorations may not be affixed to any surface of McWane Science Center. The use of adhesives is prohibited. Helium balloons, rice, birdseed, glitter, confetti, hanging objects (piñatas, etc.) are NOT permitted inside McWane Science Center. You may bring your own candles for the party; however, the McWane Science Center Birthday Host will be the one to light the candle. We also have birthday candles you may also use.

Can I bring balloons or a piñata?

- **Balloons and/or piñatas of any kind are NOT allowed at McWane Science Center.** Any prohibited items will not be permitted and must be removed from McWane Science Center immediately. We cannot hold these items in the party room, behind ticketing counter, member desk, etc.

Can I arrive early to setup?

- Due to multiple parties throughout the day, we allow a **fifteen (15) minute** set-up period prior to the scheduled birthday party start time. We are unable to accommodate any additional or earlier time for set-up.

How long can I stay in the party room?

- Each party includes a maximum of 60 minutes in a private party room. All parties will begin and end at their scheduled time regardless of late arrivals.
 - o **10am** (In private room from 10am-11am, in museum from 11am until 6pm closing) (**Saturday ONLY**)
 - o **12pm** (In private room from 12pm-1pm, in museum from 10am-12pm, 1pm until 6pm closing)
 - o **2pm** (in private room from 2pm-3pm, in museum from 10am-2pm, 3pm until 6pm closing)

What do I do at the end of the party?

- At the conclusion of your 60-minute party, you will have 10 minutes for cleanup. All gifts and personal items must be removed from the party room and taken to a vehicle prior to entering the Adventure Halls. Your group is welcome to spend the remainder of the day at McWane Science Center after the party is over!

Can I bring in goodie bags?

- Absolutely. Just remember that **food, candy, gum, confetti, glitter, and balloons of any kind are not permitted at McWane Science Center.** Goodie Bag items must be approved before your party by the Birthday Department.

What about an animal program?

- You can personalize your party to include a visit from one McWane Science Center animal for an additional fee. For the safety of our animals, we are unable to guarantee a specific animal. We cannot guarantee a length of time with the animal. The animal encounter will not go over **twenty (20) minutes.**

Final Guest Count

How many guests does my party include?

- All parties include up to 25 guests. Guests include anyone except the Birthday Child as well as any additional attendees **regardless of membership, attendance at another party, or age.** A final count of

guest is due **no later than 72 hours** prior to the party. It's easiest to separate the guest count by children versus adults. Please send this to sjones@mcwane.org or birthdays2@mcwane.org.

I will have more than 25 guests. Is that okay?

- Absolutely. Up to 25 guests are included in a party package. You will be charged for any additional guests over the included amount of 25 at the rate of \$10/person regardless of membership, attendance at another party, or age. Birthday child will not be included in the 25-guest count. They will be free. While we like to have a rough estimate of people, the Birthday Department understands some circumstances are unavoidable. We will tally up the final total of guest during the party, and you will be charged for the final additional guest count the Monday following the party.

Some of my guests are members- can they use their membership to attend the party?

- **Guests may not use their museum membership to attend a party; all guests (excluding Birthday Child) will be counted toward the total number of guests.**

Are children under the age of two counted as guests during the Birthday Party?

- **Yes. All guests will be counted toward the total number of guests regardless of age. The only child exempt from the guest count is the Birthday Child.**

Do my guests have to pay for parking?

- No! Birthday party parents and their guests are eligible to receive complimentary parking in our parking deck based on availability. Please note, our parking deck is limited and will quickly fill up on weekends. Please allow additional time for parking and entering the museum.

Are there McWane invitations available for use?

- Printable invitations are available on our website: <https://www.mcwane.org/visit/special-events/birthday-parties/> Please scroll to the bottom of the page to find the invitations.

Food and Beverage

Do you supply a cake or can I bring my own cake?

- Birthday cake does not come with either birthday package, however, you can add-on a birthday cake or cupcakes to your order. Otherwise, a traditional celebratory cake may be brought to the party. **Doughnuts, Rice Krispies, cookies, candy, etc. are not considered a celebratory cake and will NOT be permitted.**

Can I bring my own food or drinks?

- With the exception of traditional celebratory cakes, **NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS** is permitted inside McWane Science Center. You will be asked to remove the outside food or drinks from McWane Science Center immediately. Cake, ice cream, food, drinks or snacks may be purchased a minimum of one (1) week in advance as add-ons to the party.

Can I order food?

- Absolutely! Cake, ice cream, food, drink or snacks may be purchased a minimum of one (1) week in advance. Please note that due to Alabama Health Code, **any left-over food served during the party must be disposed of and may not leave the building as leftovers, take-aways, etc.**

Can I just come in and bring in a cake and/or presents if I don't have a reservation?

- You must reserve a birthday party package in order to bring in a cake and presents. We are not able to accommodate a "walk-in" birthday.

Have additional birthday party questions?

Call or email our birthday department

Email: birthdays2@mcwane.org or sjones@mcwane.org

Office: 205-714-8323