

# Family Handbook

Part 2 - Summer 2023





Camp@thenatureplace.com  
P 845.356.1234 F 845.356.9676



285 Hungry Hollow Road  
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977

# Family Handbook

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**Note: There are active links in this handbook that will bring you to our website.**

For information on communication, medical needs, what to wear, what to bring/what not to bring to camp, lunch, outdoor considerations, weekly themes, and getting the most out of camp, please [review our 2023 Family Handbook Part 1 here](#).

### **Any Questions? Contact the office!**

Phone: (845) 356.1234

Fax: (845) 356.9676

Email: [camp@thenatureplace.com](mailto:camp@thenatureplace.com)

## 1. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CAMPER'S GROUP

### Group Information

You will receive your camper's group information prior to camp starting. The Nature Place uses letters for groups. Campers pick the name that best fits the spirit of their group, starting with that letter.

### Counselor Information

The weekend prior to camp beginning, you will receive a special email with a video greeting from your camper's counselors. It's a great way for you and your camper to get familiarized with our counselors before camp starts.

## 2. BUS TRANSPORTATION

Our buses are air-conditioned and driven by certified CDL (Commercial Driver's License) drivers with at least one (most likely more) Nature Place bus counselor on board. Campers are assigned to a specific bus for the summer. Bus stops, as well as pick-up and drop-off times, are provided prior to the start of camp. We appreciate your flexibility during the first week of camp as we work through any adjustments that might need to be made. Below are other important notes:

- Each camper must be accompanied to their bus stop by you, the parent or guardian. You must wait with your camper for the bus to arrive at the stop in the morning, and you must be present to pick your camper up from the bus stop in the afternoon.
- We will ONLY release campers to known people. **Please submit a Permission to Dismiss form [via your online camp account](#) if there is any possibility that anyone other than you (the parent/guardian) may need to pick up your camper.**
- Parents and caregivers will not be able to enter the camp vehicle.
- We will not be able to have campers ride other buses for playdates or other reasons.
- If your camper is sick or will be absent, please call the camp office as soon as possible.

Our bus counselor's role on the bus:

- Supervision of campers on the bus, attendance, clear and safe dismissal procedures
- Fun! Counselors lead games, songs, puzzles, nature scavenger hunts up the Palisades Parkway, and more!
- Communication with parents: Counselors will contact parents if the bus is stuck in traffic, if we're waiting at a stop for you and your camper, really if there's anything that should be communicated to parents regarding the bus and logistics.

## 3. CAR TRANSPORTATION

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES & TRAFFIC PATTERNS – PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY!

Arrival and dismissal are strategically staggered, so take note of the specific times for your campers' group.

Please follow the instructions of our staff who are stationed to direct traffic. **Note that your arrival and dismissal location (upper or lower loop) will remain the same in AM and PM.**

**A NOTE ABOUT SIBLINGS:** If your campers are assigned to different loops, please let your campers out in the **youngest sibling's loop** when you arrive at camp. For dismissal, you will also pick your campers up in the youngest sibling's loop.

### Arrival Times

| Group      | Drop-off Time     | Location   |
|------------|-------------------|------------|
| M, O, Q    | 8:45 AM - 8:55 AM | UPPER LOOP |
| T, V, X    | 8:45 AM - 8:55 AM | LOWER LOOP |
| N, P, R, S | 8:55 AM - 9:05 AM | UPPER LOOP |
| U, W, Y    | 8:55 AM - 9:05 AM | LOWER LOOP |

**Please stay in your car!** Have your **camper(s) ready to exit the vehicle** when you pull up. A staff member will come to your car, help your camper(s) out of the car, and then escort your camper(s) to their group/s.

If you arrive after 9:05 am, please call the camp office, and a staff member will meet you at your car and escort your camper to their group. Due to safety reasons, parents/guardians are not permitted on site.

### Dismissal Times

| Group      | Pick-up Time      | Location   |
|------------|-------------------|------------|
| M, O, Q    | 3:40 PM – 3:50 PM | UPPER LOOP |
| T, V, X    | 3:40 PM – 3:50 PM | LOWER LOOP |
| N, P, R, S | 3:50 PM – 4:00 PM | UPPER LOOP |
| U, W, Y    | 3:50 PM – 4:00 PM | LOWER LOOP |

**Please wait until the start of your dismissal time before entering camp property.** If you wish to arrange an earlier pick-up on a given day, call the office ahead of time.

**Reminder: Please stay in your car!** A counselor will ask for your camper(s) name(s) and bring them to you.

**Please submit a Permission to Dismiss form [via your online camp account](#) if there is any possibility that anyone other than you (the parent/guardian) may need to pick up your camper.**

**SEVERE WEATHER at pick-up time** – If there is a strong thunderstorm or torrential downpour at dismissal, we will close the Route 45 entrance for a 10-minute period and keep all campers inside. We will notify you of this delay via a Remind message to your cellphone. Safety is always our #1 priority. You will not be able to drive into camp until the staff at the entrance give their OK. **Please do NOT wait or 'stand' on the side of Route 45.**

### Traffic Patterns

In the morning and afternoon, all cars enter and exit using the Main Camp Entrance on Chestnut Ridge Road (Route 45). All cars must make a RIGHT TURN ONLY when coming into the camp AND when leaving camp/heading back onto Route 45! **Right turns prevent hazardous traffic tie-ups. We greatly appreciate your cooperation.**

UPPER LOOP Groups M, N, O, P, Q, R, S:

Enter camp (RIGHT TURN ONLY) from Chestnut Ridge Road (Route 45) and then be directed to turn RIGHT again to enter the *upper* loop. Please proceed as far forward in the loop as possible before stopping.

exiting



entering

LOWER LOOP Groups T, U, V, W, X, Y:

Enter camp (RIGHT TURN ONLY) from Chestnut Ridge Road (Route 45) and then be directed to turn LEFT to go around the gym for drop-off/pick-up behind the gym in the *lower* loop. Please proceed as far forward in the loop as possible before stopping.

exiting



entering

#### 4. CAMPING TRIPS

The camping program at The Nature Place is based on the philosophy of living gently and purposefully on the earth. Campers learn how to be safe and comfortable spending the night outdoors while experiencing personal growth and group bonding.

An email with a packing list and other pertinent details will be sent out a week prior to all overnights. [Packing lists](#) are also available on our website and listed in your camp account. Each camper group will have a pre-trip meeting with a member of our camping department to go over the list and give additional information about the trip.

We will be offering the following camping experiences this summer:

##### ***Almost Overnight (Groups M-R)***

When the camp day ends, our adventure begins! A short walk will bring us to our campsite, where we will learn to set up tents, have an outdoor dinner (which campers will bring from home), and enjoy some evening programming. After a dusk campfire, you will pick up your camper in the evening. [Almost Overnight Packing List](#)

### ***Onsite Overnight (Groups S-Y)***

Under the guidance of our trained trip leaders, campers will be guided through an experience specifically curated for their age. Campers will tent with friends (at least 3) in all-gender tents. Camp will provide the next day's breakfast and lunch. The evening program will focus on outdoor living skills; tent set-up and break-down, fire safety and building, and deepening our relationship with nature and our own senses. They will enjoy an evening campfire, stargazing, and usually an incredible firefly show! [Onsite Overnight Packing List](#)

### ***Cedar Pond Canoe Campout (Groups U-Y)***

This one-night canoeing/camping trip will introduce participants to the basics of flat-water canoeing. Campers will paddle the waters of Lake Tiorati in Harriman State Park. Campers learn proper paddling techniques as well as watercraft safety. Groups will set up camp at the Cedar Pond camping area on a beautiful and secluded peninsula. [Cedar Pond Canoe Campout Packing List](#)

### ***Backpacking Trips (Groups W-Y)***

Into the forest we go! These backpacking trips will familiarize campers with the ways of backcountry camping and how to enjoy the wilderness in comfort and safety. Campers will learn proper hiking techniques. They will practice outdoor living skills (fire-building, tents, leave-no-trace) that care for people and the earth at the same time. [1 Night Backpacking Overnight Packing List](#)    [2 Night Backpacking Overnight Packing List](#)

### ***Rock Climbing Adventure (Group Y)***

After a summer of practicing their climbing skills at camp, our oldest group will travel to New Paltz, NY, and the Shawangunk Mountains to climb real rock faces! They'll camp out at camp the night before and the night after their day of climbing.

[Onsite with Rock Climbing Packing List](#)

### ***All Gender Tenting Policy***

The Nature Place has an all-gender/gender-inclusive tenting policy. Specifics are that at least three campers will be in a tent, in keeping with our rule-of-three policy. As always, tents will be monitored closely by staff, and campers will have the privacy they need when changing. In removing gender as a means of division, we strive to overcome gender stereotypes (assumptions that everyone fits into the category of either boy or girl and that all campers are straight), encourage self-expression, and nurture growth opportunities.

## **5. FOOD ON OVERNIGHTS**

***Almost Overnight:*** Pack or order your camper's lunch to eat at camp per usual. Remember to pack snacks as well. Please also be sure to **pack your camper's dinner** for their evening at camp. This dinner must be non-perishable and ready to eat. Camp cannot refrigerate or reheat any meals.

***Onsite Overnight & Cedar Pond Canoe Campout:*** Pack or order your camper's lunch to eat at camp per usual. Remember to pack snacks as well. Please also be sure to **pack your camper's dinner** for their evening at camp. This dinner must be non-perishable and ready to eat. Camp cannot refrigerate or reheat any meals. **Breakfast**

**and lunch the following day will be provided by camp!** If you usually order from the Threefold Café, you do not need to do so on the day following your camper's overnight.

***Backpacking Adventure:*** Please see the packing list. Some meals might change depending on which hike is selected.

***Rock Climbing Adventure:*** For this two-day adventure, for the first day pack or order your camper's lunch to eat at camp per usual (Remember to pack snacks as well) AND **pack your camper's dinner** for the first evening as well. This dinner must be non-perishable and ready to eat. Camp cannot refrigerate or reheat any meals. Camp will provide Breakfast, lunch, snacks, and dinner on the second day and provide breakfast and lunch on the third day.

## **6. EVENING PROGRAMS**

Family Program: Songs Around the Campfire – Friday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:15 pm

Gather your family and join us for an evening of community as we sing songs and share laughs around the Nature Place Campfire.