



Summer Camp 2026  
**Family Handbook**

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# Important Info

## Dates & Times

WEEK 1: **July 6th – July 10th**  
WEEK 2: **July 13th – July 17th**  
WEEK 3: **July 20th – July 24th**  
WEEK 4: **July 27th – July 31st**  
WEEK 5: **August 3rd – August 7th**  
WEEK 6: **August 10th – August 14th**

**The camp's hours are roughly 9 am to 4 pm**  
**Before & After Care will be available from 7:30 am to 5:45 pm**

## Contact Information

Phone: (845) 356-1234  
Fax: (845) 356-9676  
Email: [camp@thenatureplace.com](mailto:camp@thenatureplace.com)

## Camp Administration

**Director:** Jason Samuel – [jason@thenatureplace.com](mailto:jason@thenatureplace.com)

**Director of Programming:** Scott Dunn – [scott@thenatureplace.com](mailto:scott@thenatureplace.com)

**Assistant Director:** Tattyanna Morales-Vega – [tattyanna@thenatureplace.com](mailto:tattyanna@thenatureplace.com)

**Communications Coordinator:** Luryan Junqueira – [luryan@thenatureplace.com](mailto:luryan@thenatureplace.com)

### Health Care Team:

Kim Farro (RN)  
[camp@thenatureplace.com](mailto:camp@thenatureplace.com) ("Attn: Nurse" in subject)

### Social & Behavioral Team:

Marlie Gelu, Christopher Lawence, and Michael Engber  
[camp@thenatureplace.com](mailto:camp@thenatureplace.com) ("Attn: SB Team" in subject)

# Weekly Themes

Each week has a wonderful, sometimes punny theme that is woven throughout our camp's activities. Morning Share skits, mini plays with wacky characters performed by the staff, are also loosely based on these themes. Weekly themes help us communicate values in thought-provoking, educational, and silly ways. They are a beloved tradition of The Nature Place. Take a look and prepare to open your mind and say, 'ahhh.'

Week 1 *All I Really Need*

Week 2 *Make Your Mark*

Week 3 *Water We Thinking*

Week 4 *Rooted In Kindness*

Week 5 *Young At Art*

Week 6 *Full Circle*



# How Camp Communicates

**We keep families informed through a few different channels, each with its own purpose. Here's what to expect:**

## Email: For the Not-So-Urgent Updates

- Look for updates from **camp@thenatureplace.com**
- **Save camp as a contact** so nothing goes to spam
- Emails include: **reminders, schedules, general info**

## Phone Calls: A Mix of Reasons

- Sometimes we call to check in about health or behavior
- Other times, it's just to share something kind or awesome we saw your camper do
- Don't panic if you see us calling—it's not necessarily bad news

## Text Messages: For Time-Sensitive Info

We use **Remind** to send quick updates during the camp day. **You'll be added to 3 groups:**

- All-Camp Updates
- Transportation Updates
- Group Updates

**You'll get a welcome text the week of June 9th when we set everything up!**

## Your Online Camp Account

- Log in to view trip schedules, weekly photos, and forms
- Forgot your password? No problem—just hit Retrieve/Set Password and follow the prompts
- Follow the Fun! Catch daily moments and behind-the-scenes joy on Instagram & Facebook: @thenatureplacedaycamp

## What You'll Receive at the End of Each Week

- **Group Note:** A short note from your camper's counselors summarizing the happenings of the week for the group
- **Group Schedule:** The past week's group schedule helping facilitate conversations about the week. (*\*We intentionally hold off on sharing group schedules at the beginning of the week to preserve a sense of camp magic and wonder, while also allowing room for flexibility if plans need to change.*)
- **Jason's recap:** A recap of the week from his view and highlights for next week.
- **Photos:** We'll post a small selection of the week's pictures so you can glimpse the magic
- **Podcast:** 10-minute(ish) long recap of the week hosted by Jason, and will include guests as they discuss the special moments of the week.

## A Note on Photographs

*We feel that many campers today are too used to being photographed all the time—so at camp, we want them to feel free to simply be—immersed in nature, in the moment, and with each other. We intentionally keep photography to a minimum to avoid distractions, which also means we share fewer photos each week.*

# Daily Schedule & Program

## Non-Rushed Schedule

**We follow a non-rushed daily schedule with:**

- Six 45-minute activity periods + 10 minutes to transition between activities.

**Every camp day includes:**

- One lunch period + one swim period with both instructional and recreational swimming
- Younger campers get:**
- A full period to change after swimming + Snack time

## Sample Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 AM	Arrival				
9:20 AM	Morning Share				
9:45 AM	Drama	Earth Art	Games	African Dance	Group choice
10:40 AM	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
11:45 AM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30 PM	Outdoor Skills	Garden & Chickens	African Drumming	Mucking	Nature
1:25 PM	Climbing & High Ropes	Archery	Nature's Playground	Water Play	Low Ropes course
2:20 PM	Cooking		Woodworking	Music	Friday Share
3:15 PM	Room time				
3:30 PM	Dismissal				

**Campers rotate through all activities over the course of the week.** Additional activities, like Mucking and Nature's Playground, are added when the group has available periods. **Schedules change daily and weekly**, offering variety and new experiences.

## Age Group Activity Eligibility

The Nature Place prides itself on having almost all our activities available to all age groups by creating curriculums that are age and developmentally appropriate with only a few exceptions. **Archery is available for campers approximately 8.5 and up.** While all campers can climb the climbing tree, **some high ropes course elements are only for campers 6 and up.**

# Groups

**Each group at The Nature Place has approximately 16 campers and is led by a team of three staff members: a head counselor, often a teacher or graduate student, and two college-aged counselors. Groups are all-gender and formed with peer connection in mind, considering campers' age, grade, and friend requests. This creates a supportive, inclusive environment where campers feel comfortable, connected, and ready for adventure.**

## Group Information

You'll receive your camper's group information after June 15th. At The Nature Place, groups are identified by letters—but the fun part is, campers get to choose a group name that captures their spirit and starts with that letter. The creativity is part of the adventure!

## 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.

Before camp starts, the Social Behavior Team member who oversees your camper's group will call to introduce themselves to you. They may be calling from an unknown number (to protect their privacy).

If your camper rides the bus, the Head Bus Counselor will reach out to you the weekend before your camper starts camp to introduce themselves. They may be calling from an unknown number (to protect their privacy).

# Health & Wellness



**Your camper's health and safety is our top priority. Here's how we manage medical care, forms, and keeping our camp community well.**

## Prescription Medications

**If your child needs medication at camp or on an overnight:**

- Please bring it in the original container—no baggies or pill sorters
- Drop it off at least one week before it's needed, or on the first day of camp
- Only send what's needed for camp use
- Make sure your **Physician's OTC & Prescription Medication Form** (in your [online account](#)) is filled out and signed by your doctor. We are unable to dispense any medication, even OTC or vitamins without this signed form

## Camp Forms

- All required **forms are due by the beginning of June**. Campers may not attend without them.
- You'll find them in the 'Forms' section of your [online camp account](#)
- The Proof of Immunity Form, from your camper's pediatrician, and our digital Camper Health History Form are REQUIRED, and your camper cannot start camp until we review them.
- If something changes, you can update and re-submit online

## Care at Camp

**We have a Registered Nurse on site daily. You'll be notified if your child:**

- Has a fever, bee sting, or illness
- Needs medical treatment or observation
- You may not hear from us for small scrapes or ice packs—unless it seems worth a check-in

## Keeping Camp Healthy

**We count on families to help us keep everyone well:**

- Please keep your camper home if they are sick

**Symptoms that mean staying home:**

- Fever (100°F or higher)
- Cough, runny nose, chills
- Sore throat, muscle aches, or fatigue
- Campers must be symptom-free (without meds) for 24 hours before returning

*We know missing camp is tough, but caring for each other is part of what makes this place so special.*

# What to Bring

Most campers attend The Nature Place in shorts, a T-shirt, and sneakers. Campers must wear closed-toe shoes (no flip-flops or sandals) which allow them to actively participate in all activities. *Please label with your camper's name everything that comes to camp.*

## On the First Day

**Please send them with these items to leave at camp:**

- **A complete change of clothes in a clearly labeled bag** (name and group letter). These items remain at camp as a spare outfit. Some of our activities can get messy or wet!
- **A pair of closed-toe water shoes or old sneakers that are OK to get wet and muddy** –for mucking in the stream and other water-logged activities. Examples: Chocs, Keens
- **Send only the exact amount of medication that will be needed** in its original packaging (i.e., how you received it from the pharmacy – No Ziploc bags). Please also let the camp office know that medication will be coming in so we can make sure it gets to the nurse.

## Every Day

**A backpack containing:**

- **A swimsuit** -- We recommend that campers come to camp wearing their swimsuit under their camp clothes.
- **New for 2026 - towel service!** *The Nature Place will provide swim towels every day so you don't have to pack them. If your campers have sensitivities to general laundry detergent or love their own towel, outside towels are still allowed.*
- **We provide a swim bag** that stays at camp for campers to bring items back and forth from The Pond.
- **Undergarments** to change into after swimming.
- **Lunch** (or order from Threefold Café – more details on the following page of the handbook)
- **Snacks for the day**
- **A full water bottle**
- **Rain gear** (raincoat or poncho), which can be kept in your camper's backpack for rainy days.

# What Not to Bring

We want every camper to be fully present, safe, and free to explore.



## Here's what should stay at home:

- **Valuables**—including things like electronics, toys, games, trading cards, or anything that might get lost or damaged
- **Sandals, flip-flops, or other open-toed shoes**—they're not safe for active days outdoors

*\*While we do our best to help campers keep track of their things, The Nature Place is not responsible for any lost or missing belongings.*

## Our Electronic Device Policy:

To help campers build friendships, confidence, and a deeper connection with the world around them, all electronic devices must stay at home. This includes:

- **Cell phones**
- **Tablets**
- **Smart watches**
- **Gaming consoles and accessories**

*If a device makes its way to camp, it will be held in the camp office and returned at the end of the day.*

## Air Tags:

*We kindly urge you to keep air tags or other tracking devices home. While they seem to provide peace of mind, they can also cause unnecessary panic if the tag falls off, or the item(s) is left behind at camp.*

# Lunch

## Campers can either bring lunch from home or purchase lunch through the Threefold Café's Camp Lunch Program.

Many families opt to take advantage of the Threefold Café's wholesome lunch program because it's nutritious, sustainable, and easy to order. More details below.

### Bringing Lunch from Home

Please consider packing sustainably by using reusable containers and utensils, including an ice pack to keep things fresh, and skipping single-use packaging whenever possible.







#### Other notes about packing lunch:

- Plan an ample, nutritious lunch
- Include a drink, although water is the best!
- Everything from your child's lunch will go back home with them, so that you can see what (if anything) is not being eaten
- Camp is not peanut-free, but is highly aware of peanut, tree-nut, and all food allergies

### Threefold Café's Camp Lunch Program

- The wonderful chefs at the café put together a fantastic, delicious, and sustainable lunch menu every year.
- Check out these flexible menu options and registration details. Please note, this menu is from 2025 and subject to change for 2026.

### Lunch boxes:

<p><b>1.</b> <b>Organic PB &amp; J*</b> \$7.50</p> <p>organic multigrain PB &amp; J, carrot sticks &amp; fresh fruit *Available GF &amp; sunflower butter <b>Allergens: peanuts, gluten</b></p> 	<p><b>2.</b> <b>Chicken Salad Box</b> \$9.00</p> <p>Classic with mayo, apples and celery, w/ GF crackers, fresh fruit &amp; carrots <b>Allergens: eggs (mayo)</b></p> 	<p><b>3.</b> <b>Café's Hummus Box</b> \$8.50</p> <p>plant-based hummus, organic carrots, cucumbers, pita *Available GF (with GF Crackers) <b>Allergens: gluten</b></p> 
<p><b>4.</b> <b>Chicken Caesar Wrap</b> \$11</p> <p>Café's great romaine Caesar with all-natural roasted chicken in a whole-wheat wrap. Served with fresh fruit &amp; org. carrots *Available GF &amp; without chicken <b>Allergens: gluten, dairy</b></p> 	<p><b>5.</b> <b>Whole Wheat Bagel with cream cheese*</b> \$7.50</p> <p>Carrot sticks &amp; fruit. Available vegan with vegan cream cheese or dairy free "butter" <b>Allergens: gluten, dairy</b></p> 	<p><b>6.</b> <b>Fried Chicken Sandwich</b> \$11.00</p> <p>All-natural GF breaded Chicken breast, lettuce, &amp; café special sauce, on a café brioche bun, w/ fresh fruit &amp; carrots *Available GF <b>Allergens: gluten, egg (mayo)</b></p> 
<p><b>7.</b> <b>BLT Wrap</b> \$10</p> <p>Appelwood smoked bacon, lettuce, tomato &amp; mayo on a whole wheat wrap, fruit &amp; carrots *Available on GF toast <b>Allergens: gluten, egg (mayo)</b></p> 	<p><b>8.</b> <b>Camper's Pasta Salad</b> \$9</p> <p>Rainbow pasta spirals, roasted zucchini, cherry tomatoes &amp; Kalamata olives w/ fresh fruit *Available without olives <b>Allergens: gluten</b></p> 	<p><b>9.</b> <b>Ham &amp; Cheese Muffin</b> \$9</p> <p>Café made, w/ carrot sticks &amp; fresh fruit. <b>Allergens: gluten, egg (mayo), dairy</b></p> 



**Dinner for Almost and on-site overnights are available!**

We recommend [clicking here](#) to set up your camper's account ahead of time for easy-ordering.

Kindly direct all café lunch-related questions to the Threefold Café:  
**cafe@threefold.org**  
or **(845) 352-3130**.

# Water & Snacks

## Water

**Campers should bring a water bottle to camp labeled with their name.**

As part of making camp more sustainable, we don't provide disposable cups. **Bottle fillers and water jugs are located around camp** for campers to refill their bottles. We encourage campers to continually drink water throughout the day, especially on hot days.

## Snacks

**An ample amount of snacks should come to camp each day.**

Campers normally have one snack time per day, but may have a snack break during other transition times or if they get hungry. Campers are very active, so over-packing on snacks for the first few days is encouraged, until you know what your camper(s) nutritional needs are.



# Day Hikes

**All hikes and overnight trips are led by professional trip leaders. They are certified in Wilderness First Aid and CPR, EpiPen trained, carry a cell phone and first aid kit, and have a wealth of knowledge regarding our area's flora and fauna, natural history, outdoor living skills, and much more.**

## About Day Hikes

All groups will have two off-site hikes during the summer in or around Harriman State Park. All hikes are tailored to the age and ability of the campers in terms of interest, mileage, and terrain. Each hike offers adventure, some challenges, plenty of rest stops, a new awareness of our environment, and a chance to explore nature. During the hikes we will learn proper hiking techniques, safety, natural and human history, Leave No Trace Principles, tick awareness, trail etiquette, and more.

## What to Wear & Pack

### What to Wear:

- **Sturdy sneakers or broken-in hiking boots**
- **Lightweight, light-colored long pants, tucked into long socks**
- **Lightweight, light-colored shirt tucked into pants**
- **A hat with a brim**

### Pack a Backpack with the following:

- **Rain gear** (raincoat or poncho)
- **An ample lunch** packed from home (the Threefold Café will be able to provide day hike lunches, though not all of the menu items will be available -- **lunch must be ordered before 7:00 am**)
- **Enough water** (anywhere from 1-3 liters depending on your child)
- **Snacks**

# Day Hikes

## (Continued)

### A Word About Warm or Inclement Weather on Day Hike Days

Our hikes are a cherished part of camp life, and we take great care to make sure they're safe, comfortable, and enjoyable—even when the weather isn't perfect. Our first priority is camper safety. **You can trust that we're always watching the weather, making decisions that are in the best interests of our camper and staff wellbeing.**

### On Especially Warm Days

- We **choose routes with natural shade and aim to include a stream or water crossing** so campers can cool off
- We adapt hikes to be **less strenuous, with shorter distances and gentler terrain**
- **Harriman State Park often feels about 10 degrees cooler** than surrounding areas, thanks to the forest's natural canopy and cooler microclimate
- We adjust group pacing and take **frequent water and snack breaks**, ensuring all campers stay hydrated and nourished

### When Weather Calls for a Change

**Hikes may be canceled or rerouted if:**

- Temperatures are excessively high
- There is heavy/sustained rainfall
- There is a real threat of thunderstorms

### If a Hike is Canceled

- We will reschedule it later in the summer whenever possible
- Campers will enjoy a full day of engaging activities back at camp

### Food on Day Hikes

- Please remember to pack an ample lunch and snacks for your camper's hike, as they'll be expending extra energy on the journey.
- If you usually purchase lunch from the Threefold Café, you'll need to **select the Day Hike Lunch Option, order by 7:00am the day of**, and know that only select menu items will be available for hike lunches.

# Camping Trips

## A Progressive Camping Program That Grows with Your Camper

Camping at The Nature Place is about learning to live gently and intentionally on the earth. Whether it's their first campout or they've been on many, each camper gets to experience the joy of an evening outdoors, build confidence, and deepen bonds with their group.



### What to Expect

- You'll receive your camper's group hike and campout dates in mid-June
- Please **mark those dates on your calendar** as soon as you receive them
- Before each campout, we'll send an email with a packing list and important trip details
- **Packing lists** are also always available on our website and are linked on page 15
- Each camper **group will have a pre-trip meeting** with a member of the camping department to walk through the list and answer any questions

# Camping Trips

## (Continued)

### What to Pack (and What We Provide)

#### Campers need to bring:

- A sleeping bag
- A sleeping pad

#### Camp provides:

- Tents
- Cooking gear
- All other camping equipment

*If you don't have a sleeping bag or pad, we have a limited number available—just let us know.*



### All-Gender Tenting Policy

The Nature Place has an all-gender/gender-inclusive tenting policy:

- At least three campers will be in a tent, in keeping with our rule-of-three policy
- Tents will be monitored closely by staff
- 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.*

# Camping Trips

## Information on our Progressive Camping Program

*\*Because The Nature Place creates groups taking age AND grade into consideration, these ages are approximations*

### Almost Overnight | [Packing List Here](#)

**Campers under age 9\*, typically**

When the camp day ends, the adventure begins! We'll take a short walk to our campsite, where campers will learn to set up tents, eat the dinners they've brought from home, and take part in evening activities. After gathering around the campfire at dusk, pickup will be at 7 PM in the Orchard House Parking Lot. (Detailed pickup information will be shared closer to your camper's Almost Overnight date.)

### Onsite Overnight | [Packing List Here](#)

**Campers age 9\* and up**

Under the guidance of our trained trip leaders, campers will experience an adventure designed just for their age group. The evening program will focus on outdoor living skills—like tent set-up and break-down, fire safety and building, and deepening their connection to nature and their own senses. They'll enjoy an evening campfire, stargazing, and often an incredible firefly show! Camp will provide breakfast and lunch the next day.

### Cedar Pond Canoe Campout | 1-Night [Packing List Here](#), 2-Night [Packing List Here](#)

**Campers Age 10\* and up**

This canoeing and camping trip introduces campers to the basics of flat-water canoeing. The group will set up camp at a campsite called Cedar Pond, on a beautiful, secluded peninsula. They'll paddle the waters near one of The Nature Place's most beloved campsites in Harriman State Park, learning proper paddling techniques and watercraft safety along the way.

### Backpacking Trips | 1-Night [Packing List Here](#), 2-Night [Packing List Here](#)

**Campers age 11\* and up**

Into the forest we go! These backpacking trips introduce campers to backcountry camping and how to enjoy the wilderness safely and comfortably. Along the way, they'll learn proper hiking techniques and practice outdoor living skills—like fire-building, tent set-up, and Leave No Trace principles—that care for both people and the earth.

### Rock Climbing Adventure | [Packing List Here](#)

**Oldest group**

After a summer of honing their climbing skills at camp, our oldest group will head to the Shawangunk Mountains in New Paltz, NY to climb real rock faces! They'll camp at The Nature Place the night before and again after their day of climbing.

# Camping Trips

## (Continued)

### Food on Overnights

#### Almost Overnight:

##### For the day:

- Pack or order your camper's lunch to eat at camp (as usual)
- Remember to **pack snacks** for the day

##### For the evening:

- Pack a dinner from home. We will collect them in the morning and keep them cold for the day. *Note: There is no way to heat up any meals.*
- Or, order dinner from the Threefold Cafe. Note: Kitchen closes at 3:30, please call to place your order before then and NOTE: the meal will be refrigerated until dinner.

#### Onsite Overnight & Cedar Pond Offsite Overnight:

##### For the day of the overnight:

- Pack or order your camper's lunch (as usual)
- Pack snacks for the day

##### For the evening:

- For Onsites, just like the Almost Overnights listed above please pack a dinner or order from the cafe.
- For Cedar Pond, please pack a non-perishable dinner, *that does not need to be refrigerated or heated up to be eaten.*

##### For the next day:

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided by camp
- If you typically order from the Threefold Café, no need to order for the day after the overnight

#### Backpacking Adventure:

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

#### Rock Climbing Adventure:

##### For the first day of the adventure:

- Pack or order your camper's lunch to eat at camp (as usual)
- Pack snacks for the day

##### For the evening:

- Pack a dinner from home. We will collect them in the morning and keep them cold for the day. *Note: There is no way to heat up any meals.*
- Or, order dinner from the Threefold Cafe. Note: Kitchen closes at 3:30, please call to place your order before then and NOTE: the meal will be refrigerated until dinner.

##### For the second day:

- Camp will provide breakfast, lunch, snacks, and dinner

##### For the third day:

- Camp will provide breakfast, snacks, and lunch

# Outdoor Considerations

**Welcome to the great outdoors! With sunshine, tall grasses, and woodland trails, we take extra care to keep campers safe and comfortable from common nature-related nuisances. Here's how we work together:**

## Sun Protection

- Please apply **broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen** to your camper before camp each day
- Dress your camper in sun-protective clothing (a hat with a brim is especially helpful)
- Each group has sunscreen provided by camp for reapplication during the day
- If your camper has sensitive skin or allergies, note it on their medical form and send labeled sunscreen from home in a Ziploc bag

## Tick Awareness & Prevention When Hiking

- We educate campers and staff about tick safety: how to check, what to look for, and how to stay protected
- When hiking, campers wear long pants tucked into socks and shirts tucked in
- We keep grass short on our campus and limit off-trail hiking
- Families should do a thorough tick check at home every night as part of your routine
- Check the tick infographic on the following page for more info on spotting and removing ticks

## Helpful Extras

- You may spray your camper's clothing with tick spray before drop-off
- When needed, camp staff will apply tick spray to campers' pants and shoes before hikes or camping trips

**The Centers for Disease Control recommends the following tips for removing ticks from clothing. We recommend following this protocol on your camper(s) clothing when they return from a hike or overnight:**

- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.
- If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.
- If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium-temperature water will not kill ticks effectively. If the clothes cannot be washed in hot water, tumble dry on low heat for 90 minutes or high heat for 60 minutes after washing. The clothes should be warm and completely dry.

## Rockland County Department of Health

Ed Day  
County Executive  
Patricia Schnabel Ruppert, DO, MPH, DABFM, FAAFP  
Commissioner of Health  
www.rocklandgov.com/health  
845-364-2500



SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2019

**Stopping tick bites will prevent Lyme, Babesiosis, and other tick-borne diseases.**

# Tick Bite Prevention

## ✓ Check for ticks daily.

- Check clothing and skin. This can be easily done when bathing or showering.
- Carefully check the entire body. Look at the hairline, in the scalp, on the neck, in and behind the ears, the back of the knees, the groin area, the armpits, around the waist, and legs.
- Remove attached ticks as soon as possible using a safe process.

Approximate size.



Ticks are tiny, like the size of poppy or sesame seeds.



The risk of getting Lyme disease is reduced if the tick is removed in 24-36 hours of attachment.

## ✓ Dress in clothes that protect.

When outdoors, dress children in light, pastel, or bright colored clothing to see ticks more easily. Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Tuck shirt into pants and tuck pant-legs into light colored socks. Wear closed-toe shoes or sneakers, not sandals. Tie back long hair or wear a hat.

## ✓ Avoid potential tick habitats.

Instruct your child to walk on cleared paths or in the center of well traveled trails. They should avoid places where the grass is tall, areas covered with leaves, contact with bushes, and not sit directly on the ground, rock walls, or on fallen tree trunks.

## ✓ Safe Tick Removal Process

- Using a pair of pointed tweezers, grab the tick near the mouth parts, as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull the tick in a steady, upward motion away from the skin until out. Do not twist or turn the tick.
- Clean bite area with soap and water.

Ticks can be taken to the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Stony Point for identification. Call 845-429-7085.



## ✓ Lyme Disease Early Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms of Lyme disease can start 3-30 days after the bite of an infected deer tick. Some symptoms include:

- Fatigue or Tiredness
- Chills and Low-Grade Fever
- Mild Headache
- Swollen Lymph Nodes
- Pink or Red Rash (called a "bull's-eye")
- Muscle Aches and/or Joint Pain

Call your doctor if your child has any of these symptoms or feels ill.



## ✓ Insect Repellent Information

You may decide to use a repellent (bug spray). Some repellents should never be used on the skin, only on clothing.

***Carefully follow the label directions!***



# Outdoor Considerations

## (Continued)

### Mosquitoes

We apply an appropriate mosquito repellent to campers when the conditions warrant it.

### Repellent Use

On day hikes, we use repellent to deter ticks and mosquitoes. On camping trips, we also use repellent when the day begins to turn to dusk. At this time, we put on long-sleeved shirts and pants, and make sure that our tent zippers are zipped up tight! Please email us if you do not want your child's clothing to be sprayed.

**The repellents we will be using this summer are:**

#### **For mosquitoes: Repel**

Plant-Based Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellent by WCP Brands. It contains 30% oil of lemon eucalyptus and is listed in the EPA's database as effective against mosquitoes for 6 hours. This DEET-free repellent will be applied and reapplied only when necessary and is for use on skin.

#### **For ticks: Ranger Ready Bug Spray**

The active ingredient is PICARIDIN (20%). This spray repellent will be used only on campers' footwear and pant legs—not on skin—and will be applied only by counselors.



# Use Insect Repellents Safely!

## Dress to REPEL!

### Don't do this Stuff

### Do THIS Stuff



Don't put it on Cuts, Sunburns or Rashes!

Don't Spray your Face!

Don't Breathe Repellents!

Don't put it on Little Kids' Hands!

Don't Use it under Clothes!

Wear Light-Colored Clothing!  
(so you can see bugs and ticks and remove them)

Follow the Directions  
Spray only Outdoors!

Wash off Repellent when You Go Indoors!

Tuck Pants into Socks!

Distributed by the  
 Rockland County Department of Health  
 Ed Day, County Executive  
 Patricia Schnabel Ruppert, DO, MPH, DABFM, FAAFP  
 Commissioner of Health  
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New York State Department of Health

# Getting the Most Out of Camp

## Screen-Free Culture

Given that we are The Nature Place, and believe in connecting with ourselves, each other, and the natural world, it is important to reiterate that ALL electronic devices be kept at home. This includes cell phones, tablets, smart watches, gaming consoles, etc.

## Behavior Guidelines

Camp is all about community, founded on collaboration and inclusion. Our mission is to ensure campers can find their place in nature, embrace their unique selves, grow relationships and new life skills, build resilience, and be inspired throughout. For these things to happen, campers need to be and feel safe (physically and emotionally) throughout all parts of the camp day.



**Please go over these expectations with your camper(s), and also review with them the agreement found in CampInTouch and on the next page. Clarity and consistency, at camp and at home, are important for making our camp a healthy, nurturing environment for all.**

### Therefore, we expect all campers to:

1. Always stay with their group
2. Participate in camp activities
3. Communicate with other campers and staff members in respectful ways
4. Be supportive of other campers' needs and efforts
5. Always act in ways that are safe for themselves, as well as for all other campers
6. Treat other campers' (and the camp's) property and belongings with respect and consideration
7. Never hit, throw something at, or in any way physically hurt anyone else
8. Never threaten or imply a threat toward another camper
9. Not engage in put-downs of any type or make fun of another camper
10. Not purposefully and with ill intent exclude another camper
11. Whether in camp or out on a trip, we expect our campers to represent The Nature Place, and all expectations of our campers exist when we are out for a trip or in public.

# Community & Behavior Agreement

Below are portions of our Community & Behavior Agreement, which is a form located in their CampInTouch account that each camper and their family needs to review and sign. It is important that every camper know what is expected championed, and not allowed. We hope that all campers will model great behavior that includes respecting and hearing others, including in their play, and helping to create a positive camp environment through kindness, participation, and responsible choices.

**Screen-Free Culture:** Nature is about connecting with ourselves, each other, and the earth. To keep our focus on the outdoors, all electronic devices must stay at home.

- **No** cell phones or tablets.
- **No** smartwatches or gaming consoles.
- **Yes** to fresh air and real-life conversations!

## Common Sense Rules:

- **Keep it Safe:** Always keep control of your body and act in ways that keep your body and others' safe.
- **Sticks:** While sticks can be enjoyed at camp, they must not become weapons (or play weapons) and must not be swung or thrown. When a staff member asks to put sticks down, campers must listen right away, as it could be a safety issue. Playing with sticks at camp is a privilege, not a right, and sticks should only be used for safe, supervised activities such as building forts in Nature's Playground, creating fairy houses, making art in Earth Art, and other creative outdoor play done in a safe and respectful way.
- **Respecting Camp Gear:** Treat the camp, the building, the pond, natural environment, and gear with respect and not causing any undue harm.
- **Respecting Personal Items:** Respecting other personal property, including not taking it without permission or causing undue harm.

**We Don't Tolerate:** *Note: These rules apply at camp, on hikes, and on field trips.*

- Hitting, throwing objects, or physically hurting others.
- Threatening, bullying, or purposeful exclusion.
- Put-downs or making fun of anyone.
- No Smoking or Vaping: May lead to permanent removal without a refund.
- No Weapons (guns, knives, something that can hurl a projectile), Drugs, or Alcohol: Results in immediate removal and potential contact with law enforcement. No refunds will be issued.

## Here is what to expect next if behaviors do not live up to our community standards.

**Yellow** – a minor behavior that will have a counselor and Social Behavior team speak with the camper to help redirect the behavior and make it an educational moment. Families will be updated so we can work together as a team.

**Orange** – A more serious behavior that leads to the camper taking a break and being separated from the group. The camper will talk with the director in addition to counselors and Social Behavior Team and talk through what happened. Families will have a meeting with the director once the day is over to help the camper be successful moving forward.

**Red** – If a behavior violates our safety standards or creates an unsafe environment, the camper will be removed from the group and camper will not be allowed back into the group until the director deems it to be safe. Families will be called once everyone is safe. A meeting with the director and the family will be had after the day is over to discuss how to move forward. Depending on the severity of the situation, further action may include mandatory time off.

## What happens if behaviors happen repeatedly?

Step 1: Another talk with the Social Behavior Team and a phone call home to parents.

Step 2: A meeting between parents and camp directors to find a solution.

Step 3: The camper stays home for one or more days to reflect on their actions.

Step 4: A meeting to decide if The Nature Place is the right fit for the camper.

# Coming & Going by Car

Arrival and dismissal times are based on what group your camper is assigned to. This information will come in a separate email & text message after June 15th.

## Arrival Time Windows

You'll be assigned a drop off time in either the upper or lower loops at one of these times:

8:40am - 8:50 am

8:50am - 9:00 am

## Dismissal Time Windows

You'll be assigned pick up time in either the upper or lower loops at one of these times:

3:40 pm - 3:50 pm

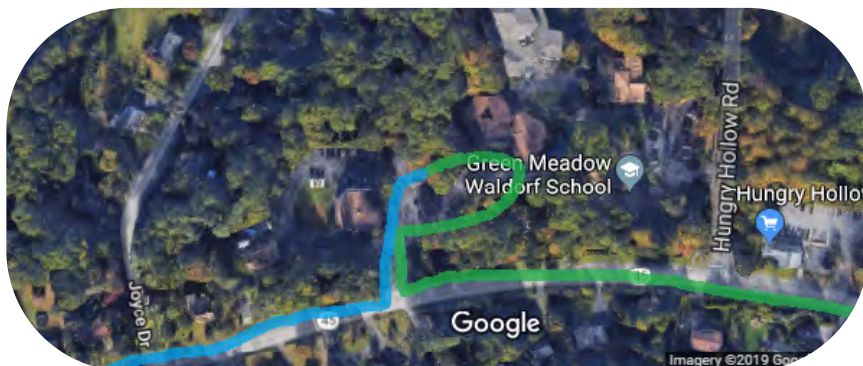
3:50 pm - 4:00 pm

## Where to Go

Type **871 Chestnut Ridge Rd. Chestnut Ridge, NY** into your GPS

### Upper Loop

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.

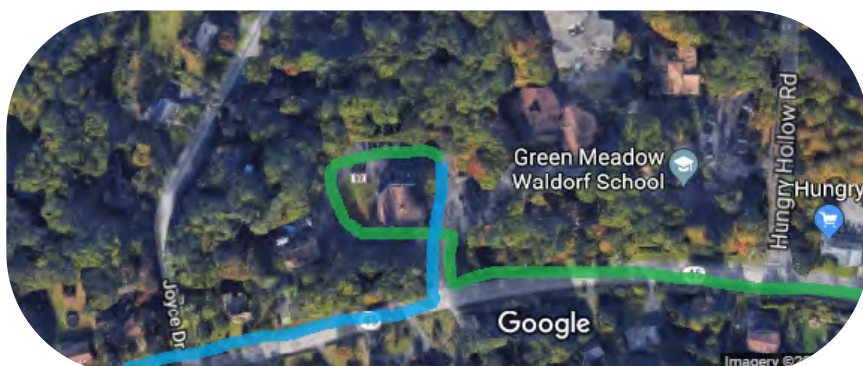


Blue: Exit

Green: Enter

### Lower Loop

Enter camp (**right turn only**) from Chestnut Ridge Road and then be directed to turn **LEFT** to go around the gym for drop-off and pick-up. Please proceed as far forward in the loop as possible before stopping.



# Coming & Going by Car

## (Continued)

### Traffic Patterns

In the morning and afternoon, all cars enter and exit using the Main Camp Entrance at 871 Chestnut Ridge Road (Route 45). Please be prepared to make a **RIGHT TURN ONLY** when **entering AND exiting** camp. Right turns prevent hazardous traffic tie-ups. We greatly appreciate your cooperation.

### Dismissal

**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, please get in touch with 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** (scroll to the bottom of the page) if there is any possibility that anyone other than you (the parent/guardian) may need to pick up your camper. This includes babysitters, grandparents, extended family, or parents of play dates.



### Severe Weather at Dismissal

If there is a strong **thunderstorm or torrential downpour at dismissal**, we will notify you of a dismissal delay via the Remind App.

#### **If you are picking up by car:**

- You will be notified by text through the Remind app
- If you are delayed, text us through the Remind app (so we can keep the phone lines clear in case of emergency – if you are late due to weather, chances are other caregivers are as well)
- Wait in your vehicle until further notice

#### **If your camper is on a bus:**

- You will be notified of a delay through the Remind app
- Stand by for further notifications from your camper's bus counselor
- Your camper's bus counselor will keep you informed of your new bus stop pickup time



# Riding the Bus

**Buses are air-conditioned and driven by certified CDL (Commercial Driver's License) drivers with at least one 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 on busing:

- 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 are unable to accommodate ad hoc busing** for playdates or other reasons.
- If your camper is sick or will be absent, please email or text the camp office as soon as possible as well as your camper's bus counselor.

## Bus counselor responsibilities:

- **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.

## Bus Guidelines for a Safe Ride:

- **Observe the same conduct on the bus as in camp.**
- **Be courteous and use appropriate language.**
- **Keep the bus clean.**
- **Cooperate with the bus driver.**
- **Respect other campers' belongings and the inside of the bus.**
- **Do not throw anything.**
- **Stay in your seat.**
- **Keep your head, hands, and feet inside the bus.**
- **Remember that the bus driver or bus counselor is authorized to assign seats.**
- **Always wear your seat belt.**

# Missing Camp

## Attendance

If your camper will be out for the day, we ask that you **let us know as early as possible** so we can plan accordingly and ensure everyone is accounted for.

### How to Report an Absence

Please **contact the camp office by 7:30 am** via:

Email: **camp@thenatureplace.com** or **Remind text message** (emailing or texting helps us keep the phone lines clear during busy mornings in the camp office. Thank you!)

## If Your Camper Is Sick

- Let us know they'll be out and include their symptoms if applicable—this helps us keep our community healthy
- If your camper is absent and we haven't heard from you, we may reach out just to check in and make sure all is well

### For Bus Riders

- In addition to **emailing camp**, please **also notify your bus counselor** if your camper will be absent

*\*Please note: We are unable to offer credit or refunds for days missed*

## Late Arrival & Early Pickup

### Arriving Late

Please **notify the camp office in advance via email or text message** of what time to expect your camper(s). If arriving after 9:05 am, please park in the upper loop and walk your camper into the office to sign them in.

### Picking Up Early

Please **notify the camp office as early as possible via email or text message with the pickup time**. Campers must be picked up **no later than 2:45 pm for safety reasons**.

### Optimal Pickup/Dropoff Times

Because of the size of our campus, lunch, snack, or transition times are optimal for picking up and dropping off your camper when an outside circumstance keeps them from attending the entire day. **The following times offer the least disruption for our staff and campers:**

**10:30 am • 11:35 am • 12:20 pm • 1:15 pm • 2:10 pm**

# FAQ

## What Group is my camper in?

You will receive an email and Remind text message with your camper's group information in the second week of June. Please make sure [camp@thenatureplace.com](mailto:camp@thenatureplace.com) is saved in your contacts.

## What is the bus stop, or when is the drop off/pick up?

If you are riding the bus, you will receive your bus stop location and times in mid-June by email.

## When are the campouts?

Dates of Almost, Onsite, and Offsite overnight and backpacking trips will be sent via email in mid-June.

## Who are the staff?

Our staff are selected based on their experience and their ability to enhance our camp culture. We pride ourselves on hiring a more experienced staff. Our Head Counselors are often teachers or those working on a graduate degree in a related field. Our counselors are typically in the college era of their lives. We don't normally hire high school students, and when we do, they are mostly former campers and Counselors in Training. Our Activity Leaders have expertise in the field they are teaching.

## How are the staff hired?

Our staff go through an extensive hiring process that includes a lengthy interview, reference checks, and both criminal and sex offender registry checks. They also go through a full **40-hour week-long training** before campers arrive.

## Do I tip the staff?

While **we allow our staff to receive tips**, they are not expected and are 100% optional. If you choose to tip and show your appreciation to your camper's counselors, it can be whatever is suitable for your family. It could be homemade cookies, a heartfelt letter, a gift card or cash. To be helpful, here are suggested amounts:

Head Counselor \$50 - \$75, Counselor \$25 - \$50, Lead Bus Counselor \$40 - \$60

- Use the [Grazzee App](#) for cashless tipping: Log into the app or website, select camps → The Nature Place. Select from the group list and select the counselor you want to tip and the amount.
- There is a 2.5% fee to use this cashless service. If you want to use a credit card, there is an additional 3% fee.

# FAQ

## (Continued)

### **Can I pack peanut butter?**

Since families are responsible for lunch and snacks, and we eat outside by group, we allow foods with nuts. We have campers with food allergies, and we follow a strict no food sharing policy. Campers wash their hands immediately after eating a nut product.

### **Are cell phones allowed for the bus ride?**

Cell phones are not allowed on the bus (except for the Bus Counselor). We consider the bus ride a part of camp. Many campers consider the bus their second camp group. They connect with others by telling stories, creating mad libs together, and more. Our no phone/screen policy extends to the bus. You have direct access to bus counselors through Remind to get updates.

### **What happens when it rains?**

On days with “liquid sunshine,” we play in the rain, splash in puddles, and we can always put on a rain jacket. In the event of a thunderstorm, groups head to their rooms with the activity leader of the program they are scheduled for and do activities inside until the storm has passed.

### **What plans do you have in place for excessive heat?**

On especially hot days, we adjust our group schedules to include more water-based activities like swimming, mucking, and water play. Most of our activities already take place in the forest, where the natural shade helps keep things cooler. For day hikes, we often modify the route to include gentler trails with water crossings, giving campers a chance to cool off and enjoy mucking. Open field activities, such as games, are typically swapped for refreshing water play.

### **Can I pick up early?**

If you need to pick up your camper early, please contact the office as soon as possible. Please give us at least a 45-minute advance notice to have your camper ready. Please call the office when you arrive and remain in your car. We will escort your camper to the arrival/dismissal area where you will sign your camper out of camp. All early pick-ups must be before 2:45 pm for safety reasons.

# Rights & Responsibilities

The State of New York puts out a helpful document detailing your rights as camp parents/guardians and our responsibilities as camp operators. You can view that document here:

[Children's Camps in New York State](#)

## Camp Gear

Each camper will receive:

- Nature Place Day Camp T-shirt
- Swim bag
  - The swim bag will be kept at camp and used to transport swim gear back and forth from The Pond (our pool that was once a pond, now lined and chlorinated).

Check out TNP's Clothing & Gear Shop: [Click Here](#)

- Flashlights, whistles, hats, sweatshirts, fleeces, special edition T-shirts, books, and more!



# Save These Dates

## Family Events at NPDC

### Virtual Family Orientation

**Tuesday, June 16th | 8:00pm**

Join us from the comfort of your couch to learn all about what to expect at camp this year! We will take a deep dive into the family handbook together, and leave time for questions at the end.

### Songs Around the Campfire

**Friday, July 17th | 7:00pm**

Songs around the Campfire is a family gathering where we come together after the camp day is done to sing our favorite NPDC songs, enjoy a campfire outdoors, build community with other Nature Place Families, and wiggle our waggles away!

### Family Picnic

**Saturday July 25th | 11am**

Bring the whole family to camp and learn -- directly from your campers -- how The Nature Place has become their summer home away from home. Explore the Fairy Stream, climb the Climbing Tree. meet other families, and have a deeper connection with the NPDC community. Bring a picnic lunch, take in the magic of nature, and be there for our Growth Rings Ceremony . Extended family members and friends are encouraged to attend!

### Community Swim Day

**Saturday, Aug 1st | 1:00pm**

Join us for a magical day of community at camp's beloved swimming oasis: The Pond. All Nature Place Families welcome with purchase of a day pass.

### Not-An-Almost Overnight

**Friday September 18th-Sat September 19th | 6:30pm - 8:30am (next day)**

Calling all campers who's group has an Almost Overnight planned this summer! Our Not-An-Almost Overnight event is the perfect family introduction to camping. We will run this event just as we do an Onsite Overnight, but campers will bring their families! We'll have dinner outdoors, a lovely campfire complete with songs, and sleeping in tents outside. Signup will go live closer to the start of camp.

