



# ARCADIA NATURE CAMP HANDBOOK SUMMER 2024



Welcome to Mass Audubon’s Arcadia Summer Camp! We look forward to meeting your camper and having a fun summer exploring and learning about the natural world.

This handbook is full of important information to help prepare you and your camper for an exciting summer camp experience. Please read through this entire document prior to camp and contact us with any questions.

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# CAMP MISSION

We believe that camp is a place where children can grow, spend quality time outdoors and have fun summer experiences. Through hands on, inquiry-based activities, free play, games and nature discovery campers learn about their surroundings, themselves and others. Spending time learning and playing outdoors helps foster a deep, life-long connection to nature and inspires environmental stewardship.

## Guiding Camp Goals and Outcomes

At Arcadia Nature Camp, we want to encourage campers to investigate nature, acquire new skills, and deepen their understanding of the natural world. We want each camper to

### **Connect with Nature**

Spending quality time outdoors while encouraging campers' curiosity, sense of discovery and understanding helps foster a deep, lifelong connection to nature.

### **Learn Science Outdoors**

Through a nature-based science curriculum children learn and practice science skills in a real-world setting. Skills include critical thinking, creativity, communication, and environmental literacy.

### **Growth Through Play**

Children and young adults learn by playing fun age-appropriate activities and games. Play fosters independence, imagination, and socialization.

### **Feel a Sense of Belonging**

Building friendships, discovering new interests, and trying new activities, children will feel supported and accepted socially and emotionally at camp. Campers of all racial, economic, gender and other backgrounds feel welcomed and comfortable in the outdoors and excited to explore local ecosystems.

### **Be Part of the Camp Community**

To create a safe and inclusive camp atmosphere, we foster a camp staff that is well-trained, passionate about camp, and excited to inspire this next generation of environmental stewards. This allows us to create an emotionally and physically safe environment where the camper can have a successful experience.

### **Engage in Stewardship**

Campers will develop awareness and appreciation of the natural world and engage in age-appropriate environmental stewardship, such as turning off water in bathrooms, using eco-friendly products, turning

off outside lights at night, picking up trash, educating peers, leading by example, or contacting local politicians.

Arcadia Nature Camp staff encourages and welcomes observations, suggestions, and ideas from campers, families, and camp staff. We want to be able to offer an engaging and well-designed camp, one that is creative and innovative and appreciates all feedback to help us achieve this goal.

## CAMPDOC AND REQUIRED HEALTH FORMS

CampDoc is a secure website that Mass Audubon uses to collect required information about your camper, ranging from contact info, health history, authorized pick up people, allergies, etc. Seven to ten days after you register for camp, you will receive an email directly from CampDoc to update your camper's profile and to upload supporting documents (vaccination records, sliding scale documents, etc). Please keep an eye out for this; you can also add the email [noreply@campdoc.com](mailto:noreply@campdoc.com) to your safe senders list to ensure it doesn't end up in your spam folder.

Uploading these documents is mandatory and will be needed to secure your camper's spot in our programs. CampDoc is a secure, encrypted, and password protected website that is used by camps across the country.

### **If your camper is new to Arcadia camps**

You will receive an "Invitation" email from CampDoc.com.

- Click on the green "Accept Invite" link within the email to create a new CampDoc.com account and secure password.

Note: Your camper's basic health information will save from year-to-year, so once you complete it in CampDoc.com this season, you won't have to start from scratch next year.

### **If your camper is returning for another summer at Arcadia**

You will receive a notification email from CampDoc.com to log in and update your camper's information. Your camper's basic information is saved from last year.

- You should use the same email address and password that you used previously to access your CampDoc.com information.
- If you forgot your password from last year, enter your email on the login page and click "Forgot Password" to reset your password.

## Helpful CampDoc guidelines for all Arcadia campers

- Once logged in, select your camper's name, and click on the health profile tab to complete your camper's information.
- Required questions will be marked with an \* and outlined in red.
- Upload any required documents to your CampDoc.com account. If you're on a phone or tablet, you can take a picture to upload any supporting documents.
- Upload the camper's complete immunization record-this is required.
- If you need an immunization exception or if you have a written recommendation from your child's physician that is different from the standard immunization schedule, please contact the Camp Director to receive a waiver application.
- If your child will be taking medication at camp, this needs to be included in the Health Care Provider Form and signed by a physician, as well as noted in the child's CampDoc record on the "Medications" tab.
- There are several sections in CampDoc, including Emergency Contacts, Activity Restrictions, Health Care Providers, Health Insurance, Allergies, Diet & Nutrition information, Medications, Authorized Release/Pick-up People, Media Release, and other camp authorizations. This information will help us prepare and be able to provide the best experience for your camper!
- You can log in to CampDoc.com at any time to update your camper's health information.
- Any information you can provide to help us best support your camper during camp is greatly appreciated!

**To avoid a late fee, please complete all forms in CampDoc by May 15.** If you register for camp after May 15, we ask that you fill out the CampDoc forms as soon as possible and at least two weeks before your camp session begins.

If you need help completing the forms or do not have access to the internet, please contact Devorah Levy, Camp Registrar, at (413) 584-3009 and press "0" for the Visitor Center front desk or email [dlevy@massaudubon.org](mailto:dlevy@massaudubon.org).

For help using Camp Doc contact their support desk at 734-619-8300 x2.

## CAMP INFORMATION

At Arcadia Nature Camp, we strive to offer high quality outdoor experiences to all of our campers - experiences that they will enjoy and remember for their lifetimes. We cannot meet this goal without the cooperation of our campers and their families, so we invite you to enter into a relationship with us to ensure that every child has the best possible time at camp.

We pledge to provide:

- A safe and healthy environment for your child.
- A high-quality educational program.
- A staff firmly committed to providing a positive camp experience for every camper.
- A community-minded, inclusive environment which helps every child feel seen, heard, included, secure, and safe.

In return, we expect the following from families and campers:

- Cooperation with our stated and written policies including our behavior and COVID-19 guidelines.
- Detailed attention to the daily needs of your child to prepare them to come to camp (dressed in the appropriate clothing, with a water bottle, hearty lunch, and snacks);
- Commitment to the well-being of the entire camp community (such as keeping a sick or over-tired child at home);
- Willingness to act in collaboration with camp staff to maintain or restore appropriate behavior and participation.

If at any time, you have a question or concern about our camp, please speak with Tim Donner, Camp Director, or Dorri Jones, Assistant Camp Director. No question or concern is too small for you to bring to our attention! You may request copies of our background checks, health care, and discipline policies and/or grievance procedures at any time.

## BEFORE YOUR CHILD ARRIVES AT CAMP

Please take some time, a few days before your child comes to camp, to prepare them for participation in camp. Here are a few things we would like you to share with your child:

- On the first morning, we will be showing the campers where the bathrooms are, where they will be eating lunch, where they can put their things, and where they will be picked up when their camp day is over. We want to ensure they have a sense of their surroundings to help them settle in.
- Remind them that their counselors are excited to meet the campers and enjoy working with children! They can't wait to share the world of nature with the campers and to get

to know them. We welcome all questions that your child might have. Counselors are here to ensure that each camper has a great time!

- Campers should plan to carry a water bottle with them, and there will be some days when they will carry their backpack with their lunch to eat out on the trail.
- Each child will be expected to be courteous and respectful of themselves and others; while we will discuss group expectations on the first morning, you might also want to talk to your child about listening when other children or camp staff are talking, and about the need to follow our expectations (for example, always staying together, respect each other and nature, be safe, be curious, have fun!).
- Please demonstrate to your child how to apply sunscreen and insect repellent. We can help younger campers at your request. We will ask that campers step away from the group when applying these products in spray form.
- Remind your camper that this is an outdoor nature camp. All activities, including snack and lunch, take place outside. We are outside even when it rains and when it's hot. Every camp group has a covered outdoor shelter as well as an emergency indoor space if needed. Bathrooms are inside; and we will go inside if there is severe weather, such as a thunderstorm, high winds, etc. We'll take indoor cooling breaks and play water games on days when it's extremely hot.
- We will explore the edges of ponds and creeks, there is no swimming at Arcadia Nature Camp.

## A DAY AT CAMP

Each day at camp is built around the schedule below. Each day of the week will have a nature related theme and the hikes, activities and crafts will be tied to that theme. There will always be some flexibility based on weather, camper needs and what we might see while exploring Arcadia!

9:00 am	Drop-off and games
9:30 am	Opening Circle, daily nature theme intro, mystery item, and riddle
10:00 am	Snack
10:30 am	Morning hike and activities
12:00 pm	Lunch, games, and stories

12:45 pm	Choice Time: Games, crafts, or Nature Play
1:45 pm	Theme-based activity time & snack
2:45 pm	Closing Circle
3:00 pm	Pick-up

## WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP AND HOW TO DRESS

Dress for exploring outdoors and playing games. Be prepared for any weather - we will be outdoors even on rainy days, so rain gear and something warm may come in handy! Any clothing should be ok to get muddy, wet, or dirty since our camps are hands-on in nature.

**Please make sure that your child's name is on everything!** We cannot be held responsible for lost items. We will keep a Camp Lost and Found. Any items not picked up by September 15 will be donated to a local charity.

### Your child should wear:

- Shorts and t-shirts are great; some families prefer long pants and long shirts to protect against the sun and against ticks or poison ivy.
- Long pants are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED on fielding day (we will let you know which day this happens) as they provide better protection from ticks. We will do tick checks and suggest you do them at home every day as well.
- Closed-toe shoes like sneakers or rugged hiking shoes - For safety reasons, **no sandals please**. Closed-toe water shoes are ok for days we explore the pond, but please make sure your camper also have sneakers or hiking shoes with them for exploring the trails.
- Socks (to protect against blisters and accidental exposure to poison ivy)
- A wide-brimmed hat to protect them from sun and insects. A wide-brimmed hat is required for the Great Blue Herons camp on the day they go canoeing.

### Your child should bring:

- Backpack to hold their belongings (and to keep their hands free!)
- Two nutritious snacks, and a hearty lunch. We notice that campers want to eat much more at camp than they do while at school. A foam-insulated bag with an icepack is recommended if their lunch needs to be cold.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- At least one water bottle. Please do not freeze the water bottle - the ice will not melt fast enough to give your child enough water to drink. We will refill water bottles throughout the day.

- A spare set of clothes so your child will be able to stay clean and dry if they get wet or have an accident while at camp.
- An extra pair of long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. If your child decides to go into the field for choice time they will be better protected against ticks.
- A spare set of socks and old sneakers – our campers love to go explore the ponds and creeks and will need to be able to change out of their wet shoes and socks.
- A raincoat- we will be outside all day, even in the rain!

**What NOT to bring to camp:** Do not bring electronic devices, personal treasures, or expensive items to camp. Cell phones and other electronics are not to be used during the camp day. Pocketknives, matches, firearms/ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items are not allowed and are grounds for dismissal from the program. The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and weapons are prohibited. No animals, other than service animals, are allowed at camp.

**Peanuts and Tree Nuts at camp:** We allow peanuts and tree nuts at camp and will remind campers that food should not be shared with other campers. If there is a camp group where there is a known airborne nut allergy, we will inform camp families beforehand and ask that you do not pack any foods that contain the specific nut (peanuts, for example).

**Parking:** Please drive slowly and park for drop off and pick up. Our parking area is one way, please follow the signs when you enter and exit.

**Drop off & pick up times:** Camp hours are from 9am to 3pm. The time before and after camp is important for the camp staff for planning and preparation; therefore, we cannot be responsible for children before 9am or after 3pm. Please be prompt for drop-off and pick-up.

**Drop off:** Please park in the designated parking area for drop off. Walk your camper to their camp group, there will be signs indicating where each group will be located. Camp staff will greet you and your camper and check you in. If you are unsure which group your camper belongs to we will be able to assist you and guide you to the correct location.

**End of day pick up:** Like morning drop off, please park in the designated spots, and walk to your camp group. The person doing pick up is required to show a photo ID. Once staff verify the ID they will radio counselors who will bring the camper over. Only people listed in the Child Release section of the CampDoc health form will be allowed to sign out your camper. A parent or guardian may add additional people to their release form, this can be done through



CampDoc or in person during the camp week. For any last-minute additions, please call Arcadia.

**Late Drop off or Early Pick Up:** Much of the day is spent outdoors, often away from the main area, which makes it difficult to accommodate late arrivals and early departures. Late drop-off and early pick-ups can happen during lunch time only (11:30 am – 12:30 pm); please speak to the Camp Director or Assistant Director in advance so we can plan accordingly.

**Absent Children:** If your child will be absent during any camp day, please email us at [arcadia@massaudubon.org](mailto:arcadia@massaudubon.org) or call Arcadia at (413) 584-3009 by 9am. If no one is available to take your call, leave a message. If a camper does not arrive and we have not been notified of their absence, we will call you at the phone numbers listed on your emergency forms to find out if they are not attending or if you are running late.

## CAMPER EXPECTATIONS

*Copies of the full policy are available upon request.*

Please go over these expectations with your camper before the start of camp. We will discuss expectations with campers on the first day.

Campers are encouraged to participate in activities, including outdoor exploration, games, crafts, and nature investigations. Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp program, campers must be able to walk on uneven terrain and trails. To ensure a successful camp experience, please discuss any pertinent information regarding your child's needs with the Camp Director. We want to work with you to establish the best strategy for your camper and the group.

All campers must follow our behavioral expectations and safety rules. The Camp Director reserves the right to dismiss a camper when the camper's behavior interferes with the rights of others or the smooth functioning of the group or activity or violates the camp's behavior policy. In such cases no refunds will be provided.

### Camper Expectations

1. We treat all living things with respect and kindness.
2. We stay with our group.
3. We help in taking care of the materials used at camp.
4. We speak to others kindly and we respect their physical space.
5. We follow staff requests.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Camp is a place where children learn and grow socially and emotionally, gain self-confidence, connect with the natural world and with campers and their counselors. All participants must follow our behavioral expectations and safety rules, which have been developed to ensure the safety of campers and to show respect for self, others, and the environment. When a camper forgets a rule or struggles with a behavior expectation, it should be approached as a learning opportunity. We want every camper to have a successful experience at camp, and staff will support this goal through positive behavior management. Positive behavior management at camp focuses on three elements:

1. Supportive Atmosphere: Staff are trained to create a supportive atmosphere that encourages children to understand and follow rules independently.
2. Behavior Tools: Staff teach children to solve conflicts and misunderstandings through communication and self-regulation of emotions.
3. Consistent Rules: Staff follow the rules and guidelines provided by Arcadia to handle behavior concerns.

### **When camp expectations aren't followed:**

In the excitement of camp, when campers forget to follow certain expectations, staff will take the following steps:

1. Reminder of the expectations.
2. Second reminder with warning.
3. Short time out.
4. Time away from the group to reset.
5. Speak with the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director.

During drop off or pick up, or over the phone, we will inform you if any of these steps were taken during the camp day. We want to work with you to ensure a fun and successful camp experience for your child!

**Discipline:** In general, any discipline problems should be handled with resets and follow-up discussions with the camper. Missing part or all of an activity might be a consequence. If a child acts in an unsafe manner that is physically harmful to themselves or others, staff will remove the child from the danger and have the camper check in with the Camp Director. In the case of serious or persistent issues, families will be called, and a behavioral agreement will be developed. For the safety of the group, campers who cannot meet these expectations may be removed from the camp without a refund.

At no time, or for any reason, will physical or corporal punishment be used. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Corporal punishment includes:

- Spanking
- Cruel or severe punishment
- Humiliation or verbal abuse
- Withholding food, shelter, or water

Mass Audubon camps serve youth of all ages with many different abilities. Having said that, Mass Audubon camps are primarily staffed by 18-25 year olds, who are learning how best to support all campers. As such, Mass Audubon camps are not a good setting for: campers with significant behavioral problems that could cause injury to themselves or others; campers who are unable to independently navigate trails and varied terrain (with or without mobility devices); campers who need an extremely rigid routine that is the same each day; campers who need very intensive medical care or use major medical devices that require specialized training; and campers whose needs would result in undue burden to our state-mandated staff ratios. We cannot provide 1:1 support to campers; however, we do welcome 1:1 aides with campers when they are provided by the family.

We know the children and teens that we've just described are wonderful and would also love a fun and safe summer camp experience, but unfortunately right now we're not equipped to provide it. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about our inclusion guidelines for our camps, please contact our Statewide Director of Camps, Kate Tucci, via email: [ktucci@massaudubon.org](mailto:ktucci@massaudubon.org)

## HEALTH POLICIES

*Our complete health care policy available upon request.*

**Sick Campers:** If your camper is sick, please keep them home until they feel better. If a camper starts to feel sick while at camp, we will have them rest inside or in a designated outdoor space until feeling better or until they can be picked up. A staff member will stay with them during this time. If a camper has a fever they need to be fever free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before they can return to camp.

**Medications:** Medication must be sent in the original container with the pharmacy label attached. Medication must be handed to the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director upon arrival. No medication, whether prescription or over the counter, may be administered to a child without it being listed in CampDoc. Be sure that any inhalers have the prescription label

attached, or bring along the box with the label attached. All over-the-counter medications should be in their original container with the camper's name and date of birth written on the container.

**Sun Exposure/Insect Bites:** We will have a designated Sunscreen and Insect Spray Area near the parking lot and encourage your camper to wear both! Tip: applying sunscreen first and bug spray second is suggested.

Massachusetts Department of Health encourages the use of wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when exposed to sun.

**Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention:** There are potential health risks associated with ticks. Please take an active role in protecting your camper by checking each evening for ticks by feeling their skin for bumps. Visual checks for ticks on campers' arms, legs, and clothing is a regular part of our routine. Please visit the following Mass Department of Public Health website for a fact sheet on ticks and tick-borne diseases: [www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases](http://www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases)

**Bathroom Needs:** Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. However, should nature call when we are far from any facilities, we will provide campers support if they need use the forest as their bathroom. Staff carry an outdoor bathroom kit and are trained in how to provide camper privacy and hygiene and minimize our impact. Please talk to your camper about this bathroom option before camp. Preparing campers for their time at camp is essential in ensuring a successful and fun camp experience.

#### **Adapting to the weather:**

- **Rainy Days:** Campers are outside for most rainy days. Summer rains can be cold. Be prepared with rain gear and jacket. We have outdoor shelters to use when needed.
- **Hot Days:** On very hot days we will have misters set up. Your camper may be damp when you pick them up! You may want to bring a towel to protect your car seat. Please inform your camper and/or the staff if you wish to limit how wet they get. We will gain their verbal consent before any camper gets wet!

**In the event of injury or if first aid is provided:** Families will be notified, indicating the nature of the injury, what first aid was provided, and by whom. Staff will keep a copy and this will be logged into the first aid log. All camp staff are first aid and CPR certified.

**Families will be contacted during the camp day if:**

- A camper needs health care beyond our training
- A camper is not feeling well and health care supervisors determine it is best that they go home
- A camper has symptoms related to COVID-19
- First aid was provided, and health care supervisors want to alert families prior to pick up
- A camper sustains an injury to the head.

**In case of emergency:** First Aid will be administered as per standing medical orders and at the level of our first aid training. The receptionist, Camp Director, or Assistant Camp Director will notify families using numbers on the child's registration and medical forms. We will work with you to coordinate further care, pick-up, or transportation of the child. When appropriate, local emergency response personnel will be called at the same time families are being notified. If a camper needs transportation, it will be provided by a parent/guardian or ambulance service. If the parent/guardian or emergency contact persons cannot be reached, the child's physician will be called, and that person will make decisions about additional help, i.e. ambulance and hospital care.

If unable to reach the camper's primary contacts, we will call emergency contacts from the health form.

**Risk Management:**

Mass Audubon staff members make every effort to conduct safe programs, to orient and support campers, and to inform families of inherent risks. Some activities may involve risks that campers do not routinely encounter at home. Risk management is an essential element of all the activities that we offer. Our standard precautions include conducting our program in a manner consistent with the practices and procedures recommended by the Mass Department of Public Health and the American Camp Association. While we anticipate that these efforts will ensure the well-being of each participant, we are also aware that it is neither possible to foresee every contingency nor to eliminate all risk.

## COVID-19 POLICY

The health and welfare of our campers and staff remains our highest priority. We feel confident that the success of Mass Audubon Camps in designing and offering safe camps will guide us into another great summer in 2024. We will continue to stay informed and engaged with the work of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the American Camp Association, ensuring best practices, and staying safe as we adapt to the developing phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work closely with partners in public health, childcare, and camp programs, will keep our camp community updated and adjust our COVID-19 policies accordingly.

Based on current public health guidelines, masks will be optional. If you prefer for your camper to wear a mask, please pack a few masks in their backpack.

## MASS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

### COVID-19 Information

[Mass Department of Public Health Covid-19 information](#)

### Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees

Campers are not considered to have increased risk of Meningococcal Disease, but the Department of Public Health requires us to provide you the information in the link below. Please read the document “Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions.” You do not need to print or return a signed waiver to us.

[Meningitis info from mass.gov](#)

## PAYMENT

If paying by check, write your camper’s first and last name on the memo line (make the check out to *Mass Audubon*). MasterCard, Discover, and VISA accepted.

## DEADLINES

The balance of the camp fees and all forms (including health forms and immunizations to CampDoc) **are due on or before May 15** unless a payment plan has been set up with the Camp Director or Operations Manager. A **late fee of \$25 per camper will apply if any forms or payments are late or incomplete**. If registering after May 15, payment is required in full unless special arrangements are made. If payment or forms are incomplete, we cannot guarantee your camper’s slot will be held. No camper is allowed to attend camp unless all forms, waivers, and payments are complete.

## DEPOSIT AND REFUND POLICY

A **nonrefundable deposit of \$75 per session** is required to hold each child's space in camp. This amount is a portion of the stated fees; it is not an additional charge. Nonrefundable deposits cannot be transferred to another camper, family, or camp location. Please check your calendar for conflicts before registering.

**Refunds will be given as follows:**

- On or before May 15: refund of all payments, except the non-refundable deposit
- After May 15: no refund is available.

If Arcadia must cancel a session, you will receive a full refund. Refunds are not given for participant dismissal, failure to attend, absence, or sick days. If your family has a special circumstance, please contact the Camp Director or the Operations Manager to discuss options.

**ANY QUESTIONS? DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT US!!**

General camp questions: Tim Donner, Camp Director, (413) 206-7752,  
[tdonner@massaudubon.org](mailto:tdonner@massaudubon.org).

For registration questions, camp session openings, or camp payments, contact the Arcadia Registrars, (413) 584-3009. Press "0" after the call connects to reach the registrars or you can email them at [arcadia@massaudubon.org](mailto:arcadia@massaudubon.org).

For payment plans and detailed billing questions, please contact us at [arcadia@massaudubon.org](mailto:arcadia@massaudubon.org).

We look forward to seeing you and your camper soon!