



2026 Summer Camp Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

New Pond Farm Education Center is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to *inspire and educate each generation to become stewards of the land by championing conservation and sustainable farming practices to protect and preserve our natural world*. One of our favorite ways to put this mission into practice is through our Summer Camp program.

Summer camp is a time for children to make connections, try new things, develop their environmental literacy, gain an appreciation for the outdoors, and be supported as they explore the wonders of the natural world. We are so happy to have your children with us this summer as we enjoy this beautiful property together. Thank you for sharing your children with us and entrusting them to our care. Please do not hesitate to reach out, at any time, should you have questions or concerns.

Happy Summer!

Stacey

Stacey Valimont
Summer Camp Director

Summer Camp Policies and Procedures

CLASS COMPOSITION

Camper groups will be assigned to a group based on grade.

Summer Sprouts: for children ages 4 & 5 who have not yet attended kindergarten.

8:2 camper:staff ratio.

Nature Trekkers: for children entering grades 1 - 5.

10:2 camper staff ratio.

Wayfinders: for children entering grades 6 - 8.

10:2 camper:staff ratio.

CAMP SCHEDULE

Summer Sprouts: Monday through Thursday, 9:30am - 1:30pm.

Nature Trekkers: Monday through Friday, 9:30am to 3:30pm. There is no camp on July 4th.

Wayfinders: Monday through Wednesday, 9:30am - 3:30pm, Thursday, 9:30am through Friday, 9:00am (this includes a campout).

DROP OFF



Morning drop off begins at 9:25am and ends at 9:45am. If you arrive after 9:45am, please bring your child into the Learning Center for check-in.

At drop off, please let the Lead Counselor know if someone other than a parent or authorized person will be picking your child up from camp. Also let your child know.

PICK UP

If you think you may be late for pick up, please notify New Pond Farm at 203-938-2117.

If your child is not picked up by 1:45pm/3:45pm, we will call your child's caregivers at the home, cell, and work numbers. If we cannot reach anyone, we will call the listed emergency contact.



If your camper is going to be picked up by a taxi, uber, lyft, or other ride-sharing service, you must inform the Camp Director at drop off that morning.

COMMUNICATION

To contact us during regular business hours, please call the Farm at 203-938-2117. For after-hours communications, please email the Camp Director, Stacey at stacey@newpondfarm.org.

CAMP DELAYS, CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

If there are any camp closings or delays we send an email and post on our website and on social media. There are no make-up days or refunds for delays or cancellations.

CLOTHING & WHAT TO PACK

Outdoor exploration requires freedom of movement in non-restrictive clothing. Campers should come in clothing that is ok to get dirty or stained. This allows children to fully participate in all activities. Closed-toe footwear is required. No flip-flops.

Packing List. Please **LABEL EVERYTHING**

- complete change of clothes in a backpack or tote bag
- reusable water bottle
- nut-free lunch and snack - packed separately in a reusable bag with an ice pack
- bathing suit
- towel
- water shoes and/or rain boots
- hat/sunglasses
- Preferred sunscreen and bug spray
 - Sunscreen and bug spray will be reapplied, when requested, with staff assistance.
- A separate packing list will be provided for the [Wayfinder Campout](#)

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The physical and emotional well-being of every camper is of utmost importance. Our goal is to help each camper feel safe and supported. We are a child-centered environment. Therefore, behavior management is centered around positive reinforcement. Other methods of discipline include setting clear rules and offering redirections, reminders of expectations, and encouragement.

When a camper is having difficulty controlling their behavior, staff assist in a calm, helpful manner. We practice conflict resolution that encourages children to identify and express their feelings. If a camper demonstrates harmful behavior or does not respond to staff guidance, we will remove the camper from the situation. This gives the camper time to calm down, regain control, and identify their feelings.

We communicate regularly with parents. If a camper does not respond to disciplinary efforts, we will work with parents to address behaviors of concern and implement a support plan designed to meet the camper's unique needs. We balance the needs of the group with the support necessary for each camper's success.

ELECTRONICS

New Pond Farm has a strict "no electronics" policy for [Sprouts](#) and [Nature Trekkers](#). This includes cell phones, smart phones, smart watches, tablets, etc.

[Wayfinders](#) may bring their cell phone, smart phone, or smart watch to camp, but its use will be strictly limited. If Wayfinders do not comply with the rules regarding phone use, their phone will be confiscated, stored in a safe place, and returned to the parent/guardian at pick up.

HEALTH POLICIES

New Pond Farm Education Center takes precautions to prevent the spread of illness by maintaining a clean environment, encouraging hand washing, providing substitutes for ill staff, and setting clear limits on the health of children in attendance. We need your cooperation.

All camp forms must be received and reviewed BY JUNE 1. Campers will be permitted to participate in camp only once all necessary documents are received and processed.

Required forms include:

1. Camper Information, Medical Release, and Pool Permission Form
2. Health Assessment (Birth to 5 or School Age)
3. Campout Permission (*Wayfinders only*)

New Pond Farm is a **NUT AND PEANUT-FREE** camp. We do not permit ANY nuts, peanuts, or projects/food containing peanut oil at camp. This policy is strictly enforced. If your child enjoys a nut-free alternative like SunButter, please label it clearly.

If your child has allergies that require medication or special health considerations, additional forms are required. They are:

1. Authorization for the Administration of Medicine (signed by parent and doctor)
2. Emergency Health Care Plan (signed by parent)

Illness

If your child is sick, please call the office at 203-938-2117 or email the Camp Director at stacey@newpondfarm.org, and keep them home until they are well. The camp day is spent outdoors. If your child is not well enough to go outside and be active, it is best to let them rest at home. Please keep your child home if they:

- are unable to participate in usual daily activities
- have nasal discharge (yellow or green)
- have an elevated temperature (greater than 100⁰) within 24 hours of camp
- have a communicable disease
- have tested positive for COVID
- have a rash that may be infectious
- have infectious conjunctivitis
- have a sore throat
- experience nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (within 24 hours of camp)



Your child may return to camp when:

- fever is absent for 24 hours
- vomiting or diarrhea is absent for 24 hours
- 24 hours have passed after the start of treatment for strep or conjunctivitis
- the stage of contagion for communicable disease has passed
- the child, under a doctor's care, has received permission to return. *A doctor's note is mandatory for all breaks or injuries that require stitches*
- the child feels well enough to participate in activities

If your child becomes ill at camp:

1. we will notify a parent (or alternate person specified by the parent) by phone and ask them to pick up the child.
2. the sick child will be cared for in the office/sick room, thus protecting well children.

*If campers are exposed to a contagious illness such as chicken pox or strep, notices will be posted and an email sent home within 24 hours of us being notified.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

First Aid

Key staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR. In the event of an accident or event that requires medical attention, we will do one of the following:



- Call parents/guardians or emergency contacts to collect the child immediately and seek medical attention.
- If severe and immediate help is deemed necessary, we will call 911, and a staff member will accompany the child to the emergency room.
- Lead Counselors carry cell phones to use in case of an emergency.

Heat

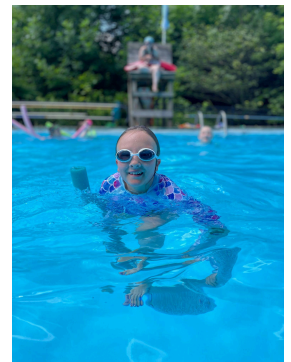
Summer temperatures are getting warmer and excessive heat can be a health risk to campers and staff. As an outdoor program, staff are trained to watch for signs of heat sickness and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Staff will check the weather and heat index daily.
- Activities will be modified to reduce risks, ie. early morning hikes, utilizing shady areas, including water play, etc.
- On hot days, campers will take mandatory hydration breaks and resting breaks and if necessary, the air conditioned Learning Center will be used for cooling breaks.

Pool

For **Nature Trekkers** and **Wayfinders**, the pool is a special part of the New Pond Farm camp experience. To ensure the health and safety of campers and staff in and around the pool, the following policies are in place:

- A certified lifeguard will be present during all pool activities.
- Campers are permitted inside the fenced-in pool area only when a lifeguard is present.
- Camp counselors remain with campers during pool time.
- Water quality and pool/filter function is monitored daily.
- Pool use is a privilege and can be revoked for failure to follow the rules.
- To determine if campers have the use of the deep end without a life jacket, an optional swim check will be administered by a lifeguard.
 - The swim check consists of swimming two lengths of the pool and treading water for 1 minute.



Ticks

Ticks are an unavoidable part of outdoor experiences in Connecticut. We strongly recommend you check your child for ticks each day after camp. If we find an embedded tick on your camper, parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

SNACK AND LUNCH POLICY

All campers should come with a labeled, reusable water bottle and a **nut-free lunch and snack**. Please pack all food with an ice pack since lunches and snacks will not be stored in a refrigerator. We encourage reusable materials for packaging.

PLEASE



**NO PEANUTS
OR
NUT PRODUCTS**

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As childcare providers, state law dictates staff report any suspicion that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk. Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF. State law protects staff from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e). All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at New Pond Farm. We keep a copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 is also kept on file.

Staff are required to attend training before the start of the camp session, which include the review of the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff are trained in these procedures before camp starts.

To report a suspected case of abuse or neglect:

Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800- 842-2288.

Call the Department of Public Health at 1-800-282-6063, 1-800-439-0437 or 1-860-509-8045.

New Pond Farm Education Center supports zero tolerance for abuse and neglect. We will implement immediate action if there is an allegation of abuse or neglect. The administration will protect the child – including immediate notification of a parent or guardian – once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program. If a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect, they will be immediately removed from their position until DCF's investigation is complete. Based on whether the allegations are substantiated, the employee will either be dismissed from their position or allowed to return to work.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

We are available any time to answer your questions. Please call us at 203-938-2117 or email us at the contact information below.

We look forward to a fun-filled summer outdoors exploring the wonders of nature!

Priya Desai, Executive Director
Stacey Valimont, Naturalist/Camp Director
Hannah Fischer, Assistant Camp Director
Thatcher Taylor, Program Support Manager
Gina Marcus, Development Manager
Chris Hughes, Director of Operations & Finance

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