



2023 Farm Camp Information Guide

Updated December 6th, 2022

****This guide is a living document and will continue to be updated as protocols and policies are developed and changed. It is of the utmost importance that you take the time to read through this guide before EACH WEEK your child comes to camp to ensure you understand the most current COVID safety protocols and changes. Many of these changes have affected our systems and daily routines. It will be highly beneficial for both you and your camper(s) to be familiar with the following protocols PRIOR to arriving at camp.****

Dear Blandford Camp Families,

Returning to full capacity, our 2022 summer day camp program sold out in less than 24 hours of opening registration. We recognize the need in our community for opportunities for children to expand their horizons, socialize, and enrich their lives with nature. While we are happy to welcome campers back to Blandford this coming summer, we are obligated to maintain safety precautions during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and to make necessary adjustments to do so. Throughout this document, you'll find our detailed plan for keeping staff, volunteers, campers, and their families safe and healthy this summer. This information guide outlines our key pillars for health and safety during camp as well as program offerings and BNC camp policies.

- **Section 1: COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan**
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Every summer, we share with campers three simple goals for the week: be respectful, be curious, and have fun. This takes work, but all of us together—campers, parents, caregivers, volunteers, and staff—can make it happen. We can't wait to share this summer with you!

Sincerely,

Mary Rose Jones, Camp Manager
camp@blandfordnaturecenter.org
(616) 735-6240

Section 1: COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

For the safety of our campers and camp staff, we have developed the following COVID safety protocols and changes for 2022:

- Up-to-date COVID-19 Vaccinations are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** for all Camp Participants
All campers and volunteers are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to be UP-TO-DATE ON COVID-19 VACCINATIONS prior to the start of camp. The only camp participants REQUIRED to be up-to-date on vaccinations against COVID-19 will be camp staff.

You are considered up-to-date on vaccination against COVID-19 after the primary series of COVID-19 vaccinations such as Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine AND their applicable boosters. These boosters include monovalent boosters for ages under 5, or bivalent boosters for ages 5 years and older. **We strongly encourage all campers and volunteers to receive their booster when they are eligible.**

COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are safe, effective, and widely accessible in West Michigan. The CDC and MDHHS recommend that everyone 5 years and older be vaccinated against COVID-19 to keep from getting and spreading COVID-19.

Efforts to protect our campers, volunteers, and staff against COVID-19 allow us to return to a much more "normal" looking season where we can relax many extraneous protocols that require a larger staff, time commitment, and resource reserve. We recognize that there is not a "one size fits all" protocol that will please everyone at this time. We will be moving forward with COVID-19 precautions due to our finite ability as a day camp program to limit the risk and exposure of campers, volunteers, and staff outside of camp hours and locations. Additionally, as a day camp program, COVID-19 testing is not feasible with campers, volunteers, and staff leaving and returning to camp each day, requiring us to test campers and staff multiple times a week.

- Face Covering Requirement for ALL Camp Participants
MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED WHEN INDOORS for all campers, staff, and volunteers. Masks will not be provided. Campers must come equipped with 2 face masks each day. Appropriate face masks cover both the nose and mouth, are made of solid material without gaps or holes, and do not display offensive language or imaging. No medical exemptions will be accepted at this time.
- Symptom Screening
We will do a modified daily symptom screening (detailed in the Check In/Check Out section) for all campers, staff and volunteers upon arrival Monday-Friday. We will additionally monitor symptoms and do temperature checks as needed throughout the day.

- **Outdoor Time**

Due to indoor programming and capacity restrictions, and to ease the process of social distancing, we will be holding as much of Summer Day Camp outdoors as possible (apart from bathroom breaks and in the case of inclement weather). Any indoor spaces used will be frequently sanitized. Additionally, in the case of inclement weather, each camp group will have a socially distanced indoor space to be utilized throughout the day. To secure the safety and comfort of your camper, it is with the utmost importance that all campers are provided with the outdoor gear they will need to stay cool, dry, and protected from the sun. If your camper does not have the supplies needed, or you have questions concerning what they will need, please contact our Camp Manager, Mary Rose, at camp@blandfordnaturecenter.org or (616) 735-6240 ext. 105.

- **Sanitization**

Both campers and camp staff will practice frequent hand washing and sanitizing throughout the day. All indoor spaces will be frequently sanitized. Camp materials will be sanitized between usage as necessary.

- **Camp Group Cohorting**

All camp groups will be kept socially distanced when indoors to reduce exposure rates. Small group intermingling will only be allowed when outdoors.

- **Lunch/Snack**

Camps will eat lunch and snacks outdoors and be socially distanced whenever possible. In the case of inclement weather, camp groups will eat indoors, socially distanced, in their socially distanced indoor space.

- **Isolation/Exposure Management Plan**

Any campers who become symptomatic or sick while at camp will be isolated in an indoor space until they can be picked up by a parent, guardian, or caretaker. The camper will remain masked while isolated. The camper will need to receive a negative PCR test to be able to return to camp. If the camper has a sibling at camp, we will strongly urge families to get siblings tested and closely monitor for symptoms.

- **Communicating with Families and Staff**

Blandford camp staff will be in close contact with all families. We will keep all participants informed as any changes are made to our COVID protocols. Any exposure occurring within the camp setting will be directly communicated to any close-contacts.

Section 2: Registration and Waitlists

• NEW! 2023 Camp Cancellation and Refund Policy

All individual camp sessions will have a \$30 nonrefundable deposit. This deposit covers the cost of internal processing fees. Refunds will be processed as follows:

- o Registrants who cancel **more than 30 days** before their camp session start date will receive a full refund, minus a \$30 deposit.
- o Registrants who cancel **14 to 29 days** before their camp session start date will receive a 50% refund, minus a \$30 deposit.
- o Registrants who cancel **within two weeks** of their session will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis:
 - Cancellations due to camper illness, injury, or other emergency will require a physician's written verification before a refund, minus a \$30 deposit, will be issued.
 - Cancellations due to personal reasons will not be refunded.
 - No-shows without prior communication will not be refunded.
 - Session fees will not be refunded if a camper is sent home due to behavioral or health issues.
- o If camp groups or sessions are canceled due to Covid-19 or other circumstances beyond our control for 3 or more days, registrants will receive a 50% refund, minus a \$30 deposit.

• Registration

Member only registration opens on February 6th at 6:00am and closes on February 6th at 11:59pm. The members only registration period has been reduced to a 1 day only special in response to increased demand and efforts to keep camps accessible to both members and nonmembers. NO CAMPS WILL BE HELD. If you need to purchase or renew your membership, please do so as soon as possible at blandfordnaturecenter.org/memberships/. Any remaining camps will be opened for registration to the general public on February 13th at 6:00am.

• Waitlists

If a camp is full, a camper can be placed on the waitlist. BNC staff cannot do this. Waitlist registration needs to be done by the parent, guardian, or caretaker registering the camper(s) for camp.

How to get on a wait list: On the regular registration page for the age group, there is a button that says "Register" beside each camp. This button remains active even after the camp is full. If you want to add a camper to a waitlist, you need to click the "Register" button beside your camp of choice and enter all of their camper's information. You will not be charged while on the waitlist - if a spot becomes available you will receive an email with a prompt to pay. If you do not receive any email or phone verification that you have been cleared from the waitlist, then you are still waitlisted.

What are the chances of getting off the waitlist and into camp: Unfortunately, we can't know whether a camper will be taken off a waitlist. Your camper will get in if another camper cancels and this does happen. If there are more than three campers on a waitlist for a camp, the chances are pretty slim, but you don't pay anything to enter a wait list, so there's no harm to try!

Section 3: Returning Camp Programming/Procedures

• Check In/Check Out Process

We will return to our normal check in and check out procedures with the addition of daily symptom screenings and temperature checks. Check-in and check-out for farm camps will take place in front of the large, red goat barn at the Blandford Farm located 3145 Milo Street NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. (In the case of poor weather, check-in will be located inside of the farm classroom, or the large red goat barn)

Please note: farm campers may not be dropped off at the main Blandford Nature Center campus.

- o **DROP-OFF STARTS AT 8:45 AM.** Staff will not be present to care for your child until 8:45.
- o **Parents must check-in their camper at the farm camp check-in table daily.** You will be asked to initial a main check-in sheet. This ensures we know who dropped off your camper.
- o **Camp ends at 12:00 for Nature Buds and 4:00 for Wild Sprouts, Trail Blazers, and Outdoor Explorers. Pick-up is no later than 10 minutes after camp ends.**
 - If you are running late, please call us at 616-735-6240 so we can inform the Camp Educator. **If you are late twice or more, you will be charged with a Camp Cool Down fee of \$20 for members/\$40 for non-members.**
 - If your camper is registered for our Camp Cool Down, pick-up is no later than 5:15pm. Late pick-up from Camp Cool Down will result in an additional fee of \$0.25 per minute or \$15 per hour. Camp Cool Down will occur at the main Blandford Nature Center campus at 1715 Hillburn Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. Please pick up your camper from the Learning Lab or schoolyard, located near the Mary Jane Dockeray Visitor Center.
- o **Campers and parents must check-out with Camp Staff at the end of the day.** Campers will only be allowed to leave with adults designated in registration. The designated adult will need to show a valid photo ID and initial the main check-out sheet daily. This ensures we know who picked up your camper.
 - Please inform the Camp Administrator, Camp Coordinator, or Camp Educators of any and all drop-off/pick-up changes including designated adults, doctor's appointments, etc. as soon as possible.

• Nature Bud Camps Return!

We will be offering our Nature Buds Camps (ages 4 and 5) again this season! We understand that 4 year old campers are not yet eligible for the vaccine. We will utilize layered mitigation strategies of masks, social distancing, outdoor programming, and frequent hand washing. Nature Bud campers are only present for half of the day from 9:00am until 12:00pm. This shorter time period will also help reduce exposure for campers, staff, and volunteers.

• Before and After Care Return!

We will be offering our Camp Warm Up and Camp Cool Down again this season! We recognize that this will create slight crossover within camp cohorts. Camp Warm Up and Camp Cool Down will utilize layered mitigation strategies of masks, social distancing, outdoor programming, and frequent hand washing to prevent and reduce exposure for campers, staff, and volunteers.

- **Favorite Camp Themes Return!**

You may notice that some of your favorite camp themes have returned this season! These themes include Wild Culinary Adventures, Wild Wizarding Wonders, and Wilderness Scouts/Leaders. You and your camper(s) may notice changes to these camps. Any changes were made to improve COVID precautions.

- **Offsite Trips Return!**

For 2 specialty camps we will be doing an offsite trip this season! These camps are Farm Stand and Wilderness Leaders. Layered mitigation strategies will be used such as masks, social distancing, outdoor programming, and frequent hand washing to prevent and reduce exposure for campers, staff, and volunteers.

Section 4: Additional Camp Safety Policies

- Tick Warning**

Scientists and insect experts are predicting an extremely heavy tick season. We are urging all campers and families to take precautions. Wear long sleeves and pants when temperatures allow. Use insect repellent that also deters ticks. We urge all families to perform THOROUGH tick checks DAILY. Focus on problem areas like under the arms, behind the knees, in and around hair, between legs, and around hemlines and waistbands. To remove ticks use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upwards with slow hands and even pressure so the tick does not break. After removal, thoroughly clean the bite and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. Never crush a tick with your fingers. Dispose of ticks by soaking in rubbing alcohol, or close in an air-tight bag and throw away.

- Smart Watch Policy**

For the safety and privacy of our campers and their families, smart watches are no longer permitted at camp. As most smart watches have photo-taking capabilities, the use of smart watches violates our no camera policy. One of our goals at Camp is to achieve an immersive screen free experience where campers are able to engage in nature and feel empowered in the natural world. Campers who bring smart watches will be asked to keep them in their bag until the end of the day. If a camper is seen with a smart watch after being asked to keep it in their bag, the smart watch will stay with the educator until the end of the day.

- Medication Policy**

All medication, whether prescription or over the counter, must be held by your camper's Educator at all times. Please hand all medicine to your child's Educator when you arrive in the morning and retrieve it when you leave. Prescription medicine must be in its original container with the camper's name printed on it. Over-the-counter medicine must be placed in a Ziploc bag with the camper's name written on it. This applies to all OTC medicine including pain relievers, antihistamine, and antacids. The exception to this rule is Epi-Pens that are contained on a lanyard around a camper's neck. Your camper must be able to self-administer all medication. BNC staff will observe your camper taking their medication but will not dispense, administer, or regulate your child's medication. If your child is unable to self-administer their medication, their parent, guardian, or a family-provided aide must be present to administer all medication.

- Camp Groups are Final**

We will be unable to accommodate any swaps or changing of camp groups. Camp groups listed at check in are final. No accommodations will be made on the day of camp.

What to Bring to Camp

- **Wear weather-appropriate clothes (e.g. raincoats, boots, sunhats) and shoes that can be worn while running and getting muddy.** Dress for outdoor activities that could get your camper dirty and wet, in rain or shine! Please note that sandals must have a back-strap, flip-flops are not permitted. We will be spending AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE OUTDOORS. Weather appropriate clothing is extremely important. If your camper does not have the gear needed, or you have questions concerning what they will need, please contact our Camp Manager, Mary Rose, at camp@blandfordnaturecenter.org or (616) 735-6240 ext. 105.
- **Bring a lunch, hearty snacks, and a reusable water bottle.** We recommend easily refillable water bottles and hearty, healthy snacks. Campers will be given one-two snack breaks per day, so please pack appropriately based on your camper's needs. Help us reduce waste by packing in reusable containers or consider a zero-waste lunch.
- **Apply sunscreen and insect repellent at home (before arriving at camp).** The general recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics is to limit the use of DEET (10% or less) products on kids. Please apply initial treatments before arriving at camp. You may send extra sunscreen/insect repellent with your camper, but please ensure it is labeled with your camper's name and that they know how to apply it. Educators may not be able to assist with reapplication.
- **Please label all of your camper's items.** BNC will make every effort to return all lost and found items but cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. Lost items will be collected throughout the week, and educators will do their best to find the owners. Unclaimed items will be donated.
- **Leave toys, family heirlooms or irreplaceable items at home, unless specified by the Camp Educator.** Children are often devastated when these items are lost at camp. We also recommend that campers do not bring electronic devices to camp. If you would like your child to bring a device, they will be asked to store it in a bag during the day and won't be able to access it except in emergencies (this includes smart watches that have a built-in camera). BNC is not liable for any lost/damaged electronics or other items.
- **Clearly label all medical supplies (EpiPens, medications, etc.).** All medical supplies must be given to camp staff each day at check-in.
- **EXTRA ITEMS FOR TIE-DYING.** Each BNC camper will receive one complimentary camp t-shirt. They will get this t-shirt on the Wednesday of their first week of camp. If your camper is attending multiple weeks of camp, please feel free to send them with another item for tie-dying on the subsequent Wednesdays. White 100% cotton items are best for tie-dying. Label any extra items with your child's name before sending them to camp.

Medical Needs

Blandford Nature Center has partnered with the City of Walker Fire & EMS services to ensure a quick response in case of an emergency. All BNC Camp Staff are certified in lifesaving First Aid & CPR, but Blandford Nature Center is not licensed to dispense medication. If your child requires regular medication (insulin, allergy medication, behavioral modification medication, etc.), your child must be able to self-administer this medication (with supervision) or you must send an official representative (parent, guardian or aide) to administer the medication as needed. The exception to this restriction will be the administration of life-saving Epinephrine (EpiPens). If your child has a known severe allergy, you MUST alert BNC Staff and provide an EpiPen each day of camp.

Behavior Expectations

Blandford Nature Center Staff work hard to ensure every camper has a fun, safe, and rewarding time during camp. Please review the following expectations with your child to help create a great camp experience:

- **Respect other campers.** Take turns, listen, maintain body boundaries, use polite words, problem solve together, and make friends.
- **Respect Blandford Staff.** Follow directions the first time and use respectful language.
- **Respect Nature.** Leave plants and animals as you find them. Take only memories!
- **Be safe and stay with your group.**
- **Be active and participate in activities.** Ask questions, be engaged, and try new things!

If a child's behavior is disruptive to the program or the experience of other campers, Staff will follow the behavior action steps listed below. Disruptive behavior includes, but is NOT limited to, bullying, inappropriate language, unwillingness to work cooperatively with group, destruction of nature center grounds.

Behavior Action Steps:

- **Step 1:** Disruptive behavior will be discussed with the camper, Educator, and support staff (Camp Manager, Camp Administrator, or Chief Operating Officer) with an agreed upon solution.
- **Step 2:** If the discussion in Step 1 is unsuccessful, support staff (Camp Manager, Camp Administrator, Chief Operating Officer) will notify parents of the concerns and discuss an appropriate, positive solution.
- **Step 3:** If disruptive behavior continues after camper-staff-parent conference, the camper will be sent home.

If a child's behavior is aggressive or violent (hitting, kicking, biting, or using any object as a weapon) toward staff or other campers, or if a child attempts to run away from the group, the child will be sent home immediately.

No refund will be given when a child is sent home for behavior reasons. Blandford Nature Center wants all children to be successful at camp; options for returning to camp after being dismissed can be discussed with the Camp Manager or the Chief Operating Officer.

Please contact us with any questions, concerns, or special needs you or your camper may have regarding Summer Day Camp.

We look forward to seeing you in the woods this season!