



Winter/Spring Break Camp Information Guide

Updated October 30th, 2023

It is of the utmost importance that you take the time to read through this guide before your child comes to camp to ensure you understand our most current protocols. We find that it is beneficial for both you and your camper(s) to be familiar with the following protocols PRIOR to arriving for your session of camp.

Dear Blandford Camp Families,

Here at Blandford, we are thrilled to be offering camp programming year-round, bringing the fun of summer camp to campers through rain, snow, and sun! We recognize the need in our community for opportunities for children to expand their horizons, socialize, and enrich their lives with nature.

Throughout this document, you'll find our detailed plan for keeping staff, volunteers, campers, and their families safe and healthy as well as key information on the operations of our Winter and Spring Break Camp. This information guide outlines expectations for our program for both you and your camper(s).

- **Section 1: Camp Health and Safety Protocols**
- **Section 2: Registration and Waitlists**
- **Section 3: Camp Programming/Procedures**
- **Section 4: Additional Camp Safety Policies**

Every year, 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, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and staff—can make it happen. We can't wait to share camp with you!

Sincerely,

Mary Rose Jones, Camp Manager

camp@blandfordnaturecenter.org

(616) 735-6240

Section 1: Camp Health and Safety Protocols

- **General Sick Policy**

One sick camper can bring a whole week of fun to a halt. If your camper is showing signs of illness, such as headache, sneezing, itchy or runny nose, coughing, or significant indigestion please inform camp staff so we can decide on the best course of action. We ask that any camper with a fever, cough, or significant indigestion be kept home. If a camper has a fever, excessive cough, or significant indigestion, we will contact you to come and pick them up to protect the health of our campers, volunteers and staff.

- **Current COVID Protocols**

All campers and volunteers are **strongly encouraged to be up-to-date on covid-19 vaccinations and boosters** prior to the start of camp. Campers, volunteers, and staff are welcome to wear a mask or face covering if they would like, but **masks will not be required**. The only exception will be in the case of a camper becoming symptomatic at camp. **In the case that a camper becomes symptomatic (fever, excessive cough, or significant indigestion) guardians will be contacted for an early pick up, and the camper will be asked to wear a mask until they are picked up.**

- **Outdoor Time**

We will be holding as much of winter and spring break camp outdoors as possible (apart from bathroom breaks, snack, lunch, and in the case of inclement weather). Any indoor spaces used will be frequently sanitized. 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 warm and dry. 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 on a daily basis.

- **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 is expected to not return to camp until symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

- **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 health and safety protocols. Any known COVID exposure occurring within the camp setting will be directly communicated to any close-contacts.

Section 2: Registration and Waitlists

- **Registration**

Registration opens for both members and non-members on November 1st at 6:00am. Members will still receive a discounted price. If you need to purchase or renew your membership, please do so as soon as possible at blandfordnaturecenter.org/memberships/.

- **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. You don't pay anything to enter a wait list, so there's no harm to try!

Section 3: Camp Programming/Procedures

- **Check In/Check Out Process**

Check-in and check-out will take place in our Environmental Education Center located to the east of the Mary Jane Dockeray Visitor Center at 1715 Hillburn Ave NW, Grand Rapids, 49504.

- **DROP-OFF STARTS AT 8:45 AM.** Staff will not be present to care for your child until 8:45 am.
- **Guardians must check-in their camper at the 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.
- **Camp ends at 3:00. Pick-up is no later than 15 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 fee of \$20.**
- **Campers and guardians must check-out with their Camp Educator at the end of the day.** Campers will only be allowed to leave with designated adults listed on the camper's 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 Admin team or your Camp Educators of any and all drop-off/pick-up changes including designated adults, doctor's appointments, etc. as soon as possible.

Section 4: Additional Camp Safety Policies

- **Smart Watch Policy**

For the safety and privacy of our campers and their families, smart watches are not 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.

- **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.

What to Bring to Camp

- **Check out our Gear Guide below.** Dress for outdoor activities that could get your camper dirty and wet, in snow, rain, or shine! 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.



- **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.

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 a 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 guardians of the concerns and discuss an appropriate, positive solution.
- **Step 3:** If disruptive behavior continues after the camper-staff-guardian 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 Winter/Spring Break Camp.

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