

# North River Nature Camp Parent Handbook

Thank you for selecting North River Nature Camp for your child. This handbook gives you an overview of our camp policies and contains important information to help ensure your child is ready for the first day of camp. Please take some time to read it over and discuss it with your child.



If you have any questions, please contact the camp director, Amy Quist at 781-837-9400, Ext. 7903 or email [northrivercamp@massaudubon.org](mailto:northrivercamp@massaudubon.org).

We look forward to a successful camp season!

## North River & You: A Camp Partnership

North River Nature Camp strives to offer high quality, fun, and educational experiences to all of our campers – experiences we hope they enjoy and remember for a long time. However, we can't meet this goal without help from all of our campers and their families, so we invite you to enter into a partnership to ensure that every child has the best possible learning adventure while attending our camp program.

### We pledge to provide:

- **Nature based programs that incorporate learning, social interaction, and free play.**
- **An environment where staff establish expectations and model appropriate behavior.**
- **Positive community spirit that helps every child feel included and cared about.**

### In return, we expect the following from our parents and campers:

- **Attention to the daily preparation needs of your child (dressed appropriately, has a water bottle and nutritious snack/lunch);**
- **Cooperation with our stated and written policies; and willingness to act in concert with camp staff to maintain or restore appropriate behavior and courtesy;**
- **And commitment to the well-being of the entire camp community (such as keeping a sick or overtired child at home).**

If, at any time, you have a question or concern about our day camp program, we ask you to please speak with your child's counselor or the 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, discipline, and/or grievance policies at any time.

**Our Staff:**

Camp staff members are carefully selected for their maturity and their caring attitude towards children. All staff must pass background checks and receive training in safety, child development and natural history. Lead instructors are certified in First Aid and CPR. In addition, we have a Health Care Consultant on call to provide routine care if needed.

**Our Credentials, License and Accreditation:**

North River Nature Camp is licensed by the Marshfield Board of Health and complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. We are also accredited by the American Camp Association.

## Important Reminders

**Refunds and cancellations:**

No refunds or transfer of funds will be given for dismissal or incomplete attendance (including sick days). All cancellation or session change requests must be submitted in writing. Prior to May 15<sup>th</sup> a refund will be granted; refunds do not include the non-refundable deposit. **After May 15<sup>th</sup> there are no refunds.**

**Dismissals:**

The camp reserves the right to dismiss a camper when the camper's behavior interferes with the rights of others, the smooth functioning of the group or activity, or violates the camp's principles of conduct. In such cases, no refund will be given.

**Medical Information:**

Under Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health requirements, all campers must have a health form on file before attending camp. A physical exam is requested within the 18 months prior to camp and is required for programs with 3 or more overnights. Health forms will be sent to you upon registration via 'CampDoc' – an online electronic health records company.

If you need assistance with this process, please contact our office manager, Emily Simmer, at [esimmer@massaudubon.org](mailto:esimmer@massaudubon.org) or 781-837-9400.

If you have questions regarding your child's ability to participate due to a health or behavioral issue, please contact the Camp Director, Amy Quist, at [aquist@massaudubon.org](mailto:aquist@massaudubon.org) or 781-837-9400.

## Camp Arrival and Departure

**Camp Times:** Camp begins at 9:15 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. (unless otherwise scheduled for specific camp sessions). **An authorized adult must sign campers in and out of camp every day.**

**Camper Arrival:**Each Day

We have a rolling drop off from 8:45 to 9:15 am.

Early Arrival – before 8:45 am

Please wait with your child at the walkway entrance until a staff person arrives. Camp staff cannot be responsible for campers before 8:45 am.

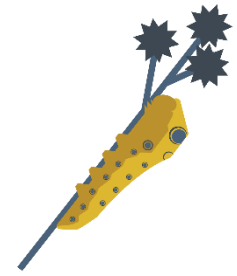
Late Arrivals – after 9:15 am

Please park in parking lot and walk your child up to the Nature Center to check-in with staff.



### First Day of Camp

On the first day of every session, parents and campers are required to check-in with the Camp Director at the entrance to the brick walkway. They will then be directed to his/her counselor(s) to sign in. *When pulling into camp, please note that the parking lot is one-way. Follow the signage to the appropriate parking area.*



### Every Other Day

After day one, campers may be dropped off and signed-in at the entrance to the brick walkway.

**Dogs & Pets:** We love animals, however, **domestic animals are not allowed at Mass Audubon sites or at North River Wildlife Sanctuary.** Please leave your pets at home or in the car during drop off and pick up times and please **do not** walk your pets in the parking areas.

### **Camper Departure:**

#### Each Day

Please park in the parking lot and meet your child at the entrance to the brick walkway. Sign your child out with your child's counselor. **Please note:** Your child will be released only to those specified on the health form. You may add a person by sending a note that includes the camper's full name, date of request, name of the pickup person and their phone number, and the guardian's signature. The pick-up person must mark his/her initials on each group's checkout sheet.

#### Early Pick Up

Please give a note to the Camp Director or lead nature counselor at least one full day in advance if possible. Group activities and hikes cannot be interrupted due to a last-minute change of plan. In such an instance, your child would be supervised at the main building until pick up.

#### Late Pick Up

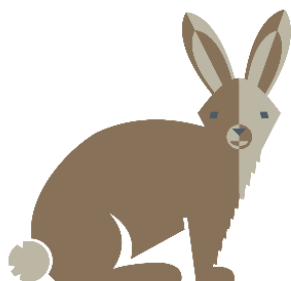
Timely pick up of campers is required. Please call immediately if there is an emergency that will make you late.

#### Absence from camp

If a camper is going to be absent, **please call the office at 781-837-9400** to inform staff. If there are scheduled absences during the camp session, please inform camp staff in writing. See **Health & Safety** section for more information on sick campers.

## After Camp

Pre-registration is required for After Camp options. Space is limited. **To add this option after your initial registration, you must call or email [northrivercamp@massaudubon.org](mailto:northrivercamp@massaudubon.org).** At the end of the regular camp day, campers enrolled in the After Care program will gather at the picnic tables adjacent to the main walkway. Campers should bring an extra snack. After Camp runs from 3:00-4:30 pm. Weeks available:



Session 3: July 8-12

Session 4: July 15-19

Session 5: July 22-Jul 26

Session 6: Jul 29-Aug 2

## Camp Preparation & Important Reminders

**Before your child comes to camp:** Please take some time to prepare your child for his/her participation in our camp program. Here are a few things to share:

- Each group will have a designated area to meet and space to place their things. On the first morning of each session, counselors will provide an orientation to the camp area, boundaries, location of bathrooms, etc.
- Each child will be expected to be courteous and respectful to others, as well as follow our rules. We will address this with each camp group on the first day of each session.
- Please show your child how to apply his/her own sunscreen and bug repellent for camper safety. We will reapply at lunch each day and may help campers with your permission. **Aerosol sprays are not permitted at camp.**
- Encourage your child to go to bed early – a good night's rest is essential to having a good day at camp!

### What to wear and bring:

We recommend that campers wear comfortable, rugged clothes and shoes that can get muddy, mucky, and grass or dirt stained. Due to the active nature of our camp, flip-flops and crocs are not allowed to be worn during the camp day. Parents will be informed when water shoes are necessary. Please double check each morning to make sure your child has the necessary items.

- **Shoes** – sneakers, closed-toed shoes
- **Water bottle** – refillable and labeled with child's name
- **Snack** – please try to use reusable containers
- **Lunch** – We do not refrigerate lunches. Please check out [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov) for information on “safe bag lunches.”
- **Backpack**
- **Hat**
- **Sunscreen**
- **Insect repellent** (no aerosol sprays please)
- **Raincoat** (if forecasted)
- **Sweater or sweatshirt** for cool days
- **Extra socks**
- **Sunglasses (optional)**

**Mass Audubon is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items brought from home. Please LABEL every item your child brings to camp!!**

### What to bring for food:

Full day campers will require a nutritious, non-refrigerated snack and lunch. A cold-pack is suggested to keep food cool. Also, due to potential problems with food allergies, children are not permitted to share snacks or lunches. Think about your impact – try to pack so as to produce as little trash as possible.

**Remember, we have a carry-in/carry-out policy for all trash/waste generated, unless it is compostable.**

### What not to bring:

Mass Audubon is not responsible for lost or damaged articles that have been brought to camp. Your child should not bring:

- Electronic devices, cell phones, iPods, walkie-talkies, etc.
- Collectable cards, stuffed animals, and other personal toys
- Personal sports equipment

- Matches, firearms/ammunition, knives or weapons of any kind (including toy weapons) – **Grounds for dismissal.**
- Tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs. Possession and use is prohibited.
- Pets or any animals

Any such items will be taken and held by the lead counselors in a secure spot to be returned to parents at the end of the day. If there is an appropriate item that your child would like to bring in, please make arrangements with the Camp Director in advance.

### Birthdays at camp:

We encourage each camp group to celebrate campers’ birthdays in their own style. Parents are welcome to provide birthday treats, **but are reminded that they MUST check with the Camp Director at least 2 days prior to sending any food to camp** in order to accommodate any food related allergies in the camp group.

We recommend fruit juice popsicles (with no food coloring dyes) and would be happy to store in the freezer.

## Health & Safety

### Health care at camp:

The Camp Director, lead camp counselors, and other full-time North River staff have certifications in first aid and CPR. Our off-site healthcare consultant is Dr. Matthew Butka, a hospitalist at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth. The Camp Director acts as the onsite Health Supervisor and will administer any prescribed medications during camp. The Marshfield Fire Department EMTs provide emergency care for North River camp programs.

### Camper health information:

To attend camp, all campers must submit camp forms, which includes a health history. **NEW as of last year – North River now uses CampDoc.com, an electronic health record system.** After registering for camp, parents will receive information from CampDoc.com on how to complete their camper’s health information online.



### Absent/Sick Campers:

If a camper is going to be absent, please call the office at 781-837-9400 to inform staff. If there are scheduled absences during the camp session, please inform camp staff in writing. Please do not send a sick child to camp. Children should stay home when they show any of the following symptoms:

- |                  |                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Fever          | • diarrhea                           |
| • skin eruptions | • discharge from or red eyes         |
| • earache        | • continuous cough                   |
| • sore throat    | • active lice or scabies infestation |
| • vomiting       |                                      |

Children with viral infections will be allowed to return when their fever returns to normal without the aid of fever-reducing medications. Children with bacterial infections will be allowed to return after 24 hours on antibiotics. Participants infected with lice may return when they have been treated and are nit free.

**In case of any illness where a child is absent from camp, parents must speak to the Camp Director before the camper may return to camp.**

### If your child is sick at camp:

- All campers requiring medical assessment and/or treatment beyond basic first aid are referred to the Health Care Supervisor. Based upon assessment, the camper will be cared for on-site and

returned to their camp group, sent home for parental or personal health care provider care, or referred to emergency care providers.

- If your child's illness extends beyond the 20-30 minutes we will notify you by phone. Sick children stay with the Health Care Supervisor in a quiet area so they can rest and be monitored.
- If your child has an injury needing immediate care, we will call 911 and then call you immediately.
- In cases where campers are off-site, campers will be given treatment by a trip leader and transported to the nearest hospital if necessary.
- Parents and guardians will be notified of any serious accident or illness as soon as possible; daily notification by paper slips or phone call is provided to parents for all reported injuries and illnesses.

### Medications at Camp:

If your child takes medication during the camp day or has emergency medications (inhalers, Epi-pens, etc.), you will be required to upload an allergy/medication action plan to CampDoc.com. No medication may be administered without this form. Medication must be in the original container, bearing the pharmacy label with the camper's name and all necessary prescription information. Please send only enough of the medication for the camp session and write the number of tablets on the container. A record of medication administered is kept in the first aid log book.

### Immunization Record/Physical Exam:

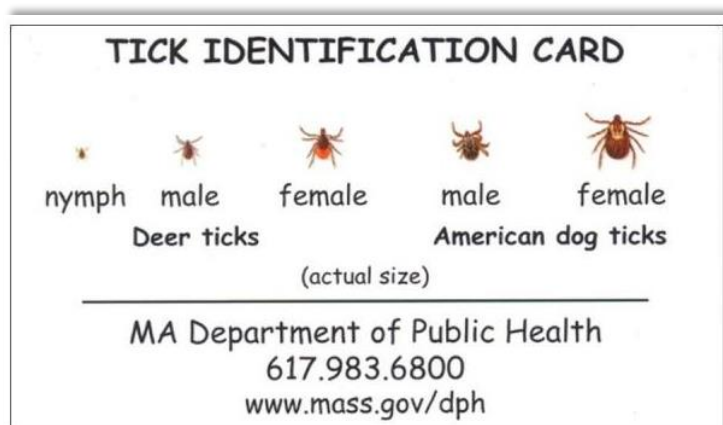
Immunizations and Physicals must meet the requirements of the MA Dept. of Public Health. We require a copy of your child's immunization record (dates must be provided by health care provider) and a physical exam is requested within the 18 months prior to camp and is required for programs with 3 or more overnights. Please call us if you need a health care treatment/immunization form for your physician to complete.

### Health Insurance:

ALL camper families must complete the health insurance portion of the health form. If your child does not have U.S. health and accident insurance, **please contact the office today.**

### Tick Precautions:

We live in New England and ticks can be found almost everywhere, including your own backyard. During the camp day, we do regular tick checks at lunch and other times as needed. Every night at bath time or just before bed, please take a few minutes to check your child for ticks. Be sure to check behind the knees, underwear lines, underarms, and on the back of the neck (near hairline). If you would like more information about ticks and Lyme disease, please visit the MA Department of Health website at: [www.mass.gov/dph/tick](http://www.mass.gov/dph/tick).



## Behavior Expectations & Discipline Policy

Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp program, campers must be able to move about on uneven terrain. Campers are expected to participate meaningfully in age-appropriate activities, including nature study. All campers must follow stated behavior expectations and safety rules. If you have any questions regarding your child's ability to participate fully in our camp program, please contact the Camp Director. The Camp Director reserves the right to dismiss a camper when in his/her judgment the camper's behavior interferes with the rights of others, the smooth functioning of the group or activity, or violates the camp's behavior policy. In such cases no refunds will be given.

Our behavior expectations and safety rules have been developed to ensure the safety of campers and to show respect for self, others and the environment. Campers will be made aware of these rules on the first day of the session. There will be no hurting of each other either verbally or physically.

**Please go over these expectations with your child before arrival to camp.**

General rules:

- Follow the Camp Director and counselor's directions.
- Stay with your group, beside or behind the leader.
- Treat everything and everyone around you with respect.
- Keep hands to yourself and be mindful of other's personal space.
- Leave sticks and other objects where you found them (unless otherwise told it is okay).
- Hitting, punching, fighting and foul language are inappropriate behaviors and will not be permitted.

### **Discipline Policy**

Infringements of the behavior expectations and/or safety rules bring fair and obvious consequences. Staff will follow a series of steps: one-on-one discussion, time-out from activities, and time with the Camp Director. The child may be asked to apologize. If a child acts in an unsafe manner that is physically harmful to self or others, staff will remove the child from the danger and bring him/her to the Camp Director. In the case of serious and/or constant issues, the guardian will be called and a behavior agreement will be determined. Those who cannot meet these expectations may be dismissed from the camp program without monetary recourse.

As mandated by the state, corporal punishment will not be used; no camper will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse; no camper will be denied food as punishment; and no camper will be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. A complete copy of the Discipline Policy is available upon request.

### **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.

## **Field Trips**

Campers enrolled in Nature Theme Sessions that include a field trip will spend one day exploring at Duxbury Beach. Field trips take place on Wednesday and are weather dependent. Please note: Transportation for field trips that occur during Nature Theme Sessions require camper drop-off and pick-up at the field trip destination.

Transportation for any field trips during the *Nature STEAM Games & Challenges*, *Into the Wild*, *Nature Photography*, *Creative Woodworking*, *Conservation Trailblazers* camp sessions, and any special outings for Naturalists will be provided by Mass Audubon vans to and from trip destinations. Camper drop-off and pick-up will be at North River Wildlife Sanctuary.



## Directions to Duxbury Beach, Duxbury

- From Route 139 at Marshfield Center: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto 3A/Moraine St. and continue to follow.
- Turn left onto St. George Street. (At stop light)
- Stay on St. George Street to the intersection with Washington Street. (Flag pole in the middle of the road and St. George ends.)
- Turn left. The road curves to the right with salt marsh on your right. Go to the end.
- Cross the Powder Point Bridge and you'll see the Harbor Master Hut on your right. Tell beach personnel you are there for the Mass Audubon camp program and proceed to the small parking lot behind the hut where the blue Audubon van will be parked.

## Overnights

Overnight sessions this summer include:

- **Into the Wild** (July 15-19); campout on the sanctuary Thursday evening, July 18. Camper pick-up is Friday at 9:00 am (no camp Friday, July 19).
  - **Adventure Stewards** (Aug 5-9); campout at Wachusett Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary in Princeton, MA, Thursday evening, August 8. Campers will be picked up at North River on Friday, August 9, at 3:00pm.
- Campers will sleep in tents, provided by North River, weather permitting. If inclement weather is predicted, they will sleep in the Nature Center. All meals during campouts provided by Mass Audubon.

## Additional Information

Campers are not considered to have increased risk of Meningococcal Disease, but the Massachusetts Department of Public Health would like us to provide the information on next page.

**Questions:** Call the office at 781-837-9400 or email [northrivercamp@massaudubon.org](mailto:northrivercamp@massaudubon.org) for additional camp details and FAQs.



We can't wait for another summer of fun adventures and great wildlife sightings!



***What is meningococcal disease?***

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can infect the tissue (the “meninges”) that surrounds the brain and spinal cord and cause meningitis, or they may infect the blood or other organs of the body. In the US, about 1,000-1,200 people get meningococcal disease each year and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 11-19% may lose limbs, become hard of hearing or deaf, have problems with their nervous system, including long term neurologic problems, or have seizures or strokes.

***How is meningococcal disease spread?***

These bacteria are passed from person-to-person through saliva (spit). You must be in close contact with an infected person’s saliva in order for the bacteria to spread. Close contact includes activities such as kissing, sharing water bottles, sharing eating/drinking utensils or sharing cigarettes with someone who is infected; or being within 3-6 feet of someone who is infected and is coughing and sneezing.

***Who is most at risk for getting meningococcal disease?***

People who travel to certain parts of the world where the disease is very common, microbiologists, people with HIV infection and those exposed to meningococcal disease during an outbreak are at risk for meningococcal disease. Children and adults with damaged or removed spleens or persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder) are at risk. People who live in certain settings such as college freshmen living in dormitories and military recruits are at greater risk of disease from some of the serotypes.

***Are camp attendees at increased risk for meningococcal disease?***

Children attending day or residential camps are **not** considered to be at an increased risk for meningococcal disease because of their participation.

***Is there a vaccine against meningococcal disease?***

Yes, quadrivalent meningococcal polysaccharide (Menomune) and meningococcal conjugate vaccines (Menactra and Menveo) protect against 4 serotypes (subgroups), A, C, W, and Y, of meningococcal disease. Meningococcal serogroup B vaccines (Bexsero and Trumenba) protect against serogroup B meningococcal disease.

***Should my child receive meningococcal vaccine?***

Meningococcal vaccine is **not** recommended for attendance at camps. However, these vaccines may be recommended for children with certain high-risk health conditions, such as those described above. Parents of children who are at higher risk of infection, because of certain medical conditions or other circumstances (see above, “Who is most at risk?”), should discuss vaccination with their child’s healthcare provider.

***How can I protect my child from getting meningococcal disease?***

The best protection against meningococcal disease and many other infectious diseases is thorough and frequent handwashing, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Individuals should:

1. wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food (hands should be washed with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel or rub may be used if hands are not visibly dirty);
2. Cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard the tissue in a trash can; or if they don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve.
3. Not share food, drinks or eating utensils with other people, especially if they are ill.

If your child is exposed to someone with meningococcal disease, antibiotics may be recommended to keep your child from getting sick. You can obtain more information about meningococcal disease or vaccination from your healthcare provider, your local Board of Health (listed in the phone book under government), or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or toll-free at (888) 658-2850 or on the MDPH website at [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph).