

Fern & Feather Nature Camp Camp Handbook

felixneck@massaudubon.org, 100 Felix Neck Dr. Edgartown, MA 02539, (508) 627-4850

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



If you have any questions, please contact the Camp Director, Sydney Pigott at (508) 627-4850 or email felixneckcamp@massaudubon.org

We look forward to a successful camp season!

Felix Neck & You: A Camp Partnership

Fern & Feather 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 cannot meet this goal without help from all of our campers and their families, so we invite you to enter a partnership to ensure that every camper 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 camper feel included and cared about.

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

- Attention to the daily preparation needs of your camper (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 camper at home).

If, at any time, you have a question or concern about our day camp program, please contact our 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 thoughtfully selected for their maturity, professionalism, and genuine care for children. All staff undergo comprehensive background checks and receive training in safety, camper

development, behavior support, and natural history. Our instructors are certified in First Aid and CPR, and all lead instructors also hold lifeguard certification. We additionally have a Healthcare Consultant on call to support routine medical needs. For camper safety, we follow the “**rule of three**” at all times—campers and staff are never alone together. A minimum of three people must be present when traveling or participating in any activity around camp.

Our Credentials, License, and Accreditation:

Fern & Feather Nature Camp is licensed by the Edgartown Board of Health and complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. We are also accredited by the American Camp Association.



Camp Essentials Checklist

- ☐ Check that the sessions and dates listed in the confirmation email are correct.
- ☐ Review this entire information packet.
- ☐ Camp sessions **paid-in-full** by **May 1st 2026**.
- ☐ **Complete CampDoc profile** by **May 1st 2026**.
- ☐ **Receive “Registration Complete” email** from Program Registrar confirming you are ready for camp!
- ☐ GET EXCITED!! - Camp season is coming, and we are so excited to see you!

Important Reminders

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. Please **upload immunization records and health forms to CampDoc by May 1st 2026**.

Payment Plan & Sliding Scale Information:

All camp sessions must be **paid-in-full** no later than **May 1st 2026**.

Payment Plans:

Should you require support in establishing a payment plan, please contact our Camp Director.

Sliding Scale:

Camp families may register using a tuition rate based on their annual gross income and household size. Registrants who use a tier 1-4 tuition rate will need to upload **income verification (tax return/ pay stub) to their CampDoc profile**. Camp administrative staff with Personal Information Protection (PIP) training will privately review any provided income verification documents and confirm or adjust the tiered rate based on your reported adjusted gross income.

Refunds and Cancellations:

A full refund, minus the nonrefundable deposit, is provided to camp families who cancel in writing on or before **May 1st, 2026**. Deposits are not transferable, and refunds are not given for participant dismissal,

absence, or incomplete attendance, including sick days. **After May 1st there are no refunds.** If we must cancel a session, you will receive a full refund.

Session Transfer:

Session transfer requests will be honored if there is space available and if a request is made at least two weeks prior to the session start date, after which transfers are not permitted.

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.

Deadlines:

All camp sessions must be **paid-in-full**, and all **paperwork must be completed and uploaded to CampDoc no later than May 1st, 2026.** Registrants will receive a completion email from our Program Registrar. A camper cannot attend camp and their spot is not guaranteed until all forms, waivers, and payments are completed (or a payment plan has been established). After **May 1st, 2026** registrants with outstanding balances and/or incomplete paperwork are at risk of losing their space(s) to someone from our waitlist.

If you need assistance at any time, please contact felixneckcamp@massaudubon.org or (508) 627-4850.

Camp at a Glance

Camper Groups



Pathfinders

Ages 4.5-6 - Counselor-to-Camper Ratio: 1 to 5



Explorers

Ages 7-8 - Counselor-to-Camper Ratio: 1 to 8



Adventurers **

Ages 9-11 - Counselor-to-Camper Ratio: 1 to 8

*Late Night (optional) on Thursday from 6-9 pm; no camp on Friday.

Please Note: There are no Adventurer sessions Week 1 or Week 8

**Adventurers and Ecologists may be combined depending on participant registration.



Ecologists**

Ages 12-13 - Counselor-to-Camper Ratio: 1 to 10

*Late Night (optional) on Thursday from 6-9 pm; no camp on Friday.)

Please Note: There are no Ecologist sessions Week 1 or Week 8

**Adventurers and Ecologists may be combined depending on participant registration.

Fern & Feather Nature Camp Weekly Themes

Week 1 - Nature Heroes June 22-26

Week 2 - Estuary Expedition June 29-July 3

Week 3 - Insect Investigators July 6-10

Week 4 - Fearless Fliers July 13-17

Week 5 - Tadpoles & Treasures July 20-24

Week 6 - Into the Wild July 27-31

Week 7 - Campology August 3-7

Week 8 - Soil to Sky August 10-14



First Day of Camp & What to Expect

Before your camper comes to camp:

Please take some time to prepare your camper for their participation in our camp program.

- Each group will have a designated area to meet and space to place their belongings. On the first morning of each session, counselors will provide an orientation to the camp area, boundaries, location of bathrooms, etc.
- Each camper will be expected to be courteous and respectful to others, and to follow instructions. We will address this with each camp group on the first day of each session.
- **TICK CHECKS:** During the camp day, we do **regular tick checks** as needed. Every night at bath time or just before bed, please take a few minutes to **check your camper for ticks**.
- Encourage your camper to go to bed early the night before, and during their camp week – a good night's rest is essential to having a good day at camp!

Please apply each morning at home before arriving at camp:

- **Sunscreen:** For camper safety, please show your camper how to apply their own sunscreen. We will reapply at lunch each day and may help campers with your permission.
- **Bug Repellent:** Bug repellent is recommended, mosquitoes and ticks share the habitat at Felix Neck. We will reapply at lunch each day and may help campers with your permission.
- **Please Note:** Aerosol sprays are not permitted at camp.

Bathrooms:

While we know some of our littlest campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own-- please reinforce potty training before your camper's session. Our camp staff do not provide one-on-one assistance during toileting and campers are expected to be able to fully use the toilet and clean up after themselves. If you have concerns about toileting with your camper, please contact the Camp Director.

- Camp groups travel to the bathrooms 3x per day; before morning snack (~10am), before lunch (~11:45am) and before pick-up (~2pm), and consistently before we leave for trail hikes.
- Bathrooms are easily accessible, and camp staff are ALWAYS available to take campers to the bathrooms at any point. Please remind your child to tell a counselor if they need to use the bathroom throughout the day.

Grown-up & Camper Mornings:

On **Thursdays at 8:30 am** grown-ups are invited to join their campers for a pre-camp walk or activity with Felix Neck staff and Suzan Bellincampi, Sanctuary Director. See the trails where your camper spends their days exploring. Activities vary each week and are dependent on weather conditions. Grown-ups are also invited to join our **Morning Circle on Fridays, 9:00-9:30 am** during which each group shares something they have done or created during the week.

Camper Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Fern & Feather Nature Camp Address: 100 Felix Neck Dr. Edgartown, MA 02539

A Note on Parking:

The entrance to Felix Neck is a very narrow road with limited turnouts. As a courtesy to fellow camp families, please be mindful of designated turnout spots. Please take the initiative to move into the nearest designated turnout if encountering another vehicle.

Camp Hours:

Camp **begins at 9 am and ends at 2:30 pm**. Monday through Friday (unless otherwise scheduled for specific camp sessions). An authorized adult (with ID) must sign campers in and out of camp every day. Registrants should use **CampDoc** to list adults authorized for drop-off/pick-up.

If you need to contact us during the camp day, please call Felix Neck Nature Center at (508) 627-4850. Our Camp Director/camp staff are often outside and unable to respond to phone calls/emails during the day.

Camper Drop-Off:

Please apply sunscreen (SPF 30 minimum) and bug repellent each morning at home **before arriving at camp.** No aerosols are allowed at camp.

- This year drop-off will be rolling from **8:45-9:15 am**. Please park in designated Fern & Feather Nature Camp Spots while dropping off your camper.
 - *Early Arrival:* Staff cannot be responsible for campers before 8:45 am.
- Check-in on the first day will take longer as we greet families, and make sure we have everything needed for the week. We appreciate your patience.
- When entering the Sanctuary, camp families should drive slowly and stay alert for pedestrians, wildlife, and other vehicles. **Use turnouts when other vehicles approach.**
- A **parent/guardian must be present on the first day** of camp to verify health and authorized pick-up information. Under NO circumstances may you drop off your camper without **signing them in with a staff member.**
- **Authorized Pick-Up:** We will verify adults authorized for camper pick-up during the first day check-in. Adults must have identification at time of pick-up.
- After you check-in with the Camp Director, your camper will be escorted to their designated group area.
- **Late Arrivals:** Please email and call the office at (508) 627-4850 if your camper will be arriving late. When you arrive, please park in the parking lot and call the office; a staff member will come and retrieve your camper.

Camper Pick-Up:

Adults picking up campers MUST BE AUTHORIZED via camper's **CampDoc** Release form and have identification at time of pick-up.

Please be prompt in picking up your camper. Please call the office if you will be late for Pick-Up.

- This year Pick-Up will be rolling from **2:15-2:30 pm**.
- Please be prepared to **show proper identification to camp staff**. Staff will remain with campers until an authorized adult has picked up each camper.
- Adults MUST BE AUTHORIZED on the release form completed on **CampDoc**. We will not release campers to anyone who is not listed on the release form or has not been authorized by you. There are no exceptions.
- **Early Pick Up:** Please notify the Camp Director as soon as possible if your camper will need to be picked up from camp early. This will allow our counselors to make sure that your camper is ready to go on time.
Please Note: Your camper's group may be up to 30 minutes away from the Nature Center.
- **Emergency Pick Up:** If you need to unexpectedly pick up your camper, please **call our office as soon as possible, at (508) 627-4850** and ask for our Camp Director, Sydney Pigott. Only authorized adults with identification will be able to pick up campers.
- Limited spaces for aftercare will be available from 2:30-3:30 pm. **Registration is required.**

★ Late Night: for Adventurer and Ecologist groups only!

Fern & Feather hosts an optional Late Night for campers in the Adventurer and Ecologist groups from 6:00-9:00 pm on Thursday evenings..

Campers participate in a full day of camp on Thursday, with the option of returning at 6:00 pm for an optional Late Night! Campers should have eaten dinner at home; only a snack/s'mores will be provided in the evening. Please communicate with the Camp Director prior about dietary restrictions. *Campers should be picked up promptly at 9:00 pm on Thursday.*

There is **no camp on Friday** for Adventurer and Ecologist groups.

Absence From Camp:

For scheduled absences, please email felixneckcamp@massaudubon.org; absences during camp sessions must be confirmed in writing. No refunds or transfer of funds will be given for dismissal or incomplete attendance (including sick days). See *Health & Safety* section for more information on our sick camper policy.

Dogs & Pets: We love animals; however, **domestic animals are not allowed at Felix Neck 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.



Daily Camp Schedule

8:45–9:15 am: Camper Drop-off

9:15 am: Morning Circle

- The whole camp gathers together for an introductory activity, playing name games, and going over rules for staying safe at camp. And of course, there is always singing!
- Please Note: Grown-ups are invited to join our **Morning Circle on Fridays from 9:00-9:30 am**

9:30–10:30 am: Nature Theme Intro & Snack

- Each small group has its own daily theme that supports nature and science learning. Activities and objectives are unique to each age group.

10:30 am–12:00 pm: Activities & Explorations

- Groups explore the trails and habitats as they learn more about their themes. This may include activities such as pond dipping, looking for caterpillars, or searching for animal tracks, to name just a few.

12:00–12:45 pm: Lunch & Story Time

- Lunchtime followed by a story or quiet activity

12:50–2:15 pm: Nature Activities, Crafts & Games

- Counselors reinforce concepts about the Theme of the Day through special art projects, games, and exploration.

2:15–2:30 pm: Camper Pick-up

2:30–3:30 pm: After Camp (*optional for all campers, requires independent registration, space is limited*)

- Campers will have a snack (brought from home) and make crafts, go hiking, or play games.

What to Wear & What to Pack

What to Wear:

- **Clothing:** We recommend that campers **wear comfortable, light-weight clothing. Long sleeve shirts and long pants** can be helpful to avoid mosquito bites and ticks.
- **Footwear:** We recommend **comfortable walking shoes** that can get wet and muddy (Texas, Keens, etc.) as it is difficult to walk through the marsh, along trails and in the pond without losing them! **Due to the nature of our camp, flip-flops and crocs are not allowed to be worn.**

Please **LABEL, LABEL, LABEL** all of your camper's belongings.

Mass Audubon is not responsible for lost or damaged articles that have been brought to camp. Please check the lost and found for any missing items.

What to Pack:

A backpack containing the following:

- o **Snack and Lunch:** Please see the *Food & Snack* section.
- o **Water Bottle:** A reusable water bottle; *please do not freeze the water bottle*, the ice will not melt fast enough to give your camper enough water to drink! We refill water bottles whenever needed.
- o **Sunscreen - SPF 30+:** With your permission, we can help reapply. **Aerosol sprays are not permitted.**
- o **Insect Repellent:** We share our habitat with mosquitoes and ticks. We recommend lotions, wipes, and pumps. With your permission, we can help reapply. **Aerosol sprays are not permitted.**
- o **EXTRA set of clothes:** Adventure can get messy; a second set helps campers return clean and dry!
- o **EXTRA pair of shoes and socks:** Comfortable walking shoes that can get wet and muddy.
- o **Hat and/or Sunglasses.**
- o **Water Shoes:** or a pair that can get wet and muddy, again no flip-flops.
- Rain jacket and rain pants (optional).
- Sweater or sweatshirt for cool days (optional).

★ **For Adventurers and Ecologists:** Bring a bathing suit and towel for snorkeling/kayaking.

What Not to Pack:

Mass Audubon is not responsible for lost or damaged articles that have been brought to camp.

Your camper should not pack:

- Electronic devices, cell phones, portable gaming consoles, walkie-talkies, etc.
- Collectible cards, stuffed animals, and other personal toys.
- Personal sports equipment.
- Matches, firearms/ammunition, knives, or weapons of any kind (including toy weapons) – **Grounds for immediate dismissal.**
- Tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs. Possession and use are prohibited.
- Pets or any animals.

Any such items will be taken and held by the counselors in a secure spot to be returned to guardians at the end of the day. If there is an appropriate item that your camper would like to bring in, please contact our Camp Director in advance.

Food & Snack

Please pack a nutritious and filling, non-refrigerated (an ice pack is recommended to keep food cool) snack and lunch that will produce as little trash as possible. Due to potential problems with food allergies, campers are not permitted to share food.

While we are not a nut-free facility, we **ask camp families to pack snacks and lunches that are nut-free**. If you have questions about nut-free products, please contact the Camp Director and be sure to read the ingredients on the packaging. If your camper attends Aftercare, please pack extra snacks to keep them comfortable through the extended day.

Carry-In/Carry-Out: We have a carry-in/carry-out policy for all non-compostable trash/waste; all lunch wrappers/containers will be packed home with campers.

Help us reduce our environmental impact by packing items that generate minimal waste.



Health & Safety

Health Care at Camp:

The Camp Director, camp counselors, and other full-time Felix Neck staff have certifications in First Aid and CPR. Our off-site healthcare consultant is Dr. Julia Stunkle, Primary Care Doctor at Martha's Vineyard Hospital. The Camp Director acts as the onsite Health Supervisor and will administer any prescribed medications during camp. The Edgartown Fire Department EMTs provide emergency care for Felix Neck camp programs.

Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp program, campers will be moving on uneven terrain throughout the camp day. The terrain at our site varies from hard-packed, gently sloped paths, to steeper uneven trails that may have exposed rocks, tree roots, and other obstacles. We encourage all families to visit the camp's Sanctuary prior to enrolling to understand its unique terrain.

If you have questions regarding your camper's ability to participate due to a health or behavioral issue, please contact the Camp Director, Sydney Pigott, at spigott@massaudubon.org or (508) 627-4850.

Camper Health Information:

Under Massachusetts state law, all campers must have a health form on file, which includes a health history, before attending camp. **Fern & Feather Nature Camp uses CampDoc.com, an electronic health record system.** After registering, an email will be sent from **CampDoc.com** on how to complete your camper's health information online. A parent/guardian must complete their camper's CampDoc profile. Please contact our Program Registrar to add parents/guardians to a CampDoc profile for access.

Immunization Record/Physical Exam:

Immunizations and Physicals must meet the requirements of the MA Dept. of Public Health. We require a copy of your camper's immunization record (dates must be provided by the healthcare provider). A physical exam is requested within the 18 months prior to camp.

Please contact us if:

- You need a health care treatment/immunization form for your physician to complete.
- Families whose religious beliefs advise against physical exams and/or immunizations need to contact Fern & Feather regarding our emergency treatment policy and waiver.

Remember:

- Doctors' offices are very busy, and it may take a while to get the information you need from them.
- **School/Sport forms** often contain immunization records and health care information.
- Please plan ahead as your camper cannot attend camp without a current copy of their immunization record.

★ For Adventurers and Ecologists, upload a copy of their insurance card to their **CampDoc** profile.

Medications at Camp:

If your camper takes medication during the camp day or has emergency medications (inhalers, EpiPens, etc.), you will be required to upload an allergy/medication action plan to **CampDoc.com**. No medication may be administered without this form. All medications must be checked in with the Camp Director on the first day of camp. A record of medication administered is kept in the first aid logbook.

At-Camp Medications:

If your camper requires medication while at camp, the following are requirements:

- All medications must be in their original containers with the pharmacy label and camper name and have specific instructions for use.
- Medications must be current (not expired).
- All medications must be approved by the camp's Healthcare Consultant and be seen and checked by the camp Healthcare Supervisor.

Asthma and/or Severe Allergies:

All campers who have severe allergies or severe asthma must provide an Emergency Action Plan.

- This plan should be written by the prescribing physician and describe the triggers and signs of a severe reaction, and necessary steps to take if a reaction should occur (e.g. give 2 tsp. Benadryl then administers EpiPen, etc.).
- The camp Healthcare Supervisor will contact a parent/guardian to review this plan before camp begins.
- We will not be able to administer nebulizer treatments at camp.
- Mass Audubon sanctuaries are open to the public, meaning that our camp program cannot be labeled as 'nut free.' We ask that families DO NOT send campers with peanut or tree-nut products while at camp, due to the high amount of severe nut-allergies in our audience.
- Campers are prohibited from sharing food while at camp.
- Our staff will work with families of children with severe, life-threatening allergies to create a safe environment for their child while at camp. On an individual basis, we may also reach out to a child's health care team and the Day Camp health care consultant.
- All staff are trained in the use of emergency allergy medications. A camper's emergency allergy medications will always be kept within reach of the child they are prescribed to, including on walks around the sanctuaries.

EpiPens & Inhalers:

Camp staff members will carry a camper's EpiPen and/or inhaler throughout the camp day and return them to the Healthcare Supervisor at the end of the day.

- All staff are trained in the administration of EpiPens and inhalers. All staff are trained in the symptoms of anaphylaxis and allergic response. Campers may also self-administer EpiPens with written permission from the parent/guardian.
- Inhalers can be administered by the Healthcare Supervisor, or by the camper themselves with written permission from the parent/guardian. Please indicate your preference on **CampDoc**.

Health Insurance:

A parent/guardian must complete the health/medical/accident section of **CampDoc**. If your camper does not have U.S (United States) health and accident insurance, **please contact our Camp Director**.

Absent/Sick Campers:

If a camper is going to be absent, please call the office at (508) 627-4850 to inform staff. For any scheduled absences, please notify the Camp Director by email at spigott@massaudubon.org. Please do not send a sick camper to camp. Campers should stay home when they show any of the following symptoms:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| ● <i>Active lice or scabies infestation</i> | ● <i>Fever</i> |
| ● <i>Continuous cough</i> | ● <i>Skin Eruptions</i> |
| ● <i>Diarrhea</i> | ● <i>Sore throat</i> |
| ● <i>Discharge from or red eyes</i> | ● <i>Vomiting</i> |
| ● <i>Earache</i> | |

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

No refunds or transfer of funds will be given for incomplete attendance, including sick days.

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

If your camper is sick at camp:

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

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

- If your camper's illness extends beyond 20-30 minutes, we will notify you by phone. Sick campers stay with the Healthcare Supervisor in a quiet area so they can rest and be monitored.
- If a camper's injury requires emergency care, emergency services (911) will be called, and guardians will be contacted immediately.
- 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 guardians for all reported injuries and illnesses.

Weather Policies:



Rain/Thunderstorms: Camp does run on rainy days, or with scattered thunder showers. We have a variety of indoor spaces to use during heavy rains and thunderstorms. Camp Groups will not hike or leave the day camp backyard until radar shows thunder showers have clearly passed. Adventurer/Ecologist aquatic activities may be rescheduled to a different weekday or canceled if necessary.

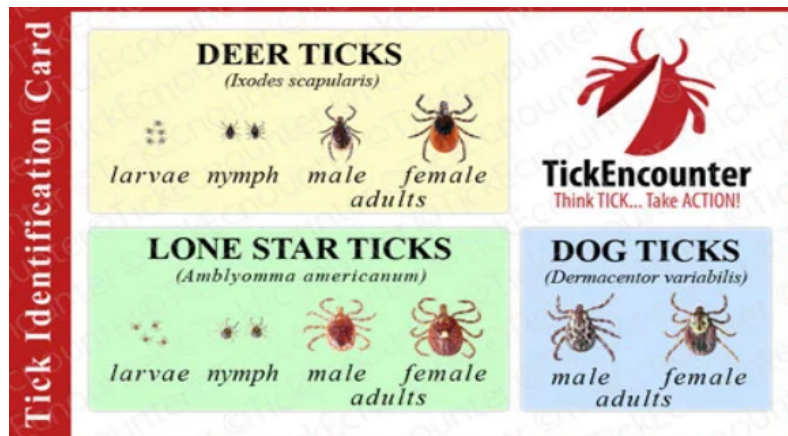
Hurricanes: As hurricanes are a predictable occurrence, all programs will be canceled if there is a possibility of a hurricane causing any adverse weather conditions. If we must end the camp day early to send campers home and prepare, families will be notified via phone for early release.

Strong Winds/Tornados: Should strong winds come up without warning, staff will move their campers to the nearest place of shelter immediately, which would most likely be the Nature Center. If the winds are predictable, and there is a chance of roads becoming impassible, camp will be canceled or scheduled for early release, and you will be notified via email/phone.

Tick Safety

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Nantucket and Dukes County, which includes Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands, lead the state in hospital emergency department visits for tick exposures and tick-borne diseases. During the camp day, we do **regular tick checks** at lunch and other times as needed. Every night, please take a few minutes to check your camper for ticks. Be sure to check behind the knees, underwear lines, underarms, and at the hairline on the back of the neck.

If a tick is found on a camper during the camp day, it will be carefully removed using tweezers and secured in tape for identification. The camper's parent or guardian will be informed at pickup and provided with a "boo-boo note" detailing the incident. If your camper has been bitten by a tick, we recommend contacting your family physician for further guidance.



If you would like more information about ticks diseases, please visit the Inter Island Public Health Collaborative - <https://islandspublichealth.com/tick-borne-illness/>

Behavior Expectations

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. Campers must follow stated behavior expectations and safety rules.

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. Our counselors are trained to create a safe environment for all campers by establishing these expectations, fostering positive camper relationships, and offering guidance throughout each camp day. **Campers are expected to follow Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct with minimal one-on-one support.** While we strive to create an inclusive environment for all participants, we do not have the staffing capacity to provide dedicated one-on-one aides.

You can help us best ensure your camper has a successful experience by proactively sharing information in his/her/their **Health History** section on **CampDoc**. Camp families planning to provide a 1:1 aide* must contact the Camp Director ahead of time. Camp families are responsible for providing an aide for campers who require 1:1 attention or need repeated behavioral redirection/social-emotional support.

*For any aides/adults joining a camper, Mass Audubon performs a background check and requires a completed adult health form, waiver, and record of immunization.

If you have any questions regarding your camper'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 their 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.

Mass Audubon's Youth Program Participant Camper Code of Conduct

Mass Audubon sanctuaries are open to the general public and camp groups may spend time in areas that have vehicles, groups of visitors and staff, varied terrain, water, and wild animals. In order for everyone to have a safe and positive experience in our programs, campers are expected to follow Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct.

Our staff establishes expectations and offers guidance throughout each day. Mass Audubon sanctuaries are open to the public and camp groups may spend time in areas that have visitors, vehicles, varied terrain, water, and wild animals. In order for everyone to have a safe and positive experience, campers are expected to follow Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct with minimal support from staff.

All families and campers review and sign off on Mass Audubon's Behavior Expectations and Camper Code of Conduct before attending camp. In addition, Mass Audubon's camp goals and inclusion practices are on our website.

Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct

1. Respect Yourself. Examples include:
 - Take care of yourself and your body and ask for help.
 - Apply sunscreen and bug spray.
 - If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, talk with an adult.
2. Respect Nature. Examples include:
 - Carry in / carry out – take trash and recycling with you or put in an appropriate bin.
 - Leave animals, plants, and other parts of nature where you found them.

- Observe wild animals from a distance – use your eyes not your hands, unless it is permitted by camp staff.

3. Respect Others. Examples include:

- Listen and follow instructions given by camp staff.
- Stay with your group at all times.
- Use caring and kind language.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Respect other people's physical space and objects.
- Listen to all ideas and be inclusive – allow others to join/play with you.
- Treat others the way they want to be treated and celebrate each other's individuality. Use pronouns and names people introduce themselves with.



Proactive Behavior Guidance Strategies

Before coming to camp, family members provide information about the camper's needs to camp staff and/or the Camp Director. Camp staff may contact a family to discuss best strategies to meet camper's needs during their session. Any previously known behavior issues that may affect a camper's participation should be shared with the camp before the session begins. Failure to disclose information may result in grounds for termination. We understand that nature-based camp may not be the best fit for every child. If your camper is struggling, we will contact you to discuss their experience.

Camp staff are trained to proactively manage behaviors within each group. Some strategies staff use include:

- Reinforce positive behavior through praise
- Provide ample warning to campers prior to transitions
- Clearly state behavior expectations through group agreements and visual tools
- Provide daily schedules through group check ins and visual tools

When campers struggle with the behavior expectations set for them in the Camper Code of Conduct, camp staff will follow one or more of the steps below, depending on the situation. Camp staff may try a step multiple times.

	Leader Response	Consequences for Camper
1st step	Reminders of the rule.*	Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
2nd step	Reminders of the rule, plus a short break. Take notes on a behavior incident report. Camp Director or designee may have a brief check-in with family in person or via a call.	Take a break for up to 15 minutes. Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.

3rd step	Discussion with the camper about the rules of camp. Update the Camp Director or Assistant Director on the steps taken so far. Supervise campers during longer breaks. Add to the incident report. Camp Director or designee updates family.	Campers will take a longer break which may include an entire activity. Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
4th step	Campers will be brought to the Camp Director or Assistant Director for a discussion. The Camp Director or Assistant Director will speak with the family about the behavior contract.	The camper will be asked to reflect on the discussions about behavior and begin a behavior contract.
5th step	The Camp Director and other Leadership staff (Director of Camps, Education Manager, Regional Director) will discuss possible dismissal of participants from the camp and speak with family.	The family will be called. Behavior contract is reviewed. Possible dismissal.

*If a camper intentionally hurts another person, themselves, or runs away from the group or staff member, they will immediately be brought to the Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director and/or Behavior Specialist.

After steps 1 through 4, if there is no mutually agreeable resolution of the behavior issues, the Camp Director may issue a written notice of termination. Refunds will not be provided for behavior-based dismissals.

Prohibitions when Managing Behavior

In accordance with the State of Massachusetts Minimum Standards for Recreational Camps for Children:

- (1) Corporal punishment, including spanking, is prohibited;
- (2) No camper shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse;
- (3) No camper shall be denied food, water or shelter; and
- (4) No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

Termination from Camp

Mass Audubon camps recognize the various needs of campers at different ages and stages of development, and that campers must be treated individually. The family will be notified of issues leading to a child's termination from a Mass Audubon camp.

Mass Audubon reserves the right to dismiss any camper whose actions or behaviors jeopardize the overall health and goals of the camp, including campers requiring routine, on-going one-on-one attention and direction related to behavioral issues. Mass Audubon also reserves the right to dismiss any enrolled participant whose actions interfere with the successful operation of the camp. Repeated failure to comply with camp rules and/or procedures will result in dismissal. No refunds will be given for behavior-based termination of participation.

Immediate Suspension

Any camper whose behavior seriously threatens the emotional or physical safety of themselves or others may be suspended, for an initial period of up to 2 days. During the period of suspension, the Camp Director, camp staff, and the family will further evaluate to determine whether it is appropriate for the camper to return to the camp.

Examples of behavior that may warrant immediate suspension include:

- Physically attacking or threatening another child, themselves, or an adult.

- Documented harassment of another child, including the use of discriminatory language on the basis of “race, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.”
- Due to a child's dangerous behavior, an emergency physical restraint is used on the child to protect themselves or others from imminent serious physical harm.
- Leaving the camp site without permission of the staff (includes leaving the sanctuary grounds or leaving the immediate vicinity of an outdoor activity without permission of camp staff).

The camp reserves the right to allow provisional reentry into the camp or to proceed with the termination of the camper's enrollment. No refunds will be given for behavior-based termination of participation.

Risk Management:

Mass Audubon staff members make every effort to conduct safe programs, to orient and support campers, and to inform camp families of inherent risks. Some activities may involve risks that participants 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.



Visitor Interactions:

During the summer months, Felix Neck's Nature Center and office are open to the public from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Staff are on duty in the Nature Center whenever camp is in session. The trails are open dawn to dusk every day. Trail patrols are done weekly by property staff to assess the condition of trails for visitor use. Before the camp season, the Camp Director and Property Manager meet to discuss security concerns and develop a plan of action as necessary.

For staff and camper safety, all counselors are required to carry a two-way radio. Campers shall be instructed in safety procedures for interactions with the general public during their camp orientation. Campers shall not approach strangers on or off camp property and shall refer all questions/concerns about strangers to a supervising staff member. Visitors will not be allowed to disrupt the camp activities and will be asked to leave camp areas (Camp Barn). Staff are instructed to ask unrecognized persons to leave the program area, kindly explaining that the area is not open to the public. If the person poses a safety threat, staff shall make sure that the campers are safe. Staff will bring the campers to a place of safety and contact the Camp Director. Staff will seek help from other camp and Felix Neck staff if the incident constitutes a threat to campers or themselves. The Sanctuary Director will contact the appropriate authorities if necessary.

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 the last page.

This camp must comply with regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and be licensed by the local board of health.

Go Green!

Please support us this summer by adopting some “green” practices at home or while on vacation. Pack lunches with reusable containers, avoid juice boxes (they stay sticky and attract ants) if possible, and pick up a reusable water bottle. Visit www.wastefreelunches.org for more ideas on how to pack waste-free

lunches and snacks. Families walk, bike, and even paddle to camp each summer! Consider the environment when planning your transportation and try to carpool when possible.

Felix the Owl:

Each day, one camper is randomly selected to bring Felix—our stuffed owl friend—home for the evening. That camper gets to play with Felix and add a drawing or short story to our Felix Journal about their time together. Because Felix is shared among the whole group, not every camper will have the chance to take him home, but every child will be recognized for their kindness. At the end of each week, all campers receive a Kind Camper slip to celebrate the positive contributions they've made. Felix is simply one of the many ways we highlight acts of kindness at camp—and even if your camper doesn't bring him home, please know that we always notice and appreciate kind campers.

Kids to Camp Fund:

Make a lasting impact on more campers by contributing to the **Kids to Camp Fund** and choosing Felix Neck Camp; [Support the Kids to Camp Fund](#). Your donation will help create unforgettable experiences at Fern & Feather for those who need it most.

Visit Us:

Felix Neck is open to the public daily from dawn to dusk – drop your campers off, and take a guided kayak tour, join us aboard The Skipper on a Marine Discovery Tour, or bring the whole family for a walk on our trails. Members receive discounts on all programs and in the Gift Shop. Browse our summer offerings by following this link: [Felix Neck Programs and Activities](#)

Questions:

Call the office (508) 627-4850 or email felixneckcamp@massaudubon.org for additional details and FAQs.

Sydney Pigott (she/her)

Camp Director

Spigott@massaudubon.org

Josey Kirkland (she/her)

Education Manager

Jkirkland@massaudubon.org

Liz Cosgrove (she/her)

Administrator/Day Camp Registrar

Lcosgrove@massaudubon.org



Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements 2025–2026[§]

Massachusetts school immunization requirements are created under the authority of [105 CMR 220.000: Immunization of Students Before Admission to School](#).

Requirements apply to all students, including individuals from other countries attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of an academic visitation or exchange program. Requirements apply to all students in every grade, even if they are over 18 years of age. Doses that satisfy ACIP recommendations [as adopted by the CDC on October 24, 2024](#) also satisfy school requirements.

Childcare/Preschool^{¶†}

Attendees <2 years should be immunized for their age according to the [2025 ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule](#). Requirements listed in the table below apply to all attendees ≥2 years. These requirements also apply to children in preschool classes called K0 or K1.

Hib	1–4 doses; number of doses is determined by vaccine product and age the series begins
DTaP	4 doses
Polio	3 doses
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
MMR	1 dose; must be given on or after the 1 st birthday; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	1 dose; must be given on or after the 1 st birthday; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

Grades Kindergarten–6^{¶†}

In ungraded classrooms, Kindergarten requirements apply to all students ≥5 years.

DTaP/Tdap	5 doses; 4 doses are acceptable if the fourth dose is given on or after the 4 th birthday; DT is only acceptable with a letter stating a medical contraindication to DTaP
Polio	4 doses; fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose or a fifth dose is required; 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
MMR	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday, and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

[§] Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

[¶] Meningococcal vaccine requirements (see Grades 7–10 and 11–12) also apply to residential students in Grades Preschool through 8 if the school combines these grades in the same school as students in Grades 9–12.

[†] Medical exemptions (statement from a physician stating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for a student) must be renewed annually at the start of the school year, and religious exemptions (statement from a student or parent/guardian, if the student is <18 years of age, stating that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs), should be renewed annually at the start of the school year.

* A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or designee.

Grades 7–12[†]

In ungraded classrooms, Grade 7 requirements apply to all students ≥12 years.

Tdap	1 dose; and history of DTaP primary series or age-appropriate catch-up vaccination; Tdap given at ≥7 years may be counted, but a dose at age 11–12 is recommended if Tdap was given earlier as part of a catch-up schedule; Td or Tdap should be given if it has been ≥10 years since last Tdap
Polio	4 doses; fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose or a fifth dose is required; 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable; 2 doses of Heplisav-B given on or after 18 years of age are acceptable
MMR	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday, and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Meningococcal Grade 7–10	1 dose; this dose must be given on or after the 10 th birthday. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine, MenACWY (formerly MCV4) and MenABCWY, fulfill this requirement; monovalent meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement
Meningococcal Grade 11–12 [‡]	2 doses; second dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) must be given on or after the 16 th birthday and ≥ 8 weeks after the previous dose; 1 dose is acceptable if it was given on or after the 16 th birthday. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine, MenACWY (MCV4) and MenABCWY, fulfill this requirement; monovalent meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement

§ Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

† Medical exemptions (statement from a physician stating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for a student) must be renewed annually at the start of the school year, and religious exemptions (statement from a student or parent/guardian, if the student is <18 years of age, stating that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs), should be renewed annually at the start of the school year.

* A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or designee.

‡ Students who are 15 years old in Grade 11 are in compliance until they turn 16 years old.

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can infect the tissue (the “meninges”) surrounding the brain and spinal cord and cause meningitis, or they may infect the blood or other organs of the body. Symptoms of meningococcal disease may appear suddenly. Fever, severe and constant headaches, stiff neck or neck pain, nausea and vomiting, and rash can all be signs of meningococcal disease. Changes in behavior, such as confusion, sleepiness, and trouble waking up, can also be important symptoms. In the US, about 350-550 people get meningococcal disease yearly, and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 10-20% 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. Less common presentations include pneumonia and arthritis.

How common is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is becoming much less common. Over the past 20 years, the overall incidence of meningococcal disease in the US has declined ten-fold. Twenty years ago in Massachusetts, there were 80-100 cases of meningococcal disease per year. In contrast, for the past decade, the average is approximately 12 cases per year. Declining rates of meningococcal disease may be due in part to the introduction of meningococcal vaccines (initially recommended routinely in 2005 for adolescents aged 11-12 years, unvaccinated college freshmen living in residence halls) as well as other factors such as the decline in cigarette smoking, which may impact susceptibility to this disease.

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 for the bacteria to spread. Close contact includes activities such as kissing, sharing water bottles, sharing eating/drinking utensils, sharing cigarettes, or being within 3-6 feet of someone who is infected and 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. Adolescents and people who live in specific 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, there are multiple meningococcal vaccines. Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menveo and MenQuadfi) protects against 4 serotypes (A, C, W, and Y) of meningococcal disease. The meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) protects against serogroup B meningococcal disease for people aged 10 and older. Pentavalent meningococcal vaccine protects against serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y. It may be administered to persons aged ≥ 10 years when both a quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine and meningococcal B vaccine are indicated at the same visit.

Should my child or adolescent receive the meningococcal vaccine?

Different meningococcal vaccines are recommended for a range of age and risk groups. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) is routinely recommended at age 11-12 years with a booster at age 16 and is required for school entry for grades 7 and 11. In addition, these vaccines may be recommended for additional children with certain high-risk health conditions, such as those described above.

Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) is recommended for people with certain relatively rare high-risk health conditions (examples: persons with a damaged spleen or whose spleen has been removed, those with persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited disorder), and people who may have been exposed during an outbreak). Adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) who do not have high-risk conditions may be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16 through 18 years of age, to provide short-term protection for most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. Parents of adolescents and children at higher risk of infection because of certain medical conditions or other circumstances should discuss vaccination with their child's healthcare provider.

How can I protect my child or adolescent 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.
- 4) contact their healthcare provider immediately if they have symptoms of meningococcal disease.

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 Divisions of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations>.

For additional information on *Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)*, please visit the CDC's website:

[Meningococcal Disease Surveillance and Trends | Meningococcal | CDC](#).

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