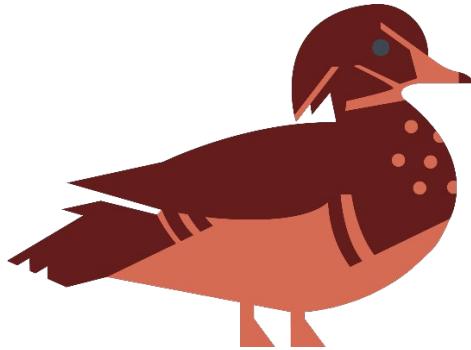




Arcadia Nature Camp Family Handbook Summer 2026



Welcome to Mass Audubon's Arcadia Summer Camp! We look forward to meeting your camper and having a fun summer exploring and learning about the natural world.

Contents

Camp Mission.....	3
Camp License & Accreditation	3
Contact Info	3
Camp Staff.....	3
Camp Leadership	3
Payment Deadlines, Deposits and Refund Policy.....	3
Coming to Camp	4
What to Pack?	4
Typical Camp Day.....	5
Drop off and Pick Up Info	6
Camper Feedback.....	6
Health and Emergency Policies.....	6
Accommodations for Campers and One-to-one Aides.....	8
Behavior Expectations.....	8
Camp Policy Requests	11

Camp Mission

We believe that camp is a place where children can grow, spend quality time outdoors and have fun summer experiences. Through hands-on, inquiry-based activities, free play, games, and nature discovery campers learn about their surroundings, themselves, and others. Spending time learning and playing outdoors helps foster a deep, life-long connection to nature and inspires environmental stewardship.

Camp License & Accreditation

Our camp complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 430) and is licensed by our local Board of Health. We are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA).

Contact Info

For registration questions, camp session openings, payment plans and billing questions contact the Arcadia Registrars, (413) 584-3009. Press “0” after the call connects to reach the registrars. You can email them at arcadia@massaudubon.org. For any other specific camp questions please contact Dorri Jones, Camp Director at 413-529-4093 or arcadiacamp@massaudubon.org

Camp Staff

Our caring, well-prepared camp staff are actively engaged in teaching and playing with campers. Camp staff bring their enthusiasm for outdoor exploration, a desire to facilitate learning, and a compassionate heart for children. This specialized team works to foster a sense of community among campers and individual connections with nature. Summer staff are carefully selected based on their enthusiasm, teaching experience, natural history knowledge, and deep commitment to engaging campers with nature.

All staff undergo background checks, are certified in CPR and first aid, and receive training in health and safety procedures, child development, natural history, and environmental education best practices.

Camp Leadership

Camp Director Dorri Jones (she/her) began her Arcadia adventure as a Hummingbird counselor in 2015 and has been involved with camp almost every year since. She is endlessly enthusiastic about nature education and fostering curiosity, two things our camps have always strived to cultivate. Dorri believes there is great power in ending the day with dirt under your fingernails, and she loves sharing moments of play and inquisitive learning with campers, CITs, and fellow staff.

Payment Deadlines, Deposits and Refund Policy

To find your balance, and to pay, visit massaudubon.org/payments

Full payment for camp and all forms (including health forms and immunization records to CampDoc) are **due on or before May 1** unless a payment plan has been set up with the Camp Director or Operations Manager. A late fee of \$25 per camper will apply if any forms or payments are late or incomplete. No camper is allowed to attend camp unless all forms, waivers, and payments are complete.

Deposits

- A **non-refundable deposit of \$75 per session** is required at the time of registration.
- Deposits **cannot be transferred** to another camper, session, family, or camp location.
- Please review your calendar for any scheduling conflicts **before registering**.

Refunds

- **On or before May 1:** You will receive a refund for any payments made **excluding** the \$75 non-refundable deposit per session.
- **After May 1: No refunds** will be issued.

Please note: If Arcadia cancels a session, you will receive a full refund, including the deposit.

Refunds are not available for participant dismissal, failure to attend, absences, or sick days.

Coming to Camp

What to Pack?

Make sure to dress for exploring outdoors and playing games outside. Be prepared for any weather - we will be outdoors so rain gear and something warm may come in handy! Any clothing should be ok to get muddy, wet, or dirty since our camps are hands-on in nature.

Please make sure that your child's name is on everything! We cannot be held responsible for lost items. We will keep a Camp Lost and Found. Any items not picked up by September 15 will be donated to a local charity.

What to Wear:

- Shorts and T-shirt; some families prefer long pants and long shirts to protect against the sun and against ticks or poison ivy.
- Long pants are highly recommended on fielding day (we will let you know which day this happens) as they provide better protection from ticks.
- Closed-toe shoes like sneakers or hiking shoes – For safety reasons, no sandals please. Closed-toe water shoes are ok for days we explore the pond, but please make sure your camper also has sneakers or hiking shoes with them for exploring the trails.
- Socks (to protect against blisters and poison ivy)
- A wide-brimmed hat protects them from sun and insects. A wide-brimmed hat is required for the Great Blue Herons (ages 10-12) on their canoe day.

What to Pack:

- Backpack to keep your gear together
- Two nutritious snacks
- Lunch. We notice that campers need to eat more at camp than they do while at school. An insulated bag with an icepack is recommended.
- Sunscreen

- Insect repellent
- Water Bottle(s)- we can refill throughout the day.
- Some ice or electrolytes added can help on warmer days!
- A spare set of clothes in case they get wet or have an accident while at camp.
- A spare set of socks
- A raincoat- if the forecast calls for light rain (we will be inside if thunderstorms are near)

Peanuts and Tree Nuts at Camp: We allow peanuts and tree nuts at camp and will remind campers that food should not be shared with other campers. If there is a camp group with a known airborne nut allergy, we will inform camp families beforehand and ask that you do not pack any foods that contain the specific allergen.

Extra Food at Camp: We keep a few items on hand for emergencies. If a camper drops their lunch or does not have enough food, we will call home to see if additional food can be provided. If not, we will consult their CampDoc profile for any known allergies and provide them some snacks to help fuel them for the day.

Bathrooms: While we know some of our younger campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own-- please reinforce potty training before the start of camp. Our 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.

What NOT to bring to camp: Do not bring electronic devices, personal treasures, or expensive items to camp. Cell phones and other electronics are not to be used during the camp day. Knives, matches, firearms/ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items are not allowed and are grounds for dismissal. The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and weapons are prohibited. No animals, other than service animals, are allowed at camp.

Typical Camp Day

Each day there will be a nature-related theme, and the hikes, activities and crafts will be tied to that theme. Each day at camp is built around the schedule below. There will always be some flexibility based on weather, camper interests and what we might see while exploring!

9:00 am	Drop-off with games and art options
9:30 am	Opening Circle, daily nature theme intro, mystery item, and riddle
10:00 am	Snack
10:15 am	Morning Hike and Activities
12:00 pm	Lunch, games, and story time
12:30 pm	Choice Time: Games, crafts, or Nature Play
1:45 pm	Theme-based activity time & snack
2:45 pm	Closing Circle
3:00 pm	Pick-up

On Fridays, we end camp with an “**I Am Special**” ceremony, where we highlight a characteristic of each camper. If you would like to arrive a little early to pick up, the ceremony typically starts around 2:40pm, at their camp base. Families are welcome to attend!

Drop off and Pick Up Info

Drop off & Pick up times: Camp hours are from 9am to 3pm. The time before and after camp is important for planning and preparation. We do not offer before or after care.

Parking: Our parking area is one way, please follow the signs when you enter and exit.

Drop off: Park in the designated parking spaces. Walk your camper to their camp group, there will be signs for each group. Camp staff will greet you and your camper and check you in.

End of day pick up: Park in the designated spots and walk to your camp group. You are required to show a photo ID when you pick up your camper. Only people listed in the Emergency Contact/Pick-Up section of the CampDoc health form will be allowed to sign out your camper. You may add additional people through the CampDoc website or in person during the camp week. For any last minutes additions please contact us.

Late Drop off or Early Pick Up: Much of the day is spent outdoors, often away from the main area, which makes it tricky to accommodate late arrivals and early departures. Late drop-off and early pick-ups work best during lunch (~11:30 am – 12:30 pm). Please speak to the Camp Director or Assistant Director in advance so we can plan accordingly.

Absences: Please email us at arcadia@massaudubon.org or call us at (413) 584-3009 by 9am. If a camper does not arrive and we have not been notified of their absence, we will call you to find out if they are not attending or if you are running late. A reminder, a camper needs to be fever free 24 hours before returning to camp.

Camper Feedback

We are excited to learn directly from Mass Audubon campers about their experience. Some campers may have the opportunity to participate in a brief, internal group survey to help us learn about and improve the camp experience. Camp staff will make audio recordings, which we will share with the Director of Evaluation to transcribe and analyze. Quotes and data from these surveys may be published, however campers will not be identified. Only campers with prior authorization (media release) signed by their parents/guardians may participate in the camper survey.

Health and Emergency Policies

Our complete healthcare policy is available upon request.

Sick Campers: If your camper is sick, please keep them home until they feel better. If a camper starts to feel sick while at camp, we will have them rest in a designated area until they can be picked up. A staff member will stay with them during this time. If a camper has a fever, they need to be fever free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before they can return to camp.

Medications: Medication must be sent in the original container with the pharmacy label attached. Medication must be handed to the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director upon arrival. No medication, whether prescription or over the counter, may be administered to a child without it being listed in CampDoc. Be sure that any inhalers have the prescription label attached or bring along the box with the label attached. All over-the-counter medications should be in their original container with the camper's name and date of birth written on the container along with instructions for administration.

Sun Exposure/Insect Bites: We will have a designated sunscreen and insect spray area near the parking lot and encourage your camper to wear both. Applying sunscreen first and bug spray second is recommended.

Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention: There are potential health risks associated with ticks. Please take an active role in protecting your camper by checking each evening for ticks. Visual checks for ticks on campers' arms, legs, and clothing are a regular part of camp. Learn more at Mass Department of Public Health webpage: www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases

Bathroom Needs: Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. However, should nature call when we are far from any facilities, we will provide campers with support if they need to use the forest as their bathroom. Staff carry an outdoor bathroom kit and are trained in how to provide camper privacy and hygiene and minimize our impact. Please talk to your camper about this before camp.

Adapting to the weather:

- **Rainy Days:** Campers are outside for most rainy days. Summer rain can be cold. Be prepared with rain gear and jacket. We have outdoor shelters to use when needed as well as indoor spaces to use during thunderstorms.
- **Hot Days:** On very hot days we will have misters set up. Your camper may be damp when you pick them up! You may want to bring a towel to protect your car seat. Please inform your camper and/or the staff if you wish to limit how wet they get. We will gain their verbal consent before any camper gets wet!

In the event of injury or first aid: Families will be notified, indicating the injury's nature, what was provided, and by whom. All camp staff are first aid and CPR certified.

In case of emergency: First aid will be administered at the level of training. We will work with you to coordinate further care, pick-up, or transportation of the child. When appropriate, local emergency response personnel will be called. If a camper needs transportation, it will be provided by a parent/guardian or ambulance service. If unable to reach the camper's primary contacts, we will call emergency contacts from the health form.

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees

Campers are *not* considered to have increased risk of Meningococcal Disease, but the Department of Public Health requires us to provide you with the information in the link below.

[Meningitis info from mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov/meningitis)

Please read the document “Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions.” You do not need to print or return a signed waiver to us.

Mandated Reporting

Massachusetts law requires professionals who work with children to notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if they suspect that a child is being abused, neglected, or both.

Accommodations for Campers and One-to-one Aides

Accommodations for Campers

Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp programs, campers move on uneven terrain throughout the day. The terrain varies from hard-packed, gently sloped paths to steeper, uneven trails that may have exposed rocks, tree roots, and other obstacles. Weather could affect our trail conditions. We encourage all families to visit the camp’s sanctuary prior to enrolling to understand its unique terrain.

If your child requires accommodation, please contact the camp’s director as soon as possible; a delay in request could disrupt your child’s Mass Audubon camp experience.

One-to-one Aides

Mass Audubon camps do not provide one-to-one support; however, we do welcome one-to-one aides to support campers when they are provided by the family. Aides must follow Mass Audubon’s Child Protection Standards, including obtaining a CORI/SORI and background check.

If your child requires an aide in school, please contact the camp’s director as soon as possible to discuss how we can best support your child. Family members are not permitted to be aides.

Behavior Expectations

Our staff establishes expectations and offers guidance throughout each day. Our 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.

Mass Audubon’s Camper Code of Conduct

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.

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.

Respect Others. Examples include:

- Listen and follow instructions given by camp staff.
- Always stay with your group.
- 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 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.

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 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	Camper will take a longer break which may include an entire activity.

	steps taken so far. Supervise camper during longer break. Add to incident report. Camp Director or designee updates family.	Reminders of the rule, discussion of why behavior was inappropriate, and possible options.
4th step	Camper 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 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 participant 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.

All families and campers review and sign off on Mass Audubon's Behavior Expectations and Camper Code of Conduct before attending camp. In addition, visit our website to view Mass Audubon's [camp goals and inclusion practices](#).

Camp Policy Requests

Our background check, health care, and discipline policies as well as the grievance procedures are available upon request.

Thank you for being part of the Arcadia Nature Camp community. Together, we create a space where children can explore, learn, and grow in the natural world. We look forward to an exciting summer of discovery and adventure with your family!

