



Family Handbook 2026

Wild at Art Nature Camp

Museum of American Bird Art Education Center & Wildlife Sanctuary

963 Washington St, Canton, MA 02021

Tel 781-821-8853

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Welcome to Camp!

Camp Mission

At the Wild at Art Camp, we believe that camp is a place where children can grow, make art, spend quality time outdoors, and have a fun summer experience. Through engaging activities, free play exploring their own creativity, and sparking their own curiosity, children learn about themselves and others while having a great time.

Connect to Nature Through Art: Spending quality time outdoors and teaching children about the world around them fosters a deep, life-long connection to nature.

Discovering Science Through Outdoor Exploration: Through nature-based STEAM explorations, children learn and practice science and art skills in a real-world setting. Skills include critical thinking, creativity, communication, and environmental literacy.

Nature Play: Children and young adults learn and relax by playing fun and age-appropriate activities. Play fosters independence, imagination, and socialization.

Building Strong Children: By building friendships, discovering new interests, and trying new activities, children grow socially, emotionally, and physically at camp.

A Community at Camp: To create a safe and inclusive camp atmosphere, we foster a camp staff that is diverse, well-trained, and passionate about camp.

Wild at Art is a camp offered by the Massachusetts Audubon Society; a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the nature of Massachusetts through conservation, advocacy, and education. Wild at Art does not discriminate in providing service to campers and their families on the basis of economic limitations, race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities or limitations, or marital status.

Licensure of Camp

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).

The Museum of American Bird Art Education Center has more than 20 years of experience in connecting children to nature and art through public, school, and camp programs. We are licensed by the Canton Board of Health and comply with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. We have received accreditation from and meet the rigorous standards of the American Camp Association.

The Wild at Art Camp operates in compliance with regulations, and has copies of policies on staff background checks, health care, discipline policies, and grievance procedures available upon request.

The Wild at Art Camp is successful because of its caring, well-prepared counselors who are actively engaged in teaching, creating art, and playing with campers. Our leadership team provides counselors with training, educational objectives, and ideas for activities. Each staff member is excited to explore the outdoors, create art, and educate all campers. Together we bring fun and learning to campers.

Staff Selection

Camp staff members are carefully selected for their maturity, love of nature, artistic ability, and their caring attitude toward children. All staff must pass background checks and receive training in

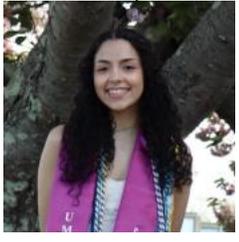
safety, child development, nature study, and art education. This year, most of our counselors are college students and post graduates who are training to become artists, teachers, biologists, or both, and they all have a passion for nature and the outdoors.

Contact Information

Museum of American Bird Art Education Center & Wildlife Sanctuary

781-821-8853

963 Washington St, Canton, MA 02021

<p>Tessa Holleran Camp Director</p> 	<p>Sarah Albanese Assistant Camp Director</p> 	<p>Isabella Piedrasanta Behavior Specialist</p> 
<p>Owen Cunningham Property Manager</p> 	<p>Sean Kent Nature & Arts Ed Manager</p> 	

Transportation

The Wild at Art Camp does not offer any transportation to or from camp.

Parking at the Museum of American Bird Art Education Center

When visiting the Museum of American Bird Art Education Center for the first time, look for the Museum Sign and Banner. Park in the parking lot by the yellow barn.

Public Transportation

The Museum of American Bird Art Education Center is within a ten to fifteen minute walk the commuter rail stops Canton Center and Canton Junction. Use the MBTA website to find the best route for your family.

At no time should you send a child into camp without an adult.

Payments, Deadlines, & Refund Policies

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. No camper is allowed to attend camp unless all forms, waivers, and payments are complete.

Deposits

A non-refundable deposit 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 non-refundable deposit per session. After May no refunds will be issued.

Coming to Camp

Packing List

We will spend most of the day exploring and playing outdoors. It is important to dress your camper for the weather for them to fully enjoy their experience. If you label your child's belongings, we can return lost items to you at the end of the day!

- Closed-toed shoes. **We do not allow flip-flops at camp because they may lead to injuries!**
- Clothing that can get dirty, wet, or messy
- A lunch and snack
- A full water bottle
- Insect repellent
- A hat and sun block (minimum of SPF 25)
- Hand sanitizer (if age appropriate)
- Backpack large enough to carry water and lunch. There will be some days where lunch is eaten on a hike to the brook or other areas on the property.

Just in Case...

- Rain jacket and rain pants
- Extra pair of socks and shoes
- An extra change of clothes
- A bathing suit and towel for hot days under the sprinklers.

Label, Label, Label!!!

If you label your child's belongings, we can return lost items to you at the end of the day!

Lunch and Snack

Please send your camper with two snacks and lunch every day.

Please remember:

- Wild at Art does not provide lunch or snack.
- Do not pack sibling lunches together.
- Food should be non-perishable, as we are unable to refrigerate any lunches.
- All lunch/snack containers should be taken home every day.
- The camp will have prepackaged snacks and lunches if needed.
- Wild at Art allows 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.

Medication

If your camper needs medication at camp, it must be checked in with the program staff at the beginning of the day. Medication must meet the following requirements:

Prescription Medication

- Must be in the original containers with the pharmacy label. For Inhalers and EpiPens that includes the box they came in.
- Written permission from the family to administer the medication.

Non-prescription Medication

- Must be in the original container.
- Written permission from the family to administer the medication.

What NOT to bring to Camp!

We have plenty to do at camp so we ask that children do not bring toys, electronic devices, personal treasures, and/or expensive items to camp.

Cell phones, iPods, and smart watches are not to be used during the camp day. If you need to speak with your child during the day, please call the main number. Mass Audubon is not responsible for lost or damaged articles that have been brought to camp.

Pocketknives, matches, firearms/ammunition, or other potentially dangerous items are not allowed and are grounds for dismissal from the program. The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs,

and weapons are prohibited. No animal is allowed in camp without prior permission from the Director.

First Day

Arrival (8:45 am, 9:00 am, & 9:15 am)

To ensure families are able to drop off their campers with minimal traffic and to streamline the process, each family will be assigned a drop-off time either 8:45 am, 9:00 am or 9:15 am prior to the session. Families of a camper who is aged 9-14 should be dropped off 8:45, 7-8 at 9:00, and 4.5-6 at 9:15.

Drop Off

- Families will arrive at their scheduled drop-off time.
- Cars should pull up to a drop-off spot by the field stone wall in the parking lot.
- Families will bring their camper(s) to the check-in table, located at the entrance to the camp.
- Siblings can arrive together even if they are in different age groups.
- To reduce density and physical interaction of individuals at any given time in the drop off area, we are encouraging families to:
 - Designate one adult to drop off and/or pick up campers each day.
 - Say goodbye inside your vehicle.

Pick-Up (2:45 pm, 3:00 pm, & 3:15 pm)

Pick-up is assigned at either 2:45 pm (9-14), 3:00 pm (7-8), or 3:15 pm (4.5-6).

Families will receive a sign for authorized pick-up on the first day of each session.

- This sign indicates that the adults in the car are listed on the child's pick-up list.
- Only give the pick-up sign to adults on your child's pick-up list.
- If a car arrives without the pick-up sign, the staff will ask the adult for identification.
- If the adult is not on the release list or does not have identification, the family will be called.
- Families will wait at the pick-up spots for a staff member to help them. The staff member will radio for the camper(s) and they will be walked to the vehicle.

Late Drop-Off

If you arrive after 9:15am, please wait in your car and call the camp director: 781-406-4152. A staff member will come out to the parking lot to sign your child in.

Late Pick-Up

If you arrive after general pick-up twice in one week you will be charged \$50. If a camper has not been picked up by 3:20 pm, the Camp Director will try to contact the parents/guardians/emergency contacts. If they cannot be reached within an hour the local police will be notified.

Early Pick-Up

All early pick-ups need to be scheduled prior to the day of the pick-up. Please email Tessa Holleran at tholleran@massaudubon.org. A staff member will be waiting at the pick-up spot

with your child(ren). If you are picking up a child due to an emergency, please call 781-406-4152 from the parking lot and a staff member will bring your child(ren) to you.

Absences

Attendance is taken every day at camp. We ask that you call or email when your child will not be attending camp. Please let us know if your child is staying home due to illness; it is important that we record and track any infections. The privacy of your child will be protected. If a camper fails to arrive and the camp staff has not been notified of the absence, the staff will call the family at the phone number(s) listed on the emergency forms.

Special Contingency Plans

Every day the Camp Directors will take attendance at 10am. If a camper is absent, a call will be made home.

If an unregistered child arrives at camp, the Camp Director will try to contact their family to pick up the child. If unsuccessful, the Canton Police Department will be called.

If a child scheduled to arrive by third party transportation does not arrive, the Camp Director will contact the family and or the transportation company. They will continue to call until successfully finding the whereabouts of the child.

A Day at Camp

Wild at Art Camp combines high-quality art instruction, science education, and nature exploration with the wonderful traditions of summer camp, helping children to grow and connect with the world around them. Every day, camp is filled with making art, hands-on/minds-on experiences, outdoor exploration, and engaging camp activities within camper’s designated age groups.

Schedule

8:45 am, 9:00 am, & 9:15 am	Drop-off Campers check-in at the tent by the parking lot, and join their camp groups for the day.
9:30 am to 10:00 am	Morning Circle & Team Building Time Morning Circle will be within each group. We will sing songs, tell jokes, and do stretches to get ready for a full day of nature exploration here at camp. Campers will get to know their counselors and the other campers in their group. They will participate in group games, crafts, and outdoor exploration.
10:15 am to 12:00 pm	Art Making, Nature Exploration, and Snack Each week, campers explore nature-based, age-appropriate STEAM activities and explorations. During this time, campers explore their theme for the week both with nature exploration, games, and making art. Morning snack is during this period.
12:00 pm	Lunch and Free Play
12:45 pm to 2:30 pm	Nature Exploration, Activities, Making Art & Games Campers continue to learn about the theme of the week through nature games, specialized art projects, and gardening.

5. When a guardian cannot be reached, those listed, as emergency contacts will be contacted. If necessary, two staff members will transport the child to the hospital; the child's whole file will be taken with them.

Minor Injury Procedures

1. Basic first aid will be administered by certified staff.
2. If further first aid is needed, the child will be brought to the main office and the director.
3. The family will be notified of all first aid provided.
4. If the child needs further care than can be provided by the staff, the director will contact a parent/guardian to pick up the child.

Notification of Injury

Families will be notified immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. You will also be notified, in writing, if any first aid is administered.

Symptoms of Other Infectious Disease:

Children need to be free of the following symptoms of infectious disease to attend camp.

- Mouth sores, unless the physician states that the child is non-infectious
- Rash with a fever or behavior change until the physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease
- Purulent conjunctivitis (eye pink or red with white or yellow discharge)
- Tuberculosis, until the child is non-infectious
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has started or all the sores are covered
- Head lice (can return to the program after first treatment)
- Strep infection, until 24 hours after treatment and the child has been without fever for 24 hours
- Chicken pox, until last blister has healed over

First Aid and Safety

As a requirement of their employment, full-time year-round staff will be certified in CPR and first aid. As part of this training, all staff members are oriented to the area, as well as all the rules and safety regulations pertaining to these areas. A staff member who is certified in first aid and CPR is available on-site whenever children are present.

Meningococcal Disease

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 [on Meningococcal disease and immunization](#).

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.

Children with Allergies

At the beginning of each session, a list of children with food and other life-threatening allergies will be compiled and given to each staff member. The program has a firm no sharing food policy.

Sunscreen Policy

Campers are encouraged to reduce their exposure to the sun. Children are encouraged to use wide brim hats, long sleeve shirts, long pants, sunscreens with a solar protection factor of 25 or greater, and lip balm. Families are encouraged to apply sunscreen at the beginning of the day. Staff will assist campers with the application of sunscreen at lunchtime if it is provided by the family.

Insect Repellent

It is important that families and campers take precautions to avoid insect bites from mosquitos and ticks. Campers are encouraged to use insect repellent and wear light colored clothing. If insect repellent is provided, staff will assist children with the application. If you would like more information about insect repellent, we suggest the Mass.gov's [Mosquito Repellant page](#).

Tick Checks

Staff will teach campers about tick checks and remind them to perform them throughout the day. Campers will be encouraged to inspect their clothing, exposed skin and hair line. We strongly encourage families to do another tick check before leaving and later at home where skin covered by clothing can be inspected. Bathing can also help find and/or wash off crawling ticks. For more information about ticks see: [Tick-borne disease prevention](#)

Water

During the day it is important that both staff and campers stay hydrated. Campers and staff are encouraged to bring at least one full water bottle every day to camp. If campers forget a water bottle, we will provide disposable water bottles for campers. At no time should campers or staff share water bottles or drinking cups.

Smoking

To provide a safe and healthy environment there is to be No smoking on the sanctuary grounds at Museum of American Bird Art Education Center. This includes all types of tobacco and other substance delivery systems.

Weather Emergencies

If Canton, the State of Massachusetts or the United States Government issues an evacuation order, the Wild at Art Camp will comply immediately. Families will be contacted, and children will be transported to a secure area in any manner deemed necessary by civil authorities.

Thunderstorms and Strong Winds

If thunder is heard or lightning is visible all campers and staff will remain indoors until a minimum of thirty minutes of no thunder or lightning. Should strong winds come up without warning, staff will immediately move campers to an indoor space. Rooms with few or no windows will be used until the wind warnings have been cancelled.

Hurricanes, Floods and Tornadoes

As hurricanes and other weather emergencies are a predictable occurrence, camp will be canceled if there is a Watch or Warning for the area. If the program is in session, families will be notified. If a tornado is seen or heard, everyone will enter the basement, protect their faces by covering them with their arms, and remain in the shelter until dismissed by the Wild at Art staff person in charge for the day or civil defense officials. Shelter will be taken in the basement of the Museum of American Bird Art.

Emergency Gathering Locations

The emergency gathering location on the sanctuary is in the field by the barn or in the Museum Building at the Museum of American Bird Art Education Center.

Camp Staff

The Camp Director is responsible for Wild at Art Summer Camp. The Camp Director supervises Wild at Art staff and offers guidance and support as needed. The Camp Director is a primary contact in the event of an emergency and is the direct contact with parents/families, interns and volunteers involved in the camp. The Camp Director is the direct contact with the Canton Board of Health.

The Assistant Camp Director is responsible for the supervision of counselors and camp management. They will assist with the direction of the day-to-day activities of the camp program, parent communications, and substitute teach as necessary.

The Behavior Specialist provides social, emotional and behavioral support, services, and solutions to all campers and staff. They spend each day walking around our site, visiting and engaging with camp groups, and checking in on campers, as well as maintaining contact with campers' families.

Camp Counselors are responsible for the direct supervision of the campers. Their duties include but are not limited to: creating and teaching camp activities, behavior management, and camper safety. All staff must complete a camp counselor training prior to the arrival of campers. All camp counselors are 18 years or older.

The Assistant Camp Counselors are responsible for aiding the staff in their duties during camp hours. These duties include, but are not limited to supervising children, distributing snacks and materials, assisting with activities and leading select activities with the help of staff. All Assistant Camp Counselors are 16 years or older and only work with children younger than 11 years old.

Family Input is welcome at Wild at Art; we invite families to share their views, ideas, and visions. All families are sent a link to the camp survey after each session. We also welcome feedback through email and phone calls.

Supervision of Campers

At all times campers are supervised by a staff member. Staff are attentive to the needs and safety of the campers assigned to them. When campers are changing activities there shall be no break in supervision.

Staff to Camper Ratios

The Department of Health and the American Camping Association have staff to camper ratio requirements that must be followed to operate camp under the current guidelines.

Campers ages 4.5-6	1 staff/5 campers
Campers ages 7-8	1 staff/8 campers
Campers ages 9-15	1 staff/10 campers

Accommodations for Campers

As an outdoor, nature-based program, it is important that families of children who have disabilities understand Mass Audubon's expectations, programs, and terrain prior to enrolling.

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 have the unintended consequence of disrupting 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 prior to their time participating within our programs.

More information and training may be required prior to the aide starting within the program. If your child requires an aide in school, please contact the camp's director as soon as possible to discuss how Mass Audubon 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 steps taken so far. Supervise camper during longer break. Add to incident report. Camp Director or designee updates family.	Camper 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	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	The family will be called. Behavior contract is reviewed. Possible dismissal.

	dismissal of participant from the camp and speak with family.	
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*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.

Prevention of Abuse and Neglect

Wild at Art Camp staff are mandated by the State of Massachusetts to report suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with MGL c119, s.51A. Staff report to the Camp Director regarding suspected family abuse or neglect issues; the Camp Director reports to the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-792-5200. The camp is not required to notify families of these reports.

Criminal record and sexual offender record searches are done on all Museum of American Bird Art Education Center employees and volunteers prior to their hiring date. All staff and volunteers are required to provide a complete work history for the prior five years plus three positive references from non-related persons. Families should report any suspected staff abuse to the Camp Director, Sanctuary Director, and DCF.

Thank you for being part of the Wild at Art 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!

