



Summer Program Parent Guide

About Us

At Nature School and Education Centre, we believe that regular and extended time in nature has benefits well beyond the educational and environmental aspect. Research supports our instinctual belief that time spent in nature has a positive effect on the well-being of an individual.

Our nature-based educational program goals are to create a setting that is naturally inclusive and educational. Our certified teachers and childcare providers are experienced with exceptional learners and alternative education models. Children are given the opportunity to explore, play and learn in a natural space.

Our inquiry-based philosophy combined with the 'forest school' model makes Nature School & Education Centre a natural choice for your child's alternative and/or enriched education.

We are a not for profit incorporation, applying any revenue towards the acquisition of a permanent site, and towards enrichment of our current programs.

Summer Program

Our Summer Programs are located within the City of St. Catharines, with the majority of the time spent in Malcolmson Eco park. Extended care, and drop-off/pick up at Port Weller School, 273 Parnell Road.

Please go to main entrance of school, doors will be open 8:00 – 9:30. Late arrivals please text or call 289-990-2939.

Campers can enjoy a full summer, a week or selected days of our summer programs. Each week will bring new sights, sounds and adventures, as we follow the spring into summer and into early fall. We offer a mix of structured and unstructured activities to suit all individuals.

Observant staff assist campers by providing necessary tools and guidance for discovery, developing questions and ways to find the answers. The program development is open, which makes what happens at camp each week largely dependent on camper's interests.

Camp Times

9:00AM-4:00PM

Extended care starts at 8:00AM-9:00AM, after care 4:00PM-5:00PM * please contact camp director to discuss times if you require additional care (289-990-2939 or jen@naatureschoolniagara.com)

Coming late/leaving early? – please contact camp director if you are arriving late, as we will be walking from the drop off location to our outdoor site, so we can make sure camper arrives safely in our care.


Late Pick Ups

Late pick ups will not be tolerated. Parents will be charged \$5 for every 5 minutes late.

What to Bring to Camp

This is a rain or shine outdoor camp (in extreme weather, we will do activities indoors), please make sure children are prepared for the weather. Children are welcome to leave belongings at camp for the week, however we cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen items. Label your child’s items, please.

Things to bring:

 List For Camp <i>Please label all items</i>		
water bottle	water refill available	
closed toe shoes and indoor shoes		
extra socks		
rain jacket	100% waterproof with hood	
lunch and two snacks		
rain boots		
sun hat		
extra change of clothes	all ages	
sunscreen/ insect deterrent	please ensure you sign “sunscreen/insect deterrent application” form if you wish your child to have assistance applying sunscreen	

Please do not bring: weapons/Swiss army knives, electronic devices, money, or other valuable items (may be lost, or damaged)

Camp Groupings

Depending on registration for the week, campers may be separated into Junior Explorers and Senior Survivors. Camp leaders will direct participants upon arrival to their 'cubbies' where they will be given an area to keep items for the week.

You may be asked to give consent to a number of activities throughout the summer, such as beach days, working with specific tools (hammer, saw), survival skills (working with fire – matches), and others, depending on the participants (as this is a child-centered program), we appreciate your patience for the time it takes to read and consider such consent forms.

Example Schedule for a Typical Day at Camp

9:00-9:30 Sign in/free play

9:30-10:00 Campers take short walk to Malcolmson Eco park.

Opening circle/meeting- Campers come together to officially start their time in the park. Boundaries for the space, resources for explore and goals for the morning may be shared. Snack may be enjoyed at this time.

10:00--12:00 Activities in the outdoor space.

Campers will be able to explore, examine, play and build in the agreed upon area for the morning. A mixture of structured and unstructured activities will occur at this time.

12:00-1:00 We may walk back to the school, where campers can wash up, refill water bottles and eat their lunch (alternatively, campers will eat lunch in the park).

1:00-3:30 If we have two age groups, younger students have the option to stay at the school and participate in nature-based programming (drama, play, arts). Older campers will go back to the park for the afternoon. Structured activities will be planned for this time, such as drama, arts and outdoor skills (shelter building), songs and games offered throughout the day, as needed.

3:30-4:00 All campers meet up at the school for closing circle/meeting, this is a time for reflection and planning for the next day. Children will get ready to go home.

Activities include:

Co-operative game, songs, photography, gardening, restoration, shelter building, arts, scientific exploration, physical challenges, team-building activities/games, and more!

Refunds

Camp fees are refundable, less \$50 administration fee. No refunds for sick days, or missed days of camp.

Medication Policy

All medication must be labelled and be accompanied by a letter addressed to the camp director explaining administration. A follow up medication call will be made prior to camp. Campers must be able to administer medication with limited assistance. Once at camp, please give all medication directly to camp staff. If your child requires an EpiPen they must carry it on them at all times. Please note all medication information clearly on your registration form.

NOTE- please let staff know if your camper has had a change in medication or dosage over the summer, even if it is administered at home.

Sick Campers

Every effort will be made to attend to sick campers at camp: however, it may be necessary for us to contact you and request that you or a guardian pick up your child.

When to Stay Home

Please do not send your child to camp if they have any illness or condition that can be easily transmitted on contact, i.e. fever or vomiting within 24 hours.

Behaviour Expectations

During camp we strive to create a safe environment for both campers and employees. We expect and encourage each camper to maintain a positive level of respect for everyone. It is Nature School's intention to work with campers and guardians to find solutions to behavioural challenges whenever possible. We appreciate your support and cooperation with our behavioural contract.

Behaviour Contract

If a camper is behaving in a way that is limiting to other campers' enjoyment of camp, they will be asked to write up a behavior contract with the camp director. The camp director, the camper and their guardians will be asked to sign this contract. If the contract is broken, the camper may be asked not to participate in certain activities or may be asked not to return to camp

Grounds for Camper Immediate Dismissal

Camp is expected to be a safe place for all campers and staff. If a camper is behaving in a way that negatively affect the camp experience or that is jeopardizing their own or others safety, that camper may be asked to leave camp without refund. This behavior includes, but is not limited to: bullying, physical assault, inability or refusal to follow safety guidelines, theft and bringing weapons or other inappropriate items to camp.