



Policy Manual 2018-2019

This document outlines the policies and procedures of all Nature School programs, and is meant to compliment the Parents Guide for the program you have registered your child with.

Refund policy

Any refunds issued will be subject to a \$50 administration fee (unless otherwise stated).

Absences - NO REFUND for absence due to illness. In extreme circumstances that may prevent a child from participating in Nature School, Nature School and Education Centre (NSEC) reserves the right to determine and assess these circumstances on a case by case basis.

Vacations- see specific program Parent Guide

Inclement Weather - NO REFUND if the day's program is cancelled due to inclement weather. Parents will be notified within an hour of by their child's teacher via email or text.

Inclement Weather/ Closure Policy

In the event that the weather/road conditions make travel to/from Nature School unsafe for either NSEC School staff or NSEC participants and we need to cancel programs for that day, we will notify parents by telephone at least 1 hour prior to the time the program would have started. In the event that the weather makes it necessary for NSEC to close earlier than normal, this decision will be communicated parents such that they are able to make the necessary arrangements for early pick-up.

Extreme Weather Policy

Educators and volunteers at Nature School consult the forecast regularly, and weather-related safety is considered in all decision-making (i.e. how far to venture away from home base, how long to be outside). In the case of predicted thunder and lightning or high-winds, NSEC educators/volunteers will ensure participants are close to shelter so that it may be sought quickly should thunder and lightning or high-winds occur. During thunder and lightning and high winds, participants will stay indoors. In the case of extreme cold (-25C or below) or extreme heat (30C), NSEC educators/volunteers will limit participants' length of exposure based on age/outerwear, and will constantly assess participants' comfort and safety, watching for signs of frostbite, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, etc.



Illness Policy

In the following cases, we ask that participants (including students, teachers, and accompanying volunteers) stay home from Nature School for at least 24 hours after their last symptom has subsided:

- Temperature over 101 degrees F or 38.3 degrees C
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (watery, profuse stools)

Should the above-mentioned situations arise while at Nature School, the affected participants will be asked to return home.

Participants affected by communicable diseases such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, flu, strep throat, viral pneumonia, conjunctivitis (pink-eye), etc., are asked to stay home from Nature School until their health care provider (i.e. naturopath, doctor, nurse, etc.) has communicated that it is safe for them to attend. Notes are not required.

Medication Policy

All medication must be labelled and be accompanied by a letter addressed to the teacher explaining administration. Children must be able to administer medication with limited assistance. Once at school, please give all medication directly to the teacher on duty. 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 child has had a change in medication or dosage over the school year, even if it is administered at home.

Privacy Policy

Nature School and Education Centre takes the privacy of its clients and visitors seriously, and we have taken steps to protect it. Any personal data shared with us, including photographic images, will be processed strictly in accordance with privacy legislation and will be used for the purposes that you have consented to. We will not share details with third parties without consent, except where we are legally compelled or obligated to do so. Please note that where consent is given to share images on the internet, they can be viewed worldwide including countries where Canadian data protection law does not apply. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about protecting the privacy of the information you provide. Parents are required to fill out a photo release form (in Child Information Form) prior to the start of our program.

Safety Play/Risky Play

Children in all of our programs have opportunities to participate in safe risky play. Teachers help students to assess and manage risks. Children are permitted to engage with their environment, and keep themselves safe. For example, students may carry sticks, climb trees, use a slingshot, whittle with sharp tools, and at our Grimsby location, light and manage fires!

All of our staff are CPR certified, and consistently take surveys of the area for safety concerns to help manage risks. Our goal is to keep your child safe, while giving them the freedom to explore and engage with their environment. **See *Permission Form* in order to participate in such activities; forms must be signed.**

<http://www.natureschoolniagara.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NSEC-Permission-form.pdf>

Accident Reports

We will ask you to sign an accident report if first aid is given to your child; minor scrapes or falls that receive a simple band-aid may not be considered 'first aid'. Any bump to the head resulting in a bruise or ice application will be reported. Parents will be required to sign the report at the time of pick up.

Emergency Procedures and First Aid

Nature School and Education Centre has written emergency procedures with which all NSEC educators and volunteers are familiar. A copy of the procedures, including emergency phone numbers, is carried by an NSEC educator/volunteer at all times in the emergency/first aid backpack. In the event of an accident during a school program (i.e. NSEC visiting schools)

Nature School staff will take the lead in responding to the emergency, and visiting educators/volunteers will support their lead. The procedures are as follows:

ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE In a severe accident or emergency the Nature School and Education Centre staff will follow this procedure:

1. Establish the nature and extent of the emergency. Refer to the first aid SAMPLE protocol. Lead educator, or senior NSEC educator, to take the lead responding and administering first aid.
2. In consultation with other educators, make sure the area and all other members of the group are accounted for, safe, adequately supervised by co-educators or volunteers. This means they fully understand what they must do to remain safe e.g. stop any tool or firework.
3. Assess the casualty and ask another adult to call 911, emergency services, while you administer appropriate first aid. The person phoning will need to respond to the following questions:

- Nature of emergency
- Injured party details: age, gender, medical history (see 'Emergency: Medical Form in first aid backpack')
- Location: Beamer Falls Manor, 140 Ridge Road West , Grimsby, ON,
- First aid administered

4. Send another adult to meet the ambulance at the parking lot entrance and direct them to the Nature School site.
5. Inform the Principal, and the emergency contact of the injured as soon as possible.
6. Ensure that an appropriate adult attends the receiving hospital, taking with them any medical information available for the injured person.
7. Ensure that remainder of the party:
 - a. Is adequately supervised throughout
 - b. Is returned as early as possible to base
 - c. Receives appropriate support and reassurance
8. The Principal will continue to liaise with the emergency services until the incident is over.
9. As soon as reasonably possible after the event, the accident will be reported using an Accident Report Form. If the casualty is the OFNS Educator The other educators will phone emergency services immediately (911) and inform Child and Nature Alliance staff (see above)
 - Nature of the accident/injury
 - Exact location
 - Whether First Aid is being applied. As soon as reasonably possible after the event the accident needs to reported with an 'Incident/Accident Report Form' which will be submitted to the Principal.

A copy of this policy is located in each emergency backpack. The emergency/first aid backpack is equipped with such things as various sizes of bandages, antiseptic wipes and polysporin, eye wash, anti-allergy medication, bear spray, a whistle, and a hypothermia blanket.

Child Entry and Release Policy

Parents must give Nature School and Education Centre written authorization for the people who may have access to their children (i.e. a relative who picks up child, emergency contact in cases where parents cannot be reached). If written authorization is not possible, the parent must phone or email us to give authorization. Parents must notify NSEC before changing the usual pick-up routine. We always act in the best interests of the child if there is any confusion or uncertainty.

Unauthorized Pick-up Procedure:

If someone other than a parent/authorized alternate pick-up person arrives to pick up a child and we haven't been notified in advance by the authorized parent or pick up person we will:

1. Call parent for verbal authorization.
2. If parent cannot be located, the child is not allowed to leave NSEC until a parent has been contacted.
3. NSEC staff will remain with the child until an authorized pick-up person arrives.

Custody and Access to Children:

According to the law, both parents of a child have equal access to a child and to the information about the child's development, health and welfare. The only time a staff member can deny



access of a parent to a child is when there is a written separation agreement or a legal court order. NSEC requires a copy of this document.

Release of Children to a Person Who Appears Intoxicated/Impaired:

Staff will not release a child to a person who appears intoxicated or impaired. In such cases, staff will assist in making other pick-up arrangements (i.e., a spouse or other authorized person). Staff members are legally responsible to protect the children in their care from any perceived risk.

Behaviour Policy

We make every effort to create a space where students feel safe, and respected. If a child is behaving in a way that causes harm to themselves, others or disrespecting property, every effort will be made by our staff to work with the child and their parents to create a supportive environment for them to succeed.

Only after every effort has been made, and with consultation with parents, teachers and board of directors, will the child be refused access to our programs.

Child Abuse Reporting

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children share a responsibility to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm.

Nature School recognizes its responsibility to promote safe environments and practices to protect children and vulnerable persons. Our educators are trained to recognize the indicators of neglect and abuse and are legally required to report any suspicions that a child may require protection. The role of the child protection agency is to investigate and determine if there is any proof of abuse or neglect and **Duty to Report** is defined under section 72(1) of the Ontario Child and Family Services Act and sets out what must be reported to a child protection agency (e.g. Children's Aid Society - CAS).

Anti-Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy

Nature School and Education Centre is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully and have equal opportunities.

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, every person has the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, condoned or ignored at Nature School. If a claim of harassment or discrimination is proven, disciplinary measures will be applied, up to and including termination of employment.

Nature School is committed to a comprehensive strategy to address harassment and discrimination, including:

- providing training and education to make sure everyone knows their rights and responsibilities
- regularly monitoring organizational systems for barriers relating to *Code* grounds
- providing an effective and fair complaints procedure
- promoting appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

Grievance Policy and Procedure

Our grievance procedure policy explains how parents and employees can voice their complaints in a constructive way. Supervisors and senior management should know everything that annoys parents and employees or hinders their work, so they can resolve it as quickly as possible. Parents, volunteers and employees should be able to follow a fair grievance procedure to be heard and avoid conflicts.

The company encourages employees and parents to communicate their grievances. That way we can foster a supportive and pleasant workplace for everyone.

Complaints / Grievances

It is our goal to strive for quality and excellence in the care of your child/ren; therefore, any positive comments or suggestions are greatly appreciated and can be made to the Principal (Jaclyn).

We always welcome your input and feedback towards the care of your child/ren. NSEC appreciates questions or discussions of any kind that influence a positive outcome for your child/ren; however, if you feel that there is a problem concerning the facility or a staff member, please follow the following steps:

1. Speak with the educator involved with your child/ren.
2. Allow follow up from the educator to you.
3. If you are still not satisfied with the results of your concerns, please make an appointment to personally talk to the Principal of Nature School.
4. All comments made to the staff members are relayed to the Principal so that the Principal is aware of any problems or issues. If a complaint is made, the Principal will listen carefully to the issue that the parent has, and will attempt to work with the parent(s) to rectify the problem. At this time, it may be appropriate to discuss any other issues that the Principal may feel is important concerning the child/ren in the context of the complaint.

We feel that communication is essential to the success of your child/ren's care. We must make sure that we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. We believe in an open door policy and encourage parents to feel free to call and check on your child/ren's day if you have any concerns. We understand that, to you, the most important person in the entire world is your child/ren and we respect that fact and in turn treat your child/ren with just as much respect. We try to put ourselves in the parent's place and we recognize that you have a right to expect



the best care possible for your child/ren.

Communication between parents and staff members is very important. We encourage daily interaction between parents and staff to ensure that as parents, you are kept informed of how your child/ren's day was and that you are made aware of any specific incidents. Also, it is equally important that staff members are kept informed of any concerns parents may have about your child/ren, at the center and/or at home, that may assist in the care of your child/ren. All comments are taken very seriously and we will all do our best to ensure your complete satisfaction as quickly and effectively as possible. We aim to keep parents stress-free and self assured knowing that their children are in our loving care.

Food Policy

Please note Nature School is completely NUT FREE. Due to the prevalence of life-threatening nut allergies, we ask that participants refrain from bringing nuts to Nature School and Education Centre. Soy and sunflower seed substitutes for nut butters are welcome.

Snack-Sharing

In addition, we ask that participants do not share or trade snacks, as this ensures the health, safety, and happiness of the community.

Garbage-Less Lunches

We encourage participants to try to bring a garbage-less lunch. At the same time, we ask that parents/caregivers consider the size/weight/safety of the containers in which their child's snacks are packed. At NSEC we seek to empower even our youngest participants to carry their own snacks and water bottles on our adventures, which is totally possible with small containers.

Hand-Washing and Drinking Water

Participants will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water before eating at NSEC and after using the bathroom. When we are in the forest, wipes and sanitizer will be available. Children will be able to refill their water bottles on site.