

# Summer Camp

## Parent Handbook & Policy Guide



50 YEARS  OF PEOPLE + NATURE

**50** The Schuylkill  
Center



8480 Hagy's Mill Road, Philadelphia, PA 19128

215-482-7300 | [www.schuylkillcenter.org](http://www.schuylkillcenter.org)

## Welcome to the Schuylkill Center

Thank you for your interest in the Schuylkill Center's summer camps! We are thrilled to be able to provide such a unique program that gives children the opportunity to explore and learn about their relationship to the natural world while supporting their physical, social and intellectual growth.

The Parent Handbook and Policy Guide provides parents with an introduction to our summer camp program, registration policies and procedures, daily life during a typical camp week, our strategies and expectations for effective parent/staff relationships, and our policies and procedures for keeping children healthy, safe, and supported during camp.

Please read through the handbook and I welcome you to talk with myself and camp staff about any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,



Gail Farmer, Director of Education

## About the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

The Schuylkill Center was founded in 1965 as the nation's first urban environmental education center. Its 340-acres of fields and forests serve as a living laboratory to foster appreciation, deepen understanding, and encourage stewardship of the environment. Reaching over 36,000 Philadelphia-area residents each year, the Schuylkill Center offers a diverse collection of educational programs, including programs for school, continuing education for teachers, the Philadelphia-area's first Nature Preschool, and a full calendar of events for the public. The environmental art department inspires and educates, while pushing the cutting edge and using art to remediate local ecological issues. Acting as the only clinic of its kind in a four-county region, the Wildlife Clinic at the Schuylkill Center treats over 3,000 injured, orphaned, and sick animals annually. In 2015 the Schuylkill Center is celebrating 50 years of connecting people and nature, with a series of events highlighting the Center's work and vision for the future.

For more information: [www.schuylkillcenter.org](http://www.schuylkillcenter.org)

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## 1. General Information

**Purpose:** The Schuylkill Center Summer Camp programs aim to improve children’s quality of life through increased access to nature, extending and enriching out-of-school-time learning activities, unstructured free play in nature and increased physical activity.

**Philosophy:** We believe that activities involving continued access to nature, in both a structured and unstructured environment, can be as important to a child’s growth and development as time spent in the classroom. Schuylkill Center camps allow children to step out of their comfort zone in a safe atmosphere, explore new fields of interest, interact with friends, use their imagination, and enables participants and educators to learn from each other.

**Guiding Principles:** The Schuylkill Center uses the following guiding principles to establish and ensure high quality, safe programming.

- Schuylkill Center Summer Camp staff builds and maintains positive relationships with children, families, and other Schuylkill Center staff.
- Program space is welcoming and engaging, while allowing children to feel emotionally and physically supported.
- Indoor space is appropriate for the range of activities the program offers and is properly maintained. Ample space is provided such that active indoor play does not impact quiet activities.
- Outdoor space is maintained appropriately for the range of activities the program offers (i.e. lessons, hiking, free play at various locations on the property, sports activities).
- Activities promote personal growth and development in a physically and emotionally supportive environment.
- Program activities are diverse and supportive of all youth regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.
- A snack and physical activity is included in program activities each day.
- Summer Camp educators are offered continuous support and learning opportunities throughout the summer.
- Constant, interactive supervision of children is crucial and staff to participant ratio is maintained at 1:8 or lower.

### Summer Camp Programs:

#### Nature Ramblers

Our Nature Ramblers Summer Camp provides children aged 3 to 9 intimate and ongoing access to forests, fields, streams, ponds and an organic farm garden. Nature Rambler campers explore the natural world through hands-on discoveries, hiking excursions, art, play, field trips and more.

#### Teen Adventure Treks

The Schuylkill Center’s Adventure Treks challenge pre-teens and teens to improve their outdoor knowledge and skills in a comfortable and supportive setting. Participants learn more about themselves, strengthen their self-confidence, and gain teamwork skills while exploring the outdoors in unique and fun ways. They’re continually challenged in incredibly fun environments under the guidance of experienced instructors and outdoor guides.

**Schuylkill Center Educators:** During the summer months, the Schuylkill Center employs highly educated, motivated adults to lead all aspects of summer camp. Our staff completes a rigorous application, interview and training process, as well as provides all necessary Pennsylvania Child Abuse clearances and criminal background checks. All of our programs maintain a 1:8 staff to participant ratio or lower. The Schuylkill Center does engage qualified teens in leadership training as a part of the summer camp program. These teens are trained and mentored by Schuylkill Center staff throughout the summer and do not factor into our 1:8 staff to participant ratio.

**Facility:** The camp classrooms are nestled in 340 acres of natural habitats, with doors that open directly into our sensory garden, woods and our Tall Trees Nature Playscape. Children experience daily nature walks and explore nearby forests, meadows and ponds. The Tall Trees Nature Playscape provides opportunities for digging, playing in the mud, climbing on rocks, constructing with natural materials, and balancing on logs. The nature center is also home to our interpretive Discovery Center, environmental art gallery, outdoor art installations, and six miles of trails.

**Weather-related Closings:** To find out about weather-related closings, please check our webpage, Facebook, Twitter or call 215-482-7300.

**Insurance:** We assume that all children are covered by the health and accident insurance policies of their parents, and that this information is indicated on the registration forms.

## 2. Registration and Fees

**Registration Policies:** Youth will be accepted regardless of race, sex, religion, handicap, political persuasion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry. Parents and guardians registering their child in Summer Camp must submit registration online using our website. Space is limited for each age group. In the event that the program is filled to capacity a waitlist will be formed on a first come, first served basis. Parents will receive confirmation of registration via email at time of registration.

Preschool campers will need to submit these additional documents prior to the start of camp (regulated by the Department of Public Welfare). Details and documents will be sent to Preschool Camp registrants prior to camp

- Proof of immunization
- Physical signed by a licensed physician
- Agreement form

**Ages of Children:** Participants in Nature Ramblers must be between the ages of 3 – 9 and must be of age by June 15 in order to participate. Youth participating in the Schuylkill Center's Teen Adventure Trek program must be between the ages of 10-15 and must be of age by June 15 order to participate. Approval from the Public Programs Manager or Preschool Manager must be made in advance for children participating in programs outside of the given age ranges.

**Summer Camp Fees:** The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education is a non-profit organization funded by program fees, membership, donations and grants. The Schuylkill Center does provide financial assistance and scholarships to families in need. Please contact the Director of Education at (215) 482-7300 ext. 129 for more information about our need-based assistance.

**Payment Schedule:** a deposit is required at the time of registration to reserve your child's space in camp.

- For campers aged 3 to 9, a deposit of \$50 per program week is required.
- For campers aged 10 to 12, a deposit of \$100 per program week is required.
- For campers aged 13 to 15, a deposit of \$300 per program week is required.

Payment balances will be due the second week of May (you will be notified of the exact balance-due date at the time of registration). Your credit card or bank draft will be charged automatically through our online registration system on that date, unless you choose to pay by another method on or before that date. We can accept Visa or Master Card payment by phone, check payment by mail, or cash, check, or credit card payment in person during normal business hours. Normal business hours are Monday – Friday, 9:00am to 5:00 pm. Space will not be reserved until payment is received. If full payment is not received by the balance-due date, you child's reservation will no longer be held and your deposit will not be refunded. After this date, we cannot guarantee that space will be available when your payment is received.

**Cancellations:** If a cancellation is made before the balance-due date, a 50% refund will be issued. If a cancellation is made after the balance-due date no refunds will be issued.

**Multi-week Discount:** Registrations of more than 1 week of camp receive a \$10/week discount after the first week.

**Schuylkill Center Membership:** Schuylkill Center Family Members receive a discount on their camp fees. Family Membership benefits include:

- Free and/or discounted admission to many programs and events
- Quarterly newsletter (*The Quill*) with calendar of programs and events
- 10% discount at our gift shop, 10% discount at our native plant sales and 20% discount on seasonal bird seed sales
- Exclusive invitations to member-only events, like the Native Plant Sale preview, where members receive a free plant
- Ability to rent community garden plots
- Free or discounted admission at nature centers across America
- \$20 per week discount on summer camps and the opportunity to register early
- Ability to host a birthday party in the nature center

**Past Due Balances:** Any parent with a past due balance with the Schuylkill Center before the start of summer camp will not be allowed to register or have children attend until the amount is paid in full. For questions about your bill or past due balances please contact the Registrar at (215) 482-7300 ext. 110.

**Return Drafts or Checks for Non-Sufficient Funds:** Any drafts or checks returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) will be subjected to an additional \$25.00 service charge.

**Receipts for Taxes:** It is the responsibility of the participating family to maintain documentation for end-of-year tax records. The Schuylkill Center does not provide yearly itemized accounts of payments received.

**Federal Tax ID # 23-1654975**

## 3. Daily Life at Summer Camp

**Program Hours:** Camp begins each day at 9:00 am and ends at 3:30 pm; preschool camp has a half-day option ending at 12:30. The Schuylkill Center offers extended hours from 8 am to 9 am and in the afternoon from 3:30 pm to 6:00pm for an extra fee. Parents and guardians needing to pick their child up between 9:00 am and 3:30 pm need to communicate the time they will be picking up to staff prior to that day. Pick-up typically takes place at the Schuylkill Center's black top (east side of main building), with the exception of the half-day pick-up for preschool camp where parents will pick-up in the classroom.

**Drop-off:** Parents will bring children to the black-top on the east side of the main building, where they will be greeted by camp staff. Parents will sign their child into the program on a daily attendance sheet.

**Children Arriving Late to Camp:** Parents and guardians should make every effort to arrive at camp by 9:00am each day. If a child arrives after 9:15 am they should visit the front desk at the Schuylkill Center's main building. Staff at the front desk will contact the appropriate group and the child will join the group within a reasonable timeframe. If a child arrives late on a field trip day and the group has left the Schuylkill Center, the child will not be able to attend camp that day.

**Activities:** The Schuylkill Center is committed to offering a safe, engaging and active summer camp program. Nature Ramblers and Teen Adventure Treks use both indoor and outdoor space for its program and invites youth to explore the natural surroundings in both structured and unstructured activities. Daily outdoor activities may include engaging educational activities, hiking, exploring streams and ponds, canoeing and exploring the forest. All safety equipment for specialized activities (canoeing or field trips) is provided and these activities will be communicated to the parents before the day of the program.

**Appropriate Footwear:** All summer camp programs spend time outdoors on uneven trails and surfaces. Participants should wear comfortable sneakers or boots to camp each day. Closed toed shoes are required at all times.

**What to Bring to Camp:** Certain articles of clothing and equipment are needed by the children at camp. Please bring one complete extra set of clothing (including underwear and socks), a reusable water bottle, sunblock and bug spray (if desired), hat (for keeping sun off face), and a healthy lunch. After care often runs a sprinkler and so a towel and bathing suit are sometimes needed.

- **Special Note:** Children will have opportunities for playing in the mud, and climbing trees and rocks under the guidance and supervision of their teachers. **You can expect that your child will get dirty during these hikes. Please do not send your child to camp in their best shoes and clothes as they will get muddy, dirty and wet.**

**Personal Belongings:** Items brought to camp by participants should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Each child will have a space to hang or store their personal belongings for the day. Items left in public areas will be placed in lost and found, located at the front desk in the Schuylkill Center's Main Building. Items not collected within a 2 week period will be discarded. **Electronics, cell phones and toys are not permitted at camp.** Preschoolers may bring one small toy for rest time only. The Schuylkill Center is not responsible for personal items that are misplaced, stolen or broken at camp.

**Snacks and Lunch:** Meal times are a special time for building relationships and developing connections while engaging in conversations among children and educators. A morning snack is provided for each child every day. For children participating in an extended day program an afternoon snack will be provided. We also encourage children to drink throughout the day and ask that families bring a reusable water bottle for their child daily. This should be taken home at the end of each day to be washed and sanitized.

Children in our program eat lunch in the classrooms or picnic outdoors with their teachers and peers. Parents need to pack a lunch for their children to bring to camp each day. We encourage families to pack a low or no waste lunch, using reusable lunch bags, Tupperware and water bottles. These reusable items should be labeled with the participant's name. **Please let us know if your child has any dietary restrictions or food allergies.**

**Please do not send any food that needs to be warmed or reheated in a microwave. Also, we may not serve children under the age of 4 hot dogs (whole or sliced), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, or raw carrots as they present choking hazards. These are recommendations provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics.**

**Discipline:** Nature Ramblers and Teen Adventure Trek staff will treat each child with respect and set clear expectations and boundaries each day. Children are expected to show respect to their peers and staff, as well as treat the facilities and equipment with care. Clear expectations will be set each week and staff will help participants establish positive roles within the camp group. For children who experience difficulty with this structure, staff will work with the child and their parents to create an individualized plan that meets the need of the child while ensuring the safety and trust of other campers. Frequent disrespect towards peers, staff or property may result in child's dismissal from the Schuylkill Center's Summer Camp program.

**Field Trips:** By signing and agreeing to the Schuylkill Center's policies and procedures and waiver form included in the registration process, parents and guardians grant permission for their child to participate in field trip days, unless a written non-consent is provided prior to the field trip day. Parents will be notified of field trip days via email a week in advance. Transportation on field trip days may include school bus or 12-passenger van. Any camper under the age of 8 traveling in a 12-passenger van must provide a booster seat from home. All campers must wear a seatbelt at all times. Under no circumstances will participants be transported in staff's personal vehicles.

A staff to participant ratio of 1:8 or lower will be maintained at all times on field trip days and each child will be required to wear identification containing the following information:

**The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education**  
215.482.7300 ext. 110

**Inclement or Excessively Hot Weather:** In case of inclement or excessively hot weather, camp pick-up and drop-off will take place inside the Schuylkill Center's main building. The Schuylkill Center's main building is air conditioned during the summer and groups will be required to remain indoors when temperature and humidity require such action. Physical activity will be limited during this time.

**Releasing Children:** Pick-up occurs on the black-top on the east side of the main building. Children will only be released to the parents/guardians and individuals named in the child's files as approved for pick-up. Parents will sign their child out on the daily attendance sheet. Children will not be released to unauthorized persons. If a parent or guardian would like to add or remove names from this list they may do so by contacting the Schuylkill Center Registrar at 215.482.7300 ext. 110.

**Late Fees:** Summer Camp educators are scheduled until 3:30 pm and aftercare staff until 6:00 pm. Late pick-ups require staff and employees to stay past their scheduled hours. Please respect their time and arrange to have your

child picked up no later than 3:30 pm for regular camp pick-up and 6:00pm for aftercare. If a child has not been picked up by 3:40 pm, summer camp staff will sign the child into aftercare. Parents will be responsible for paying aftercare fees on this day. The following late fees apply to families picking up after 6:00pm.

- 6:00 pm to 6:15 pm \$1 per minute
- 6:16 pm to 6:30 pm \$3 per minute
- 6:31 pm to 7:00 pm \$5 per minute

If a child is not picked up by 7:00 pm and no contact has been made with parents/guardians or emergency contact persons, Schuylkill Center staff will contact the proper authorities.

**Birthdays:** Birthday celebrations are significant events in children’s lives. “Simplicity” is often helpful in these events and snack items such as fruit, muffins or cupcakes are very easy-to-manage favorites of the children. Please feel free to celebrate your child’s birthday with the camp. We ask that you simply communicate with camp staff a few days beforehand to ensure we can celebrate properly and to address any questions or concerns.

## 4. The Schuylkill Center/Family Partnership

To be successful in achieving our educational mission, it is essential that families and Schuylkill Center (SCEE) staff work together cooperatively. The relationship between home and camp works best when parents understand SCEE's mission, share its core values, and support its programs and staff. Working together, parents and SCEE staff exert a strong influence on children to become better educated about themselves and their world; they also help them to mature by modeling adult working relationships based on civility, honesty and respect.

**Regular Forms of Communication:** Camp staff regularly check-in with parents during drop-off and pick-up times. Please feel free to use this time to talk with and get to know your child's educators. However, drop-off and pick-up times are not good times for more indepth conversations about any concerns you may have. We do our best to not discuss the children in front of them and are always happy to talk in person or by phone at a scheduled time. If you wish to meet with camp staff at another time let us know and we can arrange it. There are also various boards throughout the center with postings of upcoming events. SCEE staff also regularly use email for reminders and announcements.

**Individual Needs:** Camp staff will accommodate children with special individual needs, within reason, provided that these needs are communicated to our staff as soon as they are known and that it is within our capacities to provide the needed support. Families are encouraged to provide staff with any information that they feel will help the Schuylkill Center support their child.

**When We Can't Provide Needed Support:** It is our hope that every child enrolled at our camp will complete their experience, but this is not always possible or ideal. There are times when, even after receiving individual support, a student may continue to exhibit either a lack of developmental progress or a pattern of situational inappropriate behavior of such frequency, duration or intensity that it disrupts that student's own experience or the experience of others. Sometimes, the level of support a child needs to engage productively in the program is simply greater than our limited staff capacity to give. In these instances, we will need to withdraw the child's enrollment in camp, as our goal is to serve all of our campers within the context of our available resources.

**Special Circumstances:** When there are special circumstances that might affect your child and family, such as absence of parents/guardians or family illness, please communicate this with your camp staff as it will help us understand any atypical behavior the child may exhibit.

**Parent Involvement:** Parent involvement is critical to the development of young children and to the success of their camp experience. Parent involvement includes:

- Reading the newsletter and talk with your child about their daily experiences at camp
- Picking up and dropping off your child promptly at designated times
- Talking with the lead educator at pick-up about your child's day
- Talking with camp staff at the start of the week about any concerns you may have
- Sending your child to camp each day with the appropriate clothing and supplies

We also welcome parents and families to become involved in Schuylkill Center events and activities outside of summer camp. We offer regular member events, education, art and stewardship programs and volunteer opportunities for adults and children. Please check our calendar of events and webpage for details.

**Family Grievance Procedure:** In our daily communication with families, we strive to resolve issues that may come up. However, if at any time a parent feels that an issue has not been addressed or resolved and it may need to be pursued further, we are here to support that process by providing several opportunities for recourse. The early identification and communication of a concern and prompt initiation of a resolution can help avoid further problems.

If you do have a question, concern or issue, the following steps will help facilitate the problem solving process:

- First, speak with your camp educators about your concern; they will work with you to determine a mutually agreeable course of action.
- If, after working with your camp educators, you still feel the issue is not resolved, speak with the appropriate camp manager (see “About Us” section)
- If you still feel the issue is not resolved, contact the Director of Education (Gail Farmer @ 215-482-7300 ext. 129)

While parents may not agree with every decision made by the Schuylkill Center and its staff, in most cases, parents and staff find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In extreme cases, however, a disagreement may emerge that is so severe that the parent(s) cannot remain a constructive member of the camp community. In such cases, the Schuylkill Center and the family should consider whether another environment would be more suitable for the family. In the very rare and extreme cases where parent/guardian behavior undermines mutual trust and respect, including verbal abuse, the use of threats, bullying and other similar behavior, the Schuylkill Center reserves the right, at any time, to immediately terminate the student’s and family’s relationship with summer camp.

**Confidentiality:** The Schuylkill Center will maintain confidentiality and respect each family’s right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of any confidential information. Children’s files are stored away and only accessible to those who are working directly with your child. However, if we have reason to believe that a child’s welfare may be at risk, we are bound by the law to share confidential information with state agencies or individuals who may intervene on behalf of the child.

**Personal Services and Babysitting:** We ask that our staff not accept any type of outside position, including babysitting, for families in the program. When professional educators are employed for families and children in camp, the roles of the teacher become blurred in the minds of the children, their parents, and occasionally, the teachers themselves.

## 5. Health and Safety

**General Safety Measures:** The Schuylkill Center follows these guidelines to ensure the safety and security of all children here at the center:

- All exterior doors are kept locked at all times except for the main entrance and the door to the sensory garden.
- The building is armed with a security system.
- Doors to the Widener Wing will be locked to restrict the general public's access to this area. Keys to exterior and interior doors will be limited to essential staff.
- To keep track of children, we conduct head counts, position staff throughout groups of children and implement a buddy/hand-holding system to ensure all children stay together. We maintain exceptional staff-child ratios and check-in and -out with parents as they drop off or pick up their child.
- We keep current copies of health and emergency paperwork at the front desk and in a binder that educators keep with them at all times (indoors and outdoors).
- Fire drills are held once each month. Evacuation routes for fire drills and other events will be posted near the exit doors in the classrooms, bathroom, and offices.
- All cleaning supplies and toxic substances are stored in locked cabinets.

**Emergency Response Procedures:** We have emergency response procedures in place for all of the following:

1. Lost Child (onsite or offsite)
2. Lockdown (on property and in facility)
3. Evacuation (fire and shelter in place)
4. Medical Situation (onsite and offsite)
5. Travel Emergency
6. Hazardous Weather
7. Dangerous Intruder

If an emergency occurs at camp we will take the following actions;

1. If it is life threatening, we will contact emergency medical services (911)
2. If it is not a life-threatening emergency, we will determine appropriate next steps in caring for the child.
3. In both cases, the child's parent(s) will be called. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will try the other emergency contacts listed in their paperwork. If we are unable to reach the parent or the emergency contact, we will contact the child's physician.

***You must keep current your emergency name and number in the camp records.***

***Notify us immediately if there is any change.***

**First Aid Supplies:** Each classroom will be equipped with a first aid kit. A camp staff member will bring this kit when the group is outside as well.

**Background Clearances:** All full-time and part-time staff is required to submit state and federal background

clearances as a condition of employment.

**Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect:** Pennsylvania law requires professionals who work on behalf of children (such as teachers and child care center staff) to report child abuse and/or neglect whenever they have reasonable suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect. If a camp staff person suspects that a child in the class is being emotionally, sexually, or physically abused or neglected, s/he is required by law to directly report their suspicions to ChildLine and then notify their supervisor that they have made a report. Once a report of suspected abuse and/or neglect has been made, child services determines whether or not to conduct an investigation. Any person can make a report of suspected abuse or neglect by calling ChildLine: 800-932-0313

All Schuylkill Center camp staff will be required to complete *Mandated Reporter Child Abuse* training.

**Biting Policy:** Biting can occur for a variety of reasons including excitement, overstimulation, frustration, impulsiveness, lack of self-control and making an impact. While we recognize that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children ages 3 and 4, it is not a socially appropriate behavior as it is painful and, if a bite breaks the skin, it can become a significant health concern. If a child bites another child or staff, the staff will care for the bitten person, providing first aid and then follow-up with the child who has bitten. In the case that the skin is broken, the staff will provide first aid and monitor the wound, calling the parents if swelling or redness increases or if the child is extremely upset. The staff will fill out an incident report for both children (names will be confidential besides that of own child) and the lead educator will talk with the parents of each child about the incident. The lead educator will work with the parents and the biting child to provide strategies and additional support to help that child express their emotions in a more socially positive way. The lead educator and parents will check-in frequently to discuss how things are going. If there is a second bite, the same procedure will be performed, and the parents of the child who is biting will need to have a conference with the preschool manager to discuss the child's repeated biting and support options for the child. The lead educator and parents will check-in frequently to discuss how things are going. However, because of the serious implications of biting for the recipient of the bite, we must adhere to a three-strikes policy about biting. If there are three incidents of biting, we will have to withdraw the child from camp for the safety of the other children.

**Safe Outdoor Play:** We will be outside in various types of weather while always being aware of the children's health and safety. We follow weather alerts to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play and exploration. To ensure that children are protected in our outdoor space and in various types of weather, we follow these guidelines:

- Parents are asked to send clothing to allow layering for hot weather outside play
- Parents are asked to apply sunblock to their child before arriving at camp. We also ask that parents bring in sunscreen or sunblock for reapplication in the afternoon. Each container of sunscreen or sunblock should be labeled with the child's name and stored appropriately.
- Schuylkill Center staff will maintain trails and keep them free from hazards.
- Educators will carry phones on trails.

**Bruises, Scratches and Stings:** Campers frequently come home with minor scratches, bumps and bruises as a result of active play outdoors. We treat these minor injuries with soap, water, and bandages for scratches, icepacks for bumps and stings, and loving care. The most common plant and insect hazards are poison ivy (causes an itchy skin rash if allergic), stinging nettle (gives a stinging, tingly sensation when touched, sometimes minor swelling at site) and wasp stings. We teach kids how to recognize poison ivy and stinging nettle and do our best to keep the kids from playing near it. We typically do not call parents if their child is stung (unless s/he is allergic), or gets bumps, bruises, or scratches, as they are simply a part of outdoor play, but we do notify parents of the incident at

pick-up.

**Incident Reports:** If an accident, injury, or emergency should occur, we aim to learn from that experience, and modify our policies and procedures if necessary. An Incident Report form will be completed and given to parents/families for any accident or incident occurring on our property and/or during one of our programs onsite or offsite. The original report will be given to the family or guardian and a copy will be kept on file.

**Illness:** To help avoid the spread of illness, children with fever, diarrhea, vomiting or at the start of a cold **should not** attend camp. You must wait until fever, vomiting, or diarrhea has been gone for 24 hours before sending your child back to camp. Upon notification of a sick child during camp hours, a parent or guardian must pick up their child immediately. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. It is very important that a sick child not remain in camp, both for the well-being of the child and the other children in camp. You will be contacted to pick up your child if he/she has any of the following:

1. Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
2. Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide
3. Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms
4. Diarrhea – two or more cases of loose stool
5. Vomiting
6. Drooling caused by mouth sores
7. Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
8. Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
9. Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
10. Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
11. Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment
12. Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted

Children who are ill may return to camp when:

1. They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours
2. They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
3. They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
4. They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething), or if:
  - a. The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
  - b. The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage
5. If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required

**Medication:** The “release for administration of medication” section of the registration form must be filled out by a parent or guardian in order for Schuylkill Center staff to administer medication at any time, for any reason. All medications must be received in the original prescription container with original date and instructions. Medications will be kept in staff medical kits if appropriate (epi-pens, inhalers, etc.) or in a locked medicine cabinet. When medication, prescription or over-the-counter, is to be administered to a child during the camp day, we ask that the following steps be taken:

1. Written orders from a physician giving the name of the drug, dosage, when the medication is to be taken, diagnosis and/or the reason the medication is being given. A doctor's order is required for all medication,

- prescription or over the counter.
2. Written permission from parent or guardian requesting that the camp comply with their physician's order.
  3. Medication is given to staff in an appropriately labeled pharmacy container and/or, if over-the-counter medication, in its original container as purchased. In either case, the parent, guardian or family member should give the medication directly to one of the camp staff. Staff will look for the right name, right medicine, right dosage, right time and right route of administration.
  4. Inhalers are permitted at camp ONLY when the medication form is filled out. Inhalers and all other medication require these forms and will be stored appropriately.

**Communicable Diseases Notification:** When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a suspected reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

**Lyme Disease Prevention:** As part of the enrollment packet, parents and teachers receive information about Lyme disease and the risk associated with our programs, including information sheets and pictures of what to look for. Staff conducts tick checks with the children after walks, hikes, and at the end of the day. Parents are an essential part of reducing the risk of Lyme's disease. Make tick checks a daily routine, e.g. after returning home from camp or before bedtime. Use a head lamp or flashlight to find and spot ticks – they can be teeny-tiny in the summer months.

**Lice (Pediculosis) Policy:** When a case of head lice is identified, the following steps will be followed to minimize further spread and assist in elimination of the problem:

1. The child will be sent home from camp to be treated by the parents, who should consult with their physician.
2. All children in the group, siblings, and anyone else who may have been in close contact with the child should be examined for lice.
3. Written notice will be sent home to the parents and families of the camp informing them that a case of head lice has been identified in the class. Parents will be asked to assist by performing regular inspections of the child's head to reduce spread of the lice.
4. The classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Additionally, any sources of potential infestation such as mats or "dress-ups" will be disinfected or removed from the classroom.
5. According to the National Pediculosis Association, no pediculicide (lice treatment) is 100% effective at killing nits (eggs). Therefore, to prevent further infestation, treatment at home must include removal of all lice and their associated nits/eggs before returning to camp.
6. Prior to returning to camp, the child should be examined by camp staff to determine the child is free from lice and nits. If the child still has lice, he or she will be sent home from camp to have them removed by the parents.
7. For additional information visit the Center for Disease Control website:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsht\\_head\\_lice.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsht_head_lice.htm)

**Food Allergies:** Many students have food allergies. The prevalence of peanut and tree nut allergies in children, the most serious of food allergies, has doubled in the past five years. A life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis can occur even with the slightest exposure to an allergen. If your child has a food allergy, please let us know and complete an Allergy Action Plan, to provide guidance in prevention and outline steps to take in case of exposure.

Camp is not peanut/nut free; however, if we have a child in camp with a peanut or other severe food allergy, we may restrict certain foods from being sent in to camp for the safety of that child. In order to provide a safe environment for all our students, the following guidelines and steps are followed:

1. Students with allergies are supported in taking responsibility to be knowledgeable of their allergies and avoid foods containing a harmful ingredient.
2. When an individual food allergy care plan is in place, children, parents and Schuylkill Center staff will all adhere and follow the set plan. If the plan includes restriction of certain foods in class, all parents will be notified of this restriction and expected to adhere to it.
3. We ask that parents remain flexible if special health accommodations come up during camp. Our main concern is the health and safety of the children and with the help and support of families we can ensure a safe environment for all.
4. All children who are in class with a child who has a life-threatening allergy should wash hands after eating.
5. Children should not trade or share lunch, snacks or drinks.

**Bee Sting Allergies:** Parents of children with known bee sting allergies must complete an Allergy Action Plan and submit it with their enrollment paperwork. If a child with an allergy is stung, we will implement the Allergy Action Plan and parents will be notified. Any time an epipen is administered, our protocol is to follow it with a call to 911. If a child without a known allergy begins to develop symptoms of an allergic reaction after having been stung, Benedryl will be administered and 911 will be called. This is treated as a medical emergency and parents will be notified.

**Car Safety:** We ask that families please turn car engines off upon arrival at camp. This is an important safety precaution and by having less idling cars, we can increase the air quality around the Center, put less wear on our car engines, increase the fuel economy of our vehicles and reduce the amount of greenhouse gases. We ask that everyone join us in the important environmentally friendly initiative.

## 6. About Us

### Our Staff

#### **Gail Farmer, Director of Education**



[gail@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:gail@schuylkillcenter.org); 215-482-7300 x. 129

Gail provides vision and leadership for the education department at the Schuylkill Center. Gail has been an environmental educator for 15 years and involved in outdoor education administration for the past nine years. Before joining the Schuylkill Center team, she was the Program Director at the PA Institute for Conservation Education for six years, and a biologist-educator at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Audubon California before that. She received her Master of Science degree in ecology from the State University of New York in Syracuse.

### Summer Camp Staff Leadership

#### **Shannon Dryden, Preschool Camp**



[shannon@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:shannon@schuylkillcenter.org); x.121

Shannon is a certified early childhood educator who came to us from Abington Friends School, where she taught in a mixed-age classroom (ages 3-5) using an emergent curriculum. Shannon brings considerable experience teaching in progressive preschool classrooms as well as her passion for nature and providing children with meaningful learning opportunities outdoors. She is a Fellow of the Delaware Valley Association for Educators of Young Children's advocacy program and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education from Arcadia University.

#### **Beatrice Kelly, Education Assistant and Registrar**



[bea@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:bea@schuylkillcenter.org); x. 110

Beatrice Kelly is the Schuylkill Center's receptionist, registrar and education assistant, a position she has enjoyed for many years. Her educational background is in History and Fine Arts. A native of Northwest Philadelphia, she continues to derive inspiration from the flora and fauna of the region and to discover new things at the Schuylkill Center. Bea can be found at the front desk on weekdays and looks forward to meeting you. Please contact her if you have any questions about Schuylkill Center programs or other ways of getting involved here.

#### **Camila Rivera-Tinsley, Farm Camp**



[Camila@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:Camila@schuylkillcenter.org); x122

Camila developed, planned and supervises Farm Camp. She oversees farm camp staff and works closely with our farm partners, Teens4Good. Camila began her work with the Center as a part-time naturalist-educator and quickly demonstrated her skill and passion for engaging students in environmental education, which led to a full time position as an Environmental Educator and Summer Camp Director. In 2012, Ms. Rivera-Tinsley was promoted to Manager of School Programs, where she oversees the coordination and delivery of our programs for school groups in addition to overseeing our Farm Camp.



**Damien Ruffner, Teen Treks**

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Damien started his work with Teen Treks summer adventure camps as a camp educator in 2011 and 2012, after which he was promoted to a full time position that includes planning and managing Teen Treks. Prior to his work at the Schuylkill Center, Mr. Ruffner worked as a youth mentor for EducationWorks, a non-profit Philadelphia organization focused on improving the lives of inner-city youth through mentorship and academic achievement, and for Americorps, where he taught science-based lessons during after school programs for at risk youth in Austin, TX. Mr. Ruffner has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Francis Marion University in Florence, South Carolina.



**Elisabeth Zafiris, 6& 7s and 8&9s Camps**

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Elisabeth joined the Schuylkill Center in 2013 after finishing a master's degree in museum education and an internship with the National Park Service. She develops, plans, and implements Nature Ramblers' 6- 9 year old camps, as well as manages the Public Programs at the Schuylkill Center throughout the year. She is driven to connect people to nature through an interdisciplinary approach, and loves that she can provide access to nature to urban dwellers. Elisabeth has a bachelor's degree in Animal Science and spent 5 years teaching school outreaches and presenting the Bird Show at the Knoxville Zoo.