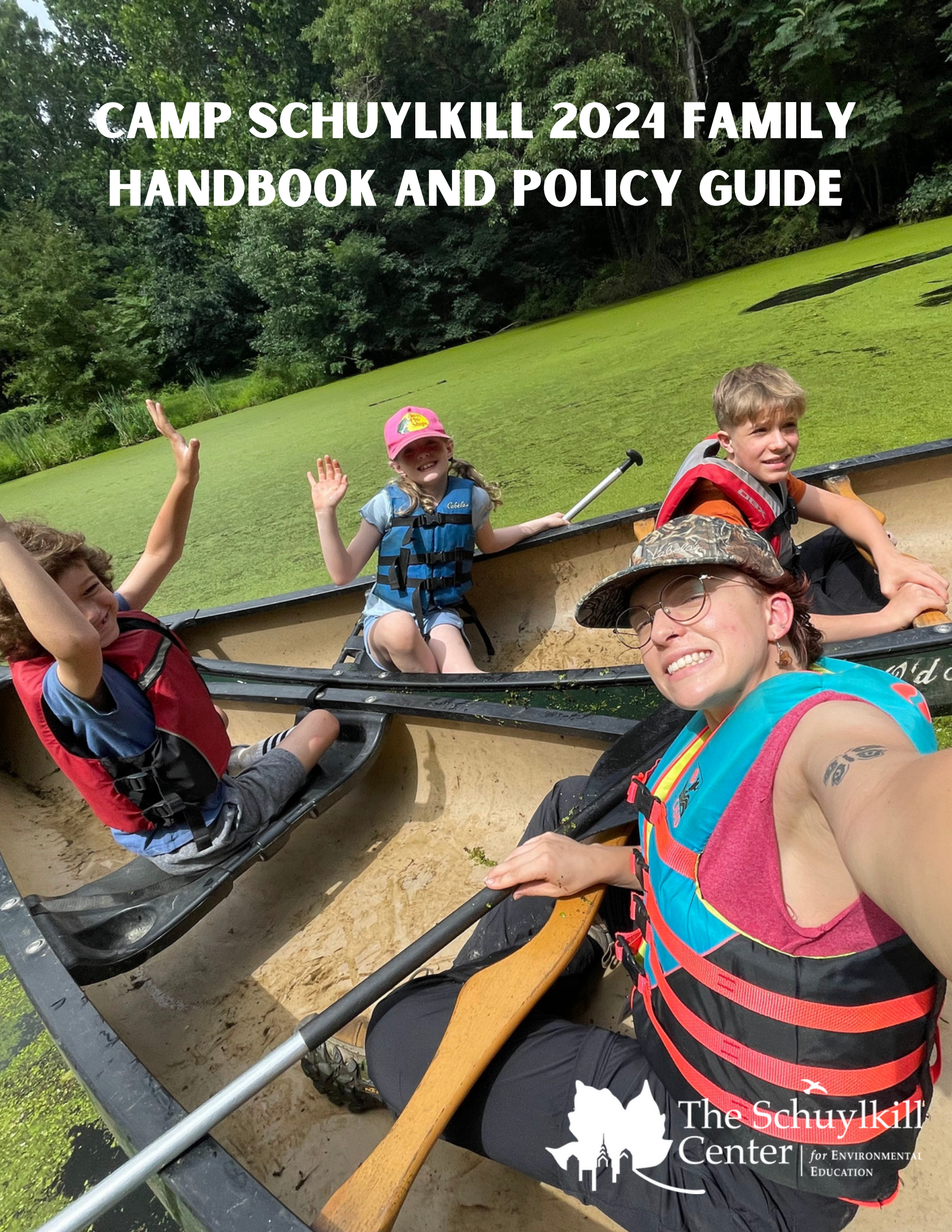


# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE



The Schuylkill  
Center | for ENVIRONMENTAL  
EDUCATION

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## Welcome to the Schuylkill Center

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

The Family Handbook and Policy Guide provides families 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 family/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 concerns you have.

Sincerely,

Aaliyah Green Ross

Director of Education  
aaliyah@schuylkillcenter.org  
215-853-6048

We are excited for your camper to join us for summer here! Through the continued exposure through Nature-based play and exploration, we see the continued growth of and strengthened

## About the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

The Schuylkill Center was founded in 1965 as Philadelphia's first environmental education center. Its 365 acres of fields and forests 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 land stewardship team leads workshops and other programs to involve the public in creating and appreciating a healthy, diverse forest. The environmental art department inspires and educates while pushing the cutting edge and using art to remediate local ecological issues. The Wildlife Clinic at the Schuylkill Center treats thousands of injured, orphaned, and sick animals annually. For more information: [www.schuylkillcenter.org](http://www.schuylkillcenter.org)

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## Table of Contents

General Information	4
Registration & Fees	5
Daily Life at Camp Schuylkill	6
The Schuylkill Center/Family Partnership	8
Health & Safety	10
Our Staff	14
Appendix A: Statement on Play	15

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## General Information

**Purpose:** Camp Schuylkill 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 it enables participants and educators to learn from each other. We value a child's need to play, and provide meaningful opportunities for child-driven play in the forests and fields of our 365-acre campus.

**Guiding Principles:** We use the following guiding principles to establish and ensure high quality, safe programming.

- Camp Schuylkill staff maintain 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.
- 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 give children daily physical exercise and 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 expression, disability, or sexual orientation.
- 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.

### Age Groups:

#### 4–5 year olds

Children ages 4–5 will explore ponds and streams, observe tadpoles and butterflies, and build knowledge and relationships. Our 4–5 year old camp allows children to deepen their connection to the natural world while getting messy and having fun through unstructured, imaginative play.

#### 6–7 year olds

Campers ages 6–7 will hike, canoe, create, and investigate while learning about the natural world---enjoying a mix of environmental education and unstructured free play. Crafts, games, and incredible discoveries will make learning about nature fun and create wonderful lasting memories.

#### 8–9 year olds

Campers in the 8–9 age group will delve deeper into environmental topics while spending plenty of time exploring, hiking, canoeing, and playing. Campers will participate in environmental stewardship projects, helping to develop their knowledge, a sense of pride in their accomplishments, and a lifelong appreciation of the natural world.

#### 10–12 year olds

Campers ages 10–12 will be challenged 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.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

**Schuylkill Center Educators:** During the summer months, the Schuylkill Center employs highly trained, motivated educators to serve as camp counselors. Our staff completes a rigorous application, interview, and on-site 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 also engages qualified teens as counselors-in-training (CITs) as a part of the summer camp program. CITs are trained and mentored by Schuylkill Center educators throughout the summer and do not factor into our 1:8 staff to participant ratio.

**Camp Space:** Our nature center is set in 365 acres of natural habitat, with easy access to our forest, meadows, ponds, sensory garden, and Nature Playscape. Children experience daily nature walks and explore nearby forests, meadows, and ponds. The 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 or other announcements, check our website, Facebook page, or call 215-482-7300.

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

## Registration & Fees

**Registration Policies:** Youth will be accepted regardless of race, sex, religion, political persuasion, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Families 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. Families will receive confirmation of registration via email at the time of registration.

**Ages of Children:** Participants in Camp Schuylkill must be between the ages of 4–12 and must be of age by their first week of camp in order to participate. Please note that due to health and safety concerns, all children must be toilet trained and toilet confident to participate in summer camp. Approval from the Director of Education must be made in advance for children participating in programs outside of the given age ranges.

**Payment:** A 50% deposit is required for registration through April 12, 2024. In case of cancellation, deposits are 50% refundable or transferable until April 12. On and after April 12, full payment is due and is not refundable or transferable.

**Pennsylvania Child Care Works/Early Learning Resource Center Subsidy:** We proudly accept Pennsylvania Child Care Works/Early Learning Resource Center subsidy payments for low-income families (formerly known as CCIS). For more information, please visit [Child Care Works Program](#) or contact your local Early Learning Resource Center office.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

**Schuylkill Center Membership:** The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education is a non-profit organization funded by program fees, membership, donations and grants. Membership is the best way to stay informed on events and happenings at the Center Schuylkill Center. Family Membership benefits include:

- Priority registration for Summer Camp.
- Half-price admission to many programs and events.
- 5% discount on day-off camps and 15% discount on Wild Wanderers
- Quarterly newsletter: The Quill
- 20% discount on bird seed and gift shop purchases, 10% discount on native plants
- Exclusive invitations to member-only events, including
  - Member Appreciation Day
  - Free seasonal nature walks,
  - Spring Native Plant Sale preview,
  - Member Spring Restoration Workday, and more
- Access to facility rentals for private events such as green birthday parties and weddings
- Free outdoor equipment borrowing of birding kits, snowshoes, canoes, and more
- Free or discounted admission at nature centers across America

Full list of benefits can be found at <http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/donate/membership/>

**Past Due Balances:** Any family 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 Beatrice Kelly at 215-853-6249 or [beatrice@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:beatrice@schuylkillcenter.org)

**Return Drafts or Checks for Non-Sufficient Funds:** Any drafts or checks returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) will be subjected to an additional \$35.00 service charge.

## Daily Life at Camp Schuylkill

**Program Hours:** Camp begins each day at 9:00 am and pickup is between 3:00 - 3:30 pm; the 4-5 year old camp has a morning option ending at 12:30 pm.

**Drop-off:** Staff will check your child into camp on a daily attendance sheet. Occasionally counselors need to convey important information to families at drop-off so all campers must have a grown-up present at drop-off.

**Children Arriving Late to Camp:** Families should make every effort to arrive at camp by 9:00 am each day. If a child arrives after 9:15 am they should visit the front desk in the Visitor Center. 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. Our camp groups primarily use outdoor spaces for their programs. 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 families before the day of the program.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

**Appropriate Footwear:** All camp programs spend time outdoors on uneven trails and surfaces. Participants should wear comfortable sneakers or boots to camp each day. Closed-toe shoes are required at all times. Flip Flops, Crocs, etc should be left at home.

**What to Bring to Camp:** Certain articles of clothing and equipment are needed by the children at camp. Please label all items and bring one complete extra set of clothing (including underwear and socks), a reusable water bottle, sunblock and bug spray, hat (for keeping the sun off face), and a healthy morning snack and lunch. **Please note that due to health and safety concerns, all children ages 4-5 must be toilet trained and toilet confident to participate in summer camp, so underwear only, please, no pull-ups or diapers.** Camp groups often play in sprinklers to cool off on especially hot days, so a towel and bathing suits are sometimes needed. Counselors will inform parents ahead of time when sprinkler days are planned.

- **Special Note:** Children will have opportunities for playing in the mud and climbing trees under the supervision of their counselors. **You can expect that your child will get dirty while hiking and playing. Please do not send your child to camp in their best shoes and clothes.**

**Personal Belongings:** Items brought to camp by participants should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Items left in public areas will be placed in lost and found, located at the front desk in the Visitor Center. Items not collected within a 2-week period will be discarded. **Electronics, cell phones, and toys are not permitted at camp.** 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. Please pack your child a healthy morning snack and lunch. For 4-5 year olds and children attending aftercare, an afternoon snack should also be packed. We also encourage children to drink water 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.

We encourage families to pack a low or no-waste lunch, using reusable lunch bags and containers. 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.**

**Discipline:** 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 families to create an individualized plan that meets the needs of the child while ensuring the safety and trust of other campers. Frequent disrespect towards peers, staff or property may result in a child's dismissal from camp.

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

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

**Releasing Children:** Children will only be released to their guardians and individuals named in the child's files as approved for pick-up. Families must check in with their child's counselors when picking up and sign their child out on the daily attendance sheet. Children will not be released to unauthorized persons.

If a family would like to add or remove names from this list, they may do so by contacting Beatrice Kelly at [beatrice@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:beatrice@schuylkillcenter.org) or 215-853-6249.

Staff is encouraged to check IDs if someone they do not recognize comes to pick up a child. **Therefore, all adults should bring a form of ID to pick up, even if they are on the authorized pick up list.**

**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 6:00 pm for aftercare. If a child has not been picked up by 3:35 pm, summer camp staff will sign the child into aftercare. Families will be responsible for paying aftercare fees on this day. The following late fees apply to families picking up after 6:00 pm.

- 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 family or emergency contact persons, Schuylkill Center staff will contact the proper authorities.

**Birthdays:** Birthday celebrations are significant events in children's lives. Please feel free to celebrate your child's birthday with the camp. However, if you plan on bringing in snack items to share, due to allergy and COVID concerns, we ask that you communicate with camp staff a few days beforehand regarding the snack you would like to bring in so that staff can ask if it is okay with other families. This way we can ensure that we can celebrate properly and address any questions or concerns.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## The Schuylkill Center/Family Partnership

To be successful in achieving our educational mission, it is essential that families and Schuylkill Center staff work together cooperatively. The relationship between home and camp works best when families understand our mission, share our core values, and support our programs and staff. Working together, families and 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 upon civility, honesty, and respect.

**Regular Forms of Communication:** Camp staff regularly check in with families during drop-off and pick-up times. While you might use this time to talk with and get to know your child's educators, drop-off and pick-up times are not good for more in-depth 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. 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 capacity to provide the needed support. However, due to staffing limitations, children that do require a one-on-one aide in a school setting are also required to have a grown-up and/or aide with them every day they are at camp. Again, please note that due to health and safety concerns, all children ages 4-5 must be toilet trained and toilet confident to be able to join our summer camp programming. 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 camper may continue to exhibit either a lack of developmental progress or a pattern of situationally inappropriate behavior of such frequency, duration or intensity that it disrupts that camper'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.

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

**Bullying:** The Schuylkill Center has a firm tolerance policy against all bullying behaviors. All campers are expected to treat each other and camp staff with respect. In our camp community everyone has the right to feel happy, safe, and confident. Camp staff will work with campers to foster community within their groups. If a camper is displaying bullying behaviors, camp staff will initially work to redirect camper. If behavior persists families will be notified to discuss next steps. After meeting with families and behavior still persists camper may be asked to not return to camp. Camper fees are non-refundable if camper is asked to leave because of disciplinary action.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

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

- Picking up and dropping off your child promptly at designated times
- Talking with camp staff 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 families to become involved in Schuylkill Center events and activities outside of summer camp. We offer regular member events, education, art, and stewardship programs, as well as volunteer opportunities for adults and children. 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 family 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 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, contact the Manager of Camp Programs, Justine O'Gara, at [justine@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:justine@schuylkillcenter.org) or 215-853-6236.
- If you still feel the issue is not resolved, contact the Director of Education, Aaliyah Green Ross, at [aaliyah@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:aaliyah@schuylkillcenter.org) or 215-853-6048.

While families may not agree with every decision made by the Schuylkill Center and its staff, in most cases, families, 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 families cannot remain 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 family 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 camper'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 the 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.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

**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 our camp, the roles of the teacher become blurred in the minds of the children, their families, and occasionally, the teachers themselves.

## Health & 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 lobby's entrances.
- 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. The keys to the exterior and interior doors will be limited to essential staff.
- To keep track of children, we conduct headcounts, position our staff throughout groups of children and implement a buddy/hand-holding system to ensure all children stay together. We maintain appropriate staff-child ratios and check in with families as they drop off and 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, bathrooms, and offices.
- All cleaning supplies and toxic substances are stored in locked cabinets.
- All camp staff carry two-way radios to facilitate quick communication in case of emergency.

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

- Lost Child
- Evacuation Medical Situation
- Travel Emergency
- Hazardous Weather
- Shelter in Place (on the property and in the facility)
- Dangerous Intruder

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

1. If it is a life-threatening emergency, 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 family will be called. If we are unable to reach the family, we will try the other emergency contacts listed in their paperwork.

***You must keep your child's emergency contact name and number current in the camp records.***

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

**First Aid Supplies:** Each camp group will be equipped with a first aid kit. This first aid kit will be with the group at all times.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

**Background Clearances:** All full-time and part-time staff are 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, they are 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 determine 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 are required to complete the state's *Mandated Reporter Child Abuse* training.

**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 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, if they would like it, and a copy will be kept on file.

**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 developmentally appropriate behavior for children ages 3 and 4, it is not socially appropriate behavior as it is painful and, if a bite breaks the skin, it can become a health concern. If a child bites another child or staff, the staff will care for the bitten person by providing first aid and then follow-up with the child who has been bitten. In the case that the skin is broken, the staff will provide first aid and monitor the wound, calling the family 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 their own child) and the educator will talk with the family of each child about the incident. The educator will work with the family and the biting child to provide strategies and additional support to help that child express their emotions in a more socially positive way. The educator and family will check in frequently to discuss how things are going. If there is a second bite, the same procedure will be performed, and the family of the child who is biting will need to have a conference with the camp manager to discuss the child's repeated biting and support options for the child. The educator and families 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:

- Families are asked to send clothing appropriate for hot weather and outside play.
- Families are asked to apply sunblock to their child before arriving at camp. We also ask that families bring in sunscreen or sunblock to be reapplied 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.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## **Injuries, Allergies, and Disease:**

- **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, ice packs 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 the 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 families if their child is stung (unless they are allergic), or gets bumps, bruises, or scratches, as they are simply a part of outdoor play, but we do notify families of the incident at pick-up.
- **Bee Sting Allergies:** Families 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 families 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, Benadryl will be administered and 911 will be called. This is treated as a medical emergency and families will be notified.
- **Food Allergies:** Many children have food allergies. 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. Our camp is not peanut/nut free; however, if your child has a severe food allergy, please contact the camp manager prior to your child coming to camp, and we can make a plan to address any allergy concerns. If we have a child in camp with peanut or other severe food allergies, we may restrict certain foods from being sent into 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:
  - Campers with allergies are supported in taking responsibility to be knowledgeable of their allergies and avoid foods containing a harmful ingredient.
  - When an individual food allergy care plan is in place, children, families, and Schuylkill Center staff will all adhere and follow the set plan. If the plan includes restriction of certain foods in close proximity to the child, all families will be notified of this restriction and be expected to adhere to it.
  - We ask that families 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.
  - All children who are in class with a child who has a life-threatening allergy should wash hands after eating.
  - Children should not trade or share lunch, snacks or drinks.

**Lyme Disease Prevention:** As part of the enrollment packet, families and teachers receive information about Lyme disease and the associated risk, including information sheets and pictures. Staff conduct tick checks with the children after walks, hikes, and at the end of the day. Families are an essential part of reducing the risk of Lyme disease. Make tick checks a daily routine, e.g. after returning home from camp or before bedtime. Use a headlamp or flashlight to find and spot ticks—they can be very small in the summer months.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

- **Lice Policy:** When a suspected case of head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*) is identified, taking the following precautions will help to keep our community healthy and minimize any potential further spread:
- At the end of the day, the child should be treated by the family, who should consult with their health care provider for any diagnosis and to recommend the appropriate treatment. Be sure to check your child's hair for eggs (also called nits).
- Children in the camp group, siblings, or anyone else who may have been in head-to-head contact with the child should also check for lice.
- A written notice will be sent home to the families of the camp group informing them that a suspected case of head lice has been identified. Please let us know if your child is diagnosed as having head lice.
- 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 should include removal of lice and their associated nits. Prior to returning to camp, the child should be treated for lice and nits and have a written letter from their care provider saying it is safe to return.
- For additional information visit: [Head Lice: What Parents Need to Know](#)

**Illness:** Please see our COVID protocols document for our policies regarding illness in staff and campers.

**Medication:** The “release for administration of medication” section of the registration form must be filled out by a family member in order for staff to administer medication at any time, for any reason. All medications must be received in the original prescription container with the 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 medications, prescription or over the counter.
2. Written permission from a family member requesting that the camp complies 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, a 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 medications require these forms and will be stored appropriately.

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

**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 number of greenhouse gasses. We ask that everyone join us in this important environmentally-friendly initiative. **Families should park in our parking lot and not on or at the edge of the blacktop as children often play in the blacktop area.**

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## Our Staff



### **Aaliyah Green Ross, Director of Education**

[aaliyah@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:aaliyah@schuylkillcenter.org); 215-853-6048

Aaliyah Green Ross guides the growth and development of the Schuylkill Center's education department. She has over 15 years of experience in environmental education, with particular interests in herpetology, general ecology, geology, wetlands, and urban watersheds. Before joining the Schuylkill Center in March 2017, Aaliyah spent nearly ten years as an environmental educator at the Phinizy Center for Water Sciences in Augusta, Georgia. Aaliyah received a B.S. in Animal Sciences from Rutgers University in 2004, and an M.S. in Ecology from the University of Georgia's Odum School of Ecology in 2007.



### **Beatrice Kelly, Registrar**

[beatrice@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:beatrice@schuylkillcenter.org); 215-853-6249

Beatrice Kelly serves as the Schuylkill Center's registrar. A native of Northwest Philadelphia with an educational background in history and fine arts, Bea derives inspiration from the flora and fauna of this region and enjoys discovering new things at the Schuylkill Center. Please contact Bea if you have any questions about Schuylkill Center programs or other ways of getting involved here.



### **Justine O'Gara, Manager of Camp Programs**

[justine@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:justine@schuylkillcenter.org); 215-853-6236

Justine O'Gara graduated from La Salle University in 2021 with a degree in Environmental Science and Biology and has been working in environmental education since. Before joining the Schuylkill Center, Justine worked with a variety of children, volunteered with various organizations, and is always looking to learn new things. Justine has been an avid lover of nature since childhood, and is often found spending time outside - usually sharing a fact about her favorite animal of the week.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## Appendix A: Statement on Play

The Schuylkill Center advocates playing outdoors as integral to children's enjoyment of their lives, their health, and their development. Children and young people of all abilities, cultures, ethnicities or social and economic backgrounds, need and want to play outdoors in whatever way they can.

Through play, children are creating their own culture, developing their abilities, exploring their creativity and learning about themselves, other people and the world around them.

The Schuylkill Center operates in accordance with the principles of play, which are:

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. Children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas, and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of play are to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training, and education.
4. The role of our staff is to support all children and young people in the creation of space in which they can play.
5. Our staff responds to children and young people playing is based on current knowledge of the play process and reflective practice.
6. Our staff recognizes their own impact on the play space and the impact of children and young people's play on the staff.
7. Our staff chooses an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All staff intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children.

In addition, the Schuylkill Center aims to:

1. Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
2. Recognize the child's need to test boundaries and respond positively to that need.
3. Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.
4. Maximize the range of play opportunities.
5. Cultivate independence and self-esteem.
6. Foster children's respect for others and offer opportunities for social interaction.
7. Support the child's wellbeing, healthy growth, and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

# CAMP SCHUYLKILL 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE

## Closing message

Thank you for reading our Camp Handbook and Policy Guide. Camp has become such a cherished, exciting, and fulfilling part of our summer as we continue to grow and learn together! We hope you join us for Camp Schuylkill 2024 for many memories, laughter, muddy clothes, and joy.

Echoing previous messages, questions and conversation are encouraged! We look forward to another amazing summer with you and your families!

Justine O’Gara

Manager of Camp Programs

[justine@schuylkillcenter.org](mailto:justine@schuylkillcenter.org)

215-853-6236