



2026 Family Camp Handbook



Welcome to Awbury Adventures Summer Day Camp!

Now entering our 14th season of camp at Awbury Arboretum, we are proud to share our camp experience with your families!! This handbook will give new families an introduction to our summer camp program, and serve as a reminder of camp policies for our returning families. In it you will find information on registration policies and procedures, daily life during a typical camp week, our expectations for campers, 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,



Hideko Secrest

Director of Education & Awbury Adventures Camp Director

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About Awbury Arboretum

Awbury Arboretum is an historic 56-acre landscape located in Northwest Philadelphia. The Arboretum is the largest contiguous greenspace within a densely-packed urban community, and its landscape boasts 40 acres of meadows, woodlands, ponds, wetlands, rolling lawns, a Victorian mansion, and 16 acres of agricultural land, comprised of farming plots, orchard, community gardens, beehives, goat paddock, and chicken coop. Originally the private country estate of the Cope-Haines family, the Arboretum was given to the public in 1916 and it has served the city for over a century as a free and open public garden with an educational mission. Last year we welcomed over 61,400 visitors to our grounds and programming. For more information about the Arboretum, go to <http://awbury.org/>

Our Mission

Awbury Arboretum is a free public garden and farm serving Northwest Philadelphia. Building on the social justice values of our Quaker founders, we make a positive environmental impact, educate children and adults, and nurture an inclusive community.

Our Camp Motto and Logo: “Outside, Unplugged, Engaged” is what we strive for in a truly immersive camp experience. We ban phones and electronics during the camp day so that campers have an unmediated experience with nature and each other. The American crow featured in our logo is a common sight at Awbury and is a clever, resourceful, and mischievous creature, much like our campers.

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Awbury Adventures Camp Purpose and Philosophy

Purpose

Awbury Adventure camps aim to improve children's quality of life through increased access to nature, extending and enriching out-of-school learning activities, structured and unstructured play outdoors, increased physical activity, knowledge of the natural world, self-confidence, self-reliance, out-of-the-box thinking, and imaginative play.

Studies have shown that activities involving continued access to nature are as important to children's growth and development as time spent in the classroom. Awbury's environment allows children to step out of their comfort zone in a safe atmosphere to explore new fields of interest, invites them to interact with friends both old and new, and allows them to flourish in connection with their own strengths and through the resilience of nature.

Philosophy

Activities promote personal growth and development in an emotionally supportive environment. Program activities are designed to appeal to all youth, regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or family structure.

Summer Camp counselors are highly qualified and offer continuous support and learning opportunities throughout the summer. Constant, interactive supervision of children is crucial and staff to camper ratio is maintained at 1:10 or lower.

Awbury Arboretum employs educated, motivated adults to lead all aspects of summer camp. Our staff completes all necessary Pennsylvania child abuse clearances and criminal background checks. The Arboretum also engages qualified teens in leadership training as a part of the summer camp program. These teens are trained in a special session of Outdoor & Wilderness Leadership Skills (OWLS) camp and are mentored by Awbury staff throughout the summer. These Counselors-in-Training (CITs) do not factor into our 1:10 staff to camper ratio.

Core Activities

Awbury Arboretum is committed to offering a safe, engaging and active summer camp program. We primarily use outdoor space for programming. Daily outdoor activities may include wide games, fire building, hiking, cooking, archery, whittling, wild foraging, arts and crafts, STEM-based activities, and other theme-specific lessons.

Drop-off and pick-up

Drop-off starts at 8:30am at either the AdventureWoods entrance (6060 Ardleigh St) or the Farm entrance (6336 Ardleigh St), depending on which camp you have registered for (map on page 13). It is *not* at the Cope House, which is where your GPS will send you. A staff member will be at the drop-off point from 8:30 to 8:50am to check your child

in. Please pull to the curb along Ardleigh Street and park, then greet the counselor and sign your child in. **Never leave your child without signing in.**

Late Drop-off

Families should make every effort to arrive at camp on time each day. If you know in advance that you will be late because of a doctor's appointment or car trouble, please text your Lead Counselor. If you are going to be later than 8:50, please bring your child either to the parking lot behind the Cope House or to the entrance to the Farm at Awbury, (depending on which session your child is signed up for), park, and walk your child in to sign them in.

Pick-up will be at the same spot at 3:30pm sharp, unless you have been notified otherwise. If your child is in After-Camp, pick-up will be no later than 6:00pm at 6336 Ardleigh St. (please walk in to the Education Center at The Farm at Awbury). **Always sign your child out before taking them.**

Late Pick-Up

On occasion, parents/caregivers are late picking up their children. We allow a 15-minute grace period (until 3:45) to accommodate for traffic or unforeseen difficulties. After that, we will charge the \$25 drop-in fee for After-Camp. If your child is in after-camp, anyone picking up after 6pm will be charged \$1 a minute for lateness. As we cannot leave a child alone, an adult staff member will have to stay with that child until the parent arrives.

After-Camp

For families that cannot arrive at 3:30pm to pick up their children because of work or other responsibilities, we offer a daily After-Camp. After-camp runs from 3:45-6pm, 5 days a week, and is held at the Education Center at the Farm at Awbury. When you register, you will have the option to pre-sign up for regular after-camp from 1-5 days a week, at \$18/day. If you will only sporadically need to use after-camp, you may choose the drop-in option, which is billed at \$25/day (\$6/day for families on financial aid). You must notify us at least 24 hours ahead of time if you will be using the after-camp drop-in so that we will have adequate staffing. Families that fail to pick their children by 3:45pm will automatically be billed for one day of drop-in after-camp. You will receive a bill for after-camp drop-in days used at the end of your camp session.

Food

Please pack your camper a *generous* snack and lunch with a water bottle. We are very active and they will be very hungry and thirsty. **Both lunch container and water bottle must be labeled with your child's name.** We will always have a cooler with ice water available for water bottle refills. Some days we will be offering extra snacks or lunch foods. Please make sure to inform us of any food allergies or dietary restrictions (vegetarian, vegan, kosher, halal, gluten-free, dairy-free) on your registration form.

Clothing

We are a messy camp. Campers should wear clothing that can get dirty or stained. On days that we will be doing water play or camouflage, it is helpful to have an extra set of labeled clothes to leave at camp or in their backpack. Campers should wear closed-toe shoes; no flip-flops or sandals, please. Shoes that can get wet and dirty and then be rinsed – all the better!

Sunscreen and bug spray

Please apply these generously *before* coming to camp. If you wish to send labeled bottles of extra sunscreen and repellent to camp, please put them in a plastic bag to stay at camp for the week.

Personal items

Phones, toys, or electronic games are not allowed at camp. If for any reason your camper needs their phone for after camp, they may give it to the lead counselor in a clear plastic labeled bag at the beginning of the day to be returned at the end of the day. *No exceptions.* Personal items such as card decks and books or sports equipment such as soccer balls, frisbees, etc. may be brought to camp for free time, but Awbury accepts no responsibility for their loss.

Water bottles, lunch containers, socks, etc. often get misplaced at camp. Last year we had 43 water bottles in the lost-and-found at the end of the summer! Staff will do their best to help campers keep track of their items, but Awbury Arboretum will not be responsible for replacing lost or broken property. Please label all items to help us make sure they make it back to you. There is a lost-and-found bin at camp.

Registration & fees

Registration Policies

Families registering their child in Awbury Adventures summer camp must register online using our website. Space is limited, and many of our camps fill up on the first day. At the beginning of registration, we set aside one quarter of our camp slots for children who require financial aid. In the event that a session is filled to capacity, a waitlist will be formed on a first-come, first-served basis. On April 15, any unused scholarship spots will be released to the waitlist or to any new registrants if there is no waitlist.

Ages of Children

Most campers must be between the ages of 5–14 by their first week of camp in order to participate. Approval from the Camp Director must be made in advance for children participating in programs outside of the given age ranges.

Ages 5-8: Programs for children in this age group stress gross motor control, imagination, immersion in nature, simple games, and creativity. Ability to read is not required.

Ages 8-12: Programs for children in this age group stress resourcefulness, the ability to follow through on instructions, more complex games, understanding of human beings' place in the natural world, and the ability to engage in fantasy worlds while understanding that they are not real. Reading and writing are occasionally used, but they are not central to the camp experience.

Ages 10-14: Programs for this age group stress organizational skills, a deep understanding of nature and the environment, more complex deductive and analytical skills, fine motor coordination, and the ability to absorb written information related to the camp program.

Ages 13-17: The program for this age group is a job training course. Campers are expected to be self-motivated, resourceful, and flexible. They will complete an American Red Cross certification in First Aid & CPR as part of the camp.

Deposits

A non-refundable deposit (\$50 for 1-week camps, \$100 for 2-week camps and \$25 for scholarship and sliding scale campers) is required for registration. Parents and caregivers may choose to pay in full when they register, or to pay in installments. Payment in full must be made by June 1 (unless you have an agreement with the Camp Directors for an alternate payment plan). In case of cancellation prior to 2 weeks of the start of your camp session, you may receive a refund of all but the deposit. **Within 2 weeks of the start of your camp session, all payments are non-refundable.** There is no fee to switch from one camp session to another, although any difference in fee will be taken into account.

After-Camp Fees

Fees for after-camp will be \$90/week for the whole week, or \$18/day in advance. In order to get the advance fee, you must sign up for After-Camp before the camp begins. It is too difficult for us to monitor added campers midweek, once we have already staffed After-Camp. Drop-in fees are \$25/day, and will be billed at the end of the camp session. **For scholarship students, after-camp is \$6 day and the discount will be taken after you sign up.**

Refunds for Canceled Camp Days

If camp needs to be canceled for situations beyond our control, Awbury Adventures will refund \$50 per day canceled (\$20 for scholarship students). No refunds will be issued for missed days owing to camper's absence, illness, vacation, or voluntary or involuntary withdrawal from camp.

Health and safety

Illness

To help avoid the spread of disease, campers with a fever, dry cough, loss of sense of smell, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, lice, infectious rash, or nausea should not attend camp.

Upon notification of a child who becomes ill during the camp day, a parent or guardian must pick up their child immediately. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will be isolated from other children and emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Illness that prevents a child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm or on the forehead)
- A dry cough that is not caused by allergies
- A loss of sense of taste or smell
- Diarrhea – two or more cases of loose stool
- Vomiting
- Drooling caused by mouth sores
- Rash with fever
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted
- Active lice infestation

Children who are ill may return to the program when (as applicable):

- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours
- Infections have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
- They are free of lice for 24 hours
- They are free of open, oozing sores or cuts unless the child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage
- They have received a negative COVID test, or it has been 5 days since the onset of COVID symptoms
- 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.
Communicable Diseases Notification: When an enrolled child or an employee of the program has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Medications

The "release for administration of medication" section of the registration form must be filled out by each parent or guardian who wishes Awbury 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 or with the child if they are to be self-administered (epi-pens, inhalers, etc.). When medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, is to be administered to a child

during the camp day, we require written permission from parent or guardian, requesting that the program comply with their physician's order and that medication is given to staff in an appropriately labeled pharmacy container. Staff will look for the correct name, correct medicine, correct dosage, correct time, and correct route of administration.

Poison Ivy

There is a lot of poison ivy at the Arboretum. We teach the campers to identify it on the first morning. We have wipes and washes for treating it. Long pants and socks help, but can be hot. We will do our best to keep everyone rash-free.

Lyme disease prevention

There are deer at the Arboretum and they do carry ticks. Parents should check their campers for ticks after returning home from camp or before bedtime.

Food allergies

The camp registration and sign-in sheets disclose all allergies. Staff are responsible to help campers avoid contact with allergens listed on their forms. Awbury is NOT a peanut-free zone.

Safety

We run, play, climb, build, whittle, build fires, and cook. We have never had a serious injury or accident. Occasionally, fingers get cut or knees get bruised. We have first aid-trained staff to treat such occurrences. We are very serious about safety. If a child is unable to follow instructions or participate in a safe manner, they will be asked to sit out of an activity until they feel that they can participate safely.

Guidelines for bad weather

Excessively hot weather

In case of excessively hot weather, staff and campers may take short breaks in the air-conditioned Cope House or Education Center. Outdoors, activities with water play may be substituted for regularly scheduled activities. Ice water is provided daily for proper hydration. If a specific child is feeling overwhelmed by the heat, they will be allowed to rest supervised in the main office.

Thunderstorms

Camp is held in all weather conditions, even when raining. If, however, there is thunder or lightning, we will seek the shelter of the Cope House, the front and side porches of the House, or the tented patio behind it, or the Education Center and pavilion if campers are on the Farm side of the Arboretum. All campers must remain under shelter for as long as the thunderstorm lasts. After 20 minutes from the last thunder have passed, campers may be allowed in the open again.

Poor Air Quality Index

In case of the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaching the red zone due to smoke, ozone, or other pollutants, camp will either be canceled for the day or campers will be released early from camp. Awbury does not have enough indoor space to run a camp program

completely indoors. Children at risk for poor air quality (asthma, or other breathing issues) should remain home if the AQI is in the orange zone.

Camper behavioral expectations

Discipline

Clear behavioral expectations will be set at the beginning of each session with our collaborative Camp Agreement, and staff will help campers establish positive roles within the camp group. Staff will treat each child with respect and reinforce expectations and boundaries each day. Campers are expected to show respect to their peers and staff, as well as treat the facilities and equipment with care. For campers who experience difficulty with this structure, staff will work with the child and their parents to create an individualized plan that meets the needs of the child while ensuring the safety and trust of other campers. We do not use punishment of any kind, though we may temporarily remove a child from an activity if they are being disruptive. Violent or lewd behavior, excessive cursing, engaging in dangerous behavior, or frequent disrespect towards peers, staff, or property may result in child's dismissal from the camp program.

Special Needs

Staff will accommodate children with special individual needs during all activities, within reason, provided that these needs are communicated to our staff in advance or as soon as they are known. If a child's physical, emotional, or learning limitations are causing them to struggle with a specific activity, an alternative activity may quietly be offered to them, or assistance may be unobtrusively provided by staff. For children with auditory processing disabilities or ADHD, complex instructions will be broken down into separate steps. Children on the autism spectrum may remove themselves from an activity if it is causing sensory overload. Children who require a one-on-one aide in a school setting are also required to have this accommodation at camp, unless staff and family agree that it is not necessary.

Restorative Practices

Since 2025, we have been working within the framework of restorative practices, which is an outgrowth of the restorative justice movement. We use these practices for conflict resolution, to create dialogue between two or more campers who are interacting negatively, to bridging gaps across divided groups, and to build a camp culture where all members have a voice, work more effectively together, and become more innovative in solving problems and conflicts.

Refusal to Participate in the Camp Program

Sometimes, children will refuse to take part in an activity because they are tired, physically challenged, hot, not feeling well, or don't like the activity. If the reason is that they don't like the activity, we require all children to participate in the first iteration of the game or activity, unless staff deems that making a child participate will cause undue stress on the child. If a child opts out of a game or activity, we will provide them with an alternate activity. If the refusal to participate becomes a daily occurrence, Awbury Adventures reserves the right to ask the family to withdraw their camper from the

session, as we do not have enough staff to provide individualized care for every camper on a daily basis.

Leaving camp early

There may be times when a camper is so overwhelmed by something that has happened that day that they request to go home early. At such times, staff will phone the parent/guardian, explain the situation, and ask for their input. Please refrain from promising at drop-off that you will come get the child early if the child feels unhappy, anxious, or uncomfortable. This sometimes makes the camper unable to focus on what is happening in the moment.

Groupmates

During the camp day, there are times that we break children into smaller groups in order to cover learning new skills with a manageable number of children. If you wish to specify up to 2 children (including siblings) that you would like your camper to travel with during the camp day, you may list their names as "Groupmates" on your registration form (under the Optional Items tab) and we will do our best to accommodate your request. The exception to this is Ilvermorny Camp of Witchcraft & Wizardry, in which the children are separated into Houses by the Sorting Backpack.

Awbury Adventures Family Partnership

In order to achieve our educational mission, it is essential that camp families and Awbury Adventures 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 help children to become confident and independent; they also help them to mature by modeling 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 counselors, drop-off and pick-up times are not good times for more in-depth conversations about any concerns you may have. We do our best not to discuss the children in front of them and are always happy to talk in person or by phone at a scheduled time.

Family Grievance Procedures

In our communication with families, we strive to resolve issues before they become problems. However, if at any time a parent feels that an issue has not been addressed or resolved, we are here to support that process. It is essential that we hear parents and families when they raise a concern. All parent concerns should be addressed initially at the level (counselor or lead counselor) closest to the incident in an effort to come to a resolution. 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 Lead Counselor about your concern; they will work with you to determine a mutually agreeable course of action.
- If, after speaking with the Lead Counselor, you still feel the issue has not been resolved, contact the Camp Director, Hideko Secrest, at camp@awbury.org.

While families may not agree with every decision made by Awbury Adventures staff, in most cases, families and staff can 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 a constructive member of the camp community. In such cases, Awbury Adventures Camp 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, Awbury Arboretum reserves the right, at any time, to immediately terminate the camper's and family's relationship with Awbury Adventures Summer Camp.

Confidentiality

Awbury Adventures Camp will maintain confidentiality and respect each family's right to privacy, refraining from the disclosure of any confidential information. This includes other families' contact information. If you wish to organize a play date with another camper, you must contact their parents at pick-up or drop-off; staff cannot share email or phone information with you. Children's files are accessible only to the Camp Directors and, as needed, to your child's Lead Counselor. 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 who may intervene on behalf of the child.

Emergency contact numbers

Camp Director: Hideko Secrest: 267-254-1120

Main number at the Arboretum: 215-849-2855 (between 9am and 4pm)

Sample Camp Day

8:30-9:00 am

Counselors go to drop-off point with sign-in sheets; campers arrive, parents sign campers in; counselor accompanies children to meeting place and gets them to stow lunches and backpacks; free play, games, crafts, intro activities (friendship bracelets, Uno, quizzes, etc.)

9:00-9:30 am

Ice-breaker activity or active game; morning circle (e.g., show-and-tell, plans for day)

9:30-10:30 am

Rotation of smaller groups among 2-4 activities.

10:30-11:00 am

Morning break & snack (from home or prepared at camp); free time (e.g., free play, tree climbing, crafts, reading, sports allowed—no electronics)

11:00-11:30 am

Final rotation in small groups or hike or STEAM activity or wide game

11:30 am-12:00 pm

Game or group activity

12:00-1:00 pm

Lunch break & free time

1:00-2:00 pm

Wide game or group activity; visiting presenter (e.g., farm partner; artist, outside educator, etc.); water play if it is very hot

2:00-2:30 pm

Activity/prep for something later in the week; cooking lesson; arts & crafts activity

2:30-3:00 pm

Quiet game (never-tell or trust game) or story time or craft activity

3:00-3:30 pm

CITs hand out popsicles or prepared snack; campers clean up area and gather belongings; counselors take campers to pick-up point; parents sign campers out

3:30-3:45 pm

The After-Camp Director will walk children signed up for After-camp to the Education Center at The Farm at Awbury

3:45-6:00 pm

After-camp includes various games, activities, and an afternoon snack (provided)

Camp Map

Please drop off and pick up your child at 6060 Ardleigh Street (AdventureWoods Entrance) for camps on the Arboretum side of Awbury, and at 6336 Ardleigh Street (Farm Entrance) for camps on the Farm side. This will be the meeting point every day unless otherwise noted. **All after-camp pick-ups will be at the Farm Entrance.**

