

Where good things grow...

# Ambler Farm Summer Camp



Parent Handbook 2022

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# Letter from the Director of Programming, Stacey Valimont

Dear Camp Families,

Welcome to Camp Ambler! Everyone at Ambler Farm is very excited to guide your child through a journey filled with exploration, berry picking, and bunny snuggles. Our property includes 22 acres of beautiful farm land with 5 different gardens overflowing with delicious fruits and vegetables ready for picking and eating. We also have goats, sheep, pigs, and many baby birds that are very eager to spend time with all of our wonderful campers. Our iconic and historic Red Barn is the perfect place for campers to practice their woodworking skills!

As the Camp Director, I am thrilled to be a part of a loving community that truly wishes for every child to have a unique and memorable experience that will connect them to land, the community, and each other. You will see me all around the farm giving tractor rides, or sneaking snacks to Raymond the goat or teaching campers about the local flora and fauna. Matt Oricchio, our Assistant Director, will work closely with every camper to ensure all woodworking projects are coming together smoothly. He will also care for the grounds so Ambler Farm can continue to be every child's summer oasis.

Each day your child will have a new opportunity to experience something they have never done before such as baking in the kitchen while singing songs to make the food taste even more delicious! Or they will harvest in the gardens with Farmer Jonathan who has convinced even the pickiest camper to try something new. They will spend quality time with all of our animals who love being brushed or held.

No two days are ever the same! Every week we have a different theme that focuses on various aspects of life here at Ambler Farm. Some themes include, "Animals Abound" "Go Green" "Pollinators on th Pathway" and many more! This year we have some exciting new programs for your child to enjoy. Outdoor Nature and Nature Crafts will allow campers to connect with our native land and then use that inspiration to create something wonderful.

We want every camper to go home with new memories, friendships, and a passion for the outdoors! We look forward to creating an unforgettable summer for your child.

See you and your family on the farm!

Stacey Valimont



## About Ambler Farm's Summer Camp



### Preschool Camp (Ages 4-5)

These campers are part of our Playful Piglet group. Playful Piglets will go on hayrides and visit our animal stations each day. They will spend a great deal of time with our goats, sheep, pigs, rabbits, baby chicks, turkeys and geese. A Playful Piglets day is truly about movement, taking in the full wonder of the farm. Centers are designed for children to play in small groups and make friends. Preschoolers are involved in cooking twice a week and have a weekly woodworking project. Depending on what's growing in the gardens, Preschoolers pick strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, sugar snap peas, garlic scapes, and even more with assistance from Farmer Jonathan.

A Preschool is only as excellent as the quality of the staff, and our staff is pretty amazing. Our new Preschool Director is no stranger to the farm, Melanie Pietrunti has worked as a Senior Counselor for our camp for many years! Melanie has a Masters degree in Elementary Education. You will see her singing songs and showing young campers the best way to eat raw corn.

**Campers must be fully potty-trained and able to use the bathroom independently in order to attend camp.** Ambler Farm policy prevents staff members from assisting with bathroom needs in the event of an accident. Our Preschool Program is designed for young campers who have not attended Kindergarten yet.

## Grade School Program (Entering 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Each day consists of 4 program areas that will vary from day to day, followed by a picnic lunch brought from home. Every camper will have multiple opportunities for a hayride around the farm! On days when the heat index grows rapidly, we set up water activities for campers to cool down. Each week brings a new and exciting farm adventure. Families often sign up for multiple weeks!

### Cooking:

We connect garden experiences to our cooking station. Our weekly menu is determined by what's growing in the gardens. Berry crisp is a favorite as we have many strawberries, raspberries and blueberries growing at the farm. Pickling cucumbers from our garden happens in late July/early August. Some of our recipes, like monkey bread, are just old fashioned sugary fun!

### Animal Visits:

We have an incredibly friendly menagerie of sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits, turkeys, baby chicks, and ducks. You'll notice that our animal pens are designed for children to come in and play with our animals. Our sheep, Ben & Jerry love going for walks with the campers. It takes a full week to visit all of our animals. Ask your child which animal is their favorite!

### Building:

Campers will practice woodworking skills with Matt, our Assistant Director. All of our projects are age appropriate and will connect to each week's theme. Weekly projects are designed by the Eli Whitney Museum in Hamden, CT.

### Gardens:

Your child's experience will vary week to week depending on what's growing on the farm. The summer starts with strawberry picking and then raspberry and blueberry season overlap with blackberries. Eating raw garlic scapes is one of our favorite things to do at the farm. Maybe your child will discover their new favorite vegetable!

### Outdoor Nature:

Campers become fully immersed in our local ecosystem. They will learn how the native plants and animals contribute to the overall wellbeing of the farm. Some weeks we will explore the birds flying overhead to learn how each bird is unique. Other weeks we will discover how bees and other insects provide nutrients and even protection to our crops.

### Nature Crafts:

Once a week, campers will draw inspiration from the natural world around them to create something unique and beautiful. Some popular crafts include making plantable paper, DIY feeders, and even making dye from beet and avocado scraps.

## Camp Groups

Camp groups correspond to the grade your child will be entering in the Fall of 2022. Your camper will be placed into one of the following groups based on their age. Each group will have approx 10-15 campers accompanied by one or two counselors.

This year we will offer a new program for rising 8th graders. They will be part of the Older Camper group. They will participate in some camp activities, then they will shadow counselors and other program areas to start learning what it takes to be a counselor. Older Campers will participate in service projects. Older campers will attend camp from 9am-3pm (without paying the additional fee of after camp care). Older campers will start taking on new leadership roles while still having fun as campers!

Camper Groups				
Preschool (4 & 5 years old)	1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> / 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> / 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8th Grade
Playful Piglets	Chirping Chicks Wascally Wabbits Daring Ducks Lucky Lambs	Samurai Sheep Buzzing Bees Giggling Geese	Ninja Goats T-rex Turkeys	Older Campers

## Camp Arrival + Pick-Up Procedures

Prior to camp starting, please check your child's temperature. Campers cannot attend camp if their temperature exceeds 99.9°. Your child must be fever free and COVID-19 negative for 24 hours

before returning to camp. Each day, please make your way through the Hurlbutt Soccer Field parking lot off Hurlbutt Street. At the end of the soccer parking lot, turn left into the farm's parking field. Parents will remain in the car for pickup and drop off. Please follow signs to the check in station where their counselor(s) will meet them to conduct a COVID health screening. **Check in for all campers will take place between 8:45am-9:15am.**

Parents will remain in the car for checkout as well. Each camper can be picked up in the same place they were dropped off. Campers must be picked up by a parent/guardian, by someone listed on their emergency contact form, or by written permission by the parent/guardian. You can update emergency contacts through the [Parent Dashboard](#). The authorized adult must sign out their camper(s) with their counselors. If you are picking up your camper early, please tell your counselor that morning. For camp security, please do not roam the property to look for your child's group. Please contact Stacey Valimont: [stacey@amblerfarm.org](mailto:stacey@amblerfarm.org)

## After Camp Care

This year, we are adding an After Camp Care program for campers who wish to extend the camp day. For an additional fee, campers will be able to stay from 9am-3pm. After camp care will be divided into two major activities: Campers choice and Counselors choice. Campers will be in smaller groups and participate in activities that are not available during the regular camp day. After Camp Care will be limited to 50 campers, and allow campers to be placed in smaller groups. After Camp Care will cost an additional \$150/camper.

## Family Fridays

On Fridays, the whole family will have the opportunity to learn what your camper has been doing all week. At 1pm on Fridays, parents and camper families are encouraged to walk around the Farm, play with our animals, and visit the camp store. This is a great opportunity to learn more about what activities your child was doing all week.

## What to Bring to Camp (and What to Leave Home)

**Face Covering/Masks:** Your child should come to camp wearing a face mask that fully covers their nose and mouth without any gaps. Each camper should have a spare mask in a sealed bag to wear if their original mask gets wet or dirty.

**Water:** Pack a full, reusable water bottle. Campers will be able to refill throughout the day.

**Snack + Lunch:** Send your child with a small, nut-free and non-perishable snack and lunch in separate reusable bags with an ice pack. Snacks must be kept separate from camper's lunch.

**Clothing:** Campers should pack a change of clothes in case what they are wearing gets wet/dirty. Campers should wear layers and weather appropriate clothing that can get dirty and/or damp. On Particularly warm days, we will have a cooling station where the campers may need a towel to dry.

**Footwear:** Sturdy shoes for walking and running. No sandals or open toed shoes.

**Rain Gear:** Campers are outside, even in inclement weather. Dress warm and pack raincoats / boots if rain is forecasted.

**Backpack:** To easily hold all of a camper's belongings.

**Sunblock and Insect Repellant:** Sunblock and insect repellant (if desired) should be applied prior to camp. Staff can not apply sunblock or insect repellant to campers. As with any outdoor activity, please check your child each night for ticks.

**Ride-Sharing Note:** Ambler Farm may not release a child without written permission. If your child is being picked up by anyone other than a parent/guardian or emergency contact, send them with written permission including the following: date of pick up, name of person picking up and their contact information.

**Camper Use of Electronic Devices:** Ambler Farm is a wonderful place to connect with the land and each other. Please leave electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, etc.) and toys at home, as well as any items with significant financial or emotional value as we are not responsible for any lost, stolen or broken items.



# Camp Safety

## Healthy Child

Campers must be healthy, injury-free and well enough to participate fully in activities.

## Communicable Illnesses/COVID-19

Due to the serious threat that COVID-19 poses, we encourage families to refrain from travelling and to limit chances of exposure in the two weeks prior to sending your child(ren) to camp. Please keep campers who have symptoms of COVID-19 home to avoid spreading the illness to other campers and staff. If a camper shows signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or other communicable illness, the camper will be isolated, and the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick them up immediately. In cases where COVID-19 is suspected, the camper will be able to return with a negative COVID-19 test or doctor approval.

Throughout the camp day, we have several protocols in place to ensure that campers will still have fun while staying safe. Campers will be placed in groups of 10-15 campers. Those groups will be fully independent and will not mix with other campers. Campers will not need to wear masks while outdoors. Masks will be required inside. Campers will be encouraged to stand at least 6 feet apart during activities. We will also be sanitizing tools and equipment each day. We are also following guidance from the Office of Early Childhood, the CDC, and the State Department of Health.

## First Aid

Our Medical Director adheres to state requirements for the administration of medication. The First Aid Office is located in the White Barn. In the event of an emergency we will notify parents/guardians after appropriate medical steps have been taken, which may include calling 911. Unless otherwise notified, any camper that requires further medical attention will be transported to Norwalk Hospital. The Medical Director will notify parents of mild injuries at his/her professional discretion and all serious injuries that occur at camp. According to CT Department of Public Health, campers appearing to have a contagious disease must be quarantined and sent home.

## Emergencies

We have specific procedures for lost campers, severe weather, and medical emergencies.

## Medical + Emergency Contact Forms

Medical and Emergency Contact Forms are available on the [Parent Dashboard](#) under the forms section. Most Forms will need to be submitted digitally during the time of enrollment. They include:

1. **2022 Photo/Video Release**

2. **2022 COVID Informed Consent**

3. **2022 Liability Release**

4. **2022 Health History Form**

5. **Health Assessment Form** - This form will need to be signed by a pediatrician within the past 3 years. This form should also include the current vaccination records for your child. Campers must have had a physical within the past **36 months or 3 years**. A copy of a previous form, including a school medical form, can be submitted as long as it meets the 36 months requirement.

6. **IPC (Individual Plan of Care)**: This form is only required for any camper that has a special health need or disability that requires special care while the child is at camp. This may include but is not limited to food allergies/sensitivities which require prescribed or over-the-counter medications, hearing aids, ADD/ADHD, physical challenges, epilepsy, services or paraprofessional support received during the school year, etc. The IPC form allows us to have important information to ensure each child has a happy, healthy and successful time at camp.

6. **Authorization for Administration of Medication Form**- This form only needs to be filled out for campers who will require emergency or life saving medication during camp such as an epi-pen, inhaler, Benadryl, insulin, etc. It will need to be signed by your child's pediatrician.

We require a NEW set of forms to be submitted every year, even if your child has attended camp in the past.

All forms are due by **JUNE 1ST, 2022**. The Camp Medical Director will need this time to review all forms to make sure all questions are answered. ***No child will be admitted into camp without completed medical forms. Our Summer Camp Director and our Medical Director are only available to discuss and review a camper's medical forms during the week (Monday – Friday). Any medical forms received over the weekend will not be reviewed until the conclusion of camp each Monday.***

If your child is attending multiple weeks of camp, only one set of medical forms needs to be submitted.

## How to Submit Forms to Ambler Farm:

- I. Please go to the forms page of the [Parent Dashboard](#)

2. Complete any digital forms that have not been submitted
3. Scan & Upload any forms that were signed by a pediatrician

Please contact [Stacey Valimont](#) with any questions or concerns with forms.

### **Medication Policy + Forms**

All medications, including inhalers, must be given to the Medical Director for approval on the camper's first day of camp. Medications cannot remain with a child at camp; they will be kept in the First Aid Office in a locked box. If your camper needs to take medication, either over the counter or prescription, during the camp day, our camp Medical Director can dispense medication if the following requirements are met:

1. The medication is in its original, sealed bottle/box with the camper's name printed on the prescription label.
2. Your child's physician has filled out and signed the Authorization for the Administration of Medications Form for each medication received and they are on file in the First Aid Office. Forms are available on the [Parent Dashboard](#).
3. The medication has not expired.
4. All medications must be picked up each week, by the parent on the last day that a child attends camp. Medications will not be held over in the First Aid Office if the child is attending multiple camp weeks.

**\*All medications received must be in a clear, gallon-sized Ziploc bag with the child's name and DOB written on the outside in permanent marker. Medications must be in their original package with the prescription label affixed. CHECK EXPIRATION DATES. Include a current photo of the child inside the bag.**

### **Ticks + Lice Prevention**

If lice is suspected in your child's camp group, your child may be checked for lice. If the camp has any concerns over the appearance of lice or nits in your child's hair, you will be contacted to pick up your child that day. We ask all campers to be free of nits before returning to camp to ensure containment of exposure. Before your child may be permitted to return to camp, they will be checked by a camp Medical Director or Senior Staff member.

As with any outdoor activity, please check your child for ticks daily. Call your doctor if your child develops a fever or rash.

## Allergy Protocol

Campers with peanut/tree nut allergies range in severity. For this reason we are, “Peanut/Tree Nut Aware,” and ask that camp families refrain from bringing peanut/tree nut products as well as products:

- : made in a facility that processes peanut/tree nuts;
- : manufactured on shared equipment with peanuts/tree nuts;
- : that may contain **trace amounts** of peanuts/tree nuts.

Ambler Farm’s Protocol for a “Peanut/Tree Nut Free” Camp:

1. All lunches will be inspected by your child’s Counselor.
2. Any foods that contain peanut/tree nut products or are processed in a plant or on shared machinery with peanut products will be sent home. **Please inspect your child’s snack and lunch ingredients for possible traces of peanuts/tree nuts.**
3. If your child’s lunch or snack contains nut processed products, they will be left unopened and sent home.
4. Campers and staff are not permitted to share food.

## Registration + Policies

Both new and returning camp families should use the [Parent Dashboard](#) to register their campers. Registration can be completed online for multiple children and weeks through the [Parent Dashboard](#) with a credit card and a minimum deposit of \$100 per child per program. You will also be able to establish an Automatic Monthly Payment Plan with the final payment occurring on June 1st. Contact our Accountant, Sheena Shen ([accounting@amblerfarm.org](mailto:accounting@amblerfarm.org)) if you have questions or are experiencing difficulties.

Registration closes at Noon on the Wednesday prior to each camp week, space permitting.

Programs run Monday – Friday. Registration is for the entire week.

For members, camp costs \$350/week per child.

For non-members, camp costs \$415/week per child.

After Camp Care will cost an additional \$150/camper. (Please note that After Camp Care will not be available for Week 1.

To learn more about becoming a member go to our [website](#).

### Sessions + Themes

June 13<sup>th</sup> – June 17<sup>th</sup> (*Preschool only*)

June 20<sup>th</sup> – June 24<sup>th</sup>

June 27<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>

**\*\***July 5<sup>th</sup> – July 8<sup>th\*\*</sup>

July 11<sup>th</sup> – July 15<sup>th</sup>

July 17<sup>th</sup> – July 20<sup>th</sup>

July 25<sup>th</sup> – July 29<sup>th</sup>

August 1<sup>st</sup> – August 5<sup>th</sup>

August 8<sup>th</sup> – August 12<sup>th</sup>

A Farm Fairy Tale

Whether the Weather

Tracking + Orienteering

Fungus Among-us

Animals Abound

Go Green!

Colonial Living

Pollinators on the Pathway

Animals Abound

### Discounts

As a non-profit organization, Ambler Farm does not offer sibling or multi-week discounts and we do not pro-rate weeks. However, the week of July 4<sup>th</sup>, will be discounted due a 4-day camp week.

### Cancellation/Refund Policy

Full refunds will be provided up until June 6<sup>th</sup> for Summer Camp. After that date, we will only provide full refunds for medical exceptions. We may offer a partial refund if we can fill the camper's spot from our waitlist.

Additionally, due to the COVID pandemic, we may also cancel camp on any days due to weather. If we cancel two consecutive days or more due to inclement weather, we will provide a pro-rated refund equal to 1/5 of the number of days cancelled over two (2)

### Financial Assistance

To be considered for financial assistance, please contact Stacey Valimont at [stacey@amblerfarm.org](mailto:stacey@amblerfarm.org).

### Walk-in Policy

Walk-ins will not be permitted this year due to our limited capacities and COVID-19 policies.

### Wait List

If you would like to be in a session that is currently full, you can enroll for that week, and your camper will automatically be added to the waitlist. Occasionally, families need to cancel their registration and space becomes available. If space does become available, you will be notified by email. You will have 24 hours to respond. If we do not hear from you during that time, we will



assume you are not interested in registering for that week and we will move on to the next camper on the list. Please contact [Stacey Valimont](#) should you have any questions. We cannot predict if or when space will be available to pull campers from the waitlist.

### **Potty-Training**

Campers must be fully potty-trained and able to use the bathroom independently in order to attend camp. Ambler Farm policy prevents staff members from assisting with bathroom needs in the event of an accident.

### **Campers with Special Needs**

If your child receives paraprofessional support during the school year, we suggest you provide additional support at camp (credentials and background check required). Families and their campers must connect with the camp directors at least 2 weeks prior to the session start date to discuss fit and needs.

If your child requires assistance with toileting, please review the Ambler Farm Summer Program policy on Potty-Training.

### **Behavior at Camp**

Ambler Farm has a zero tolerance policy for physical aggression including but not limited to hitting and biting. Parents will be notified immediately and a conversation will be held to determine if the child can continue to participate in camp.

## FAQs

Answers to some commonly asked questions can be found below. If you have further questions, feel free to contact us at [stacey@amblerfarm.org](mailto:stacey@amblerfarm.org).

**Q: Will campers be required to wear a mask?**

A: Campers will not be required to wear a mask while outdoors. Campers will need to wear a mask whenever they are indoors which is very rare. We encourage parents to pack an extra mask in case the first one gets wet or dirty. We will provide disposable masks as needed.

**Q: My child's physician cannot complete the Medical Forms in time to meet the camp forms deadline. Can my child still attend camp?**

A: According to Connecticut State law, campers may not attend camp without all necessary completed medical and health forms. Please contact Camp Director, Stacey Valimont at [stacey@amblerfarm.org](mailto:stacey@amblerfarm.org), if you have questions or concerns.

**Q: Will camp still run if it's raining, cold or other inclement weather?**

A: Yes! We are an outdoor camp. Please dress your child warmly in layers, with appropriate rain gear (boots, rain coat, hat, etc.). Layers can always be removed if the weather improves. We are a farm and it gets muddy pretty quickly in the rain!

**Q: If my child is sick or can only come a few days, can you prorate my fee?**

A: As a non-profit organization, Ambler Farm does not pro-rate weeks. Prior to June 6<sup>th</sup> all cancellations are 100% refundable. After June 6<sup>th</sup>, full refunds will only be issued due to emergencies. Weeks may be exchanged, for the current summer, if space is available in an alternate week.

**Q: I'm registering my child with a friend. Can they be in the same group?**

A: We have one group of Preschoolers (ages 4 and 5). We group 1st/2nd grades together, 3rd/4th and 5th/6th/7th together. You may note a friend request during enrollment. We will do our best to honor those requests, however we cannot guarantee that they will be placed in the same group. This year, each group will remain in their individual cohort and will not mix with the other groups. They will have many common experiences for different age groups, but we will ensure that each activity is age appropriate.

**Q: How do I register multiple children for camp for multiple weeks?**

A: You can register for multiple weeks and children. Start by going to the [Parent Dashboard](#) and register each camper one at a time for their preferred week(s).

**Q: Does the weekly theme affect what activities my camper will participate in each week?**

A: While each week has a different theme, the campers will always participate in our core activities such as visiting our animals, gardens, cooking, building, and outdoor activities. Each week, those themes help us explore other concepts while we participate in our core activities. For example, during our Things with Wings week, we will build the shapes of various bird beaks for our building projects to learn how many birds eat different types of food. We will also learn how birds are able to fly while we visit our resident turkeys, ducks, and geese.

**Q: What activities will children participate in during After Camp Care?**

A: After Camp Care will run from 1-3pm. Campers will participate in Camper's Choice where they will be able to pick which activities they would like to participate in such as dodgeball, bracelet making, or gardening. Then, they will participate in Counselor's choice where their counselor will lead their favorite activity!