

Where good things grow...

Ambler Farm Summer Camp



Parent Handbook 2023

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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. Hannah Fischer, our First Aid Director, will work closely with every camper to ensure all campers are staying safe and healthy this summer. You will also see her leading a mindfulness program for our younger campers to stay connected to the Farm.

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” “Cultivating Comparisons” “Pollinators on the Pathway” and many more! This year we have some exciting new programs for your child to enjoy.

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 ducks. 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 staff are all CPR and First Aid certified. They have all been working with young children and a lot of them are studying Early Education. You will see them showing the Playful Piglets the best time to pick strawberries and raspberries!

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. Our camp is licensed to care for campers aged 4-15. Sadly we are not able to allow children 3 years of age or younger to attend camp regardless of maturity.

Grade School Program (Entering 1st - 8th 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.

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. Sometimes, our campers will even bake pies and other sweets which will be for sale at our camp store.

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.

Adventure Story Time:

Campers will have the opportunity to go on thrilling adventures without leaving the Farm! Everyone will need to use their imagination as they create their own unique story. Once their story is written, the campers will need to act out their daring tale.

Leather working:

Our oldest campers (grades 5-8) will participate in a leather working project. They will use tools such as awls, bevelers, mallets, stitch groovers, and more! Projects in the past have included small pouches, bookmarks, keychains, and even notebooks! Our counselors will keep a close eye to make sure everyone is using the tools safely.

Teambuilding:

This is another activity exclusive to our oldest campers. They will participate in activities that allow them to harness their leadership skills while having fun with their friends. Each team building activity will present a new challenge that will also allow campers to bond with each other.

Camper Groups

Camp groups correspond to the grade your child will be entering in the Fall of 2023. 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 st / 2 nd Grade	3 rd / 4 th Grade	5 th / 6 th / 7 th Grade	8th Grade
Playful Piglets	Chirping Chicks Wascally Wabbits Daring Ducks Buzzing Bees	Samurai Sheep Lucky Lambs 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. Please note the main entrance will be closed. 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 greet your camper and guide them to their meeting spot. **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. Parents will also complete the Pickup Permissions Form which allows you to grant a non parent/guardian to pick up your child. You can update the Pick-up Permissions Form through the Forms tab of the [Parent Dashboard](#). The authorized adult must sign out their camper(s) with the Camp Director or counselor. 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

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: While they are no longer required, we recommend that campers bring a mask with them in case they want to wear them while inside.

Water: Pack a full, reusable water bottle labeled with their name. 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. Campers must be completely symptom free for 24 hours before returning to camp.

Communicable Illnesses/COVID-19

Due to the serious threat that COVID-19 poses, we encourage families 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 when they are symptom free for 24 hours.

Throughout the camp day, we have several protocols in place to ensure that campers will still have fun while staying safe. Mask use will be encouraged (not enforced) when we are inside. 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 First Aid 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 the 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. **2023 Photo/Video Release**

2. **2023 COVID Informed Consent**

3. **2023 Liability Release**

4. **2023 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 **24 months or 2 years**. A copy of a previous form, including a school medical form, can be submitted as long as it meets the 24 month's 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 at camp. This may include but is not limited to food allergies/sensitivities which require prescribed or over-the-counter medications, 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, 2023**. The First Aid 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 First Aid 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:

1. 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 First Aid 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 or with your camper's counselor. If your camper needs to take medication, either over the counter or prescription, during the camp day, our camp First Aid 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 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) 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. There will be no camp on June 19th or July 4th.

For members, camp costs \$385/week per child.

For non-members, camp costs \$450/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 13th – June 17th (*Preschool only*)

**June 20th – June 24th

June 27th – July 1st

July 5th – July 8th

July 11th – July 15th

July 17th – July 20th

July 25th – July 29th

August 1st – August 5th

August 8th – August 12th

The 5 Senses

Animals Abound (4 day week)

Farm Fitness

The 4 Seasons (4 day week)

Tracking and Orienteering

Cultivating Comparisons

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 June 19th and July 4th, will be discounted due a 4-day camp week.

Cancellation/Refund Policy

Full refunds will be provided up until June 5th 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, 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 canceled over two (2)

Financial Assistance

To be considered for financial assistance, please contact Stacey Valimont at stacey@amblerfarm.org.

Walk-in Policy

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

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/Guardians 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.

Q: Will campers be required to wear a mask?

A: Based on guidance from the CDC, OEC, and local guidance, masks are encouraged while indoors, however they are no longer required. This is subject to change in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines.

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](#), if you have questions or concerns. You may submit a form that has been signed within the past 24 months.

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 5th all cancellations are 100% refundable. After June 5th, 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/8th grades 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. If we cannot honor your child's friend request, they will have the opportunity to see their friend/sibling throughout the day at various activities.

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 outdoor games, bracelet making, or crafting. Then, they will participate in Counselor's choice where their counselor will lead their favorite activity!