

# Ambler Farm



# Summer Camp

## Parent Handbook 2026

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*Photo credits: Moments by Andrea*

## About Ambler Farm's Summer Camp



### Preschool Camp (Ages 3.5-5)

These campers are part of our Playful Piglet and Buzzing Bees groups. Playful Piglets and Buzzing Bees will go on hayrides and visit our animal stations each day. They will spend a great deal of time with our goats, sheep, rabbits, baby chicks, turkeys and ducks. Their 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 craft 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 farm staff and older campers..

A preschool is only as excellent as the quality of the staff, and our staff is amazing. They have all been working with young children and many of them are studying Early Education. You will see them showing the Playful Piglets and Buzzing Bees 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.

### 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. Each week campers will have multiple opportunities for hayrides 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.

### Animal Visits:

We have an incredibly friendly menagerie of sheep, baby goats, rabbits, turkeys, baby chicks, and ducks. You'll notice that our animal pens are designed for children to engage with our animals. 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 in our red barn(the building barn). All of our projects are age appropriate. Preschoolers will have weekly crafts in lieu of woodworking. Weekly projects are designed by the Eli Whitney Museum in Hamden, CT. We also add a second day of free building which allows for more creativity.

### 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. Eating grilled garlic scapes is one of our favorite things to do at the farm. Maybe your child will discover their new favorite vegetable!

### Grilling:

We grill vegetables each week with each group. We do not do this to teach them about healthy foods. We do this because it is delicious and we love to eat! Oh, and by the way, they are healthy foods!

### Play:

It is our intention to engage all campers in playful group activities. We strive to engage campers individually as well but the group activities are where campers can stretch socially and emotionally. Summer camp is all about having fun!

# Camper Groups

Camp groups correspond to the grade your child will be entering in the Fall of 2025. 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 (3.5 to 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> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Playful Piglets	Chirping Chicks	Samurai Sheep	Ninja Goats
Buzzing Bees	Wascally Wabbits		

## Camp Arrival + Pick-Up Procedures

Your child must be fever free and COVID-19 negative for 24 hours prior to attending 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 park in the field. Please follow signs to the check in tents where their counselor(s) will greet your camper to check them in at the beginning of the day and out at the end of the day. **Check in for all campers will take place at 8:45-9:00 am.**

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 Kevin Meehan:

[kevin@amblerfarm.org](mailto:kevin@amblerfarm.org)

## After Camp Care

The After Camp Care program is 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 inside and outside activity time. The inside activities are intended to get the kids out of the heat for a bit and the outside activities are based around movement. 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.

## Family Fridays

On Fridays, the whole family will have the opportunity to learn what your camper has been doing all week. Family Fridays are a highlight of the week including many activities for the whole family to enjoy. Families can join us from 12:15-1:00.

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

**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. Snacks must be kept separate from camper's lunch.

**Clothing:** Campers should pack a change of clothes in case they are very young and have "an accident." 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, running and visiting animal pens. Some of our animals have hooves so feet should be protected. No sandals, crocs 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.

**No candy or gum allowed at camp.**

## 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

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.

### 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. 2025 Photo/Video Release**
- 2. 2025 Liability Release**
- 3. 2025 Emergency Information Form**

4. **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.

5. **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 MAY 15th, 2025. 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 [Betsy@amblerfarm.org](mailto:Betsy@amblerfarm.org) 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 Finance Manager, Adrienne Calderone ([accounting@amblerfarm.org](mailto:accounting@amblerfarm.org)) if you have questions on the automatic payment plan.

Registration is for the entire week and closes at Noon on the Wednesday prior to each camp week, space permitting. Contact Betsy Back ([betsy@amblerfarm.org](mailto:betsy@amblerfarm.org)) with any registration questions.

**Time:** Monday - Friday, 9:00am – 1:00pm + After Camp Care from 1pm-3pm

**Fee:** For members, camp costs \$390/week per child. For non-members, camp costs \$460/week per child

**After Camp Care:** Costs an additional \$155/child for 4 days and \$195 for 5 days. After Camp Care is not available for Week A.

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

### Sessions

Week A – June 8th (Preschool Only)

Week 1 – June 15th (We are offering this week as a 5 day program for preschoolers, private, home school and children who would like to enjoy the entire week. This week is not pro-rated due to snow days.)

Week 2 – June 22nd

Week 3 – June 29th

Week 4 – July 6th

Week 5 – July 13th

Week 6 – July 20th

Week 7 – July 27th

Week 8 – August 3th

Week 9- August 10th

### New Cancellation + Refund Policy as of 2025 – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

- Registrations are nonrefundable beginning **May 15th**.
- Prior to May 15th, a **processing fee of \$75 per camper/ week** will be forfeited for cancellation.
- There will be a **\$25 administrative fee for any changes** to enrollment.

Membership payments made in conjunction with or due to summer camp registrations are nonrefundable.

Registrations are nonrefundable and nontransferable for campers who miss camp due to incomplete paperwork. Inclement weather-related cancellations with more than two consecutive days (in the same calendar week) are provided a prorated refund.

As a small non-profit organization, cancellations and changes require significant administrative time to manage our enrollments and plan for our programs, including summer camp.

We appreciate your understanding. All policies are subject to change.

### **Discounts**

As a non-profit organization, Ambler Farm does not offer sibling or multi-week discounts and we do not prorate weeks.

### **Financial Assistance**

To be considered for financial assistance, please fill out the scholarship application on the summer program page.

### **Walk-in Policy**

Walk-ins are not permitted 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 email [Betsy@amblerfarm.org](mailto:Betsy@amblerfarm.org) 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 director at least 2 weeks prior to the session start date to discuss fit and needs. Ambler Farm does not provide one on one support. If your child requires assistance with toileting, please review the Ambler Farm Summer Program policy on Potty-Training. If your child has significant needs, contact the Program Director, [Kevin@amblerfarm.org](mailto:Kevin@amblerfarm.org), prior to registering to determine if Ambler Farm is the right camp for your child.

### **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. Children must be able to follow counselor directions and stay with their group to ensure adequate supervision of the whole group as well as the safety of the individual. In addition to the safety of our campers, the

safety of our animals is important. Campers must be able to follow directions regarding the interaction with animals.

## FAQs

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

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

A: Based on guidance from the CDC, OEC, and local guidance, masks 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 our First Aid Director, [Betsy@amblerfarm.org](mailto:Betsy@amblerfarm.org), 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 prorate weeks. Prior to May 15<sup>th</sup> a processing fee of \$75 per camper/ week will be forfeited for cancellation. After May 15<sup>th</sup>, registrations are nonrefundable.

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

A: We have two groups of Preschoolers (ages 3.5 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. Friend requests must be mutually requested by both families. 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: 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! After camp care is a great opportunity for campers to bond with counselors in a small, extended session.