

KALAMAZOO NATURE CENTER CAMP SUMMER PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Kalamazoo Nature Center’s Day Camp Program. Whether your child is attending camp for the first or fiftieth time, the information provided in this guide will help you and your child prepare for a fun-filled experience at camp. Please go over this guide together, so that you and your child have the same expectations for camp. If you have questions after reading this information, please contact me anytime. The camp staff and I (Director Jenny) are looking forward to learning, growing and having fun with your child!

See you soon,

Jennifer Metz, Experiential Education Director
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Our Mission:

The KNC Camp Program mission is to provide safe experiences that allow all children to grow into active and respectful community members through exploration of the natural world.

Our Philosophy:

Our goal is to empower children to make good choices for themselves and their communities and to help them grow into good-natured people - people who respect and care for nature and each other.

To guide us in this goal we use the ACORNS Philosophy-Be:

- Active** – in your camp group, KNC and your community
- Curious** – ask questions, try new things, explore the world
- Outside** – get the physical and mental benefits of being out doors
- Respectful** – to yourself, to your neighbor, to nature
- in Nature** – nature education is the way that we learn our life lessons
- Safe**- all participants will always be physically and emotionally safe



Everyone Is Welcome!

We believe that all kids can participate in our program. We ask parents to be honest on the health forms about their child’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being and anything else our staff should know to help their child succeed in our program. Director Jenny may contact you to discuss how we can adapt camp to provide a safe and successful environment for all children.

How to get to KNC

From US-131:

Exit at D Avenue (Exit 44) and travel approximately 4 miles east on D Avenue to N. Westnedge.

Turn right on N. Westnedge and go approximately 1 mile, then turn left at the Kalamazoo Nature Center sign.

From Interstate 94:

Exit at US 131 North (Exit 74) and follow the above directions.

From Downtown Kalamazoo:

Follow Park Street north through downtown Kalamazoo. Park Street will turn into Business Loop 131. Follow the sign to the right directing you to N. Westnedge Ave. and the Kalamazoo Nature Center. Follow N. Westnedge about 3 miles and turn right at the Kalamazoo Nature Center sign, just past E Avenue.



Arrival at Camp/Transportation

The Adventure House: Once you are at KNC, you will find the Adventure House (our main camp location) at the first gate on the right-hand side. Please park as close to other cars as is safe to conserve space and escort your camper to the Check-In Area. Please avoid parking in the bus dropoff/pick-up area. Campers are not allowed in the parking area unattended. Thank you in advance for making our transition times safe.

Camp Bus: Bus transportation is included in the camp fee.

- A camp staff member will be on each bus to welcome campers and answer parent questions.
- Pre-registration for bus transportation is required. If you would like to participate but have not signed up, please call to make arrangements.
- The bus arrival and departure times can vary slightly. Please arrive at least 5 minutes early in the morning to bus stops. If you miss the bus, you will be responsible for transporting your child directly to camp in the morning. For your child’s safety, no child will be left at a stop alone.
- The afternoon bus will stay at a stop for 2 minutes past the scheduled return time. If you are not at the stop, the bus must continue through its route. You can either meet your child at a later bus stop or pick your child up at the KNC Adventure House. Please call (269) 491-7641 if you missed your child’s pick-up time.
- If a child is returned to the Nature Center because someone failed to meet the child at any of the designated stops, a warning will be given.
- If a parent fails to meet a child at the bus more than once during the summer, a fee of \$50.00 will be charged (covers bus driver time, the bus’s extra mileage and overtime for KNC staff who must supervise the child after hours), or the privilege of riding the KNC summer camp bus will be suspended.
- If a parent/guardian refuses to pick up a child from camp, local authorities will be contacted to assume custody of the child.



Code	Camp Bus Stop Location	Departs	Returns
A	Maple Hill Mall	8:00 AM	6:00 PM
	(in parking lot in front of Office Max)		
B	Portage Community Education Center	8:20 AM	5:40 PM
	(Parking lot at old Milham School, 1010 Milham Rd.)		
C	Parkwood Upjohn School	8:40 AM	5:20 PM
	(Park St. side)		
D	Bronson Park	8:50 AM	5:10 PM
	(South St. side)		
E	Lincoln School	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
	(Parsons St. side)		

What to bring to camp: Please label all of your camper's items with full name!

- **Camp fun can be dirty and wet. Please send your child with clothes/shoes/bags that can get dirty/wet.**
- Small day pack to carry supplies (bags with wheels do not work on our trails)
- 1 qt water bottle
- Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, as we will be enjoying the summer outdoors!
- Properly fitting closed-toe shoes or boots
- Rain gear
- Hat/bandana
- Sweatshirt/sweater
- Spare clothes: socks, pants, undergarments
- Swimsuit or clothes that they may get wet, and towel (for Afternoon Water Play)
- A non-aerosol bug repellent
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher), apply before camp
- Medications marked with the camper's name. Fill out a *Permission to Administer Medication* Form.
- Packed lunch and snacks: (Full-Day Camps Only)
 - In reusable containers (help us teach sound environmental practices)
 - No refrigeration required
 - We will notify you if anyone in your camper's group has severe food allergies
- **KNC Camp is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Lost & Found items will be held for one week. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charity.**

Additional Items for Programs with an Overnight Campout

(Dinner, lunch and breakfast the following day are provided)

- Flashlight
- Hair brush/comb, toothbrush and toothpaste
- Sleeping bag
- Camping ground pad
- Appropriate amount of clothing changes for time spent on-site
- Long pants or sweat pants
- Long-sleeved top
- Towel and washcloth (River Trek and Teen Campers will be able to use the solar shower)
- 1 pair of quick-drying long pants (Adventure and Teen Camps)
- 2 pairs of shoes - one each for water and hiking (Adventure and Teen Camps)



Teen Backcountry Adventures

Specific items will be discussed at parent information meetings for the Teen Backcountry Adventure Trip.

Mandatory meetings are on Monday, June 1, 6:00–7:30 pm & Monday, July 6, 6:00–7:30 pm. Camper and at least one parent/guardian must attend each meeting.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING:

- Cell phones (or secret backup cell phones!)
- Digital cameras
- Laptops
- Hand-held computer games
- Trading cards
- iPods or music players
- Any other items that either distract from our nature activities or could be destroyed, lost, or stolen
- Any of the above items discovered will be taken to our office and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

ACORNS Expectations: Please review this with your child.

These are the rules of camp that we all need to follow so that everyone has a fun and safe time. The ACORNS Expectations are an expansion of the REAL Rules (our previous rule system) and follow similar principles that many schools use when they put Positive Behavior Supports in place.

	Bus + Van	Check-In & Check-Out	Small Group Activities	Hikes	Flagpole/ All Group	Markin Glen
ACTIVE	Talk to new people		Play with everyone	Look around you	Join in with the group	Play with everyone
	Follow directions the first time!					
	Drink lots of water!					
CURIOUS	How does that work? Do you want to play? May I go...? Can you help me? What is that? How can I help?					
RESPECTFUL	Indoor Voices	Be patient	Use positive words	Pick up trash		Keep your things on group tarp
			Use names	Take care of nature		
	Say please and thank you					
	Quiet when others are talking					
SAFE	Stay in seats, bottom on seat and wear seat belt	Stay in line and with group until dismissed	Stay with the group	Stay on trail and between staff	Stay with group	Stay in bounds
	Hands to self					
	Listen to lifeguards & counselors					

Camp Behavior Policy: Please review this with your child.

- The Nature Center Camp staff strive to make camp safe, fun, friendly, respectful, and educational for all campers at all times.
- In turn, campers are expected to follow the ACORNS Expectations. Safety is the #1 concern at camp.
- If a child's behavior is disruptive to the program or to the experience of others, appropriate actions will be taken.
- Disruptive behavior is defined as a behavior that adversely affects the activities of a camp group. This can include, but is not limited to, bullying, threatening words or actions that are intended to provoke fear, repeated refusal to work cohesively with the group, and destruction of property.
- Behavior Action Steps
 1. Discussion of the disruptive behavior with the camper, staff person involved, and the Camp Director.
 2. Parents will assist in problem-solving a positive solution.
 3. After a parent-camper conference, a behavior agreement will be drafted by the camp director and signed by all parties.
 4. The camper will be dismissed if the disruptive behavior is repeated after the behavior agreement is in effect.
- **If a child's behavior is aggressive or violent (hitting, kicking, biting or using any object as a weapon) toward either staff or other campers, the child will be sent home immediately.**
- **No refund** will be given when a child is sent home because of behavior reasons.
- The dismissed child will not be allowed back for the rest of that week of camp but may try to be successful later in the summer.
- We want all children to be successful at camp and learn from their mistakes so they can become active, positive members of their camp group.

Camper Sign-In/Sign-Out

ALL campers MUST be signed in and out DAILY by a parent/adult guardian. Photo ID is required at the time of pick-up. Please have your license or photo ID ready to show to our staff whether we know you or not. There is space on the health form to list additional adults authorized to pick up your child. Anytime someone other than those designated will be picking up your camper(s), you must add those extra persons to your child(ren)'s registration form.

Please do not be offended if our staff asks for an ID. This procedure is to ensure the safety of your child. Whether or not we already know you, you must bring your ID to your child's counselor.

Daily Camp Schedule

8:00 am Buses begin scheduled routes
8:45–9:00 am-----Campers arrive at KNC
9:00 am-----All camps begin their day
9:00–9:30 am -----Opening Ceremonies
9:30 am–12:00 pm -Program activities
12:00 pm -----My First Nature Camps and Junior Naturalist Camps end
12:00–1:00 pm ----Lunch and “**I Wonder...**”
1:00–2:30 pm -----Program activities
1:00–4:00 pm Wednesday Only—Swimming at Markin Glen Park
2:30–3:15 pm -----Group Games and Water Play
3:15–4:30 pm -----**Afternoon Blend activities**
4:30–5:00 pm -----**Junk Report**, Closing Ceremony
5:00 pm -----Campers leave KNC
6:00 pm -----Buses finish scheduled routes

“I Wonder...”

“I Wonder...” is an opportunity for campers to take a closer look at daily topics. We use this time each day to independently observe, discuss, write, and draw in journals.

Afternoon Blend: Choose Your Own Adventure

Each afternoon, campers get the chance to pick how they want to explore the week's topic. Here are just a few examples of the classes campers can choose from: Story Quest, Live at the Improv, Survival Sense, and Leadership Lab.

Junk Report

In the Junk Report, we explore ways to reduce the packaging waste of our brown bag lunches, composting, and recycling. We learn that small changes in our daily routines can have a big impact on the environment and our personal health.

Friday Family Fest · Every Friday 3:30–5:00 pm

Here is a chance for a camper's family and friends to join in the fun and excitement of a camp day. Meet the staff, play games, enjoy performances, and learn about the week's highlights. Please park in the grassy parking area to the north (left turn) of camp. Handicap and bus parking is available in the Adventure House Parking Lot (right turn).



Medication

“Medication” is any substance a person takes to maintain and/or improve their health. This includes vitamins and natural remedies. If your child will be taking medication while at camp, fill out and return the Permission to Administer Medication form and provide enough of each medication to last the entire time at camp. Medications must be brought in the original pharmacy container. Bring only enough of the medications needed while at camp. Any unused medications will not be carried home by the camper. Medications are returned to the parent/guardian at check-out.

Emergencies/Illness at Camp

Should there be any emergency involving your child, or if your child becomes ill while at camp, we will contact you immediately. If you cannot be reached, we will call the individuals you have designated as alternate emergency contacts. Please make sure all information provided is accurate. If you have a family emergency at home and need to pick your child up early, please call the Camp Director’s Cell Phone at (269) 491-7641.

Ticks, Mosquitos and Poison Ivy

It is possible that while exploring the habitats at the Nature Center, your child may come in contact with ticks, mosquitos or other biting flies, or poison ivy. Our staff will do their best to remind campers to check themselves for ticks and reapply their bug spray. However, you must check your children each night when they get home because ticks hide in places that it is only appropriate for parents to check. We will teach your children how to identify and avoid poison ivy and other plants that may irritate the skin.

The general recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics to limit the use of DEET-containing products on kids to those that contain 10% or less DEET. Check the parent section of our website for information on how to choose the right bug spray, how to check for and remove ticks, how to identify the signs of a tick bite, and the symptoms and signs of poison ivy.

Nature Center Gift Shop

You will be notified in advance if your camper’s group has a planned visit to our gift shop. Not all camp groups schedule a visit to the gift shop. The gift shop is open all year during KNC’s normal business hours, 9 am - 5 pm. There are many value-priced souvenirs in the shop, and we ask that you send no more than \$10.00 with your camper per session. We do not encourage the purchasing of candy, snacks, and soft drinks.

Camp Policy for Campers and the Internet

We view e-mail, IM and social networking sites such as Facebook.com and MySpace.com as positive ways for campers to express themselves and keep in touch with friends. Campers have the right to exchange e-mails or IMs with other campers and invite other campers to be on their “friends” list in any way that they and their parents see fit.

When it comes to exchanging contact with anyone on our staff, parents must take full responsibility for that contact. This includes giving or getting an e-mail or IM address, cell phone number, social networking profile, weblog, or any other Internet contact. Staff are instructed not to exchange contact information with the campers. If campers would like to send an email or letter to their counselor after camp, they may send it to the Nature Center and we will facilitate the communication. We believe that the relationships between campers and their counselors are important. However once they leave camp we can’t take responsibility for what happens between them—only their parents can.

Please view the expanded version of our internet and technology policy, and tips for kids using the Internet on the Parent Page of our website, www.KNCCamp.org.

Lost and Found

We ask that all personal belongings be marked with the camper's name. At the end of each day we will make an effort to match lost items with their owners. Lost & Found will be kept for one week. All unclaimed items will be given to a local charity. Please do not bring items of great value to camp. KNC is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Refund and Cancellation Policy

We are unable to give refunds for cancellations within two weeks (10 business days) of the camp's start date. A \$50 processing fee will be charged for any cancellation prior to two weeks before a camp's start date. There is no fee for switching to another available camp of the same price in the current camp season. If prices differ, you will need to pay the difference or we will refund or credit you the difference.

Bus Mail System

If your child will be using the Summer Camp Bus, please give all information that needs to be relayed to camp staff to the Bus Counselor in writing. Medication and forms may also be given to the Bus Counselor if they are clearly marked with your child's full name. This will assure that all information gets to its proper place. The Bus Counselor may also have updates for you from your child's counselor.

Parent's Check List

Before Camp

- Register for camp and complete *Camper Health History* (on registration form or received via email)
- Make sure you are paid in full. You will receive an email confirmation. Your child is not fully registered until we receive full payment.
- Read the Parent Information Guide
- Return the following forms to camp if they apply to your children. Forms can be found online at www.KNCCamp.org under "Forms"

Permission to Administer Medication

Unimmunized Child & Refusal of Treatment Waiver

Travel Camper Health Care Recommendations: Filled Out by Dr. (for River Trek and all Teen Camps)

ACPL Student Medical Form (Leadership in Nature)

Climb Kalamazoo Waiver (Adventure Skills Campout)

- Pack all recommended camper items
- Mark all of camper's items with full name
- Talk with your children about the great time they will be having at the Nature Center

During Camp

- Tell your child's staff person about any last minute changes in your camper's health or life situation
- Check your child's Group Board for update on daily activities
- Check your child each evening for evidence of ticks, mosquitoes, and poison ivy. Adjust your child's clothes and bug repellent accordingly.
- Visit KNC for Friday Family Fest and enjoy camp for yourself!

Thank you for reviewing this Information Guide!
We look forward to seeing you and your child soon
at the Kalamazoo Nature Center!

