

# NATURE CAMP FAMILY HANDBOOK



# UNPLUGGED SUMMER CAMPS

City of Farmington Hills - Heritage Park  
24915 Farmington Rd - Farmington Hills  
248-473-1870 - [fhsscamps@fhgov.com](mailto:fhsscamps@fhgov.com)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

## INTRODUCTION

Our Camp Goals, Staff a& Camper Ratios, Names & Pronouns

04

## EPACT NETWORK *MUST COMPLETE!*

What is ePACT  
ePACT Family Guide  
ePACT Troubleshooting.

07

## CAMP HOURS, DROP OFF / PICK UP INFORMATION

Heritage Park, Times, Contact Information, Late Pick Up Fees, Extended Care

08

## CAMP POLICIES

Camp Rules & Expectations  
Inclement Weather, Electronics Policy, Bathroom Usage, Camper Attire  
Lunch & Snacks, Injuries, Health, Medication Policy  
Separation Anxiety, Staff Qualifications, Personal Items, Refunds/Transfers

12

## A DAY AT CAMP

General description of loose schedule

13

## WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

All campers should bring these items to every camp.

# OUR PRIMARY CAMP GOALS

# WE CREATE FUN!

These simple three words are our mission statement. We strive to ensure that each program is fun for the children, in all that we do. These programs are founded on the principal of cherishing the short time in each person's life called childhood. We feel each child is special, and we use our summer programs to celebrate this uniqueness through wholesome activities in positive settings. Everyone should strive to establish caring and supportive relationships that encourage each child to have FUN and to feel GOOD about themselves.

In fulfilling this mission, we have two goals:

- SAFETY
- FUN
- IN THAT ORDER!

## HOW DO WE DO THIS?

### TEAMWORK

Coming together is a beginning  
Keeping together is a process  
Thinking together is unity  
Working together is success.

### Quality interactions include:

Greeting and acknowledging people by their name if you know it  
Be responsive to needs  
Follow up on questions  
Take complaints serious  
Work diligently to resolve issues

## STAFF TO CAMPER RATIOS

At a minimum, we follow 1 staff member for every 10 campers. However, in addition to our 1:10 ratio, there is always a minimum of 2 staff members with each group so those camps having less than 20 for maximum enrollment will have a lower ratio. We are also pleased to offer Counselor in Training and Junior Counselor programs and many camps will have these participants to assist each day as well.

## NAMES & PRONOUNS

Some of the ways we build camaraderie and relationships at camp are icebreakers and name games that help us get to know each other. During these times, campers and staff have opportunity to share how they wish to be addressed while at camp. Some campers and staff may also wish to share their preferred pronouns, or not, and we normalize both approaches as a personal choice. Staff are provided with visible nametags and also have the option to list their preferred pronouns if they so choose.

**We recognize and celebrate the value and worth brought to our camps by  
EVERY SINGLE PARTICIPANT.**



## EMAIL INVITATION TO EPACT

All households **MUST** complete the required health & emergency information for their camper in ePACT prior to the first day of camp. Upon registering, you should have received an email (same email used to register) prompting you to create an account. **The sender of the email will be from Farmington Hills Special Services via ePACT Network.**

We will also send a reminder email, but please let us know right away if you have not received it, so we can get that information as quickly as possible. You will not be able to drop your camper off at camp until your ePACT Account is submitted. **The subject line of the email will say "[Camper Name] Farmington Hills Summer Camps".** Please accept the email and complete your profile. **Your ePact account MUST be created with the same email you used to complete registration.**



Please note that staff are unable to see incomplete records. Additionally, for the safety of your child and the members of your family, staff is unable to make changes to your unique profile. However, you can make changes as needed throughout the day, and we can see them in real time! Need to suddenly add an additional person as authorized to pick up? Update your profile, and we will see that your camper is safe to leave with them.

**For more information on starting or troubleshooting your ePACT account please visit our ePACT Family Guide.**

Available at <https://www.fhgov.com/play-explore-learn/camps/>

**YOUR CAMPER'S  
EPACT FILE MUST BE COMPLETE  
IN ORDER TO ATTEND CAMP.**

We utilize **ePACT Network**, a health and safety software to better support all our members and make it easier to submit critical data securely!

**If you have not yet done so, please accept the email invitation to complete your child's required emergency contact file.**



**If you already have an ePACT account but are having problems resetting your password, please reach out to ePACT directly.**

***In case of an emergency, you will be notified through ePACT via email or text.***

*In some cases, we may call you from a City of Farmington Hills phone.*

*Please keep an eye out for phone calls, text messages, or emails from us while your camper is in our care.*

## RECEIVE A REQUEST

Upon registering, you will receive an email from us, inviting you to complete your ePACT profile for your child. **The sender of the email will be from Farmington Hills Special Services via ePACT Network.**



Open the email and Click on ‘COMPLETE REQUEST’ to get started. Tip: This may be completed on a phone or tablet, but some find that a desktop or laptop can be easier to use when filling out the first time.

## CREATE AN ACCOUNT

**IMPORTANT! The email used to create your ePACT account MUST be the same email that received the invitation and was used for registration.** If you create an account with another email, we will be unable to see the emergency information you provide for your child.



## GETTING STARTED

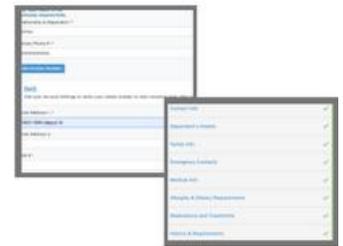
Read the instructions carefully.  
Click on Getting Started.

Tip: Though not required, adding photos of your child and emergency contacts/approved pick-ups is very helpful!



## FOLLOW THE STEPS

Answer the questions on each step. Those with an asterisk (\*) are required. All completed steps will show a check mark. We are unable to see any of your information if you attempt to submit with a step that does not have a completed check mark. On our end, this will show as “outstanding”, meaning incomplete.



## ADD ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

You can upload additional documents like immunization records, custody orders, etc.



## ADD INITIALS AND SIGNATURE

Add your initials to each waiver and add your signature.

Click on the share button to complete the process and submit your information to become visible to the City of Farmington Hills Special Services Department.



## **I completed ePACT for my child, but City of Farmington Hills staff can't see it.**

This can happen when you create an ePACT account using an email address that is different from the email address we have on file for them. The email address **MUST** be the same email used at time of registration and from which you accepted the invitation to create a profile for your child.

### **Parents/Guardians are able to update the email address in their ePACT account very easily!**

You may login to your ePACT account and change the email address to the one that was tied to the registration. Once this is complete, you can update the information for your child so that Farmington Hills is able to view the necessary profile.

**Also important** - Your child's profile will have tabs at the top. Please note that we can only see the information completed within the Organizations Tab. Click [HERE](#) for more information on Profile Tab vs. Organizations Tab.



## **I have never been able to log-in and ePACT won't allow me to recover my password.**

If you have never logged into ePACT, you do not yet have an account created. In order to recover a password, you must have already created an account. We often have families that think they created an account and actually have not yet. While ePACT talks with our registration system, it is a different system all together so you must also create an account with ePACT, using the same email address used at time of registration.

## **I received a reminder to complete my record marked as **OUTSTANDING**, but I have already completed it. Why am I receiving this?**

This means something in your profile is likely incomplete. Emergency contact information, allergies, etc are not visible to City of Farmington Hill staff if a record is marked as outstanding so it is very important to double check that all necessary information has been provided. Even if you think you've submitted everything, it is possible that some critical details were missed. Click [HERE](#) for more information regarding your next steps.

## **Why is ePACT indicating my emergency contacts aren't correct?**

Be sure to list **AT LEAST** one adult (preferably 2) as an emergency contact that is **NOT** the parent/guardian. Examples are neighbors, extended family, family friends, etc. Once you submit emergency contacts and approved pickups, ePACT will separately ask you to **MANAGE RELATIONSHIPS** of these individuals. This section is where you are required to update how the contacts are related to your child.

## **How do I add/edit approved pick -up lists after I've shared the profile?**

The great thing about ePACT is that when you submit these updates, we can see them without the need for you to call/notify us of a change. It is important to note that updates must be made for your child on the organizational tab rather than just in their personal profile. Click [HERE](#) for more information regarding how to make these changes successfully.



**FULL DAY  
CAMP  
HOURS  
9AM - 3PM\*  
MONDAY - FRIDAY**  
*\* Half-day camps do not follow these same hours.*

## DROP OFF

Drop off runs from **8:50-9:00 AM**, and campers must be checked in by their adult. **Please escort your camper into their designated camp room.** There your camper will be checked in by a staff member.

**LATE DROP OFF:** If you are dropping your camper off after 9:15am, please go to the Nature Center office for check-in. From there, your camper will be escorted to their camp.

## PICK UP

Pick up runs from **2:50 PM - 3:00 PM** and campers will be picked up from their camp room. Anyone picking up after 3:05 PM will need to sign up for extended care or will be charged a late fee. **Campers will only be released to individuals listed on the "Pickup Info" list within your ePACT account and who are 16 years of age or older.** We require a photo ID be presented at the time of pick up. Please bring your ID with you every day. We may have counselors who are unfamiliar with you and will need to see your ID prior to checking out. If your camp ends prior to 3:00 PM, please review pick up information specific to your camp in the [Nature Summer Camps Packing Lists](#).

## LATE PICK UP FEES & POLICY

Participants picked up more than 5 minutes after their registered program's ending pick up time will incur a late pick up fee. Guardians are responsible for paying the fee prior to participating on the next day of camp. For late pick ups, camp staff may contact guardians and/or emergency contacts to inquire expected arrival time. If we are unable to reach you and 60 minutes has passed, we may call the authorities.

<b>Late Pick Up Fees:</b>	<b>5-15 minutes - \$15</b>	<b>26-30 minutes - \$50</b>
	<b>16-25 minutes - \$25</b>	<b>31-60 minutes - \$75</b>

## EXTENDED CARE

We offer AM and PM Extended Care options for an additional fee. Most camps have these options available, but some do not and they are noted as such within the [Camp Guide](#). Extended Care is not available as a prorated option if campers only use it a few days out of the week.

### AM Extended Care

Campers registered for AM Extended Care will be dropped off in the Nature Center anytime from **8:00-9:00 AM**.

### PM Extended Care

Campers registered for PM Extended Care will be picked up anytime between **3:15pm - 5:30pm** from the Camp Maple room (door on the right side of the Nature Center lobby).

**The following Nature camps are NOT eligible for Extended Care:** Young Explorers



Register for Heritage Park AM & PM Extended Care at [recreg.fhgov.com](http://recreg.fhgov.com).

# CAMP POLICIES

During camp, we work together with campers as a team to ensure that your children gain self-confidence, make new friends, create wonderful memories, and go home feeling fulfilled with by their camp experience.

Campers are expected to behave in an age-appropriate, mature and responsible manner and to respect the rights and dignity of others.

## CAMP RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Please read and discuss these rules with your camper. Further camp specific rules and expectations will be discussed with your camper on Monday.

- Campers are to treat their peers, counselors and instructors with respect.
- The materials at camp are for everyone's enjoyment and it is each camper's responsibility to take care of them.
- We need to keep our camp environment clean, campers and counselors are responsible to help with clean-up.
- Be honest, caring, and kind in all interactions with peers and staff.

It is important for all campers to follow these rules as well as any other directions given by their counselors and directors so that camp is fun for everyone!

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When campers do not follow the rules and expectations of camp, our staff will take the following steps in succession with repeated occurrences:

1. Redirect camper to more appropriate behavior.
2. Privately speak to camper to remind them of the rules of camp and work together as a team to determine the action steps that can be taken to correct the behavior.
3. Write up the behavior and consult with parent for how to work together to correct behavior.
4. Repeated behavior may result in the removal of camp for the day, week or season at the camp director's discretion.

## EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- Refusing to follow behavior guidelines or camp rules as set forth above and within the classroom.
- Using profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or slurs.
- Refusal to participate or cooperate with staff.
- Disrupting other campers or staff.
- Leaving camp group without permission.
- Endangering the health and safety of others.
- Teasing, making fun of, or bullying other campers or staff.
- Hitting or fighting of any kind.

*Registration fees are non-refundable if a camper is dismissed for disciplinary reasons.*



# INCLEMENT WEATHER & AIR QUALITY

Camp will continue to run as scheduled. For light rain and sprinkles, we may continue outdoor activities. However, during hard rain and severe weather, all camps will move indoors. Some camps spend a substantial amount of time outside, even on extremely hot days. Campers are given frequent water breaks and encouraged to refill their water bottle multiple times throughout the day. Breaks are given for time in the shade or indoors.

# ELECTRONICS POLICY

Electronic device (including but not limited to cell phones, gaming devices, tablets) use is not permitted during camp hours. Our goal is for campers to get unplugged, take a break from technology, and we encourage them to focus on the camp experience and build relationships with fellow campers and our staff. If a device must come with them, it MUST stay in their backpack throughout the day. We are not responsible for keeping track of your camper's electronic devices.

# BATHROOM USAGE

Staff are asked to escort campers to the bathrooms to ensure safety of campers in these personal spaces. Campers must be able to use the facilities unassisted. Campers may use bathrooms in line with the gender identified on their camp registration. Some facilities also offer gender-inclusive bathrooms and are available for use by any camper.

# CAMPER ATTIRE

We love when your campers express themselves through their clothes, hair, accessories and more. Most important, make sure campers are dressed for comfort! Our rules regarding appropriate attire are as follows:

- Clothing must be opaque and unable to be seen through. Clothing should provide full coverage to groin, buttocks, midriff, and chest areas - please note some exceptions for camps requiring swimming suits.

In the general camp setting, campers must wear ALL of the following:

- Tops - fabric must cover the midriff on all sides and under the arms.
- Bottoms - pants/jeans or equivalent such as skirt, sweatpants, leggings, dresses, shorts
- Shoes - must be closed toe shoes that secure around the back of the foot.

Dress for the weather - we will try to spend as much time outside as possible.

# SWIMSUIT POLICY FOR APPLICABLE CAMPS

Camper must be able to dress/undress themselves. No T-Shirts, woven fabrics, or street clothes are permitted in the water as soiled clothing can create an unhealthy swim environment. Street shoes are prohibited on the pool deck. Plastic goggles only (no tempered-glass).

# TOWELS FOR APPLICABLE CAMPS

Phone calls will be made if towels are forgotten. If no one is reached or unable to deliver, we will provide your camper with an "emergency" towel for a fee of \$10 to be paid prior to the next day of camp. The towel will then become property of your camper. Please note that emergency towel options are not available for TourXPlore Camps if they have already departed The Hawk.



## LUNCH & SNACKS

Please send your camper with a lunch and two snacks everyday. Campers will NOT have access to a refrigerator or microwave. **For the safety of our campers we are a nut free camp.** Make sure to put their name on their lunch!

If a lunch is forgotten, families will be called to see if one may be delivered prior to lunch time. If no one answers, or no one is available to deliver, an “emergency” healthy lunch will be provided to your camper for a fee of \$15.00, payable prior to the next day of camp. Please note that this will be provided in emergencies only and should not be relied upon as a method for ensuring your camper has a lunch each day.

**CAMPERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO PURCHASE LUNCHES OR SNACKS FROM HAWK CONCESSIONS.**

## INJURIES

We are committed to providing a safe and enjoyable experience for our campers. While we take precautions to minimize risks, injuries can occasionally occur, especially during outdoor activities or when children are engaged in sports or games. Camp staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, AED and Stop the Bleed. Our staff will treat routine cuts and scrapes and send home an incident report. In all cases of serious illness or accident, camp leadership will contact the camper’s parents or guardians. In the event they cannot be reached, attempts will be made to contact all other emergency contacts included in your camper’s ePACT profile.



## HEALTH

If your camper has a runny nose, communicable disease, or any contagious health problem including fever, diarrhea, severe coughing, difficulty breathing, untreated skin rashes, vomiting, lice, severe stomach pain, extreme fatigue or headache that may affect the health of other campers and staff, please do not send them to camp and notify our office at 248-473-1870.

While at camp, if your child suddenly develops any of the above listed symptoms, you will be contacted and your camper must be picked up immediately. If you are unreachable, we will call listed emergency contacts. All campers will be isolated from others until they are picked up. Camp leadership reserves the right to decide whether a child is healthy enough to participate in camp AND whether to remove a child if there is concern for the health of those around them.

If children have been sick, they must remain home until 24 hours has passed without the assistance of fever reducers; since they last had symptoms; since first dose of antibiotic; no longer have thick, green, or yellow nasal discharge; skin rashes subsided or physician's note determined that rash is not contagious. We continue to follow COVID-19 guidelines as set forth by Oakland County.

*Registration fees are non-refundable if a camper is absent due to illness.*

## MEDICATION POLICY

If a child requires medication during camp hours, they must be able to administer it themselves. Our staff will secure the medication for them for safety reasons, but the child must be aware of not only the dosage but also when they need to take it.

An Authorization for Medication Form **MUST** be completed by camper’s physician and parent before any medication can be dispensed. **These forms are available online, in the Nature Center office or via email pdf.**

**Any medication sent to camp must be in the original container and properly labeled with the child’s name, physician’s name, instructions and name and strength of the medication.**

All camper medications must be turned in to Camp Staff upon arrival at day camp. Camp Staff will keep all prescription drugs and medications in the lock box for their group. All medication bottles and any unused medications will be taken by the family on the camper's last day of attendance.

[FHSSCAMPS@FHGOV.COM](mailto:FHSSCAMPS@FHGOV.COM)

## SEPARATION ANXIETY

Our staff are trained to recognize and address any separation anxiety we see. Our goal is to make the drop off stress free and smooth for you and your camper as they transition into the camp day. We use a variety of techniques including introducing them to a new friend that has attended before, starting them in quieter spaces first, providing a distracting activity, and above all validating their feelings.

Please take time to explain the camp drop off process to your camper ahead of the camp day and send them equipped with comfort items such as: a small toy or stuffed animal, their favorite book, and drawing or writing supplies. If your camper is having issues at drop-off, we ask that you do your best to keep goodbyes brief and positive. In our experience, lingering at drop off can actually make the experience more challenging, and may delay your camper's adjustment time. We will always work to ensure open communication with families about their child's adjustment to camp. Please seek out a camp director for additional help if needed.

## STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Supervisors and site directors have degrees in related fields and years of experience working with children and developing youth enrichment programs. Our large team of lead counselors are college age and older with a history of working with children and have been selected because of their experience, skills, character, and enthusiasm for working with kids! Many of our counselors have degrees or are currently taking classes in childcare, physical education, art, education, or other related fields. We even have some schoolteachers that work with us during the summer! All staff have completed background checks and hold First Aid/CPR certification. All staff also undergo intensive training prior to each camp season. Examples of covered topics include but are not limited to safety protocols and procedures, positive youth development principles, our camp standards and expectations, group work skills, behavior management, inclusive practices, emergency procedures, and program content.

## TOYS/PERSONAL ITEMS

Campers are welcome to bring toys, fidgets, or other appropriate personal items to camp. However, please be aware that we are not responsible for keeping track of your camper's personal items. Our counselors may ask campers to put items away if it becomes disruptive. Toy weapons are strictly prohibited.

## CAMP REFUND AND TRANSFER POLICY

- Refund requests submitted more than two weeks prior to the start of a program begin date, will be issued a 100% refund, LESS a \$10 Administrative Fee.
- Refund requests submitted less than two weeks prior, but more than three business days, prior to the start of a program will be issued a 50% refund LESS a \$10 Administrative Fee.
- Refund requests submitted less than three business days (Monday -Friday) prior to the start of a program will not be granted, and no refund will be issued.
- A \$10 transfer fee will be charged for each transfer five (5) business days prior to the start of camp. Transfer request made less than five (5) business days prior will not be granted.



# A DAY AT CAMP



## OUTDOORS

**Heritage Park Nature Camps aim to spend as much time outside as possible during the camp day. In the case of severe weather, activities may be modified or moved inside. Counselors will notify you of any major changes.**

**Please prepare your child properly for the weather of each day.**

## A DAY AT CAMP

Each morning, campers and staff will work together to set the day's expectations. The morning is full of activities whether it be beginning specialty projects specific to their camp, playing active games, or going outside for fresh air. Most camps will take a mid-morning break for snacks and calm time before moving on to different pre-lunch activities.

Lunches generally occur mid-day and most camps use this time for outdoor picnics and high energy games. Afternoon consists of returning to activities and projects before beginning the clean-up and wind down process of dismissal. Camp staff are adept at providing ample time for snacks, rest, and reset opportunities to provide the most well-balanced camp experience possible.

### HALF DAY CAMPS:

Many camps for our youngest campers have 3 or 4 hour time frames. Our 3 hour camps follow a condensed version of the above, taking snack and water breaks but removing time for lunch. Our 4 hour camps do include a break for lunch.



# WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

**ALL NATURE CAMPERS SHOULD  
BRING THESE ITEMS EACH DAY.**

- **Backpack**
- **Closed toe shoes that secure around back of foot**  
Tennis shoes and Sneakers are preferred
- **Nut-Free Lunch**
- **Refillable Water Bottle**
- **Two (2) healthy Nut-Free snacks**
- **Sunscreen / Bug Spray**  
Must be applied at home. Camp staff may not apply sunscreen to campers.
- **Extra clothes, just in case**

 **Please make sure to label your camper's items with their name!**



Many camps require special items be brought daily, or weekly. Please visit Nature Summer Camps Packing List found online at [www.fhgov.com/play-explore-learn/camps/](http://www.fhgov.com/play-explore-learn/camps/)

