Beaver Brook Children's School, Inc.

2026 Nature Exploration Summer Camp Handbook

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About Us

Philosophy

At Beaver Brook Children's School (BBCS), our camp priority is to provide a safe, fun, supportive, and engaging environment so children can experience the natural world. Our educational philosophy is that children learn best through hands-on, relatable experiences. Our program provides the opportunity for children to gain knowledge through interactions, exploration, and challenges. Our camp staff strive to help each child develop a lifelong love of learning and curiosity about our natural world. We believe that connections with nature foster critical thinking and self-confidence. Our Nature Exploration camp program is a fully outdoor nature-based experience, and the day is spent outside.

Mission

Our nonprofit's mission is to provide high-quality early education experiences to Wilmington and nearby towns with the goal of promoting enrichment, nature based education, place based education, and social development for families and children in the community.

Certification

Our summer camp for ages 4-8 years is licensed through the state of Vermont Child Development Division. We are able to accept CCFAP/Subsidy for tuition. Please contact us directly with questions about licensing.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child.

Definition of Program

In this handbook, the terms program, school, camp, center, or BBCS may be used to describe our operation. All of these terms refer to Beaver Brook Children's School, Inc.

Program Setting

BBCS Summer Camp is a nature-based program. The day is spent outdoors, rain or shine. Our program uses a pavilion for shelter from sun and rain and provides tables, benches, and other seating for children for use during some activities. We have access to the Old School Community Center for indoor bathrooms, an indoor classroom, the gym, and emergency shelter during inclement weather. We frequent a local brook, hiking trails, and the town park during our camp weeks. During some weeks, we will also run camp "offsite". These offsite experiences are considered full day field trips. Families are expected to drop off and pick up at the field trip site. No transportation is provided by the program. See Session Weeks and our Google Site for more information.

Information on our Learning Environments and Philosophies - Important!

BBCS provides a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in our learning spaces. We offer scaffolded experiences that allow children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning in the early years happens through play and experiences, not direct instruction. Learning and exploration are hands-on and experiential. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, self-confidence, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others respectfully.

We believe that risk assessment and risk engagement are important parts of healthy early childhood development. Children learn resilience, body awareness, confidence, judgment, and problem-solving skills through appropriately supervised opportunities to explore challenges and manage risk. Climbing, balancing, tool use, hiking, navigating uneven terrain, and other physical experiences are incorporated into our curriculum in intentional and developmentally appropriate ways. While staff work to create safe environments and actively supervise children at all times, minor bumps, scrapes, and falls are a natural part of active play and outdoor learning experiences.

Our programs are nature-based and place-based. This means children regularly interact with the natural world and the broader community in which we live. Children may participate in walks, hikes, stewardship projects, outdoor exploration, visits to community spaces, and off-site learning experiences as part of the curriculum. We believe that meaningful connections with nature and community foster a sense of belonging, environmental stewardship, curiosity, and respect for the world around us. Children will encounter the natural world and community peoples at our program.

We recognize that every family has different values, expectations, and comfort levels regarding early childhood education, outdoor exploration, supervision styles, and children's engagement with risk. Our approach is intentionally nature-based, community-centered, and experiential, and may not align with every family's preferences or needs. Families seeking a more traditional classroom or camp model or a program with more structured indoor environments and lower-risk opportunities may find another setting to be a better fit. We are always happy to discuss our philosophy openly with prospective and current families and, when appropriate, help connect families with other local childcare options that may better match their goals and comfort levels.

Operating Information

Hours/Dates of Operation

Our program's base hours are **9am-3pm, Monday through Friday, June 22nd-August 27th**.

Absence/Tardiness

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00AM, please call or email us no later than 8:45AM. Our camp program may leave the drop off area to begin their day shortly after 9:15AM, so please be sure and communicate with us if you will be late.

Late Pick Up

If you will be late picking up your child please call us as soon as possible, and consider sending an emergency pick-up person to retrieve your child.

Force Majeure

BBCS may be closed or delayed for forces or events that drastically impedes program safety or operations (i.e., very severe storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, loss of power, loss of water, etc). These closings will be communicated via email and/or phone. We do not offer refunds for closings but may offer a credit for future use at our discretion.

Program Information

Admission and Registration

Children ages 4-8 years enroll in our camp program on a week-to-week basis. Families may opt to enroll for one week, some weeks, or all weeks as available. Enrollment is first come first served. If needed, we will keep a waitlist for enrollment.

Part time enrollment: We highly recommend children attend full days and full weeks, Monday through Friday, to get the most out of our camp structure, curriculum, and projects. Children can be picked up early at 12:15 or 1pm if families expect that 5 full days of programming would be too intensive for their child.

Our camp program uses the website beaverbrookschool.Jumbula.com for all registration paperwork needed for summer camp enrollment. Registrations can also be taken manually via email or phone if needed.

Program Fees and Policies

See Tuition Information and Payment Policies for all information.

Expulsion/Disenrollment

At BBCS, we work hard to create strong family partnerships and work through any issues as a team. However, some circumstances prevent appropriate care and education, and may be grounds for disenrollment of a family. Disenrollment of a family may happen due to any of the following reasons:

- Excessive absence of your child without proper notification
- Excessive tardiness at pick up or drop off time and/or repeated failure to follow operating hours
- Failure to communicate appropriately and professionally with school staff
- Extreme behavioral circumstances and/or safety concerns of a child (see our discipline policy at the end of this handbook)

Inclusion / Non-Discrimination

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate because of special needs if a safe, supportive, inclusive environment can be provided and/or your child uses a private aide to access the program. Please inform us prior to enrollment if your child has special needs or requirements so we can discuss program options for inclusion.

BBCS believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in community based programs. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs and level of comfort.

If your child has an identified special need, please include any paperwork related to their diagnosis and/or any services he/she receives in or out of camp upon enrollment. We also prefer to meet in person with you, your child, and your child's special education team prior to enrollment. We do not provide individual aides through our program but can discuss options for adjusted program schedules, private aides, etc.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released to anyone. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications and Relationships

Our counselors are vetted by experience and education. References and criminal records are checked.

Position Title	Minimum Education/Certification	Prior Experience
Director	Master's Degree in Education or Related Field	10 years
Head Counselor/ Curriculum Lead	Bachelor's Degree in Education or Related Field	5 years
Counselors	At least one college course or 45 hours of professional studies in child development, education, or a related field	2 years

All BBCS staff participate in orientation and annual, ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, trauma, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by BBCS.

Child to Staff Ratios

We maintain the following MINIMUM standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
4-5 years	8:1	15
6-8 years	10:1	12

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. All families will receive a verbal summary of children's activities and participation at the close of each day. Verbal communication is most frequently provided by your child's counselor at pick up.

Newsletters. Weekly newsletters provide camp news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are written by the program administrative staff and are sent via email prior to and at the close of each week.

Email. We require all families to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, camp newsletters and general updates. If you do not have an email address, we can assist you with creating one.

Family Events and Presentations Your child's program will host family events at varying times throughout the summer. Invitations to these family events will be sent out by your child's counselor and participation is highly encouraged.

Conferences. You may request a confidential, in-person family conference with the counselors and/or director at any time. The best way to request a conference is to email us.

Open Door Policy

We offer an "open door policy" for direct family members at all times. However, we ask families to be respectful of children's routines, schedules, and learning activities, and encourage you to check with your child's counselor and/or the program director about the best time to visit.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the program for use within the program, on our website, on our Google Site, or other print media. We never post photos on any social media platforms, and do not allow families to post any shared photos of our program on social media. Written permission will be obtained prior to taking photographs, via your child's registration form. You can choose to allow one of the following: photos for print/website media and internal use (on our digital newsletters sent to currently enrolled families), OR allow photos only for internal use (only on digital newsletters sent to currently enrolled families), OR not allow any photos. You may change photo preferences at any time.

Curriculum & Learning

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each of our programs. Our programs are designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, self-confidence, responsibility, independence, curiosity, and/or reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to participate with others and the natural world respectfully. We also provide lots of time for open ended, child directed free play.

Curriculum

The curriculum for our camp program is based on 9 separate weeks of individually themed skills based topics. Curriculum is scaffolded and differentiated to be accessible to all ages participating.

Daily Schedule

8:45am-9am Family drop off, center based activities
9am-9:15am Morning Circle, review of daily schedule and upcoming activities, songs
9:15am-10am Morning Block 1 - Focus Block
10:00am-10:30am Morning Snack (family style shared meal, provided by BBCS)
10:30am-10:45am Transition to 2nd Block
10:45am-12:15pm Morning Block 2 - Adventure Block
12:15pm-12:30pm Transition to lunch
12:30pm-1pm Lunch (provided by BBCS)
1pm-1:45pm Story time, quiet activities, sit spots
1:45pm-2pm Transition to end of day activities
2pm-2:45pm Finishing daily projects, open ended play, brook exploration
2:45pm-3pm Closing circle and family pick up

Morning Family Style Meals

BBCS is now providing a daily morning snack and lunch for all children in our programs! See our Food Program Guide for lots of important information about this program.
If your child has a severe food allergy, please let us know in advance. We will shift our menu during your child's time with us to accommodate them. It is important to us that all children are able to participate in our shared meals program. Outside food and snacks are not permitted at our program.

Outdoor Environment

Our program values nature and a connection with the outdoors. **Our day takes place outside**, and children may participate in hikes, walks, water activities, movement activities, games, scientific observation and analysis, and more.

It is very important that your child is dressed for outdoor success and comfort at our program. Please provide seasonally appropriate outdoor clothing and other required items for your child every day. See Packing List document for more info on appropriate outdoor gear and clothing that is required.

Transitions

Your child's participation in our program should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. If you have concerns about your child transitioning into the program, please contact us and we will be happy to set up tours and meet-and-greets for your family prior to your child's first week.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include any electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use. However, we may use age appropriate primary resources (interviews, photos, real videos, etc) as teaching aids and discussion stimulators for our students. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material only. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world.

Toilet Training

BBCS requires children in our 4-8 year old summer camp program to be fully toilet trained. If your child has special emotional or medical needs surrounding toileting, we are happy to accommodate these when given prior notice and documentation.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

BBCS is committed to each camper's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our program works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the program community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to gain self-control and regulation. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people and property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Behavior Policy

We have created a behavior policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of our behavior policy is included in this document and on our Google Site for you to review.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's immediate safety or that of others and we may briefly restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation, or we may pick up and remove the child from the area if physical aggression or instability may harm others or self.

HEALTH

Illness

Children and staff will be excluded from in-person activities if they show symptoms of an illness or other condition including but not limited to cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, fever, rash, large amounts of nasal discharge and/or stuffy nose, diarrhea, vomiting, eye or ear irritation, head lice, or other symptom that inhibits or prevents them from participating in activities or may be contagious.

If any of the above symptoms begin while at the program, the child must be sent home as soon as possible. Sick children will be kept separate from others and staff contact will be limited as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the sick child(ren) until they leave.

Children shall be excluded from the program until the following conditions are met:

- They no longer have symptoms of illness
- They are able to fully participate in programs
- They have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication
- They have not had any vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours without the use of medication

Please note, healthy children and/or staff with the following symptoms/conditions will NOT be excluded from in-person activities:
• Allergy symptoms (with no fever) that cause coughing and clear runny nose may stay IF they have medically diagnosed allergies AND they provide documentation of a medical diagnosis from a doctor
• Cough and/or shortness of breath due to well-controlled asthma with a medical diagnosis AND medical treatment plan from a doctor
• Other chronic ailments that are non-contagious and allow for normal participation. Medical documentation may be required.

Injuries

Safety is a major priority at our program, but we also value children's independence, exploration, and risk-taking to build confidence and physical skills. Daily safety inspections are completed at the program area in order to prevent injuries caused by unsafe environments. If a child is injured, first aid will be administered by a trained team member for minor injuries (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive a written incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury includes any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. In the event of a serious and/or life threatening medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we contact you. Each group carries a first aid kit and a trauma kit at all times.

Medications including Epi-Pens and Inhalers

BBCS currently permits administration of life saving medication ONLY (epi-pens, inhalers). All other medications should NOT be brought to the program. If your child needs other medication administered during the program, families are encouraged to speak with the director to make a plan for administration by a family member during program hours.

If your child will be bringing a life saving medication to the program (epi-pen or inhaler only) please follow these guidelines:

- Medication must be in its original container/box, and list a valid expiry date

- A copy of the prescription must be on the container/box or provided separately
- Families MUST complete a BBCS medication administration form
- Families MUST provide their child's asthma and/or allergy action plan from the pediatrician
- Families must hand medication over to a staff person - do NOT keep it in your child's backpack
- It is easiest for us if families place the medication with prescription, the action plan, and the BBCS medication administration form in a ziplock bag labeled with your child's name and hand it to your child's counselor or the director at drop off

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, please notify us upon enrollment so that we can make appropriate accommodations.

We are able to accommodate most food allergies. Our meal program includes whole, organic, unprocessed foods free of many common allergens.

SAFETY

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to direct parent/guardians listed on the enrollment form. If you'd like a contact listed as Emergency or Approved Pick Up Contacts to pick up your child, you MUST tell us in writing (email) or verbally at drop off so we can be prepared. For safety purposes, we do not release children to other individuals, even if they are listed on your form as emergency or approved pick up, without prior notification from you.

If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency or Approved Pick Up Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance so we can add this person to your child's registration paperwork. Please make an effort to notify us via email of this change. If you must use the phone, we will verify your identity and ask for your child's DOB prior and/or other identifying information to make changes to a registration form.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if we have not been able to reach you, your family, or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency and police department.

Child Custody

State law requires safe release of children to either parent who is listed on a child's registration form. Without a court document, both parents/guardians listed (if applicable) have assumed equal rights to custody even if one parent says otherwise. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no legal documentation.

You do NOT need to list a second adult on your child's registration form as a primary parent/guardian. However, if only one adult is listed, no other person will be able to pick up the child unless they are listed

as an approved pick up or emergency contact AND we have received prior authorization from the primary parent.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior, especially if it becomes a pattern or is severe. If this occurs, we may obtain an order of no trespass and/or disenroll your family from our program.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend at the program dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you in person about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you not use your cell phone at any time during drop off or pick up.

Smoking

The poisons in first and secondhand smoke are especially harmful to young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment are always non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco or marijuana in any form is prohibited on the center's premises, including our parking lot. All staff are required to change clothing after smoking, and we ask that parents not arrive at the camp area smelling of tobacco or marijuana smoke.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited by all staff and families.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons, and families, children, staff, or guests.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 5 minutes, the police and the family will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our indoor spaces are fully equipped with multiple fire exits, posted exit plans, fire extinguishers, and/or sprinklers. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a weekly basis during camp.

Lockdown

In the unlikely event that a threat is made or presents itself to our program, we will lockdown the program and shelter in place. This determination will be made by the director and will be communicated with all parents as soon as all children are present and accounted for. Once police have cleared the threat to our program, children will either be released to parents or we may continue through the remainder of our normal daily operations depending on the severity and length of the lockdown.

Because our program takes place mainly outside, children and staff will shelter in place during situations that require a lockdown. We work with the local authorities (police and fire located directly across the street from our camp site) to make a decision to either stay in place or evacuate to either OSEC or the public safety facility.

Evacuation

In the unlikely event that a threat is made to our program and it is unsafe to stay in the building or in our outdoor space, or if there is a fire, flood, or other severe disturbance to our building, our program will evacuate to the Wilmington Public Safety Building. Parents will be alerted to the evacuation via phone as soon as all children are present and accounted for and would be required to pick up their child at the evacuation site immediately.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort (the program director and/or your child's counselor) will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives. This policy is also included in our registration form.

Links to Helpful and Important Documents

Camper Behavior Policy

Camp Weekly Descriptions

Billing Policies

Summer Packing List

Camp Google Site with even more information!