

WELCOME TO THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL DAY CAMP

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Our Philosophy

Our Mission:

The Discovery School Day Camp is a special place for children to have fun, grow new friendships, discover nature, and have the freedom to be themselves! We strive to inspire a culture of kindness, curiosity, and connection to one another as well as the world around us.

Our Discovery kids spend their days exploring our 7 acre nature campus - climbing in our nature playground, wandering through the woods, relaxing by the pond, creating art, playing group games, working in the garden, and having water fun!

Camp Values:

Grow Friendships: We provide an environment where children can bond through their shared experiences with nature, the arts, and team building fun! Camp is a special place to grow friendships, both old and new, as well as create cherished memories together.

Encourage Discovery: We provide our campers a place to play together, explore nature, make discoveries, and connect with the joy of childhood. Our campers are encouraged to interact with the natural world and gain confidence in their growing abilities as they explore our 7 acre nature campus.

Inspire Creativity: Creativity is honored and encouraged as campers explore the arts throughout the day. From theater games, to interactive storytelling, to music and movement, to creative art projects, children have the opportunity to explore new and different ways to express themselves.

Promote independence: Campers are given voice and choice throughout the day as they engage in age-appropriate activities within their camper crew. We encourage campers to try new things and take on challenges with the support of their counselors and fellow campers. As they navigate new experiences, campers develop independence and gain self-esteem throughout the week.

Instill Kindness: We believe in creating a space for all campers and staff to feel free to be themselves. At The Discovery School Day Camp, we strive to inspire a culture of kindness that embodies support, respect, and compassion for all.

Camp At-A-Glance

Contact Information:

Our school telephone number is 412-712-7307

Our address is: 4225 Middle Rd. Allison Park, PA 15101

Camp Director: Regina McLaughlin regina@discoveryschoolpgh.com

Camp Dates 2024

Week 1: June 10th

Week 2: June 17th

Week 3: June 24th

Week 4: July 8th

Week 5: July 15th

Week 6: July 22th

Week 7: July 29th

*No camp the week of July 1st, for the 4th of July Holiday

General Camp Hours:

Full day: Flexible drop off between 8:45am - 9:00am

Full day: Flexible pick up between 3:45pm - 4:00pm

Free Before Care: available as early as 8:00am

Half day (AM): Flexible drop off between 8:45am - 9:00am

Half day (AM): Pick up at 12:00pm

Free Before Care: available as early as 8:00am

Half day (PM): Drop off at 12:45pm

Half day (PM): Flexible pick up between 3:45pm - 4:00pm

The Essentials:

Make sure campers always have:

- A labeled, refillable water bottle
- Sunscreen (applied before camp)
- Extra set of clothes in separate bag in backpack
- Towel in backpack

What to wear:

- Any non restricting clothes that your camper can move comfortably through the day in that is weather appropriate. Keep in mind that we spend a lot of time in nature, our bottoms can get wet in kayaks and we may get a little paint on us in the art room.
- Appropriate camp shoes, preferably closed toe
- Shoes that can get wet and muddy

Please do not bring:

- Toys from home
- Electronic devices

Camp Specifics

Allergy Policy

Although The Discovery School Day Camp is committed to best efforts for safety's sake when it comes to food allergies, our kitchen is not an allergen-free facility and we are not able to guarantee that a child will not be exposed to a food allergen while on our campus. While we maintain safe allergen practices in our kitchen at all times, including review of food ingredients and labels of all food items, caution in food preparation, and are a "nut free" facility, our kitchen is not an allergen-free facility. Our kitchen may contain wheat products, dairy products, eggs and soy. Parents of campers with allergies are required to notify The Discovery School Day Camp of the camper's medical diagnosis and prescribed medical treatments for severe allergies by completing the following 3 steps:

- Completing a [FARE Form](#)
- Supplying the Discovery School Day Camp with up to date emergency medication and any other information required in original packaging.
- Taking responsibility for effective communication with camp faculty and staff.

The responsibility for selecting safe foods must remain with the camper and their parents/guardians. In the event of exposure or reaction, the information and medication provided by the family will determine our protocol. In a true medical emergency our camp staff will provide CPR if necessary and call 911.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate birthdays! Camper crews will make sure your child feels special throughout the camp day. Although not necessary, if your camper wants to send in individually wrapped treats/tokens for their camper crew, we will send them home at the end of the day.

Code of Conduct:

For the enjoyment and safety of the group as a whole we have implemented a Code of Conduct Policy, located at the end of this handbook. In the unfortunate event that a camper exhibits unacceptable behavior (ex. inappropriate or hurtful language, disruptive behavior), our staff will work through three stages of consequences as outlined at the end of the handbook. The Discovery School Day Camp reserves the right to send a camper home for the day or week in the event that a particular behavior poses a safety risk to self or others.

Daily Schedule:

Our camp day offers a variety of activities to keep our campers engaged and having fun within a structured framework that offers routine and stability. An example of a typical day is as follows:

Daily Schedule AM: Playful Pollinators (ages 3 - 5)

Child:Counselor Ratio 6:1

Drop Off 8:45am - 9:00am	Parents park and walk their camper into Building A. Here you will sign your camper in, see your camper's designated camper crew room and meet your child's counselor. It's time to give hugs goodbye and head out to enjoy your morning!
Playtime 8:45am - 9:45am	It's playtime! Campers enjoy a daily rotation of specials, such as sensory experiences, creative arts, music and movement, and imaginative play, all carefully constructed to fit within our weekly themes. This ensures variety for our campers who will be attending multiple weeks.
Snack & Storytime 9:45am - 10:15am	All campers enjoy a healthy outdoor snack while enjoying a read aloud of a story connected to our theme.
Outdoor Adventure 10:15am - 11:30am	It's time for some outdoor fun! Children will have fun playing in our sandpit mud kitchen and herb garden, use the magical key to unlock the fairy house door or go on a walking adventure to Hummingbird's Hideout or Stick Village. Whatever the activity, our campers are sure to have a good time!
Pack up & Closing Circle 11:30am - 12:00pm	Half day campers relax and unwind while participating in a closing circle as they wait for parents and caregivers to pick up. <i>Full day campers enjoy a picnic lunch together with their camper crew friends, followed by a quiet rest time.</i>
Pick Up: 11:45am - 12:00pm	Parents pick up their children in their designated camper crew room (where you dropped off). Your child's counselors will ask for your initial to check your camper out.

Daily Schedule PM: Playful Pollinators (ages 3 - 5)

Child:Counselor Ratio 6:1

Drop Off 12:45pm - 1:00pm	Parents park and walk their camper into Building A where you will sign your camper in, see your camper's designated camper crew room and meet your child's counselor. It's time to give hugs goodbye and head out to enjoy your afternoon!
Playtime 12:45pm - 1:45pm	It's playtime! Campers enjoy a daily rotation of specials, such as sensory experiences, creative arts, music and movement, and imaginative play, all carefully constructed to fit within our weekly themes. This ensures variety for our campers who will be attending multiple weeks.
Snack & Storytime 1:45pm - 2:15pm	All campers enjoy a healthy outdoor snack while enjoying a read aloud of a story connected to our theme.
Outdoor Adventure 2:15pm - 3:30pm	It's time for some outdoor fun! Children will have fun playing in our sandpit mud kitchen and herb garden, use the magical key to unlock the fairy house door or go on a walking adventure to Hummingbird's Hideout or Stick Village. Whatever the activity, our campers are sure to have a good time!
Pack Up & Closing Circle 3:30pm - 4:00pm	Campers relax and unwind while participating in a closing circle as they wait for parents and caregivers to pick up.
Pick up: 3:45pm - 4:00pm	Parents pick up their children in their designated camper crew room (where you dropped off). Your child's counselors will ask for your initial to check your camper out.

* There is variation and choice built into all playtime activities to ensure variety for our full day campers.

Woodland Wonders (ages 6 - 12)

Child:Counselor Ratio 8:1

Before Care 8:00am - 8:45am	Campers are dropped off in the gym to enjoy “early bird” activities: morning snack, quiet corner, arts/activities, and/or gym equipment.
Camper Crew Time 8:45am - 9:10am	As campers arrive, they listen to music and engage in small group play while getting to know their counselor and new friends!
Foxes’ Fire Pit 9:10am - 9:30am	The whole camp comes together for skits, songs and fun!
Discovery Station 9:30am - 10:30am	Head to Frog’s Field and have fun playing spud, jump the creek or tail tag.
Discovery Station 2 10:30am - 11:30am	Off to the Whimsical Woods where your camper may enjoy playing a new instrument, creating their own costume or engaging in drama play.
Lunch/Free Play 11:30am - 12:00pm	Camper Crews will pick up prepared lunches and find an area to picnic.
Discovery Station 3 12:00pm - 1:00pm	It’s time for fun on the pond, take a ride on a kayak or use a net to see what lives beneath the water
Discovery Station 4 1:00pm - 2:00pm	Cool off in our art and design studio.
Snack 2:00pm - 2:15pm	Relax and recharge with some water and a small snack, provided.
Discovery Station 5 2:15pm - 3:15pm	It’s time for our daily special! Make a s’more around the fire or run down the slip n slide.
Foxes’ Fire Pit 3:15pm - 3:35pm	The whole camp stays together to tally up the days earned points and move the groundhog up the board game.
Pack Up 3:35pm - 3:45pm	Campers return to their classrooms to pack up belongings.
Closing Circle & Pick Up 3:45pm - 4:00pm	Camper crews sit together at their “pick up spot” and engage in seated calm activities while waiting for their approved pick up.

Electronic devices:

The Discovery School Day camp is device free. We expect that campers will not bring devices of any type to camp. If campers do bring cell phones or other electronic devices to camp, their camp counselor will hold onto it in their fannypack that travels with your child's group until the end of day.

Fees

Camp tuition is \$425 per weekly session. Payment is due within one week of enrollment unless a parent requests to split payment, in which case, half of the total payment is due at registration and the remainder is due on May 1st. We have a limited number of partial scholarships available upon request. Contact daycamp@discoveryschoolpgh.com for more information.

First Aid

All Discovery School Day Camp counselors are First Aid and CPR certified.

Inclusion

The Discovery School Day Camp is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to children with special needs that would allow them to better access our programming. This includes permitting adults providing specialized services on the premises as specified in a child's IEP, IFSP or written behavioral plan. If you think your child may need an accommodation, please contact our camp director.

Lost and Found

We have a lost and found collection location table located near the front door to the school. It is very helpful if you write your child's full name on his/her backpack and water bottle so we can help your child keep track of their belongings.

Lunch and Snack

A well rounded, child friendly lunch and snack are prepared and served daily. We cannot accommodate special dietary restrictions however our facility is peanut free. If your child has a specific food allergy, make sure that you have read the Allergy Policy above.

Children are welcome to bring their own lunch and snack from home if parents prefer. We ask that families be aware of our "no nut" policy and not send in food products that list peanuts and/or tree nuts on the ingredient label. Rule of thumb: if in doubt, make another choice.

Medication

Our camp does not have a full time-nurse and camp counselors will not administer non-emergency medication. If your child requires medication, we ask that parents administer medication at home, before or after camp. If necessary, arrangements can be made for a parent to come into camp to administer medication during the camp day. Our counselors are trained to administer medications for severe allergic reactions.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Discovery School Day Camp is fully committed to Equal Employment Opportunity and to attracting, retaining, developing and promoting the most qualified employees without regard to their race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, citizenship status, veteran status, or any other characteristic prohibited by state or local law. We are dedicated to providing a work environment free from discrimination and harassment, and where employees are treated with respect and dignity.

Admissions and the provisions of services shall be made without regard to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, neurodiverse learning styles, age, health, physical or mental ability, national origin (including limited english proficiency), immigration status, veteran status, physical appearance, religion, and language or any other basis protected by state or federal law.

Parent Communication

The day camp will communicate with families via Brightwheel message, phone and/or email.

Pick Up Policy:

All campers will get picked up in their camper crew rooms during the pick up window. Rooms will be clearly marked and staff will be available to direct you where to go. Parents and caregivers will need to sign their camper out. Please make sure to bring your license as identification.

Children may only be released to people added as "Approved Pick Ups" on your child's Brightwheel profile. *You may log into your child's profile at any time and update contacts.*

In an emergency, a child may be released to another adult with verbal permission by the parent, as long as parental identity can be verified by the staff member (ex. a parent would need to know the child's birthdate to verify parental identity).

Positive Discipline Approach

Counselors explicitly teach and model appropriate social behavior, communicate clear boundaries, support mindfulness practice, and guide positive interactions among children and adults. Nurturing social-emotional development is essential to child development, and helps children grow into self-assured learners in a community setting. Please see our Code of Conduct below.

Refund Policy

- Cancellations made before May 1st will be fully refunded, minus a \$50 processing fee.
- Cancellations made between May 1st and June 1st will receive a 50% refund, minus a \$50 processing fee.
- Cancellations made after June 1st will not be refunded.
- We are not able to refund if your camper misses for illness or travel. However, we will do our best to transfer your camper to another week if space is available.

Sharing Summer Fun

Photo and video highlights of events and weekly videos will be posted on our Facebook and Instagram pages, so be sure to follow us!

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

Sunscreen and Bug Repellant

We kindly ask each family to send their child to camp with sunscreen and bug repellant already applied. If you would like to send sunscreen and bug spray in a labeled bag in your child's backpack, camp staff will be happy to assist campers as needed with additional applications.

Ticks

While ticks have become more prevalent, proper awareness and prevention can greatly mitigate adverse outcomes for everyone who ventures into nature. If an attached tick is found, it will be carefully removed by a staff member. Staff will make every effort to keep the tick for the parents in case they would like to have it tested. It is recommended that parents perform a daily tick check at home, and encourage campers to be active participants too.

Water

Please send your child to camp with a labeled refillable water bottle every day. Our staff will monitor regular water breaks.

Weather Events

In the event of inclement weather, such as flooding, severe lightning storm, or other emergency, The Discovery School Day Camp may choose to delay opening, dismiss early, or close camp for the day. Delays or camp closures will be communicated by 7:00am via Brightwheel alert message and email.

Health and Wellness

Illness During Camp

Germs spread quickly in an early childhood environment. Campers and staff stay healthier when sick children stay at home. We use information from Brightwheel to contact parents or another designated adult if a child develops symptoms of illness while at camp. We will isolate the child in a comfortable, supervised place until he/she can be picked up.

Please keep your child home if any of the following symptoms are present

- temperature higher than 100.4°F
- nausea or vomiting
- red, pink, or crusted eyes
- stomach ache
- earache
- diarrhea
- rash/infection of skin
- headache
- thick or greenish mucus from nose
- cough
- sore throat

Antibiotic timeline: A child should be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to camp. We strictly observe this health department regulation for children (and staff) to protect the health of everyone.

Return to Camp: Please keep your child home until they have been free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for at least 24 hours.

First Aid Care: Our staff are certified in Adult and Pediatric First Aid and CPR. In the event of an illness or injury, we will provide care in line with our training (some typical examples include: cleaning and bandaging minor wounds, applying sting swab, applying ice, etc.)

We ask parents to notify the camp immediately if a child is diagnosed with any communicable illnesses including COVID-19, flu, strep throat, pink eye, lice or any other illness common to a camp environment. The notification allows The Discovery School Day Camp to take appropriate action and inform parents within your child's camp group. Please note that we will not release the name of the child or family involved. We post "There has been a case of _____ reported ..."

The Discovery School Day Camp follows CDC guidelines as they relate to COVID 19 and other communicable diseases, and will notify the Department of Health as needed.

Code of Conduct

The Discovery School Day Camp strives to provide each child with a positive experience when they attend our day camp program. In order to maintain a fun, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for everyone, all staff and children are expected to abide by our Code of Kindness. We encourage parents to discuss the Code of Kindness expectations and consequences with their child prior to camp.

Hive Rules:

- Bee Kind:
 - by using kind words
 - by treating myself, others and nature with respect
 - by being thoughtful in my actions

- Bee Safe: :
 - by following directions
 - by staying with my camper crew
 - by using tools and materials appropriately

- Bee-lieve in Yourself
 - by actively participating
 - by trying new things



Consequences:

We understand that children are learning in all aspects of their lives, and that learning appropriate behaviors is a process. Our staff members will use a variety of positive techniques to manage behavior, and children will be reminded of the behavior expectations as needed. Our goal is to maintain a positive, safe environment for all campers. Therefore, if problematic behaviors occur, our plan is as follows:

First occurrence:

The counselor will give a verbal reminder to the child of the appropriate behavior as well as redirect the child and/or utilize natural consequences as appropriate (ex. If a child is playing unsafely with sticks, that child will take a break from playing with sticks).

Second occurrence:

The child will be removed from the camper crew to take a break and reflect on the behavior. The director or camp counselor will discuss the behavior with the child, and together make a plan of action. The director or counselor will discuss the issue and plan of action with parents/guardians.

Third occurrence:

In the rare occurrence that a camper consistently does not abide by the Code of Kindness, he/she may be removed from camp. Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately to pick up their camper. No refunds will be issued if a child is removed from camp for behavioral reasons.

Note: The Discovery School Day Camp reserves the right to send a camper home for the day or week in the event that a particular behavior poses a safety risk to self or others.

Emergency Plan

The Discovery School has an emergency preparedness plan that provides guidelines for a wide range of emergency situations. The Discovery School Emergency Preparedness Plan is located in the school.

Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- ***Immediate evacuation:*** Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may proceed to our relocation facility: Central Elementary.
- ***Evacuation to our Relocation Facility:*** Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility: Central Elementary (4100 Middle Rd. Allison Park, PA 15101). If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door stating where we are located. If you're not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.
- ***Shelter In Place:*** Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- ***Lockdown:*** An imminent danger either inside or outside our building may dictate that we follow our lockdown procedures.
- ***Modified Operation:*** May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Communication During an Emergency:

Depending on the emergency situation and the school's communication capabilities during and after the emergency, The Discovery School will inform and instruct parents/guardians about the emergency in the following order, until each parent/guardian is reached:

1. A Brightwheel alert message sent to primary family contact.
2. A text message sent to primary family contacts and emergency contact numbers.
3. A phone call to primary family contacts and emergency contact numbers. A staff member will call the emergency contact numbers for each student until an authorized adult is reached.

Once the emergency status has changed or is lowered, the emergency contact will receive a second communication from a staff member informing him/her of the change in status. We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. In the event that we need to make a change to our typical dismissal plan, we will follow procedures outlined in our emergency dismissal and reunification plan.

Please be sure to update your emergency contact information and approved pick up contacts on Brightwheel as needed. Your child will only be released to someone on your approved pick up list.

In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, I ask for your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures, contact Jessie Handron (jessie@discoveryschoolpgh.com; 412-712-7307).

Developmental Support Resources

(early intervention, ages 3 - 5)

If you have questions or concerns about your child's development:



- 🌱 Review the CDC milestone checklist for a list of developmental skills at each age. This tool also provides suggestions for supporting your child's development.
- 🌱 Talk to your child's teacher or caregiver about their observations.
- 🌱 Talk with your child's pediatrician about your questions and/or concerns.
 - Bring the milestone checklist with you to the appointment
 - Ask if your child may need further developmental evaluation
 - If so, ask for a referral in your area, call to make an appointment

Some helpful community resources:

- **AIU3 Preschool Early Intervention: 412-394-5904.** Serves children in Allegheny County, ages 3 - 5. Provides FREE screenings & evaluations to identify needs in communication, adaptive, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, and person-social development.
- **River Pediatric Therapies: 412 - 767-5967.** Provides therapies in all areas of development for children, ages 0 - 18. Locations in Fox Chapel and Cranberry Township.
- **The Children's Institute: 412-420-2400.** Provides educational, autism, outpatient physical and behavioral, early intervention, and family support services in the Pittsburgh area.
- **The Watson Institute: 412-741-1800.** Behavioral health assessment and services for children, ages 3 - 21. Multiple locations in Allegheny County.