

Nature School Handbook

Updated: October 2021

This handbook has been developed using guidelines published by the Provincial Ministry of Health, Toronto Public Health, Ontario Camps Association, Public Services Health & Safety Association and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. The following handbook is subject to change, based on new versions of guidelines from Toronto Public Health or the Ministry of Health.

Stay up to date with current Emergency Orders issued by from the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and guidance provided by TPH at www.toronto.ca/COVID19.

Evergreen's Approach to Children & Learning

The following handbook provides details for the following Children's Programs:

- Nature School: Learning Outdoors

Our programs are engaging, active, memorable, and a lot of fun. We strive to connect children to nature in the city, nurturing place-based ecological literacy. Our programs have six core tenets woven into every experience:

- Place-Based: Building a foundation of knowledge through a focus on local nature, culture and community.
- Ecological: Providing children direct contact with nature.
- Active and Mobile: Moving the body to engage the mind.
- Hands-On: Creating a setting for compelling learning through multi-sensory, direct experience.
- Arts-Infused: Breathing life into learning through creativity, compelling narratives and arts activities.
- Integrated: Weaving together knowledge and skill through ecological themes and engaging experiences
- Inclusive: children see themselves reflected in activities; diversity is honoured and children feel like they belong in the natural world

Our Team

Our skilled team of educators utilize a place-based learning approach combining the best of Nature Connection, FNS and experiential learning principles to ensure your child has an unforgettable experience in Nature School. Our facilitators represent a diversity of experiences and perspectives and are committed to supporting a culture of belonging and care in all our programs. Our unique location coupled with our experienced staff ensures every child feels inspired and engaged while at the Brick Works campus.

Promoting Healthy Behaviour

1. When to Stay Home

A reminder that all staff, participants and their families must stay at home and not attend the program if they are sick or feeling ill.

2. Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Etiquette & Protecting Yourself

Participants will be encouraged to practice careful hand hygiene. This will take the form of participants and staff washing their hands routinely throughout the day with soap and warm water and/or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when not close to washrooms. Hand hygiene will be incorporated into breaks, transitions between activities and before/after snack and lunchtime. Hand sanitizer stations will be available in supervised areas.

Participants will be reminded to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, doing so into a sleeve or elbow. Participants will be reminded to avoid touching their faces, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

3. Physical Distancing

Personal space and boundaries have always been an important element of our programs, and we will continue to encourage participants within their groups to maintain physical distancing. While close contact may be unavoidable between members of a group, physical distancing and general infection prevention and control practices will still be encouraged, wherever possible.

Activities will be planned to allow for appropriate physical distancing (both indoors and outdoors) within groups.

Visual cues will be incorporated into the site (ie. Floor markings, signage) to remind staff, participants and parents/guardians to maintain physical distancing.

Physical distancing will never compromise supervision or your child's safety.

4. Non-medical Masks

Staff and participants over the age of two are required to wear non-medical/cloth masks when indoors, outdoors and/or when physical distancing cannot be maintained. This includes but is not limited to indoor spaces, washrooms, play spaces and outdoor spaces.

We understand that face coverings may not be tolerated by everyone based on underlying health or medical conditions or disabilities.

Please ensure your child knows how to safely wear a cloth mask or face covering by using the following Toronto Public Health Resources:

- [Choosing the Right Face Mask or Covering](#)
- [Proper Use of a Cloth Mask](#)

Mask Breaks and Eating:

- During the program day we will routinely take advantage of suitable occasions for temporary mask breaks but only when safe to do so. This will be limited to the outdoors only.
- When participants are eating, masks will be removed and physical distancing must be maintained. Covered outdoor spaces will be prioritized for eating, however, eating may occur indoors due to inclement weather.

Masks do not replace the need for physical distancing, hand washing, and staying home when sick.

5. Increased Public Health Awareness

Posters and signage will be placed in visible locations across the site to raise awareness about COVID-19 and encourage healthy behaviors. These will be geared to children when/where appropriate.

Maintaining a Healthy Environment

1. Daily Screening

All individuals, including participants, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors will complete an electronic screening tool. Screening will include temperature checks either at home prior to arrival. All participants must have access to a thermometer at home.

Entry will be denied to any staff, participant, parent/guardian or visitor who has any of the symptoms outlined in the screening tool or anyone who has come in close contact with a person with symptoms of or confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Participants will be monitored for atypical symptoms and signs of COVID-19.

Please review the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#).

2. Cleaning and Disinfecting

Frequently touched surfaces and all washrooms on site will undergo enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection, a minimum of twice per day. Washrooms that are shared between groups will be disinfected prior to use by a different group and operate on staggered schedules.

Shared programs supplies (ie. tools) will be cleaned daily.

3. Symptomatic Participants

If a participant begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 we will:

- Separate the participant or staff member into a supervised separate room

- Ensure anyone interacting with that participant wears a medical mask, eye protection and maintains physical distancing where possible
- Ensure the symptomatic participant is wearing a medical mask and is sanitizing hands often
- Direct caregivers of the participant to testing options
- Clean and disinfect the isolation area upon the participant's exit
- Upon confirmation of illness, inform our local public health unit and provide contact tracing information including contact information of the participants caregiver and the contact information of the caregivers of any close contacts that participant had during our program

4. Outbreak Management

An outbreak is declared by the local medical officer of health or a designate.

One or more probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases in a participant or staff member requires collaboration with the local public health unit, who will determine the exposure risk and provide direction for all contacts, which may include the recommendations for testing, exclusion of cohorts, declaration of an outbreak, and outbreak control measures to be implemented.

Once an outbreak is declared, the local public health unit will provide recommendations on cohort(s) isolation, and the potential need for full or partial program dismissal based on the scope of the outbreak.

The local public health unit may give Evergreen discretion, if necessary, to send individuals or cohorts home while awaiting the results of the public health investigation.

The local medical officer of health or their designate is responsible for declaring when the outbreak is over and informing the day camp operator and advising on any next steps.

Delivering a Safe Program

1. Group Protocols

Group sizes will be limited and where possible, cohorted groups will consist of the same students and instructors. Each group will have their own designated indoor space and program supplies, made up of materials that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.

Participants will not be permitted to drink from water fountains. Water bottles must be filled at re-filling stations or sinks.

2. Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Drop-off and pick-up locations will be separated across the site in outdoor locations. Meeting locations for your program will be sent one week ahead of time to parents/guardians. Sign in/out procedures will be contactless.

Families are encouraged to have only one adult at drop-off and pick-up. Always maintain physical distancing while dropping off and picking up your child. Parents/guardians entering the drop-off/pick-up areas are required to wear non-medical masks.

Only those who have completed the daily screening tool are permitted at drop-off/pick-up.

3. Traveling to/from the Brick Works

We do not anticipate that our Shuttle Bus will be operational in Fall/Winter 2021.

For those using public transit to access the site, you are required to adhere to all public transport policies, specifically the [TTC's mask and face covering policy](#).

4. Personal Items and Food Policy

Please keep your participant's belongings to a minimum. Mandatory items include:

- Extra masks
- Extra socks
- Water Bottle (labeled)
- Sunscreen (labeled)
- Sun Hat (labeled)
- Lunch and Snacks
- Closed-toe shoes
- Rain Jacket
- Extra set of clothes (including socks)
- Rainboots (if possible)

We will be reinforcing our “no food sharing” policy. Participants will be required to practice proper hand hygiene before and after eating.

Applications & Registration

Please note, all applications will be reviewed prior to the start of the program to ensure we can provide sufficient care for your child, which may include follow-up calls and/or arranging an in-person visit or in some cases a trial-run in programming. Participation in programs is contingent on a successful application. We will inform you of the result of your application via e-mail prior to the start of program unless we have made alternative arrangements such as an in-person visit. Once you have applied, we will work to inform you of the result of your application in a timely manner.

Behaviour Expectations and Grounds for Dismissal

We strive to create and maintain a safe environment for both participants and staff. We expect and encourage each child to maintain a positive level of respect for everyone. It is Evergreen's intention to work with participants and guardians to find solutions to behavioural challenges whenever possible. We appreciate your support and cooperation with our behavioural policy.

Prior to participating in program, parents are expected to review and verify that their child is able to the best of their knowledge to comply with the following safety expectations:

- Staying within eyesight of an outdoor educator and/or program supervisor at all times , unless they are using the washroom or with special permission from the outdoor educator and/or program supervisor

- No verbal or physical assault of outdoor educators, supervisors and/or other participants

If a child is behaving in a manner that is limiting other participants' experience of inclusion or safety, they will be asked to develop a behaviour contract with the Program Director. The Program Director, the participant and their guardians will be asked to sign this contract. If said contract is broken, the child may be asked to not participate in certain activities or may be asked not to return.

If a child continues behaving in a manner which negatively effects the physical or emotional safety of themselves or others and the above means have not addressed the situation, that participant may be asked to leave without refund. This behaviour includes but is not limited to bullying, physical and verbal assault, inability or refusal to follow safety guidelines, theft and bringing weapons or other inappropriate items.

Refund and Cancellation Policy

Upon applying for the program, we collect a non-refundable \$20 application fee. No refunds will be issued if a reservation is cancelled within 21 days of the session start date. Otherwise, fees are refundable, less a \$25 administration fee per participant. Please note, registrations are non-transferable. Refunds will not be issued for missed days due to inclement weather, including flooding. Requests for cancellations or refunds must be made in writing and submitted to camp@evergreen.ca.

Late Arrivals/Early Pick-ups

If you need to pick up your child early or your child will be absent, please notify the office at 416-596-1495 x252 or camp@evergreen.ca

Epi-Pen/Medication Policy

Upon arrival, all medication must be placed in the care of the staff. (Exceptions: participants must hold on to their inhaler and/or Epi-pen). All medication must be labelled and be accompanied by a letter explaining administration. Participants must be able to administer medication with limited assistance. We will keep all medication in a secure location in the office.

If your participant requires an EpiPen, they must always carry it on them. Please note all medication information clearly on your medical form.

Flooding

Our site is in the Lower Don Valley and is subject to occasional flooding. While flooding historically and statistically occurs infrequently, it can occur at any time. In the event that a site closure is ordered prior to the start of program, Evergreen will attempt to make alternative plans to run activities elsewhere, or, much like on a snow day, we may need to cancel the program. Staff will attempt to contact you as early as possible to avoid any inconvenience.

Refunds will not be issued for missed days due to flooding. In the unlikely event that an evacuation is initiated while program is in session, Evergreen will relocate participants to Rosedale United Church, located at Glen Rd. And Roxborough Dr. Sign-Out will occur at the Glen Rd. entrance. You will be notified by email as soon as groups are safely offsite. Note that response times to email/phone calls will be longer than usual.

Rosedale United Church
159 Roxborough Dr
Toronto, ON

Contact Information

Evergreen Brick Works, CIBC Classroom
550 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, ON
M4W 3X8

Phone: 416-596-1495 x252

Email: camp@evergreen.ca