



**SUMMER CAMP
HANDBOOK
2024**

Table of Contents

About Nature Together School	3
Address and Contact Information	3
Our Philosophy	3
Teachers	3
Policies and Procedures	4
Commitment to your child’s emotional well-being	4
Emergency and Injuries	4
Medication and Allergy Management	4
Dressing Appropriately	5
Parent-Teacher Communications	5
Extreme weather closure	6
Location of classes	6
Sick child policy	6
Absence policy	6
Custodial Situations	6
Mandated Reporters	7
Toilet proficiency	7
Fees and Withdrawal Policy	7
Student Profile Forms/Medical Authorizations	7
Class Information	8
Drop off/pick up *	8
Nature Together’s COVID-19 Policy and Procedures	9
Mask Requirements	9
When should I keep my child home?	9
What to do if my child is exposed to someone with COVID-19?	9
What happens if a student develops symptoms of Covid-19 while in class?	9
COVID-19 Resources	10
Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19	11

About Nature Together School

Our school is an early learning program taught completely outdoors in the Japanese Gulch of Mukilteo. We use an inquiry-based teaching style to spark children's curiosity and engage in active learning. The program's curriculum emerges from the children's interest as they move through the natural world and the seasons. In this program the children will develop a strong sense of place and belonging from their intimate connection with nature. We also encourage individual empowerment and promote group bonding.

Address and Contact Information

Director:
Kristin Hammer
(425) 404-1985
kris@explorenaturetogether.com

Mail correspondence can be sent directly to:
Kristin Hammer
619 4th St, Ste C
Mukilteo, WA 98275

Program location:
Edgewater Beach, Everett, WA
Lower Japanese Gulch, Mukilteo, WA

Our Philosophy

We believe that young children learn best through direct experience with the natural world. Our goal is to tap into their sense of wonder about nature while teaching basic environmental, natural science and preschool principles. We teach respect for all living beings and how to minimize our impact on the earth. Our lesson plans flow organically from what nature presents us with each day.

Teachers

Our Nature Together teaching team includes director/teacher Kristin Hammer (Ms Kris), teacher Theresa Costanzo (Ms Theresa), and teacher Alyssa Burrows (Ms Alyssa). New teachers will be added as needed.

While school is in session we can be reached on-site at (425) 404-1985. Ms Kris can also be reached at kris@explorenaturetogether.com.

Detailed information about our teachers qualifications can be viewed on our website. All Nature Together teachers are current in their First Aid and CPR certification and have passed a criminal background check. All of our teachers have current COVID-19 vaccinations.

Policies and Procedures

Commitment to your child's emotional well-being

As naturalists we are committed to inspiring and teaching respect for the earth and all it's creatures. This includes modeling and fostering respect for self and for others at all times. We shun competitiveness in favor of cooperative activities, guiding children to co-creative adventures.

We have a zero tolerance policy for hitting, grabbing, pushing, name calling, aggressiveness or any other demeaning behavior. If any of these behaviors occur, one of our teachers will immediately remove the instigating child to a calm place where the child's concern can be heard one-on-one. We empower children in learning how to work with others while simultaneously enhancing their individuality. We will speak respectfully to your child and model appropriate responses to the range of your child's emotions. We will hold and carry your child if it is necessary to their feelings of safety. If your child ever reports any type of negative experience at Nature Together, we ask that you please bring it to your child's teacher's attention immediately, so we can all communicate and work as a team to support your child's concerns or feelings.

Emergency and Injuries

- Fully stocked first aid kits, emergency medical forms and staff with First Aid and CPR training and certification are always present with the children.
- Emergency medical forms include parent contact information, emergency contacts and authorization for the release of a child to other adults, and health and medical histories. In addition, these forms give preschool staff permission to seek emergency medical care should the child require such treatment.
- In the event of a minor injury, the child will be treated with first aid by the preschool staff. The incident will be verbally reported to the parent or guardian at the end of the day. In the case of more significant injuries, staff will complete an Incident Report Form and provide a copy to the parent or guardian at the end of the day.
- In the event of an emergency, teachers will assess the situation and, if warranted, call 9-1-1. Teachers will respond as necessary until emergency help arrives. Parents or guardians will be contacted as soon as possible. In the event that we are unable to reach the child's parent or guardian, we will contact the individual(s) designated as emergency contacts for the child.
- If parents have a family emergency that requires their child to be picked up early from school, they may call your child's teacher to arrange for early pick-up.

Medication and Allergy Management

- Parents must provide written permission and directives for Nature Together Staff to administer medication. Medication administration is limited to Epi-pens or asthma medication. You must complete a [Snohomish County Health Department Medication Authorization](#) form for each medication.

- All medication must be
 - In Original Container
 - Labeled with the child's name.
 - Have clear written instructions for dosage for the child's age.
 - Not past expiration date.
 - Medication must be left with teacher for the entire camp, and updated as prescribed by the doctor.

Dressing Appropriately

Dressing your child appropriately is CRITICAL to the success of our program. We adhere to the motto: There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing choices. Please make sure all clothing is labeled in some way, and that your child is prepared to carry anything they may remove.

What to wear and bring for camps.

- Clothing you do not mind getting wet or dirty
- Zipper sweatshirt (mornings can be cool)
- Shorts or pants depending on if your child runs hot or cool
- Shoes that are comfortable in sand/water (beach), or walking long distances (forest).
- Water bottle and snack
- Hat and/or sunglasses are helpful, but not required.
- Please apply sunscreen before dropping off your child. We are unable to help them apply sunscreen during class.

You may send extra clothes if you feel your child may need them. Remember that this is an entirely-outdoor school. Make sure that you and your child are both okay with that. Most important, keep YOUR attitude positive about blustery cold rainy days as some of our most fun days have been in this type of weather!

Parent-Teacher Communications

Good communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of our students and our school. It ensures that we are able to identify and meet the needs of our students and the expectations of their parents.

We use a variety of methods to communicate with the parents:

- **Face to Face:** We encourage parents to discuss any questions or concerns they may have with their child's teachers. During school hours, teachers need to focus on the children, so we ask parents to reserve discussion of detailed matters with teachers until the end of the day or use e-mail and telephone as desired.
- **Email:** We will use email to relay most information to parents. All teachers have Nature Together email accounts and parents may email teachers with questions or concerns.

- **Telephone:** The school phone is Ms Kris's personal phone number (425) 404-1985. You are welcome to call her or text her with questions or concerns. If she is not available, please leave a message and she will get back to you as soon as possible.

Extreme weather closure

Though we do not expect extreme weather during the summer, there are a few situations that might require us to cancel camp. We want to make sure your children are learning in a safe environment with us. The teachers of Nature Together will make the call on whether or not to cancel class by 7am the day of class. Classes may be cancelled due to the following inclement weather:

- If there are high wind advisories and the forest or beach becomes unsafe.
- If air quality index is above 100 (airnow.gov). This is possible during the wildfire season.
- If there are other location or weather conditions that would make campers unsafe.

There will be no credit or refund for the days camps close due to the weather.

Location of classes

Children will be dropped off and picked up at Edgewater Beach or the Lower Japanese Gulch (at the Mukilteo Dog Park).

Sick child policy

In light of our current situation and possibility of Covid-19, we require all children to stay home if they show any signs of illness. If your child has a runny nose, fever, cough, diarrhea, vomiting, or any other signs of not feeling well, please keep them home. Please see our Covid policy for additional information.

Absence policy

- **SICK DAYS:** If your child is sick and cannot attend class, please text Ms Kris at (425) 404-1985.
- If you know in advance that you will miss a day (vacation days, etc.), please send an email to Ms Kris.
- Please do not pass information to the teachers at pick-up or drop-off about upcoming absences, as it is a busy time and we may forget.

Custodial Situations

Please notify us of any ongoing custody issues with your child. Nature Together will not be involved in custody disputes. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. Our teachers will follow a court order as it is written. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing any updated court orders. Please note: Per state law, in the absences of a court order, both parents have equal rights. If custody issues create a risk

for our staff, or repeated disruptions in class, Nature Together has the right to remove a child from the program.

Mandated Reporters

All Nature Together Preschool staff are required by law to report and document any proved or suspected incidence of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, or endangerment of a child immediately upon suspicion.

Toilet proficiency

Although we can handle occasional accidents, all children **MUST** be toilet-proficient in order to attend our class. Children must be able to know when they have to go to the bathroom and be able to communicate that. If your child has a messy potty accident we will call you to either come change your child's clothing or to take your child home

Fees and Withdrawal Policy

Nature Together depends on tuition to operate, but we understand that unforeseen events can occur and withdrawal may be required. Nature Together reserves the right to remove a child from the program if necessary due to behavioral issues but will work with parents or guardians to the greatest extent possible to address any concerns.

Summer Camps: Payment is due at the time you book camp. If cancelled more than 2 weeks before camp start date you will be issued a refund, minus a \$40 deposit/processing fee. If you must cancel within 2 weeks of the camp start date, there will be no refunds, though you may switch to a different week of camp if space is available.

Student Profile Forms/Medical Authorizations

Student Profile Forms must be completed for each student **1 WEEK BEFORE** the first day of camp. These forms help our teachers get to know your child, and have emergency contacts set up. These forms also contain waivers we are required to have signed before your child is in our care. Students who do not have completed forms will not be allowed to attend class.

Class Information

Drop off/pick up *

When you drop your child off, please park in the lot and walk your child to the teachers.

Drop off is at 10:00 am. Please do not arrive more than 5 minutes early.

Pick up is at 1:00pm Please do not appear sooner than 12:55am as it is distracting to the students.

Children must be signed in and out by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult over the age of eighteen. Please talk with a teacher if you will need to drop off late or pick up early as we are often far from the parking lot and cannot guarantee we will be nearby.

Nature Together's COVID-19 Policy and Procedures

One of the benefits of Nature Together's preschool is that we offer small class sizes and easier social distancing because we take advantage of outdoor space the entire time for learning. Children are spread out and breathing fresh air while in nature. They are not sharing toys, touching desks, or sitting on the same carpet risking the spread of germs. Learning outdoors also boosts your child's natural immunity to illnesses. With that said, Nature Together will still be taking extra precautions to protect your child and our teachers while in class during the pandemic. We are following guidelines set by the Washington State Department of Health for child care programs. Updates will be made to this policy as needed based on current local and state requirements.

Mask Requirements

Masks are not *currently* required in school or childcare settings, and are not required at Nature Together classes. If there is a change to this policy, you will be notified as soon as possible.

When should I keep my child home?

Parents are expected to assess the health of their child, including taking their temperature, on a daily basis before coming to class. If your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, *please contact Ms Kris to discuss the next step.*

- Fever (100.4 or greater)
- Cough (new, changed, or worsening)
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Shortness of Breath
- Sudden Loss of Taste or Smell
- Unusual Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or Runny Nose
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea

What to do if my child is exposed to someone with COVID-19?

Exposed students may continue to take part in all in-person instruction as long as they are not symptomatic. A child who has been exposed to COVID-19, and is *experiencing symptoms*, should be assumed to have COVID-19. *Please contact Ms Kris to discuss the next steps.*

What happens if a student develops symptoms of Covid-19 while in class?

- The student will be removed from class and relocated to an isolated area with one of the teachers.
- A parent/guardian will be called to pick the student up immediately.
- We will report the event to Washington Health Department and will follow their recommendations which may necessitate class being canceled.

- Families of other students in class will be notified immediately without identifying student by name.

COVID-19 Resources

The following are links to the flowcharts and resources that Nature Together uses to determine if a student should attend class. We do our best to update these links if changes are made.

- [Washington State DOH Symptomatic//Exposure Flowchart](#). This is a flowchart used when a person in a school or childcare setting is experiencing symptoms, or has been exposed to COVID-19.
- [Mukilteo School District COVID-19 Daily Health Screening & Resource Form](#). This is a summary of the rules for attending school after experiencing symptoms, or being exposed to COVID-19.
- [Snohomish County Health District COVID-19 Information](#). This page includes links to case counts, testing information, vaccine information, and other important details about the county COVID-19 response.

Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is reported to be extremely contagious. The state of medical knowledge is evolving, but the virus is believed to spread from person-to-person contact and/or by contact with contaminated surfaces and objects, and even possibly in the air. People reportedly can be infected and show no symptoms and therefore spread the disease. The exact methods of spread and contraction are unknown, and there is no known treatment, cure, or vaccine for COVID-19. Evidence has shown that COVID-19 can cause serious and potentially life threatening illness and even death.

Nature Together cannot prevent you [or your child(ren)] from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while utilizing Nature Together's services or premises. It is not possible to prevent against the presence of the disease. Therefore, if you choose to utilize Nature Together's services and/or enter onto Nature Together's premises you may be exposing yourself to and/or increasing your risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

ASSUMPTION OF RISK: I have read and understood the above warning concerning COVID-19. I hereby choose to accept the risk of contracting COVID-19 for myself and/or my children in order to utilize Nature Together's services and enter Nature Together's premises. These services are of such value to me [and/or to my children,] that I accept the risk of being exposed to, contracting, and/or spreading COVID-19 in order to utilize Nature Together's services and premises in person.

WAIVER OF LAWSUIT/LIABILITY: I hereby forever release and waive my right to bring suit against Nature Together and its owners, officers, directors, managers, officials, trustees, agents, employees, or other representatives in connection with exposure, infection, and/or spread of COVID-19 related to utilizing Nature Together's services and premises. I understand that this waiver means I give up my right to bring any claims including for personal injuries, death, disease or property losses, or any other loss, including but not limited to claims of negligence and give up any claim I may have to seek damages, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen.

I understand and agree that the law of the State of Washington will apply to this contract.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ALL PROVISIONS OF THIS RELEASE, AND FREELY AND KNOWINGLY ASSUME THE RISK AND WAIVE MY RIGHTS CONCERNING LIABILITY AS DESCRIBED ABOVE:

Signature:

Date:

Name (printed):

Updated 03/18/2024

