

# Parent/Guardian Guide to Camp Dawes



## Summer Day Camps for Children Ages 5 – 14

Dear Parent or Guardian,

2025

We know that day camp may be a child's first independent experience away from an adult. In a day camp environment, a child will strengthen their emerging skills of making new friends, taking care of their own belongings, trying new activities and taking risks. This experience away from home, in a new setting with unfamiliar peers, can create the foundation needed for successful long-term experiences.

### At Camp Dawes, campers can expect to:

- Reach outside their comfort zone to try new things
- Develop self-esteem – belonging, learning & contributing
- Share in laughter with new friends
- Unplug from technology and connect with nature
- Develop new skills
  - o Physical
  - o Scientific
  - o Artistic
  - o Social/emotional – teamwork, self-confidence, leadership



All campers at Camp Dawes participate in traditional camp activities such as arts & crafts, outdoor play, nature study and group games. Themed sessions will allow campers to dig deeper into an area that interests them – such as science, wilderness survival, art, history or wildlife.

How can you enhance your child's experience? **We encourage you to discuss camp with your child each day!** Ask them what new things they have tried or learned. Talk to them about their interactions with the other children and any challenges they may have experienced. Discuss the way they feel and if they might try anything different the next day.

At Camp Dawes your child's wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional – is our primary concern.

We hope that your child's experience is a positive one, full of fun and healthy challenges. Please do not hesitate to discuss any concerns or questions with myself or your child(ren)'s counselors.

Karla Long  
Director of Learning & Engagement

kjlong@dawesarb.org  
740-323-2355

**Please carefully review the following information to ensure that your camper has a fun and safe experience at day camp.**

### **About The Dawes Arboretum**

The Dawes Arboretum is a nearly 2,000-acre, not-for-profit organization. We are engaged in education in the areas of horticulture, natural resources and Arboretum history. Established in 1929 by Beman and Bertie Dawes, The Arboretum fulfills the vision of our founders by obtaining and displaying outstanding varied plant collections; by cultivating awareness, understanding and appreciation of nature; by giving pleasure to the public; and by preserving our heritage.

### **Camp Setting**

Camp activities take place in a variety of locations, both indoors and outside. Individual camp sessions are stationed at one of two locations, on-grounds – The Zand Education Center or the Red Barn Area – but will travel to areas throughout The Arboretum. Throughout their camp day, campers may be exposed to sun, bugs, natural bodies of water and other elements of the outdoors. Depending on the session's location, campers may have access to indoor, flush toilets or will use portable toilets and hand washing stations. Please be sure to review the information on what to bring/wear to ensure that your camper is comfortable while at camp.



### **Behavior Expectations**

The camp environment is informal, but structured. Campers will review rules and etiquette on their first day and are expected to follow them to ensure a quality experience for all participants. Disruptive campers may be asked not to participate in a group activity. In the event of repeated misbehavior, staff will notify the parent/guardian.

We follow these steps when addressing poor camper behavior:

1. Child will be warned that their behavior is not acceptable and there will be further consequences if it continues.
2. Child will be separated from the activity with supervision (time-out). The person picking up the child will be informed, at the end of the camp day.
3. Child will be sent to the Visitors Center to sit with designated staff away from camp. The child's parent or guardian will be contacted.
4. We will exhaust every reasonable effort to improve camper behavior and integrate them into the camp environment. However, if the violation is severe enough or the camper will not change his/her behavior after the above steps have been taken, the camper may be sent home. The final decision will be made by the Director of Learning & Engagement or designee. **No refund will be given in the event that a camper is excused from camp.**

## **Camper Supervision**

Campers are supervised at all times by trained Arboretum staff. Upon hire, staff members are required to sign a voluntary disclosure statement and complete a criminal background check, as required by section 2151.86 of the Ohio Revised Code. The Dawes Arboretum checks the National Sex Offender Public Website for all camp staff.

Camp Dawes utilizes a buddy system for all campers. At no time are campers permitted to be left alone or with an individual adult, outside of the sight of others. An exception may be made during an extreme emergency. Whenever possible, at least two staff members are present at all times with a group of campers. Other Arboretum staff including our environmental educators, land conservation staff and horticulturists may visit camp to assist with specific activities but are not included in the staff to camper ratio. Some camps include a visit from an outside presenter.

## **Safety & Medical Information**

Camp Dawes is an outdoor camp program that includes some physical activity such as walks and running games. Please be aware that nature interpretation and hikes to different areas of The Arboretum have hidden dangers (***including but not limited to***: risk of poison ivy exposure, ankle sprains, and exposure to ticks and mosquitoes). So that we may provide the safest and most enjoyable experience for your child, parents are encouraged to provide any information on the Camper Health History & Release Form that might be relevant to your child's experience at camp.

Camp staff members are trained in administering first aid and CPR. Camp staff does not administer any medications, except those provided by the parent/guardian and disclosed/detailed on the Camper Health History & Release Form.

In the event of injury or illness of a camper, the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not reached, the emergency contact will be notified. Please take care to thoroughly and accurately complete the Camper Health History & Release Form to ensure all contact information is up-to-date.

## **Snacks**

Campers will be provided with a small snack each day. Dietary needs and food-allergies indicated on the Camper Health History & Release Form will be taken into consideration when providing snacks. If your child has a dietary restriction, please feel free to pack a suitable snack. Campers should bring a refillable water bottle labeled with their name, each day.

## **Emergencies**

Camp staff are trained in Arboretum policies including medical emergencies, severe weather, intruders and missing person(s). If you have any questions about our policies, please contact the Director of Learning & Engagement.

### **Sun, Mosquitoes & Ticks**

Please apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent, prior to coming to camp. Staff will assist with applying sunscreen and/or insect repellent, as needed, with permission given on consent form using the product supplied by camper. We encourage campers to wear hats, long, lightweight clothing, sunscreen/balm and UV protectant sunglasses for sun protection. Campers may walk through areas where ticks can be found. Staff do group tick checks but it is suggested that tick checks also be done at home. For more information about ticks, please visit [www.cdc.gov/ticks](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks).



### **Bad Weather**

Many camp activities take place outdoors or under shelter, rain or shine; it is advised that you check the daily forecast and dress your child accordingly. Arboretum staff monitors weather closely. In the event that dangerous weather is expected, camp activities will be held indoors at the Zand Education Center or the Visitors Center. If inclement weather approaches while campers are out on grounds camp staff will take campers to the nearest safe location. If bad weather continues, Dawes staff will transport campers in the Arboretum van to the nearest indoor location.

### **Transportation of Campers**

Some camp sessions include activities that require campers to be transported to an outlying area of The Arboretum or off-grounds. If an off-grounds field trip is included in an individual camp session, it will be noted in the description. Campers are not transported by staff in personal vehicles.

**12-passenger van:** Staff is trained in the use of a 12-passenger van, which may be occasionally used to transport campers across grounds or to an outlying part of The Arboretum, such as the Dutch Fork Wetlands. At least 2 staff members, including the driver, will be in a van when transporting campers. All staff who drive Arboretum vehicles, including golf carts, are subject to a driving records check and must participate in driver training based on recommendations from the American Camp Association. All campers must follow established rules including demonstrating safe behavior and proper use of safety restraints (including booster seats, when needed). On a rare occasion (e.g. sudden illness), a camper may be transported on an Arboretum golf cart.

**Open-air wagon:** All campers are be subject to being transported across Arboretum grounds on our open-air wagon, pulled by a truck or tractor at low speeds. Generally, our wagon is used for transporting campers between the Visitors Center and Red Barn Area or during a grounds tour.

## Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

**Drop-off and pick-up will be held on our Visitors Center deck.  
Camp runs from 9am-3pm each day.**

Please **sign your child in and out** with camp staff each day by initialing the log.

Certain camps may have an alternate drop-off or pick-up location at some point during the week, based on the activities schedule. A more detailed calendar indicating any alternate drop-off /pick-up locations will be sent home with your camper on the first day of camp.

Campers will be permitted to leave **only** with authorized adults, as listed on the Camper Health History & Release Form, who show proper identification, such as a Driver's License. In the event of a change in pick-up arrangements, the legal parent/guardian must inform staff, in advance.

If you know your child will be late or will not attend, please call 740.323.2355 to inform our staff. If a camper has not arrived, as expected, within 30 minutes of the camp start time, camp staff is required to call the persons listed on the Health History & Release Form, in an attempt to verify the absence.

Please arrive promptly for camper pick-up. We are not able to provide child-care outside of camp hours. Campers not picked up by 15-minutes after camp end time may be subject to a \$10.00 fee.

## What to Bring to Camp

It is important that campers dress appropriately to be safe and comfortable in a camp environment. Remember that temperature and activities change, throughout the day.

Campers should wear:

- T-shirt
- Pants or shorts that extend at least to the fingertips.
- Shoes that tie and cover the foot (e.g. no sandals with open heels or toes); socks
- Hat or bandana; long hair covered or tied back
- For cooler weather, a long sleeve shirt or light jacket

Campers should also bring:

- Bagged lunch and refillable water bottle marked clearly with camper's name  
*In an effort to support The Arboretum's goal of sustainability, we kindly request that you limit the amount of packaging waste generated from lunch items. We do not provide refrigeration and cannot heat lunches.*
- Extra clothes – t-shirt, shorts, socks, undergarments and shoes – on days when the camper will do activities such as creek (will be notified on the first day of the session)
- Sunscreen and insect repellent

Please do not allow campers to bring toys, cameras, money, pets or other valuables to camp. If cell phones must be brought, campers will be instructed to keep them in their bags during the camp day. **The Arboretum is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.**

## Cancellation and Refund Policy

Camp cancellations must be made at least two weeks prior to the first day of the session in order to receive a full refund, minus a \$5 processing fee. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis; in the event of extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness, family emergency), you may submit a written request to [learning@dawesarb.org](mailto:learning@dawesarb.org) to be considered for a refund.