



2021-2022 Programs and Classes

Parent Information Guide

Welcome to Rye Nature Center! We are excited to meet you and your child(ren) and ask that you read this information packet carefully to ensure that you understand the policies and procedures FRNC has established to make your child's experience as safe and rewarding as possible.

COVID-19 Policies and Procedures

Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC) is committed to ensuring the health and safety of students and adults in our programs. We have reviewed and adopted the guidelines for educational facilities from the Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Department of Health, and the New York State Department of Education to help in the prevention, mitigation, and containment of COVID-19.

Our staff has successfully completed two summer camp seasons and one school year integrating the various operational and educational changes necessary for a safe and healthy in-person program experience for students in preschool through tenth grade. In addition, staff has had time to adjust to the protocols and refine how best to implement them into class management practices.

Below you will find the details for 1) how we will manage in-person instruction including our methods of monitoring the health of our students and staff, 2) our containment procedures in the event of possible virus transmission, 3) our strategy should our programs close due to widespread community outbreak, and 4) additional program guidelines. Please note that additions and modifications to our policies and procedures may be made as more information and data become available.

1. Day-to-Day Student, Staff, and Facility Management

- **Staff and Student Health Checks.** Prior to attending or leading classes at the Rye Nature Center, children and staff must complete a weekly health questionnaire that will be sent out each Monday. *This should be completed on Monday regardless of which day your child attends the program.* Students and staff with symptoms of any illness should not attend the program. If students/staff are determined to have an observable illness, such as constant coughing or respiratory distress, or a temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, they will be sent home.
- **Drop-off and Pick-up.** Students attending Rye Presbyterian or Christ's Church Nursery Schools who have chosen to use our optional walking option will be transported between their school and RNC. All other drop-offs and pick-ups will take place via drive-by drop-off and pick-up. Staff will escort students to their class' location. Students will sanitize their hands upon arrival and wear masks/face coverings until they are brought to their class' designated outdoor area. We request that unvaccinated drivers and passengers over the age of two wear masks when interacting staff.
- **Outdoor Classrooms.** Children will be outside their entire time at the Nature Center. Tented classroom areas will be assigned to each class/group. Parents must provide proper gear for that day's weather conditions. You will find a suggested gear list within this packet. Children will only be required to wear a mask/face covering when indoors, during drop-off and pick-up, and during small-group activities (including outside). Children are not required to wear masks outside but you may request that your child remains masked for the duration of their class.

- **Indoor Classroom Space.** Each program group will be given a designated indoor classroom space. This space will be where the children's extra gear is stored. These spaces will be occupied by the group only when a severe weather event makes it unsafe to be outside. Weather events that would require a group to come inside include but are not limited to thunder/lightning events; tornado; hail or ice storm; high windstorms; hurricane; extreme heat or cold. When children are inside, they will be required to wear a mask or face covering unless actively eating or drinking. When masks are removed for these purposes, children will be spaced three to six feet apart. Children will also have assigned seating while eating indoors. Please note that children will be outside during rain and snow as well as when it is cold. On very cold days, campfires are used to warm up the groups and children may come inside to warm up as necessary.
- **Group Size Limits.** Group sizes are limited to no more than 16 children. These group sizes allow for safe social distancing in the event children need to come inside. Please note that contact with groupmates may be unavoidable; masks will be required when inside.
- **Teaching Assignments.** Any staff substitutions will be announced in advance when possible and logged internally.
- **Student Cleanliness.** The Nature Center has several sinks to allow for ample hand washing stations. Each group's first aid kit will contain hand sanitizer and there will be many stations around campus with hand sanitizer. Students must wash or sanitize hands upon arrival, after using the restroom, before and after eating, before and after using shared equipment, and after sneezing, coughing, or blowing their nose. Children are required to bring their own face mask to the program each day. We recommend packing additional masks in their bag. Reusable masks should be washed daily. Child-sized disposable masks will be available in case of emergency.
- **Staff Cleanliness.** FRNC will wear masks at all times indoors and when within six feet of others outside. Staff will wear disposable gloves and/or sanitize hands before helping students who may require physical assistance or support.
- **Lunch/Food Safety.** Students/staff will bring their own lunches/snacks to FRNC. Children will be kept three feet apart while eating. Program participants are asked to be respectful of the peanut/nut allergies of other children and use alternatives whenever possible.
- **Facility Cleanliness.** After each group finishes an activity, the equipment and area will be cleaned. Green Apple Cleaning Company sanitizes the facility at the end of program days.
- **Younger Student Protocols.** Younger students may need assistance or reassurance that requires physical contact. Staff will wear a new pair of disposable gloves or sanitize their hands between each child they support.
- **Visitor Policy.** Our interior facility, offices, and visitor center is closed to non-active program participants. To protect the health of our students and staff, parents/guardians/caregivers are not allowed inside. We want to minimize contact with anyone outside of our immediate student

community. Parents will be stopped at the entrance to our facility or asked to remain in their cars. We will bring students and student belongings to parents.

- **Ongoing Communication.** Our relationship and communication with you are more important than ever before. We are relying on you to share your households' and children's health, any virus exposure risks, as well as your travel plans with us throughout the school year. No question or concern is too small; **please email us at admin@ryenaturecenter.org or call us at 914-967-5150.** Together, we will create a healthy, fun, and educational school year!

2. COVID-19 Mitigation and Containment Procedures

- **Quarantine and Close Contacts.** If a student/staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will immediately report this to the health department and follow their direction. We will also notify families and staff of any reported cases. Anyone who is deemed a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case (laboratory confirmed or clinically compatible illness) will be required to quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated. A close contact is anyone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period. **However, in the preschool through grade 12 indoor classroom setting, the CDC specifies that students who were within three to six feet of an infected where both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks are not considered close contacts.**
- **Confirmed Student/Staff Virus Exposure.** If a student or staff member who is not fully vaccinated reports an exposure to COVID-19, that individual may not attend class/work and should quarantine for 10 days per the CDC recommendations. This 10-day period allows for the individual to be monitored for symptoms of the virus. Any areas that the exposed individual occupied/used will be closed for 24 hours for cleaning/disinfecting. As long as no symptoms develop, the exposed individual may return after this 10-day period.
- **Confirmed Student/Staff COVID-19 Case.** The ill individual may not attend class until it has been at least: ten days since their first symptoms, three days since the individual has had a fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine); and three days since the symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.
- **Monitoring of local schools and surrounding districts.** FRNC will be in communication the schools that our program participants attend to monitor exposures and confirmed cases. We will monitor the surrounding districts for increases in cases as well.
- **Travel Restrictions.** FRNC requires its staff and program participants to abide by any New York State travel restrictions and CDC recommendations that are in place for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.
NYS: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>
CDC Domestic: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html#print>
CDC International: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html#print>

3. Facility Closure and Remote Learning

If FRNC is not permitted to host our programs, optional remote learning opportunities will be provided for your child's class. Some activities can be done with your child on the Nature Center grounds. Refunds and credits for remote time will not be provided during the 2021-22 academic year.

- Forest Preschool Remote Plan
 - Curriculum Guide for Parents
 - Daily Zoom Classes (20 min)
 - SeeSaw Activities for the Day
 - Supplemental Videos
- Preschool Ecology Remote Plan
 - Curriculum Guide for Parents
 - 20 minutes of live class meeting on child's instruction day
 - Supplemental Videos as Appropriate for Lessons
- Afterschool Programs
 - Curriculum Guide for Students

4. Additional Program Guidelines

- **Snack & Lunch (Forest Preschool and Preschool Ecology Only).** Please pack a healthy and hearty lunch for your child in an insulated bag and include plenty of fluids. We are a carry-in, carry-out facility. All trash and recyclables will be sent home with your child. We encourage the use of **reusable, refillable** containers! Be sure to label bottles, bags, and containers with your child's name. *Due to allergies, we discourage lunches with peanut and nut products.* To observe social distancing at lunch, each camper must bring a towel to sit on. During the winter months, children may eat in designated spaced indoors where we have room for them to space out 6 feet apart.
- **Prescription Drugs.** Our staff cannot dispense medications of any kind, but children may take prescribed drugs on their own. FRNC staff will check the labels and remind him/her when to take the medication. Please turn in all medications to staff at drop-off to be safely stored until use. Send medications in **original containers** bearing prescription information, directions, and warning labels.
- **Insect Repellent and Sunscreen.** Staff is only allowed to apply repellents or sunscreens to your children with written permission. If you did not sign the optional section of the waiver, you may authorize via email or note.
 - If you do not send your child with sunscreen or bug repellent, the Nature Center's supply includes SunX and Ranger Ready.
 - Parents should use their own discretion in applying these to their children each day. Please avoid strongly scented products.
 - See the attached fact sheets about Lyme Disease, West Nile Virus, and Rabies.
- **Personal Toys/Belongings.** Only items and gear relevant to the program should be sent with your child. Our programs encourage play using natural items so toys should be left at home. All personal belongings will be stored in students' backpacks for the duration of the program.



Dressing for Outdoor Classes Gear Guide and Tips

Top 5 Dos & Don'ts of Dressing for Outdoor Fun

DO

Focus on staying dry, both from the outside (snow and rain) and the inside (sweat).

Base the amount of insulation on temperature AND the amount of physical activity you expect.

Pay special attention to hands and feet: wear warm, waterproof mittens, thick socks, and warm boots.
Make sure boots start out dry inside!

Wear a comfortable, warm hat with good coverage.
Soft fleece tends to get better compliance than rough wool. Consider scarf/neck gaiter/balaclava.

Dress in layers.

DON'T

Wear cotton—it absorbs moisture and conducts heat away from the body!

Wear mittens or boots that allow snow in.

Wear fleece or flannel on the outside where they can be “snow velcro”.

Wear plastic or rubber boots that have no insulation—they aren't warm enough and they trap moisture inside.

Wear cotton socks! Always wool.

Recommended Gear for FRNC Programs

Our students will need the appropriate gear to ensure their comfort outdoors, in all types of weather. FRNC will provide a Classic Trail Rain Suit for each Forest Preschool student and there will be additional rain suits available for Preschool Ecology students. These additional suits will be washed between use. All other apparel should be provided by families. Children in afterschool programs will need to come with their own gear. Please explore the included links below for recommended apparel.

<p>Rain: Jackets Boots</p>	<p>Cold Weather: Base Layers Socks Gloves Balaclavas Gators Boots Snow Suits</p>	<p>Mild/Warm Temperatures: Bug Spray Wicking Layers Hiking Boots Sun Hats</p>
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How to Layer Up

	Base Layer	Insulating Layer	Weatherproof Layer
What?	Top: Long Underwear Bottom: Long Underwear Head: Thin Balaclava Feet: Non-cotton Liner Socks	Top: Log-Sleeved Top Bottom: Pants Head: Hat Feet: Wool Socks	Top: Jacket Bottom: Snow Pants, Bibs, or One Piece Suits Head: Hood Feet: Insulated Boots Hands: Mittens with Shell
Why?	Wicking, Comfort, Thin	Insulation, Wicking	Keeping Wind, Snow, and Rain Out
Fabrics	Polyester Stretch Knits Silk Polypropylene Lightweight Wool	Fleece Puffy Synthetic Insulation Heavier Weight Wool Down	Nylon Polyurethane ("PU") Neoprene1 Waterproof/Breathable Shells Leather, Fur, Shearling
Fit	Snug fit Fabrics with stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose fit/slides over base layer easily • Turtle or polar necks • Hats that cover the ears • The "puffier" the better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain gear: taped or sealed seams • Jackets: snow skirts/elasticized waists, extra-large to fit over layers with slippery linings • Boots: mid-calf w/closable tops • Mittens: avoid cold spots and keep snow and rain out • Pant cuffs: come past top of boots

Resources:

- <https://oaki.com/>
- <https://www.polaropyretusa.com/>
- <https://www.smartwool.com/>
- <https://bombas.com/>
- <https://www.keenfootwear.com/>
- <https://www.bogsfootwear.com/shop/index.html>
- <https://rangerready.com/>
- <https://buffusa.com/>
- <https://www.sundayafternoons.com/>
- <https://en-us.hestragloves.com/>
- <https://www.rei.com/s/kids-thermal-underwear>

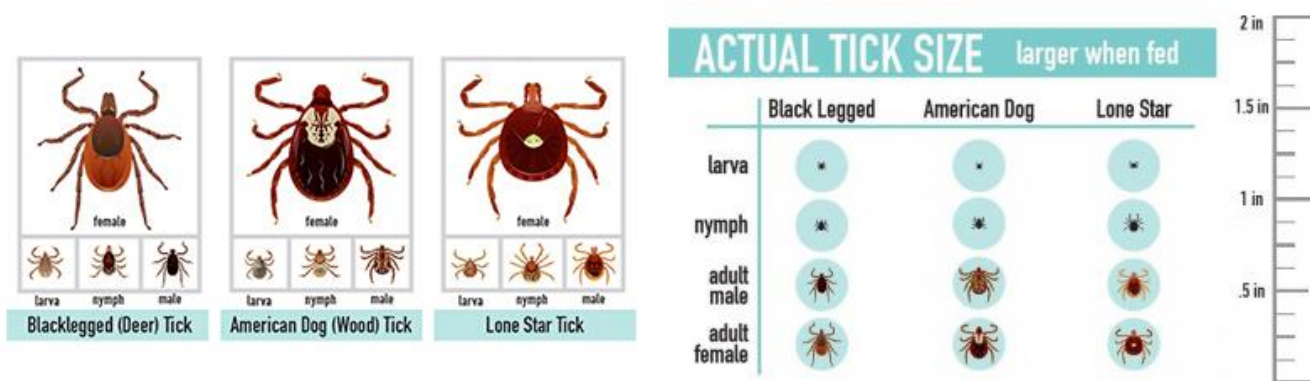


*All children should come to programs with a reusable face mask attached to a lanyard.

Animal Borne Illness Fact Sheet

Any outdoor activity, including Rye Nature Center’s Summer Ecology Camp, carries an inherent risk of contact with animals that can transmit diseases. Our camp staff is trained to keep your children as safe as possible. However, parents also have a responsibility to understand the risks, take appropriate preventative measures and seek prompt professional medical attention if signs and symptoms of disease appear. According to the Westchester County Health Department, three diseases are of particular concern in our area at this time: Lyme Disease, West Nile Virus (a form of Encephalitis) and Rabies.

Lyme Disease



Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection which can be transmitted to people by deer ticks. Deer ticks are found on mice, birds, and deer. They may be as small as a period on a printed page and grow up to 3 millimeters in size.

The tick embeds itself in the skin and engorges on blood. If not removed within 24 hours, bacteria may be transmitted.

A rash may develop around the tick bite in 3 to 30 days. Other symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, chills, headaches, stiff neck, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain. If untreated, it can cause neurological, heart and joint damage. Lyme Disease can be detected with medical tests and treated with antibiotics.

For a more detailed fact sheet, see the Centers for Disease Control website at cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/index.htm.

West-Nile Virus

West Nile Encephalitis is caused by a mosquito borne virus. Not all mosquitoes are infected with the virus and not all mosquito bites transmit the disease.

Most infected people exhibit no symptoms. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have mild, flu-like symptoms. About one in 150 people will develop severe symptoms including high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These may be life-threatening.

Since West-Nile Encephalitis is caused by a virus, there is no specific treatment for low grade symptoms. If you or your child develops symptoms of severe illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately.

For more information, see the Centers for Disease Control fact sheet at cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv_factSheet.htm.

Prevention of Lyme Disease and West Nile Encephalitis:

Lyme Disease and West Nile Encephalitis are best prevented by avoiding the animal vectors of these diseases. To protect your child during our day camp programs:

1. Our ponds are inspected by the Westchester County Health Department annually to ensure that West-Nile Virus carrying mosquito species are not living in our ponds.
2. Our staff conducts a "Tick Check," inspecting unprotected (unclothed) skin on all children at lunchtime and at the end of each camp day.
3. You must check your child more thoroughly at home, especially areas covered by clothing that we do not check. Remove ticks by pulling gently on the head (not the body) with fine tweezers. Use a disinfectant on the bitten area.
4. Change and launder clothes immediately when you get home to remove any ticks clinging to the fabric.
5. Insect repellent applied to your child's socks and clothing can act as a deterrent to deer ticks and mosquitoes. Staff is NOT permitted to apply insect repellent to campers. If you would like to protect your child in this way, please apply repellent prior to or upon arrival at the Nature Center.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease carried by mammals that can only be transmitted through bites and direct contact with bodily fluids. Since rabies affects the brain, rabid animals may show unusual behavior such as aggression, fearlessness, abnormal posture, seizures, weakness or paralysis.

People can contract rabies from wildlife such as bats, foxes, raccoons, and skunks or through pets which have come into contact with infected wildlife. Small rodents, such as chipmunks, hamsters, mice, rabbits, and squirrels, do not typically carry rabies.

Rabies is a fatal disease that cannot be treated once the symptoms have appeared. Rabies can be confirmed only in a laboratory. Therefore, it is critically important to capture and test the animal that exhibits signs of rabies. It is critically important to see your doctor or the emergency room immediately.

For more information see the Center For Disease Control website at cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/kidsrabies.

Prevention of Rabies

The mammals in our exhibits have been vaccinated. Our staff will keep your children out of contact with any potentially infected wild animals. The following measures may prevent infection at home year round:

1. Be sure all pets are vaccinated.
2. Do NOT take in or feed stray animals, either wild or domestic.
3. Do not handle dead animals without proper precautions.