

# BRANFORD PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK



**SUMMER  
2024**

**Awesome Camps  
for Awesome  
Kids!**

Revised: 04/2024

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# Summer Camp Program Overview



***We ask that all parents and their children read through this Handbook together! The last page MUST be signed and submitted to the Parks & Recreation Department before the start of your registered camp.***

The Branford Parks and Recreation Department's staff will ensure your child has a safe and well-cared-for summer with lots of fun activities to create lasting memories. Our Summer Camp staff are a mix of professional teachers, college students, high school students and returning counselors who all enjoy working with youth. Our team of staff members are certified in American Red Cross First Aid, CPR, Epi-Pen administration, and how to handle emergencies. Our staff goes through extensive training including policies and procedures, customer service, and emergency preparation to name a few. Safety is our number one priority at our Summer Camps.

## Program Mission Statement

The Branford Recreation Department will ensure a safe, engaging, and nurturing environment for families in need of Camps that provide quality child care. Our goal is to emphasize creating an environment that balances enrichment, physical activity, special events, arts & crafts, group games, and free time in a non-stressful & enjoyable safe setting. All of our programs maintain consistent & clear policies, procedures, and guidelines. Staff welcomes and encourages open communication and parental input. We are committed to providing Summer Camp Experiences that will:

- ❖ **Ensure a safe environment:** All camp staff are vigilant about where their campers are, what they are doing and the condition of the equipment and physical space. Campers will be safe and happy while following all COVID-19 best practices and guidelines. If your child is sick and has a fever, they must be fever free for at least 24 hours before returning back to camp or activities.
- ❖ **Provide fun and engaging activities:** Camp Staff are well trained and able to provide a wide range of games, sports, arts and crafts, field trips, special guests, and opportunities to socialize among their peers.
- ❖ **Communicate:** Our staff is committed to keeping parents informed about all that happens at camp, both successes and challenges. Staff will remind parents about special days, activities, and field trips via on site communication, emails, and sometimes handouts.
- ❖ **Take an interest in camper's success:** Staff provides encouragement to develop each camper and to make sure that camp offers well-planned and thoughtful activities that build self-esteem, character, sportsmanship, and social and emotional well-being.
- ❖ **Educate children about healthy choices:** Staff will set positive and healthy examples for all campers.

## Camp Contact Information



Please feel free to contact us at any time. We look forward to getting to know you and making the **Summer Camp Programs** a positive experience for you and your child.

➤ Alex Palluzzi, Jr.                      Director of Recreation                      [apalluzzi@branford-ct.gov](mailto:apalluzzi@branford-ct.gov)

### **TEEN TRAVEL ADVENTURE PROGRAM (GRADES 7+)**

➤ Dale Izzo                                      Assistant Director                      [dizzo@branford-ct.gov](mailto:dizzo@branford-ct.gov)

### **LITTLE EXPLORERS CAMP (AGES 4-5)**

➤ Victor Amatori, Jr.                      Program Supervisor                      [vamatori@branford-ct.gov](mailto:vamatori@branford-ct.gov)

### **SUMMER PLAYGROUND CAMP (AGES 5-12)**

➤ Dale Izzo                                      Assistant Director                      [dizzo@branford-ct.gov](mailto:dizzo@branford-ct.gov)  
➤ Ricky DiRago                              Program Coordinator                      [rdirago@branford-ct.gov](mailto:rdirago@branford-ct.gov)

### **PARKS & REC SHORELINE THEATRE CAMP & ENRICHMENT (GRADES 3-9)**

➤ Colin Sheehan                              Arts, Culture & Special Events                      [csheehan@branford-ct.gov](mailto:csheehan@branford-ct.gov)

**Office Line:** 203.488.8304

**Office Email:** [recreation@branford-ct.gov](mailto:recreation@branford-ct.gov)

## Staffing

Our summer camp staff are a mix of professional teachers, college students, high school students and returning counselors who all enjoy working with youth. We will maintain safe counselor to camper ratios at all our sites/locations.

## Illness & COVID-19 Regulations

Our department will follow processes and protocols in accordance with the most recent guidance from the State and local Health Officials and the Town of Branford. We encourage campers to practice personal space with staff and their peers. We will follow best practices to keep your child and the staff safe. The Branford Parks and Recreation staff is commitment to the health and safety of your children.

- ❖ Campers and staff will wash / sanitize their hands frequently.
- ❖ All participants and staff will practice hand hygiene, for example when:
- ❖ Before and after eating breakfast, lunch, and snacks

- ❖ Before and after administering first aid
- ❖ After helping participants with handwashing
- ❖ After using the bathroom
- ❖ After coughing or sneezing
- ❖ After playing and using equipment

Participants will wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. If soap and water are not immediately available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be used with staff supervision. If necessary, staff will assist children with handwashing. Staff will remind participants to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw out the tissues in the trash and wash their hands.

### **Diagnosis & Exposure to Illness & COVID-19**

If your child is exhibiting symptoms or diagnosed with an illness or COVID-19, please do not attend camp. ***If you child is sick and has a fever, they must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to camp. Please do not send your child sick to camp. In certain situations, a doctor's note may be required.***

### **Communicable Illness**

No child will be allowed to attend camp if they have a communicable (contagious) illness. This is for the safety and well-being of each camper and staff. Parents are required to notify the staff in the event that your child is sick and will not be attending camp. Your child cannot attend camp if:

- ❖ Your child is sick
- ❖ Your child is symptomatic for COVID-19
- ❖ Your child has a temperature and not fever free for 24 hours

Symptoms include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Diarrhea
- ❖ Vomiting
- ❖ Fever
- ❖ Sore throat
- ❖ Stomach ache
- ❖ Head ache

### **Sickness:**

When a child becomes sick at camp, staff will immediately notify the sick child's parent or legal guardian and arrange for pick up.



## Program Dates/Daily Schedule



See your camp calendar and Camp Program Book for more daily information on the camps that you are registered for.

### Sample Daily Schedule:

**8:30 AM - 8:45 AM:** Arrival

**9:00 AM:** Camp Activities Begin/Field Trip Departures

**11:30 AM - 12:30 PM:** Lunch

**3:45 PM - 4:00 PM:** Preparation for dismissal.

Your child **must be picked up prior to 4:00 pm** to avoid any late fees. If attending Little Explorers Camp, your child **must be picked up prior to 1:30 pm**.

Campers are encouraged to participate in the many exciting activities and events that are provided at camp daily. The daily activities will be structured around a rotation schedule utilizing various outdoor areas.

**Swimming:** Campers will take periodic trips to the Hospice Pool (weather and schedule permitting). Certified American Red Cross Lifeguards will be on duty at all times, as well as our camp counselors to provide supervision. In order to swim in the deep end of the pool, all participants must pass a swim test that will take place by the lifeguards on duty. U.S. Coast Guard lifejackets will be provided for those swimmers who may need or want to wear one. No outside floats or swimmies will be allowed.

**Field Trips:** Depending on the weeks, campers will enjoy special field trips to exciting locations. This schedule is subject to change. Please check your camp's program calendar for tentative details and times. Please note for Summer Playground Camp, there will be no staff at the camp sites on "all camp" field trip days. All campers **MUST** go on the scheduled trips if they are attending camp for the day. If you do not want your camper to attend a trip on a particular day, they will need to stay home on that day. Please arrive on time when trip days are planned as buses cannot wait for late arrivals. We allow parents to send money for field trip days when it is stated. Please note that counselors are not responsible for lost or stolen money. The Branford Parks & Recreation Department allows for extra travel time on all trips. However, incidents can occur that could potentially cause delays in returning from field trips on time. We ask that parents be patient if busses are running late. Parents will not be allowed to bring campers to field trips. Parents are not allowed to pick up campers from a field trip location.

## Fees and Payment Options



### Fee Policy

All camp program fees must be paid in full prior to the start of camp. If you have a balance, your child will not be able to attend camp and your spot may be given up. The Branford Parks and Recreation Department understands that some children may come from split homes and that some parents share the cost for camps programs/childcare. The Parks and Recreation Department does not split costs for parents. We leave the responsibility of dividing costs to the parents. Please make all financial arrangements necessary to avoid a delay in attending.

- ❖ You can make payments at our office. Please call the office to make arrangements or to make a payment over the phone or online.
- ❖ The Town of Branford charges \$20.00 for all returned checks. Returned checks must be replaced with valid payment immediately following notification. Receipt of a returned check may result in a “cash only” payment requirement.

### Receipts/Tax Forms

Please contact the office for a copy of your receipt. It will have all the information needed for filing your taxes. All receipts are also available online by logging into your account. If you need assistance, please contact our office.

### Accepted Methods of Payment

- ❖ Mastercard or Visa credit cards, checks, or cash can be used to make payments. You can make your payment online (credit card only), over the phone, in-person or by using the black drop box located at the rear entrance. If using the drop box, please put your payment in a seal enveloped labeled: Branford Parks & Recreation Office. Please make check payments payable to: **“Treasurer, Town of Branford”**.

## Registration Information



For registration of all camps, parents must have completed the online Child Information Form. **It is imperative that all forms be submitted with complete and accurate information with payments prior to the start of camp.**

Before a child may attend, parents/guardians **must** provide the following information:

- ❖ A complete, accurate, & digitally signed Child Information Form. This form includes:
  - Child, Parent, & Emergency Contact Information
  - Child Medical Information
  - Child T-Shirt/Shoe Size
  - Permission Notices (Field Trips, Signing in/out of camp, First Aid & Sunscreen Administration)
  - Photo/Video Release
- ❖ All signed field trip waivers
- ❖ Signed Page 16 of the Camp Policies & Procedures Handbook
- ❖ If applicable, an Epi-Pen medication form
- ❖ If applicable, a copy of custody papers or signed court documents if a birth parent is restricted from picking up your child from the program

### Custody Matters

The Branford Parks and Recreation Department's intent is to meet the needs of the children, especially when their parents/guardians are experiencing a difficult situation such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. However, our Department cannot restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless our Department has been provided with current legal documents restricting the parent from having access to the child(ren). Copies of a court order/documentation will be kept in the child's file. Please fill out the Divorced Family Form.



## Check-In, Pick-Up, & Absences



- ❖ Every child must be signed in AND out of camp every day.
- ❖ Only authorized persons may sign a child(ren) out of camp/program.
- ❖ Photo ID may be required for the release of your child/children.
- ❖ Suggested drop off times are 8:30am to 9:00am.
- ❖ Pick up time is 4:00pm.
- ❖ **Note:** You can drop off your child anytime. Please pay close attention to the calendars so that your child is not disappointed if they miss a scheduled activity. You may pick your child up prior to the scheduled pick up times.

### Check-in Procedure

Staff will greet your child each day when they arrive at camp. They will be checked in daily. If your child has a high temperature or any other signs of illness (refer to Page 4) they will not be able to attend camp.

### Pick-Up Procedure

Your cooperation during pick-up time is needed to ensure that you and your child are safe. Parents/Caregivers/Authorized Adults will pick up their child at the entrance or designated area at each camp location.

1. A staff member will ask you the name of your child.
2. Please have your identification with you to show staff. Only those listed on your Child Information Form will be allowed to pick up your child.
3. Please sign the sign out sheet.
4. Children will not be able to leave their assigned area unattended.

Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent, guardian, or those individuals listed on the Child Information Form unless the child's parent notifies the Program Staff prior to pick-up time. It is the parents' responsibility to inform staff who is allowed to pick up your children. If a staff member is unfamiliar with any person picking up a child, the staff member will ask to see photo identification before the child is released. If you wish to add an additional individual to your pick up list, you must put it in writing and submit it to the Parks and Recreation Office. If someone comes to pick up your child whose name is not on the list, we will not release your child without prior authorization in writing. We will not release children to any adult without an ID.

### Late Pick-up Fees

Children are to be picked up **no later than 4:00 pm**. While it is understandable that there might be occasional delays due to business emergencies, or transportation difficulties, it is imperative that you make arrangements to be on time to avoid late fees. There will be a \$10.00 late fee for

every 15 minutes or part of 15 minutes you are late picking up your child. (These fees apply to each child). Repeated late pick-ups may result in the following:

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> late pick-up: Verbal Notification
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> late pick-up: Verbal Notification with fees charged
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> late pick-up: Written Notification with fees charged
- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> late pick-up: Written Notification with fees charged
- ❖ 5<sup>th</sup> late pick-up: Dismissal from the program without refund

We understand there are times when emergencies arise and you may not be able to pick up your child in a timely manner. If you know that you will be late for dismissal, you must call the office at (203) 488-8304.

### **Absences Procedures**

The safety of your child is our number one priority. If you know that your child will not be attending Camp as scheduled, it is **IMPERATIVE** that you contact the Parks and Recreation Department ASAP at **(203) 488-8304** or email **recreation@branford-ct.gov** to report your child's absence for that day.

## Weather or Emergency Policy



Camp is held rain or shine. We try to hold camp outdoors as much as possible, even in marginal weather. Please have campers dress appropriately to the weather. On severe weather days, field trips and camp locations may change. On these days of inclement weather, rain sites will be used for certain camps. If you are unsure if the rain sites will be utilized, please check your email as we will send updates via email or you can call the office at 203-488-8304. Any scheduled trip or activity can be closed/cancelled at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department after the children have arrived at camp if the weather becomes dangerous or any other emergency occurs. Parents will be contacted if such situation arises.

## Discipline/Behavior Policy



The Branford Parks and Recreation Department approaches discipline in a serious, yet positive manner. Desirable behavior will be rewarded with positive reinforcement. If the child exhibits inappropriate or negative behavior, the staff shall talk to the child and enlist him/her in solving the immediate problem. The following discipline policy will be in effect and should be discussed with your child prior to the start of the Program:

Summer Camp is designed to provide a supervised recreational program. Campers are expected to behave in a fashion suitable to the program. Cursing, fighting, bullying, stealing, bringing a weapon to camp, disrespecting the staff, abuse of equipment or facilities and disruptive behaviors will NOT be tolerated at camp or on field trips. **NO SMOKING** will be allowed. Any problems of this nature will result in suspension or expulsion from the camp with no refunds. Camp equipment is the property of the Branford Parks & Recreation Department. Malicious mishandling or abuse of equipment, etc. will require the parent/guardian to replace or repair any damage. This also applies to any buildings or facilities. Any camper found to be non-compliant with these rules will be suspended and parents will be notified. No scooters, roller blades or skateboards are allowed at camp. Bikes **MUST** be put in designated areas.



## Participant Code of Conduct

We have developed a code of conduct to make sure that everyone, campers, staff, & parents/guardians included, has a positive experience. This means that all participants shall respect the individual rights, safety, and property of others.

**Parents:** Please review these rules with your child:

### **I will:**

- Respect the differences of others and make an effort to include everyone.
- Refrain from behaviors that may hurt another participant or staff member's feelings.
- Be mindful of the staff and respect their requests and follow their directions.
- Pick up after myself and throw away all trash.
- Respect other people's property.
- Let staff know if I am having or not having a good time.
- Respect the staff, and the property of Branford Parks and Recreation.
- Have fun in ways that are safe to others and myself.
- Have a positive attitude.

### **I will not:**

- Fight with other participants with my hands or my words.
- Bring peanuts/nuts, candy or soda.
- Share food or supplies with another camper/staff.
- Go anywhere without permission and accompaniment by camp staff.
- Use derogatory terms or offensive language when talking to or about others.
- Tease or bully others.
- Bring inappropriate items (weapons, drugs, etc.) to camp.

### **If I choose not to follow the code of conduct:**

- **First Time:** I will be given a verbal warning explaining the problem and the expected behavior.
- **Second Time:** I will be removed from the activity and my parent will be notified. The Program Supervisor, Site Director, or their designee may call home to discuss the behavior plan.
- **Third Time:** The Program Supervisor or Site Director will notify my parents and they will pick me up.

## Parent Conduct Expectations



We have expectations of the behavior and conduct of parents/guardians when entering the camp site which are but not limited to:

- Address the staff and participants respectfully and courteously.
- Not use profanity or obscene gestures.
- No bullying of other participants or staff.
- Parents are not permitted to address or reprimand another participant while in our camp.
- Smoking and use of alcoholic beverages are not permitted on school grounds or the Branford Parks and Recreation Department locations and all town parks.
- Dangerous weapons, such as guns and knives are not permitted on school grounds or the Branford Parks and Recreation Department locations and all town parks.

## Bullying



Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt another physically or emotionally. The Branford Parks and Recreation Department does not tolerate bullying. It is inexcusable. Our philosophy is to ensure that every camper has the opportunity to have a positive experience. We work together as a team to ensure that camp participants gain self-confidence, make new friends, and go home with lasting positive memories.

Our Department is committed to addressing concerns. We will immediately and fairly inform parents about concerns and disciplinary policies and stress to all campers the importance of choosing respect when interacting with one another.

## Mandated Reporting



The Branford Parks and Recreation Department is legally required or mandated to report if they know or have reason to believe that a child has been neglected, or physically/sexually abused.

## First Aid and Injuries



Members of the staff are trained in first aid procedures and CPR/AED procedures. Routine or minor injuries, such as scrapes, small cuts, scratches, or bruises, will be handled by staff at the site. In the case of a more serious injury, Emergency Services will be called and the parents/guardians will be contacted. An accident report will be completed by the staff whenever a child is injured.

In the event of an emergency, our staff will take necessary steps to keep children safe & calm. Staff will seek emergency medical care as warranted. The following actions may include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Provide immediate first aid.
- ❖ Attempt to contact a parent or guardian.
- ❖ If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact others listed on your child's information form.
- ❖ In the case of a serious injury, appropriate emergency medical assistance will be contacted (911 will be called).
- ❖ If we are unable to reach you or the authorized person on your child's information form, the emergency staff will transport your child to the nearest hospital.

### **Medications:**

Some staff has been trained to administer certain medications to campers. Please contact the office if your child requires medication while in our care. You will need to have signed documentation from your child's physician. Staff is trained in Epi-Pen administration in the event of an allergic emergency. All Epi-Pens must have a medication form on file. We ask that all Epi-Pens be clearly labeled with your child's name and kept in their lunch box.

### **Sunscreen:**

Staff recommends that campers wear sunscreen daily. It is the parents/guardian's responsibility to provide sunscreen for their child and apply it before attending camp. If your child needs staff assistance in applying sunscreen, you will need to have granted permission on the Child Information form.



## Communication



Parents / Guardians must inform staff when:

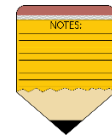
- ❖ Household contact information should be updated (change in phone numbers, e-mail, address, emergency contacts). More information explained below under “Change of Emergency Information.”
- ❖ Someone other than those listed on your Child’s Information Form will be picking up your child. This information must be in writing and the designee will be asked to show valid identification (refer to Page 8 for more information).
- ❖ Your child cannot be picked up on time.
- ❖ If your child will not be attending camp due to illness.

Parents / Guardians will be notified when:

- ❖ Your child is injured or ill.
- ❖ Your child is having disciplinary issues.

Please communicate any questions, comments or concerns you have to park staff or the Director of each camp. Keeping open communication between parents/guardians and staff is the key to the success of our Camps.

## Change of Emergency Information



It is important that the Parks and Recreation Office maintains current and accurate records on each child so that parents can be contacted in case of an emergency. This information includes address, phone numbers, emails, and names of individuals authorized to pick up your child(ren). It is extremely important to your child(ren)’s safety and well-being that we be informed of changes. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make any necessary updates if changes occur. These changes can be done by calling the office at 203-488-8304.

## Breakfast/Lunch/Snack Policy



We have partnered with the Branford Board of Education and Chartwells, which provide us with free breakfast and lunch. All children bring food to camp need to be a **NUT FREE** breakfast or lunch. You should also send your child with **NUT FREE** snacks and a water bottle each day they come to camp. Children will not be allowed to share food. We do not allow candy, gum, or soda. Please make sure all snacks from home are Nut Free. **We have a strict NUT FREE policy as some children are highly allergic.**

- ❖ Send your child to camp with lunch in a lunch box to camp (Nut Free).
- ❖ Choose healthy options when packing your child’s lunch each day.
- ❖ Send a lunch that will not spoil, please include ice packs if needed.

- ❖ Please note that campers will not have access to a microwave or refrigerator.
- ❖ Pack a spoon or fork if necessary.
- ❖ Sharing of snacks/lunch is not permitted.
- ❖ Please pack a water bottle to keep your camper hydrated throughout the day.

## Dress Code Policy



We ask that children be prepared and dressed in practical attire for a camp program. Please send your child to camp in comfortable and appropriate clothing: shorts, camp issued t-shirt, sneakers, hat, etc. Sneakers/tennis shoes are required daily for program safety purposes. Open toed shoes, sandals or flip flops are not allowed. **Campers must wear their issued camp shirts each day they come to camp.** Please pack appropriate clothes for weather. We ask that you label your belongings. Children will need to take home all belongings each day.

## Personal Belongings



Upon arrival to camp each day, your child is required to put his/her own belongings, such as jackets, backpacks, and lunch boxes in the area designated by the staff. The Branford Parks and Recreation Department is **NOT** responsible for lost or damaged personal items. We ask that children do not bring toys, electronic devices, or games from home. The staff will not be responsible for holding or keeping children's valuables during the program. All items must be taken home upon dismissal. No cellphones will be allowed to be used by campers unless it is an emergency.

## Lost and Found



Each camp will maintain a lost and found. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- ❖ Label everything your child brings to camp with their full name.
- ❖ Do not send expensive personal belongs to camp (video games, electronics, phones, etc.)
- ❖ Have your child leave all toys, games, cards, etc. at home unless otherwise notified.
- ❖ We are not responsible for loss or damage of items that your child brings to camp.
- ❖ Lost & found items not claimed within a reasonable amount of time will be donated to charity.

## Photo/Video Release



Occasionally, photos or videos are taken of the children to be used for promotional material or to commemorate their time at our programs. Please contact the office if you wish to not have your child photographed as this release is located on your Child Information Form.

Child/Children's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

The Policies and Procedures in this handbook are subject to change depending on the State of Connecticut, Department of Health, East Shore District Health Department, Town of Branford, and the Parks and Recreation Department guidelines.

I have received the Summer Camp Policies & Procedures Handbook for the Branford Parks and Recreation Department Summer Camp Programs. I will abide by all the policies and procedures set forth by the staff of the Branford Parks and Recreation Department. I acknowledge that I have read and agree to all information in this handbook and understand the code of conduct of me and my child who will be attending the camp. I understand that these policies and procedures can change at any time.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_