

Nature Explorers Parent Handbook

(215) 247-5777 x127

Dear Parents,

We are delighted that your child will be spending their days making sweet summer memories at the Morris Arboretum & Gardens. For over ten years, we have been offering summer programming that is uniquely designed within the 92 beautiful acres of the Morris Arboretum & Gardens. Our goal is to get children as comfortable as possible around nature through fun immersive experiences that encourage scientific inquiry, curiosity, and discovery about the world around them. It is our belief that when children are surrounded by trees, birds, animals, and insects, they will come to appreciate and protect them as future stewards of our planet.

Our youngest adventurers, Little Lightning Bugs (ages four to five), will spend their summer headquartered on the garden side of the Morris, where most public events take place. Parents will park in our lot (rain or shine) and meet our counselors at the Widener Visitor Center at both drop-off and pick-up.

Our more experienced campers, Bloomfield Buddies (ages six to ten), are headquartered at Bloomfield Farm, located directly across from the main entrance of the Morris on Northwestern Ave. Bloomfield Farm is a wonderful place for our campers to explore, as it's filled with wildlife, lush meadow paths that are mowed weekly, honey bee hives, and our Springfield Mill.

REGISTRATION POLICIES

Register and pay on-line (<https://experience.morrisarboretum.org/Login.aspx>). Completed forms, which include the child's emergency contacts, medical info, parent permission & liability form, and health insurance info must be printed and submitted **by May 30** to hold a camper's place in the program. Forms must be mailed or dropped off at Gates Hall. If the forms are late, a \$25 fee will be added to your registration. Without these forms your child cannot attend camp.

MORRIS ARBORETUM & GARDENS MEMBERSHIP

Arboretum members receive a member discount on summer camp and a number of other great benefits. To learn more about becoming a member contact the Membership Office at (215) 247-5777.

WEATHER & CANCELLATION POLICIES FOR EXTREME CONDITIONS

Camp is held rain or shine. Campers may still be outdoors in light rain, so please send extra clothes and/or rain boots! In the case of lightning, activities will be modified and moved indoors. The Hillcrest Building (Little Lightning Bugs) is air-conditioned. Bloomfield Barn (Bloomfield Buddies) is not air-conditioned, however, multiple fans are mounted throughout the barn.

While a rainstorm will not deter us from camp activities, Morris Arboretum & Gardens does reserve the right to cancel or shorten a camp day if the conditions are unsuitable and/or dangerous due to extreme weather or air quality. While it is very unlikely that we will ever cancel, if more than half of a camp week is cancelled due to weather, then a half tuition refund will be issued to all registrants. If less than half of a camp week is cancelled, then no refund will be issued.

WATER PLAY

Please send a pair of water shoes, a bathing suit or change of clothes, and a small towel on Monday. We will keep these at camp and send them home on Friday. In addition to morning creek walks about once a week, we will do water play (sprinklers, baby pools, etc.) in the afternoon whenever there is a heat advisory.

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WHAT TO BRING

Please dress your child in clothes that can get dirty! Hats, t-shirts, and sneakers are strongly encouraged. Flip Flops and open-toes shoes are **NOT** permitted. Please be sure that your child is covered with sunscreen and insect repellent before their arrival to camp. Campers should bring **a backpack with the following items: a lunch, snack or two, refillable water bottle, change of clothes, and water shoes.** Please label all items. Less is more! **Please do not bring toys, phones, cameras, electronic devices, money or valuables to camp.** The fewer items that your child brings the better!

SUN, MOSQUITOES & TICKS

Please apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent prior to camp. It is recommended that bug spray is applied after sunscreen. For more info: [cdc.gov/mosquitoes](https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes), [cdc.gov/ticks](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks). Counselors will apply as needed with permission (see Registration Form) for younger campers. While ticks have not posed a problem in the past, we suggest that tick checks be done every day when campers get home. Neem oil is a natural critter deterrent but cannot guarantee that Lyme disease will not be transmitted.

CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

Our camp environment is informal and fun, but structured. Campers will be informed of Morris rules and etiquette on the first day of camp. All campers are expected to respect each other, as well as the Arboretum staff, plants and wildlife. Disruptive behavior affects the fun, safety, and overall quality of the camp experience. In the event of repeated misbehavior, counselors will notify the parent/guardians and request that the camper be picked up or dismissed. No refunds will be given to campers who are dismissed.

SAFETY & MEDICAL INFORMATION

We take the protection and security of our visitors and campers very seriously. All Morris counselors, education staff, and education volunteers must be vetted through a three-point background check (state, federal, child abuse) and approved by the Human Resources department of the University of Pennsylvania.

Nature Explorers Camp is an outdoor camp that incorporates physical activity. Nature interpretation and hikes to different areas of the Morris Arboretum & Gardens may have hidden dangers (*including but not limited to*: risk of bee stings, poison ivy, ankle sprains, excessive heat, and exposure to ticks and mosquitoes). Camp staff are trained in administering first aid and will contact 911 in the case of an emergency.

In the event of a family emergency during camp hours, please contact (215) 247-5777 x125, or ask a Visitor's Services representative to reach our camp counselors, who will be called on portable radios.

CANCELLATION POLICIES

Please note our new cancellation policy. Planning ahead can be challenging for everyone, but please be mindful when making your camp registrations. We try to accommodate requests to change scheduled weeks, however, since we fill up quickly there is no guarantee there will be any space available in a different week. If you register during Early-bird pricing and then switch to a different week after the early-bird pricing ends, you will be charged for the regular camp price.

Cancellations up to May 20: \$50 fee will be deducted from refund for each week cancelled.

After May 20: Refunds will ONLY be issued for extenuating circumstances and are at the discretion of the Camp Director. If a replacement is found from the waiting list, a refund may be granted minus a \$75 cancellation fee.

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Typical Camp Schedule	Bloomfield Buddies & Lightning Bugs
8:45 to 9:00	Bloomfield Buddies Car Line Drop off/Lightning Bugs Widener Drop Off
9:00 to 9:30	AM Meet and Greet; Circle Time; Announcements; games
9:30 to 10:00	Out on a Limb time for LLB; Morning lesson or begin hike
10:00 to 10:30	Snack; Group activity
10:30 to 12:00	Hike/Garden Exploration; Creek Exploration; Games
12:00 to 12:30	Lunch; Story time
12:30 to 1:00	Free choice activities for LLB. Station rotations for BB
1:00 to 2:00	Arts & Crafts; Science time/Experiment
2:00 to 2:45	Water play; afternoon playtime/hike for LLB; Free choice activities for BB.
2:45 to 3:00	Closing circle; Clean up/Pack for home
3:00 to 3:15	Pick up at Bloomfield Car Line / Lightning Bugs @ Widener

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Can my child be in the same group as their friend or sibling?**

We only have one group for Little Lightning bugs, so all 4-5 year old campers will be in the same group. Bloomfield Buddies will be divided into two groups by age. Groups will be preassigned, and children will be told their groups each Monday. If your child has a friend or relative registered in Bloomfield Buddies and you wish to place them in the same group, please email igrubin@upenn.edu at least TWO WEEKS PRIOR to the start of camp.

- **Can I send my child home with another parent?**

Changes in pick up can be arranged by email (igrubin@upenn.edu)

- **What happens if I am late dropping off or picking my child up?**

Drop off begins at 8:45am each day. If a camper will be late, please call (215) 247-5777 and leave a message. Pick up is at 3:00pm. Campers picked up after **3:15pm** will be charged a late fee of \$5 for every 15 minutes late.

- **Can I stay at the Arboretum after I drop my child off?**

Unfortunately, parents and family cannot stay on the grounds after a child is dropped off, however, they are welcomed to walk the Morris public gardens once we officially open at 10am.

- **What do campers do when there is an excessive heat warning?**

On days when the temperatures and humidity are excessive, we scale back the number of activities that involve physical activity. Instead, we focus our energy of crafts, splashing in the sprinklers, and playing games in the shade. Campers are reminded to always keep their water bottles close by.

- **Can I pack peanut butter and jelly?**

Yes - We are not a peanut-free camp. We strongly discourage campers from sharing lunches or snacks and will place campers with peanut allergies at separate peanut-free tables per parent request.

- **What do you do when it is raining?**

During times of inclement weather, campers can stay indoors. Little Lightning Bugs find safety at the Hillcrest Building and Widener Visitor Center. Bloomfield Buddies have indoor space at the Bloomfield Barn. We play indoor games and conduct craft activities on rainy days.

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DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES

Little Lightning Bugs: Ages 4 to 5

Drop Off/Pick up Location: Widener Visitor Center (Please park your car in the lot and walk to Visitor Center)

Drop off: 8:45 - 9:00am

Pick up: 3:00 - 3:15pm

Campers ages 4 to 5 will begin and end their camp day at the Widener Visitor Center, accessed from the main entrance on Northwestern Avenue. Please park in the parking lot and walk to the Widener Plaza to sign-in or sign-out your child with a camp counselor. If you have a child in both programs of camp, please consider dropping off your older one first at Bloomfield Farm. **Curbside drop-off and pick up in front of the Widener Building is not permitted due to our high volume of bus traffic.** If you arrive before 8:45am, please wait outside the Widener Building with your child until a counselor is present. During inclement weather, please go straight to the café tent, or in the Widener Visitor Center to pick up. Campers will be permitted to leave with **authorized adults** (as listed on the Registration Form). If you need to make changes to this list, please email Ilana Grubin (igrubin@upenn.edu) or call (215) 247-5777 and speak with an Arboretum staff member. Please be respectful to Counselors and Arboretum staff and pick up your camper no later than 3:00 each day.

Bloomfield Buddies: Ages 6 to 10

Car Line Drop Off/Pick up Location: Bloomfield Farm (Please see map below)

GPS Address: 120 Bloomfield Farm Road, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

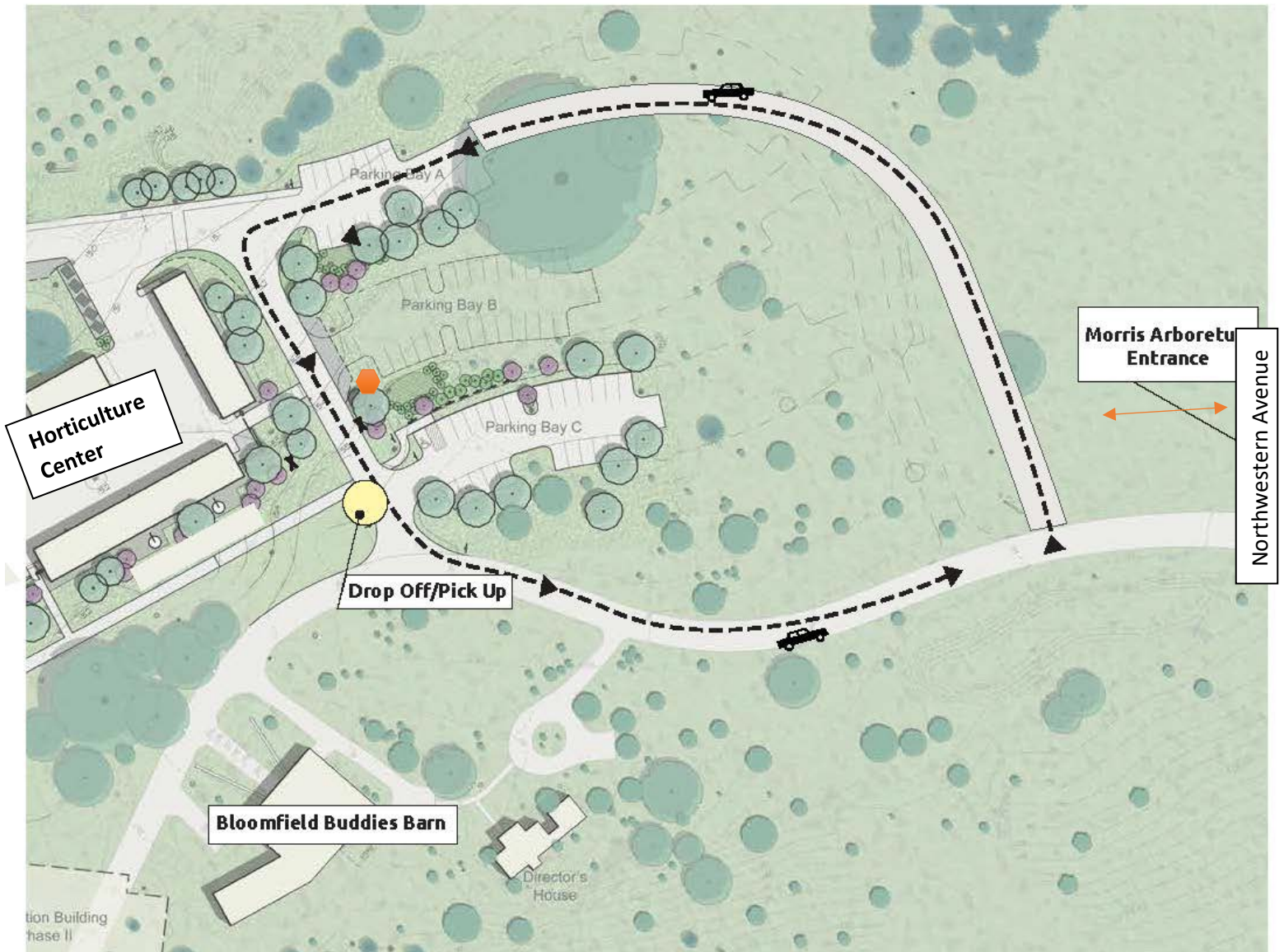
(Directly across the road from the Arboretum's main entrance)

Drop off: 8:45 - 9:00am

Pick up: 3:00 - 3:15pm

Bloomfield campers will be dropped off and picked up in a car line across the street from the Arboretum Garden at Bloomfield Farm. There will be lots of signs to guide you 😊. Please drive slowly as horticulture staff and township employees' use these roads as well, and stop at the 'Stop Here' sign. Students should exit the car on the *passenger side only* at the designated pick-up and drop off spot when counselors are present. We also kindly ask that parents and guardians remain in the car line so that traffic flows naturally. Campers will be permitted to leave only with authorized adults (as listed on the Registration Form). If you need to make changes to this list, please email Ilana Grubin (igrubin@upenn.edu) or call (215) 247-5777 and speak with an Arboretum staff member. **(See Map on next page)**

Bloomfield Drop off Map: Located directly across the road from the Morris main entrance,
GPS Address: 120 Bloomfield Farm Road, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444



More Questions?

Please contact Ilana Grubin 215-247-5777 x127, or via email igrubin@upenn.edu

We are looking forward to seeing you!