



## At Wildflowers Nature School Summer 2017

### PROGRAM & PHILOSOPHY

#### **PHILOSOPHY**

Education has come so far from the original, innate way that humans learned for thousands of years. With extended family always around in natural settings, kids used to observe, explore, imitate, question, and watch their mentors in a natural setting. They learned by discovery, experimentation and very keen awareness. At Wildflowers Nature School, we try to allow the space for that unfolding of inquisitiveness and exploration, for experiencing the wonder and the spirit in special moments in nature. For in those moments lies the heart of education that will last a lifetime.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Running with the innate exuberant wonder of a child towards nature, we nurture imagination, inquisitiveness, confidence, creativity, resourcefulness and a connection to, gratitude for and understanding of the world around them. Through stewardship, nature arts, sustainable living skills, and utilization of resources available to a child in a natural setting, children develop gratitude & a love of nature. That connection to nature will be a treasure that children can continually return to in their life for growth, values, compassion, wisdom and joy in their lives.

#### **CAMP SIZE & RATIO**

Our size is an expression of our belief in "mentoring". The main way that children learn is by imitation, and most people learn best by relationship. We nurture listening, caring for each other, and noticing the special gifts of each child. In each session, we have 14 kids and 2 or more "mentors" (some call teachers or camp counselors). Please check out the bios of our highly qualified staff at [www.earthcamp.org](http://www.earthcamp.org).

#### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

We will spend our days doing a variety of outdoor activities, catered to the children's ages & interests. Just some of the possible activities may be: archery, sustainability skills such as building with cob & willow, raising food & animals including apple pressing and cheese making, primitive skills and camp craft (fire, forts/ shelters, etc.), arts & crafts (nature art, flower crafts, weaving with plants, etc.), tree elements such as climbing silks or rapelled tree climbing, exploring, tracking, creating habitats, team building (problem solving, creating, games, etc.), water & mud play, animal imitations, whittling, orienteering (compass & "lostproofing" skills), photography, woodworking, & games that help with nature awareness. This is all balanced with the truly necessary nature play that kids invent.

## HOURS & DAYS & AGES

All weeks of camp are for ages 5 to 12. During camp we will split into age groups as appropriate. All weeks, camp is held Monday-Friday from 9am – 3pm.

- **Week 1:** June 12 – 16
- **Week 2:** June 19 – 23
- **Week 3:** July 10 – 14

## CIT (Counselor in Training)

Ages 12-16 are invited to join us, and be mentored by our staff in the ways of a nature mentor. They will assist the young children in their adventures & needs, as they learn from us how to be aware of both the needs of children and the environment that is full of wonder to share with them. Regular rates apply to ages 12 & 13, as the law considers them in our maximum number of kids. But for ages 14-16, we only charge \$100/week for our time and planning spent mentoring them to learn to be mentors.

## RATES & FINANCIAL POLICIES

### CAMP FEES

Tuition this year is by sliding scale. Please choose an amount that reflects your income (or assets) and your charitable heart, sharing the gift of nature connection camp with kids whose families might otherwise feel they couldn't do. If you need help even paying even the lowest figure below, please ask and it's possible we may be able to give you a combination of scholarship & work trade, depending on how many parents pay the higher figure. If we receive over a certain amount, we'll allocate the remainder to scholarships. I would like to think that all kids could have the opportunity to experience the nature connection of Earth Camp. All that said, please don't turn away from Earth Camp for any guilt of not "paying enough". You have my trust and support that everyone will just do what's right for their family. If you want more guidelines, suggestions, or have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. It's all confidential, of course. Please see my blog on the new sliding scale on earthcamp.org for more info.

- **\$325 to \$450** per week, sliding scale

### CARPOOLING REBATES

Though we're on almost 5 acres, our small camp is located at our home on a small narrow lane that we share with 2 other households. So carpooling is very, very important here to respect the neighbors and in keeping with our philosophy of contributing to a sustainable society. The new sliding scale begs for a different incentive than our usual "carpooling discount". So this year, we're giving rebates at a rate of \$5 each trip. **This is for 2 or more families.** If one family drops off & picks up another family's child at the same time as theirs, that's a "carpool" and both families get the rebate. So if you carpool both ways all 5 days that week, you'll get a rebate of \$50. We'll calculate that based on the sign-in form, so be sure you fill that box in with who you carpool with. We may issue checks on Friday or may mail it within 30 days. If you prefer to donate the rebate to our scholarship program, just let us know (Gratitude!).

### SUBJECT TO SIGN-UP

In the rare case that there not enough children are signed up for a particular week, we reserve the right to cancel that week (with appropriate refund) or offer it at a higher rate or if there are less than 8 kids signed up for a session or day, we may drop to one mentor.

## **REFUNDS**

All refunds (regardless of reason) will only be given on the following schedule:

More than 60 days notice: full refund.

30-60 days notice: 50% refund.

Less than 30 days notice: no refunds.

## **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

There is no after camp care. All campers need to be picked up by 3:00. Late fees will be assessed for late pick-ups. If parents pick up their child more than 15 minutes late without previous arrangement, they may be billed \$10 every 10 minutes they are late. If it is not paid by Thursday of camp week, child cannot return on Friday until paid.

## **TERMINATION OF CONTRACT**

This arrangement can be terminated or modified by the director if the safety or well-being of the other children or mentors are at risk from the child's behavior or if the parents do not uphold the responsibilities contained herein. In these cases, a refund of tuition will be given on a pro-rated basis.

# **DETAILS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## **HOW TO SIGN UP**

Please check the website to make sure there is space in the week you wish your children to attend. Call the camp director if you want to be sure. Then print out the registration form from the website, fill it out & mail it in with the fee (see above on "sliding scale") payable to "Wildflowers Nature School" to the address on the form. That's all it takes to reserve a spot for your child. If you can take care of all of the paperwork all at once, that's always best. But if not, you can mail it in later, up to 2 weeks before camp starts (then we'll start hounding you for the forms). There's a link on the website for all the forms. There will be one more when you arrive.

## **WAITLIST**

Children will be enrolled on a first come, first served basis, with priority assigned to returning campers and alumni of Wildflowers Nature School. A waiting list will be kept for additional enrollment, following same priority.

## **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURE**

Drop-off is at 9am. See above for pick-up times. Please NEVER drop off or pick up a child without signing in or out. Please remind anyone else who is driving to sign in & out. **Visual or verbal acknowledgement by a staff member is required upon delivery of children.** Process: Sign child in on the sign-in sheet, read wipe-off board for important messages for the day, put daypack with lunch & water in it on tarp, and deliver children to us. **NOTE:** Children can only go home with people who are listed on the "Identification and Emergency Information" form. In the event of an emergency, people will be contacted in the order in which you list them on the form. If your child is being picked up by someone other than parent or carpool parent, please let us know that he/she is to be picked up by one of these authorized people for that specific day. Appropriate car seats are required by everyone driving a child that still legally requires one.

## **READINESS**

All children must be able to hike up a steep hill on a hot day without assistance. All children must be able to use toilet by themselves. If you believe your child may experience separation anxiety or have toileting accidents or

other stress behaviors, please call Bev to discuss a plan. Please do this 30 days before camp if possible, so that if we decide together that your child is not ready for camp, we can offer the space to someone else. Also, that way we can include the information at a staff mtg (confidential of course), so that all mentors are able to assist your child as best as possible.

## **PARKING**

Wildflowers is located on a private drive that is shared with 2 other households. PLEASE, for this program to continue, it is imperative that everyone give the neighbors the utmost respect by driving slowly and only parking in the driveway area of the school. Please pull as far in as possible to allow for the other cars to park in our driveway. **Please don't park along the shared driveway.** Carpooling is strongly encouraged and financially rewarded. Apples, grapes, prickly pear & raspberries on driveway belong to neighbors. Most importantly, be VERY CAREFUL pulling in & out, as children are hard to see. Keep children close to you when walking so that they are safe at pick-up & drop-off times. IT'S IMPERATIVE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF EARTH CAMP THAT YOU DRIVE SLOWLY & RESPECTFULLY DOWN THE DRIVEWAY! If there are repeated infractions of this rule, we may not allow your child to register for Earth Camp in the future.

## **MENTORS (counselors/teachers)**

Our Earth Camp Director, Jamie Malone, is returning this year. There will be one experienced mentor working with her at all times. Please see our website for updates.

## **COMMUNICATION**

If you need to get hold of us during the day, text is best. See bottom of handbook for phone #'s of directors and owner. If you don't have text capabilities then do call, but you may have to call a few of us, as we don't usually answer phone when we're with kids. Personal info that might be needed on some days, such as whether a child didn't eat breakfast, had a "melt-down", stayed up very late the night before, etc. is best communicated verbally with us. If anything major occurs (such as divorce, death in the family, etc.), please try to contact us the day before. It can be hard to pay full attention when parents are coming & going at drop-off time. If you have a child with a specific concern, let's make a plan together ahead. Every child is different. Together, we can make a plan that works for you and your child.

## **ABSENCESES**

All parents must let us know if your child will be absent on that day. Please send a text to Director or Owner (see below for #'s).

## **FOOD & WATER PROVIDED BY FAMILIES**

Each child should have, in their daypack, a **quart** water bottle, that will not drip when on its side, and have their name on the bottom AND top in permanent marker. We'll have a large thermos of water for refills, but sometimes we'll be out on the land, so please send your child with a large enough bottle. Please send your child with a snack and a nutritious lunch each day. With all the activities we do, your child's body will need all the energy it can get, so please pack more food than you would guess he or she would need. Items with sugar are not appropriate for sustained energy as they cause blood sugar to spike & dip (& socially, sugar becomes a distractive issue here). Campers should bring their lunches in non-disposable containers that are re-usable and have no advertisements or licensed characters or intense graphics on them (baskets, boxes, cloth bags, zip-arounds, etc.). On occasion, if it's part of the curriculum, we may serve food to the kids. Commonly, they try the goat milk and produce they harvest. There's a fair amount of grazing on foods growing here, wild and cultivated. We teach them which foods they can graze on here and what to be careful to avoid. If your child has food sensitivities, please note that on form. For severe sensitivities, please also speak live to the director.

## **SUSTAINABLE EATING**

From the most local of our environments (our bodies) to the most global, the most sustainable food system thrives on fresh, locally produced foods. Please try to send zero waste lunches. Any waste coming to camp with child will go home with child. Feel free to ask for or consult the “Wildflowers Food Policy” for additional program philosophies (can be found at [www.wildflowerkids.org](http://www.wildflowerkids.org) ).

## **CLOTHING**

This is an outdoor program. It is absolutely imperative that you provide the proper clothing, as we will be sure your child is protected from the elements. We spend all of our time outside every day, rain or shine, freezing or blazing. We are outside the whole day and for overnights, all night without a tent. Sometimes we have mud play or messy art. Please have your child either wear or bring in his/her backpack: 1) 2 warm layers (like a long sleeve shirt & a sweatshirt for instance), 2) if there's fog or chance of rain (& everyone in week 3), send waterproof raincoat and rainpants, 3) shorts & t-shirt or summer dress, 5) swimsuit, 6) sunhat, and 7) one full change of clothes. Yes, EVERY day they need clothes for both cool & hot weather. We recommend closed toe shoes. On hot days, you could put sandals in the backpack for later. Bare feet are allowed here, but be sure they have some shoes in case we go crawling in berry bushes, etc. Layering clothing is great, as temperatures can range greatly from the 50's to the 90's. We will assume that if you want sunscreen on your child, you will do so before dropping him/her off, as we are not allowed to apply it. Please label everything they bring to camp.

## **FORMS**

The following forms must be kept on file and parent is responsible for updating when necessary: 1. Registration Form, 2.Contract & Waiver (which references Calendar & this document), 3. Identification and Emergency Information, 4. Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment, 5. Health & Safety Information, 6. Immunization Record (blue card) 7. Acknowledgement of receipt of: “Notification of Parents’ Rights”, “Caregiver Background Check Process,” and “Consumer Awareness Information.” We’re also including an optional form for Medication Permission. At our most recent 1<sup>st</sup> Aid refresher course, we discussed that many of these kids have not had a bee sting before nor other things they might show severe allergy to. It would be a good idea in an extreme possibly life or death reaction to have permission to give a child's dose of Benadryl if they go into an anaphylactic reaction to something. We'll only administer what is authorized by parents. I suggest writing in “Children's Tylenol”; “Arnica” (homeopathic – calms most bigger owies); “Benadryl”; & “sunscreen”. Please don't rely on us to apply sunscreen, though. We suggest applying it every morning before sending them here.

## **ILLNESS**

If a child has had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours before a camp morning, please don't bring them to camp: fever, vomiting, upset stomach, stomach ache, sore throat, diarrhea, skin problems, body aches, sneezing, coughing, eye/ nose drainage or any symptom that might indicate they are coming down with something. For your children & other's, please allow them having a full day of wellness before returning. If child shows signs of illness here, we will call his/her parents to come pick up their child. If medication is necessary for your child, there is a state form to fill out before we are allowed to administer it. **DO NOT SEND ANY MEDICATION WITH YOUR CHILD, INCLUDING VITAMINS, HERBS, HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES, & for kids under 7, sunscreen.** If there have been contagious illnesses recently in your house, please inform us (flu, etc.).

## **TICKS**

Of course, a camp with a focus on nature is going to spend time in wild natural areas. Please check your child EVERY SINGLE DAY when your child returns home. Long pants with tick repellent on them add protection. Deer ticks are extremely small. Ask us for a “tick card” if you aren't positive how to ID them. If you find a tick, take it to

Sonoma County Health Dept for test and let us know results, please. If it bit your child (or you), see a Dr. versed in Lyme Disease.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

To avoid conflicts, we ask that ALL toys and electronics stay home. Items from the natural world can be donated or loaned to our Nature Shelves/Table at any time and/or shared in circle. Earth Camp is not responsible for any lost or broken items and may temporarily confiscate any items that become an issue.

## **CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The greatest block to today's children connecting to nature are electronic devices. None are allowed here at any time, whether off & in the backpack or not. If there is an extenuating circumstance where you need your child to keep a cell phone (change in pickup, etc.), or they have belongings that include a device are going with them somewhere else after camp, please make arrangements with one of the mentors.

## **TV & VIDEO/COMPUTER GAMES**

We request families to be careful about selecting quality & quantity of media for children in the days prior to & during camp. Children DO act out what they see in the media, which *does affect other children*. Shows of real animals are the exception, as that's often the only way to see many of the animals we discuss and track.

## **DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR**

We expect all children to treat staff and other children with respect, honesty and courtesy. Any behavior which endangers any child will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to the following: fighting or hitting or harming, teasing, threatening, the use of inappropriate language or frequent disruption. First offense receives a verbal warning. Second offense receives a discussion with the director and a phone call to parents. If we feel a child is creating a situation where he/she or other children are not safe (physically or emotionally), we'll institute a strict policy of sending the child home immediately after each infraction. Parents need to be available to pick up in these situations. If the behavior continues, a child may be dismissed from our program with the fee pro-rated.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

The garden and nature space are a very important part of your child's program here. Parents are welcome to attend community work days, both to help create a flourishing environment for your child and to create a sense of community. Offers to volunteer, whether during camp to help with the children, or during non-camp hours to assist with projects here, are greatly appreciated.

## **FOUND OBJECTS AT CAMP**

Anything found on the property belongs to the school & owners, including but not limited to arrowheads and other historical artifacts, special rocks, etc. We do encourage nature collections by children so there will be plenty of natural objects they're allowed to take.

## **WORKING FARM**

Wildflowers is a working farm. We have gardens and chickens and goats. There are inherent dangers on a farm including, but not limited to, shelters made of scrap lumber & chicken wire, fencing that ranges from scrap wire to electric wire to barbed wire, tractors, tools, fertilizers, etc. Farm kids get used to the life cycle of animals. They may witness births or deaths. They may find dead animals if we find gophers in the traps, or wild animal kills, or death by natural causes. We also have a nature museum of pelts & frozen animals we show a few times. Kids also will know that *when they aren't here* we do sometimes kill our animals to eat them & we may serve our farm-raised goat or chicken or goat cheese or goat milk to those without dietary restrictions noted on their forms.

Seeing where food comes from (both animal & plant) is so important. We'll touch on the benefits of eating food you know the origin of and eating meat that's raised humanely with love. If you're vegetarian, note that on Health form so we can verbally honor that with your child.

For questions about Earth Camp, or the registration procedure:

Please direct all email inquiries to: [info@earthcamp.org](mailto:info@earthcamp.org)

For phone calls, please contact:

Earth Camp Director, Jamie Malone: (707) 321-5753

Earth Camp Co-Owner and Mentor, Bev Buswell: (707) 479-1052

For bookkeeping questions, either call Jamie or Farmer Buzz (Mark Buswell): (707) 481-2710

POLICIES & PROCEDURES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Rev. 5-16-16