

Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

We are delighted that your child will be spending their days making amazing summer memories at the Morris Arboretum & Gardens. For over ten years, we have been offering summer programming that is uniquely designed for children to experience over 100 acres of gardens and natural spaces at 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 4 to 5), will spend their summer headquartered on the public side of the Morris, where most visitor events take place. Parents will go up the hill and park in our main visitor lot (rain or shine) and meet our counselors near the parking lot. During inclement weather, drop-off and pick-up will be at the back of the Widener Visitor Center in the event tent.

Our older campers, Bloomfield Buddies (ages 6 to 10), 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, and our Springfield Mill. These campers will also cross the street regularly to our main visitor gardens.

REGISTRATION POLICIES

Register and pay online (<https://experience.morrisarboretum.org/Login.aspx>). Completed forms, which include the child's emergency contacts, medical info, parent permission and 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 Morris Arboretum & Gardens. 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

Morris's members receive a discount on summer camp and other great benefits. To learn more about becoming a member contact the Membership Office at 215.247.5777 x205.

WEATHER & CANCELTION 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 gear! In the case of lightning, activities will be moved indoors. The Hillcrest Building (headquarters for Little Lightning Bugs) is air-conditioned. Bloomfield Barn (headquarters for Bloomfield Buddies) has some air-conditioning and fans, and campers will have access to space in the Horticulture Center during excessive heat warnings.

While normal rain or a lightning storm will not deter us from camp activities, the 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 canceled due to weather, then a half-tuition refund will be issued to all registrants. If less than half of a camp week is canceled, then no refund will be issued.

Parent Handbook

Typical Camp Schedule	Bloomfield Buddies & Lightning Bugs
8:45 to 9:00	Camper drop-off
9:00 to 9:30	Morning meeting; 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; nature games
12:00 to 12:30	Lunch; story time
12:30 to 1:00	Free choice activities
1:00 to 2:00	Arts & crafts; science time
2:00 to 2:45	Water play; afternoon games. LLB walk to Widener for pick-up.
2:45 to 3:00	Closing circle; cleanup/pack for home
3:00 to 3:15	Pick up at Bloomfield car line / Lightning Bugs @ Widener

WATER PLAY

In addition to morning creek walks about once a week, we will do water play (sprinklers, splash pad, baby pools, water games, etc.) on many afternoons, especially when there is a heat advisory. Please send a pair of water shoes (waterproof sandals, crocs, or old sneakers are all ok), a bathing suit or change of clothes, and a small towel on Monday. We will keep water shoes and extra dry clothes at camp and send them home on Friday. Extra clothes should be in a sealed bag and labeled with your child's name.

WHAT TO BRING

Please dress your child in clothes that can get dirty! Make sure your child's shoes are comfortable to walk in since we will be spending a lot of time on our feet. Extra socks are helpful since morning dew on the grass might get our feet a little wet. Some children don't mind, but others really benefit from dry socks. Flip flops and open-toes shoes are **NOT** permitted for running games and hiking. Some sturdy open-toed sandals are OK as water shoes, but these cannot be worn all day. Hats, comfortable clothing, and sneakers are strongly encouraged.

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, some snacks that can be carried on a hike, refillable water bottle, change of clothes, and water shoes.** Water shoes will stay at camp throughout the week and come home on Friday. 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 reapply as needed with permission (see Registration Form) for younger campers. While ticks have not posed a serious problem at our camp in the past, they are prevalent throughout Pennsylvania, and tick-borne illnesses can be very serious. We suggest that tick checks be done every day when campers get home.

Parent Handbook

CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

Our camp environment is informal and fun, but we do provide structure and routines throughout the day. 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 Morris staff, plants and wildlife. Disruptive behavior affects the fun, safety, and overall quality of the camp experience for everyone. Parents will *not* be notified of all minor infractions as this is a normal part of child development and happens every day, but the camp director will get in touch with parents when there are bigger behavior concerns. In the event of repeated misbehavior, Morris staff 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 hikes and interpretation 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.

Please include all pertinent medical information about your child on their camper health form. If your child will be bringing any medications to camp (asthma inhalers, EpiPens, etc.), they must be in a sealed bag with your child's name. The bag needs to hold the medication and the prescription information from a physician.

In the event of a family emergency during camp hours, please contact 215.247.5777 x125, or ask a Visitor Services representative to reach our camp counselors, who will be called on portable radios.

CANCELATION POLICIES

Planning ahead can be challenging for everyone, but please be mindful when making your camp registrations. We often cannot accommodate requests to change scheduled weeks since we fill up quickly.

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

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.

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- to 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?

- Please mark on your camp forms any friend or relative who has permission to pick up your child. If you need to make additions or changes, please do so by email at igrubin@upenn.edu.

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

- Drop off begins at 8:45 am each day. We usually begin morning meeting at 9 am, and by 9:30 am our campers could be off exploring the gardens. Please let us know ahead of time if there will be a late drop off or early pickup since our campers have over 100 acres to explore and it can be very tricky for counselors to make separate arrangements. The camp director will help figure out the best timing and location to find the group (usually snack or lunchtime). If a camper will be late due to unforeseen circumstances, please call 215.247.5777 x125 and leave a message. Afternoon pickup is from 3:00 – 3:15 pm. There is a grace period of one late pick-up, but after the first infractions, campers picked up after **3:15 pm** will be charged a late fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes late.

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

- Unfortunately, families cannot stay on the grounds after a child is dropped off. However, they are welcome to walk the Morris public gardens once we officially open at 10 am. You may also stay for a visit after pickup at 3 pm.

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 on crafts, splashing in the sprinklers, and doing games and activities 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 discourage campers from sharing lunches or snacks and will place campers with food allergies at separate tables per parent request.

What do you do when it is raining?

- A light sprinkle will not deter us from being outdoors. 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.

DROP-OFF & PICKUP PROCEDURES

Little Lightning Bugs: Ages 4 to 5

Drop Off/Pick up Location: Top of hill near main visitor parking lot. In the case of rain, pick up and drop off will be at the event tent behind the Widener Visitor Center.

Drop-off: 8:45 - 9:00 am

Pickup: 3:00 - 3:15 pm

Campers ages 4 to 5 will begin and end their camp day in the open field near the Widener Visitor Center, accessed from the main entrance on Northwestern Avenue. Please park in the parking lot and walk your child to their counselors. 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 pickup is not permitted.** If you arrive before 8:45 am, please wait with your child until a counselor is present. During inclement weather, please go straight to the event tent behind the Widener Visitor Center for both drop-off and pickup. 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 x125 and speak with an Arboretum staff member. Please be respectful to Counselors and Morris staff and pick up your camper no later than 3:15 pm each day. There is a grace period of one late pick-up, but after the first infractions, campers picked up after 3:15 pm will be charged a late fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes late.

Bloomfield Buddies: Ages 6 to 10

Car Line Drop-Off/Pickup Location: Bloomfield Farm (Please see map below)

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

(Directly across the road from the main entrance to Morris)

Drop off: 8:45 - 9:00am

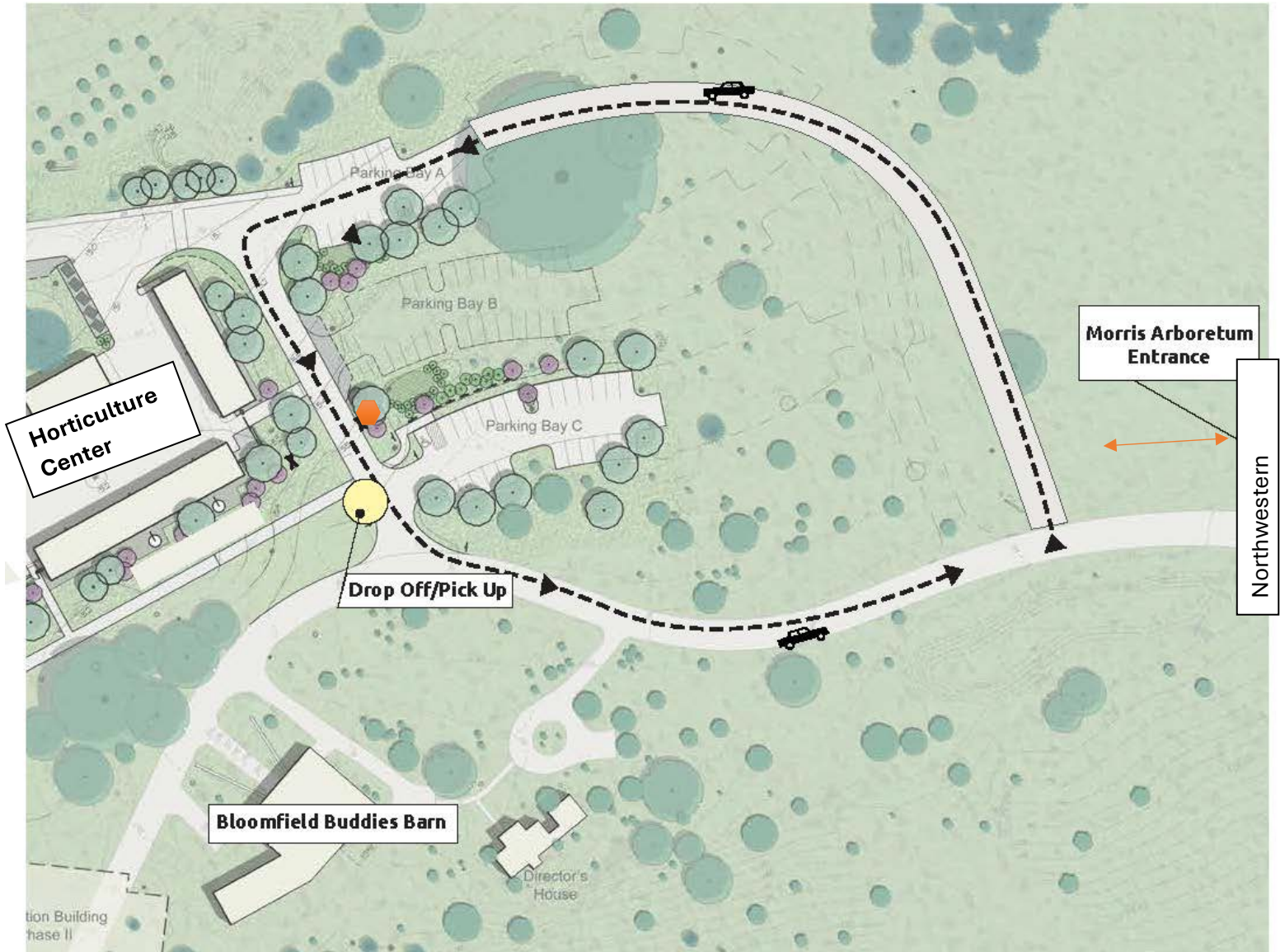
Pick up: 3:00 - 3:15pm

Bloomfield campers will be dropped off and picked up in a car line at Bloomfield Farm (across the street from the main visitor entrance of the Morris Arboretum & Gardens). There will be 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.

Please do not start lining up for pickup before 3pm – kids will be dismissed at 3pm and lining up excessively early just creates a very long traffic line around the loop and blocks the road for our horticulture staff who frequent those roads and driveways. Students should exit the car on the *passenger side only* at the designated pickup 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 x125 and speak with a Morris staff member. Please be respectful to Counselors and Morris staff and pick up your camper between 3 to 3:15 pm each day. **(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!