



The Natick Community Organic Farm

Community Programs Policies

2021-2022

Fall, Winter, Spring

Welcome children and families to our Community Programs! Read on to learn about how to insure your child has a safe and fun adventure at the farm. If you have a question, please contact communityprograms@natickfarm.org.

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Program Notes

Communication

Email: Updates, cancellations, and additional program information. Be sure to add the farm email address to your Contacts (to avoid the Spam filter).

Telephone: Only very last minute changes.

Contact us:

- communityprograms@natickfarm.org
- 508-655-2204 ext. 14

Refund Policy

NCOF does not offer refunds after the stated deadline on the Community Programs webpage. If you request a refund before the deadline, there is a \$25 refund fee. We do not offer partial refunds or credits. Pro-rated refunds will be applied if registering for a program after the program start date. We do not offer refunds if a child is asked to leave a program due to behavior issues.

Weather Policy

Natick Community Farm does not cancel due to weather. As a working farm, we do not shut down or stop working due to rain, snow, or cold.

If there is thunder and lightning, we have designated shelters on the property to take shelter. In limited cases, we may call for children to be picked up if thunder lasts for an extended time.

NCOF programs follow the Natick Public Schools weather policy. If NPS cancels school due to snow or extreme weather, NCOF programs will be canceled as well. If NPS has a delayed opening, morning NCOF programs will be canceled, while afternoon programs will run. Please check your local news for cancellation info.

Bathroom Policy

Children are expected to be fully potty-trained. Educators can assist with toileting but are not required to change diapers or accidents.

Late Pick Up Fees

A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged after a 5 minute grace period.

Water & Snacks

- Water Bottle: mandatory for all programs 1+ hours
- Snacks: Pack a snack for all programs running 2+ hours.
- Due to the prevalence of peanut allergies, no peanut snacks please.
- We may sample farm produce. Please alert us to your child's allergies.

Sunscreen & Bug Spray

- Parents supply and apply both as needed (bug spray must be applied off-farm).

First Aid & Poison Ivy

- Scrapes & cuts: we will wash with soap and water and apply a Band-Aid. We do not apply any antibiotic cream, sunscreen, or bug spray.
- If we think your child has been exposed to poison ivy, we will wash their hands with Tecnu soap.

Photos & Electronics

- The Farm often takes pictures to use in its marketing materials. If you would prefer not to have your child's picture taken, please let us know at info@natickfarm.org.
- No electronics on the farm, including cameras.

Program Ratios

- Each program has a max of twelve spots, and may have up to two teachers.
- Age 3-5 programs that are woods-based and/or 3 hrs.+ always have two teachers.

Dressing for Outdoor Farm Weather

There's nothing more invigorating than a four-season, outdoor experience at the Natick Community Organic Farm!

However, proper dressing techniques, base layers, and outerwear are essential for your child's safety and fun. Remember: *"There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes."*

OVERVIEW

Adjusting for Age & Weather

- While some of these guidelines are geared to younger children, parents of older youth should adapt this information accordingly.
- Our guidelines address the extremes of rain and cold. However, even in the spring and fall, New England weather is fickle, so be sure that your child has the right gear for the (changing) weather.

Ideal Upper Body Clothing

- Base layer (next to skin): polypropylene, fleece, silk, wool
- Middle layer: fleece or wool sweater/jacket
- Outer layer: waterproof rain jacket or winter coat

Ideal Lower Body Clothing

- Base layer (next to skin): polypropylene, fleece, silk, wool
- Middle layer: fleece
- Outer layer: waterproof rain or puddle pants, or snow pants

Spare Clothes (2+ hour programs)

- Mandatory for **Farm Sprouts, Woodland Adventures, and Fridays on the Farm**
- Pack a full change of clothes (shirt, pants, wool socks, underwear) in your child's backpack.
- Give the farm educators another full change of clothes to keep at the farm.

Getting Dirty & Labels

- Send your child with clothing and footwear that CAN and WILL get dirty.
- Label all clothes, boots, water bottles, and backpacks.

BASE LAYERS

- Polypropylene, fleece, silk, and/or wool for upper and lower body long underwear
- Avoid cotton next to skin---it absorbs moisture and keeps the body chilled
- Two+ lighter layers are better than one heavy layer. Layering allows the child to modify body temperature when weather and activity levels change. Layering also allows for trapped air to warm the body.

OUTER LAYERS

Rain Jacket and/or Winter Coat

- Waterproof and hood

Puddle or Rain Pants, and/or Snow Pants

- Waterproof---very important
- Bibbed puddle, rain and snow pants preferred

Mittens (pack 2 extra)

- Waterproof---very important
- Roomy enough to fit a pair of stretchy gloves underneath
- A velcro seal or a zipper are ideal for younger children

Stretchy Gloves (pack 2 extra)

- Essential for snack time eating in the winter, or when temps rise

Boots & Wool Socks

- Waterproof
- Rated for cold weather

Hats

- Full coverage wool or fleece hat, balaclava or ski mask

RESOURCES

Used

- Local children's resale stores
- On-line "deal of the day" sites
- Craigslist
- NCOF has a limited "lending closet"

New

- REI
- Natick Outdoor Store
- Sierra Trading Post
- Biddle and Bop
- Campmor
- LL Bean
- **Polarn O. Pyret
- Marmot
- North Face
- Bog Boots (farm favorite, and a combined rain and snow boot)

**Polarn O. Pyret Gear Discount

NCOF families get a 15% discount on full-priced outerwear

https://www.polarnopyretusa.com/outdoor_schools

Click "Program Application"

Enter your information and provide the name and address of the Forest Gnome program

Forest Gnomes

117 Eliot Street

Natick, MA 01760

Covid-19 Policies

Masks & Distancing

- Outdoors: no mask
- Indoors: Staff and children must wear masks, per the Town of Natick. Parents must pack two (2) masks for their child.
- We acknowledge the 3-6 ft. distancing protocol.

Sanitizing

Hand sanitizer is available for each program group and in common areas.

Educators will have a cleaning kit to use when needed.

Illness during Programming

If a child becomes ill during programming, we have designated a quarantine space for them until they are picked up. There must also be an emergency contact that can pick the child up at any time during programming if they become ill or injured.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for checking their child's temperature before and after programming for any signs of illness related to Covid-19. If a child is showing symptoms, the parent must notify communityprograms@natickfarm.org right away and keep the child home. The child must get a Covid test and be cleared to return to the programs.

Behavioral Guidelines

On the Farm there are a lot of ways to be. Our guests are invited to be happy, be curious, be excited, be engaged, and to be respectful. The Natick Community Organic Farm is a working farm; everything you see, touch, and taste was grown or cared for by our farmers. We want you to be part of that process as our guest, something you can do by your actions while on the Farm.

We ask that all visitors to the Farm help us care for our animals by not running or yelling, so as not to scare them. We ask that guests be careful where they walk and what they touch as to not damage our crops. For program participants, the expectations are broadened to include respecting the other members of our community. Appropriate behavior is encouraged at all times, inappropriate behavior will be corrected, and unacceptable behavior will be dealt with in a linear fashion.

1. At the first instance of unacceptable behavior, NCOF staff will discuss it with the child's caregiver. The Community Programs Coordinator will email a follow up.
2. The second instance will result in the child being asked to leave for the day. The Community Programs Coordinator will also follow up.
3. On the third event the child will be uninvited from participating in future Farm programming. This communication will come from the Community Programs Coordinator.

Unacceptable behaviors include: cruelty to the animals, violence towards others, gross disrespect, swearing and foul language, not listening to their educators, and willful destruction of crops, structures, or produce.

No refunds will be issued if a child is asked to leave a program due to poor behavior. Please note that the three strike rule is subjective and will scale up if the first instance of behavior is severe.

Behavioral Meeting

The Community Programs Coordinator and educators will call a behavioral meeting at either the second or third strike, depending on the severity of the behavior. This meeting will determine if the child can return to the program