

# HOME BASE LEARNING CENTER

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

2021-2022

Home Base Learning Center is a nature-based, experiential, and holistic education program and parent cooperative. In the primary context of nature and with a focus on community and project-based learning, our program is aimed at supporting the intellectual (including academic), social, emotional, and physical development of young people, grades K-8.

Home Base is for homeschool families seeking a professionally-staffed and parent-supported consistent learning community for their children, where Positive Youth Development, Social Justice, and Earth Stewardship are the guiding values.

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## WELCOME TO HOME BASE LEARNING CENTER

Inherent in our philosophy is the view that young people are strong, capable, and naturally curious about their environment; worthy of our respect and our celebration of their increasing independence; and learn best by directly experiencing physical reality. We believe that lengthy periods of immersion in nature, in weather of all kinds, teaches children to trust in their abilities, to become intimately acquainted with their natural surroundings, and to orient themselves as interconnected with and stewards of the earth. The richness of the natural landscape supports young people's eager curiosity and ingenuity for creative interaction with people and the environment. Rain, snow, ice, wind, and heat over the changing seasons provide elemental parameters and opportunities. We believe that children benefit from the presence of adults (both professional educators and parents within the community), who care about them, trust them, encourage exploration and risk-taking, and are engaged in their own learning and risk-taking.

We embrace the spirit of family-centered, cooperative education and welcome parent participation within and outside of our program hours. At Home Base we foster a spirit of community that allows for individual strengths and weaknesses, and for differences in energies and commitments. We will enhance this spirit throughout the year, and grow and sustain our community, through volunteerism and regular family gatherings, parent education and speaker series, potlucks and all-family campouts, and regular formal and informal communication between educators and families.

We are excited to be a part of a growing outdoor education movement in the United States that has risen out of the environmental education, Scouting, camping, and early childhood movements in Europe and the U.S. over the past 100+ years. The Spirit of Adventure Council and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) are a natural fit for educating children in what Robert Baden-Powell called "woods school," the kind of teaching-learning environment and human dynamic that inspires lifelong learning and active global citizenship.

Within these pages you will become acquainted with our mission and values, community culture and curriculum, and operating procedures and policies. Our program and policies are a reflection of and designed to support our guiding values/core developmental outcomes: Positive Youth Development, Social Justice, and Earth Stewardship. These policies apply to all members of the Home Base community: Children, caregivers, faculty, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

We are so happy to welcome you to our Home Base Learning Center community and are confident that you and your child will gain lifelong benefits from your experience here!

Dan Warren, Ph.D.

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Co-Founders, Home Base Learning Center

## GUIDING VALUES / CORE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Positive Youth Development  
Social Justice  
Earth Stewardship

### Positive Youth Development

Today, the most cutting-edge thinking about human development across the lifespan is holistic, dynamic, and emphasizes the relationship between the developing person and his or her context. This thinking represents an important evolution within the field of developmental science. It stands in stark contrast to outmoded ideas that reduce development down to a couple competing forces (e.g., nature versus nurture), or that see the person as something to be molded like a piece of clay or filled like an empty receptacle. We now know that there are many integrated and co-acting influences that make up the “ecology of human development,” from biology/physiology through culture, the physical ecology, and history. We also know that people are very effective agents in their own development, and that development is a lifelong endeavor.

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective<sup>1</sup> is one such holistic, dynamic, and relational view of human development that centers on the developing young person. The PYD Perspective has six core concepts:

1. Because of the potential for developmental change (plasticity) across the lifespan, all young people have strengths.
2. All contexts have strengths as well. These strengths are resources that may be used to promote positive youth development.
3. These resources are called “ecological assets.” They are the “social nutrients” needed for healthy development.
4. Ecological assets are found in families, schools, faith institutions, youth serving organizations, and the community more generally.
5. If the strengths of young people are combined with ecological assets, then positive, healthy development occurs.
6. We should be optimistic that it is in our power to promote positive development among ALL young people and to create more asset-rich settings that support development.

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<sup>1</sup> Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdóttir, S. Naudeau, S., Jelicic, H., Alberts, A. E., Ma, L., Smith, L. M., Bobek, D. L., Richman-Raphael, D., Simpson, I., Christiansen, E. D., & von Eye, A. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 25(1)*, 17-71.

In short, PYD emerges out of this dynamic relationship between the strengths of young people  $\leftrightarrow$  (and the) strong ecological assets within their contexts. How do we know that this is happening, that positive development is taking place? We know PYD is happening when we see the presence of “Five C’s”:

Competence – A positive view of one’s abilities. This tends to refer to social, academic, cognitive, and vocational skills and knowledge.

Confidence – An internal sense of worth and effectiveness. Consists of goals related to improving self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity, and belief in the future.

Connection – Building and strengthening mutually beneficial relationships with the natural world, with other people, and with institutions.

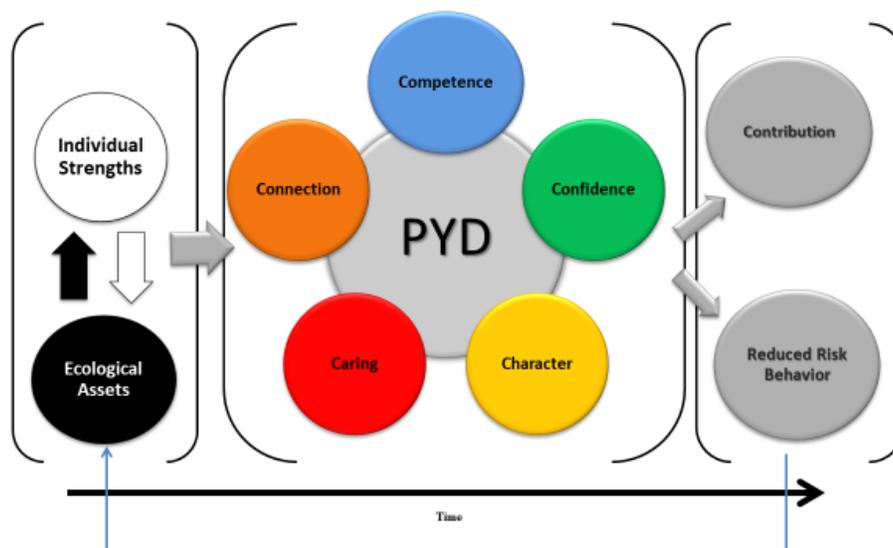
Caring – A sense of sympathy and empathy for and identification with other living beings.

Character – Respect for cultural norms, as well as a sense of right and wrong.

The “Five C’s” model of PYD refers to the needs of the whole child, not just one part. The goal is to understand how young people develop in all areas of their life and how development in one area (always) affects another. When these “Five C’s” are happening for a young person, we can imagine that he or she is not the only person to benefit. Positively developing, thriving young people contribute, in turn, to their contexts. So, we can say that from the “Five C’s” emerges a sixth “C”... Contribution:

Contribution – It is believed that, when the “Five C’s” combine within a person, then there is a sixth “C” that emerges. This refers to contribution to self, to family, to community, and to civil society in general.

## The 5 Cs Model of PYD



The Positive Youth Development perspective is a guiding value and a core developmental outcome at Home Base Learning Center. By nurturing the strengths and passions of our children and aligning those strengths with the ecological assets of our community, with the strengths and passions of our teachers and parents and of our incredible natural and designed spaces, we seek to nurture the positive development of our children, and of every member within our community. The opportunity to maximize one's chances to develop in healthy and positive ways *is* social justice and so we can think of PYD as a social justice perspective, which is our second guiding value/core developmental outcome.

## Social Justice

Social justice is both a goal and a process. As a goal, social justice means full and equal participation of all groups in society, where the distribution of resources is equitable and where all members are both self-determining (able to realize their full potential as human beings) and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). At the center of even this larger, societal-level goal is the relationship between self and other, and so the seeds of social justice are planted from the beginning of life in every interaction every day.<sup>2</sup>

As a process, social justice within education is a way of seeing and acting that strives for fairness and equity, and that helps to actualize each individual's human potential:

It is the practice of deep introspection and awareness of one's interconnectedness with the whole of life, from the closest influences to the most distant.

It is calling attention to our differences and similarities, honoring both individual and group identity.

It is intentionally introducing issues of fairness and unfairness, and calling ourselves to think critically and to take action.

It is understanding mechanisms of oppression and how to nonviolently challenge them.

It is being responsive to each other's developmental needs and trajectories and paying attention to our passions and burning questions.

It is cultivating a sense of place — of belonging to a particular patch of earth and sky — and a connection to the earth and its creatures.

Social justice, then, goes hand-in-hand with Earth Stewardship, our third guiding value/core developmental outcome.

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<sup>2</sup> Warren, A. E. A. (2012). Strengthening human potential for great love—compassion through elaborative development. In A. E. A. Warren, R. M. Lerner, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Thriving and spirituality among youth: Research perspectives and future possibilities* (pp. 91-127). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

## Earth Stewardship

Learning to value nature requires significant personal contact with it. It requires knowing what previous generations of children and youth knew, namely, that nature is where one can go to experience wild play, where natural materials can be used to build with and explore, where risks can be taken to grow and mature. Children are naturally interested in how nature “works” and so it is simply a matter of building on that interest. When we build on this natural interest, we start children down the road toward earth stewardship, even if at first they are not yet capable of understanding the ins and outs of biodiversity and the interconnectedness of living systems.

The development of earth stewardship involves:<sup>3</sup>

A sense of wonder, a kind of wonder that, if supported, will lead to individuals showing care for nature. David Sobel, a leading environmental educator, puts it succinctly, “One transcendent experience in nature is worth a thousand nature facts.”<sup>4</sup> In all earth stewards, no matter the form they take, we find a deep sense of wonder. And so, with children, we do not begin with the facts of nature but rather with nature’s power to elicit wonder.

Knowledge and understanding that fosters a nature-centric perspective, one that leads naturally to an understanding of humans as participants in a vast and complex natural world. All well-developed earth stewards have in common the fact that they ‘know their stuff’ – their medium and the methods needed to achieve their goals in being earth stewards. For example, John Muir had to learn the skills needed to climb cliffs, traverse glaciers, and scale tall trees in order to put himself in position to write his accounts of high adventures, accounts that captured the nation’s imagination and led to the nation’s preserving wilderness. The list of professionals and workers in general, using their special professions and their special workplaces to be earth stewards, is long indeed – but in each developed earth steward we find these same themes of knowledge and competence.

*“...in leading children to wonder about worms and to search out the homes of squirrels and to find in the outgoing tides diversity in the color of periwinkles, we set children on a path to eventually see that in this myriad of parts there are partnerships that turn the natural world into a marvelous and complex community, a community where the story is as much about cooperation and interdependence as it is about competition and survival of the fittest, a story that provides the key to what has kept our planet livable. And once children start to see the interconnections and interdependency of living beings, then they are ready to dive into explanations of just how this interdependence works to keep our planet livable and just how we can work to restore what nature has been doing long before we humans came on the scene.”*

*-W. George Scarlett*

<sup>3</sup> Scarlett, W. G. (in press). Rachel Carson and the development of earth stewards. *Journal of Character Education*.

<sup>4</sup> Sobel, D. (2008). *Childhood and Nature*. Stenhouse Publishers.

An ethical-spiritual perspective on the natural world, which has at its center respect for the intrinsic beauty and worth of the nonhuman world – such that nonhuman animals, mountains, plants, rivers, etc. – all evoke not only a sense of “is” but also a sense of “ought” – we ought to care about and for the natural world. In all cultural variations, we find in the development of earth stewards a shared ethical-spiritual perspective that emphasizes wonder, interdependence, and care for the natural world. Even young children can have an intuitive understanding and appreciation of the natural world and its ethical-spiritual meaning. With development comes increasingly more advanced ways of reflecting on this meaning such that what was once understood only implicitly and felt intuitively is eventually made explicit, and out of that emerges a developed earth steward.

No doubt, there are different pathways to becoming an earth steward, and no doubt, the endpoints of these pathways differ from one another. But they all have in common the development of a passion for caring for the natural world, and they all indicate a keen awareness of our smallness and interdependence.

## COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Establishing and maintaining a strong sense of community where children feel emotionally and physically safe is the center of the work at Home Base Learning Center. Such feelings of safety provide the greatest opportunity for growth both individually and as a group. To this end the teachers and children work together to understand and meet individual needs in conjunction with meeting the needs of the group; working to support children in developing agency with an eye on interdependence and interconnectedness. Whole child-development, including social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development is nurtured. Finally, due to the demanding nature of the program and the output it requires from children, much attention is given to the daily flow, ensuring that high-output times are balanced with opportunities for group and individual reflection and quiet; thereby maintaining a feeling of calm and safety.

These ideals are supported by the following:

### Community Agreements

Safety – Help create safe spaces in the physical, social, and emotional domains.

Love & Respect – This is the fabric that holds it all together, starting with self and extending outward into the community.

Optimism – We assume goodwill whenever possible and believe that we are all doing our best.

Proactivity – We seek to address matters at the earliest possible time with open hearts and forward-thinking minds.

Courage to Confront – Because we believe that conflict is an opportunity for learning and growth, we commit ourselves to using dialogue to resolve conflicts.

Responsibility/Accountability – Hold agreements with integrity. Be in communication when necessary.

## Scout Oath and Law

Members of Home Base Learning Center will also agree to the ideals outlined in the Scout Oath and Law.



## The Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

## The Scout Law

A Scout is...

Trustworthy – We tell the truth and keep our promises. Honesty is part of our conduct and people can depend on us.

Loyal – We support our families, other learners, our community, and the earth.

Helpful – We are concerned about other people. We do things willingly for others without pay or reward.

Friendly – We are a friend to all. We seek to understand others and respect those with ideas and customs other than our own.

Courteous – We are polite to everyone regardless of age or position. We know good manners makes it easier for people to get along together.

Kind – We understand there is strength in being gentle. We treat others as we want to be treated. We do not hurt or kill harmless things without reason.

Obedient – We follow the agreed upon rules of our family, community, and society. When we think these rules and laws are unfair, we strive to have them changed.

Cheerful – We look for the bright side of things. We cheerfully take what comes our way and work to make the best of the situation. We try to bring happiness to the world.

Thrifty – We work to make the most out of what we have. We protect and conserve natural resources and attempt to save for unseen needs. We thoughtfully use time and property.

Brave – We have the courage to stand for what we think is right and to face danger even when we are afraid.

Clean – We keep ourselves fit and clean. We help to keep our home and community clean.

Reverent – We respect the beliefs, traditions, and sacredness of other peoples and places; we respect and steward the land we are on and the living system it supports.

## Conflict Resolution

Let us strive to include, not exclude  
To show compassion to one another  
To refrain from criticism and accept each other's individuality  
To respect one another's bodies, feelings and differences  
To refrain from criticizing  
To refrain from physical and verbal violence  
To seek the help of others  
To live together in peace.  
-Whole Life Learning Center

The Home Base Learning Center staff is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all members of our Community. Conflict can be a great opportunity for learning and children are encouraged to work out conflicts as far as they can and when it is safe to do so. Teachers will be nearby to support and intervene when necessary. Whenever possible, concerns are addressed at the time that they occur. However, if this is not possible, children may be offered the opportunity to leave the group and talk with an available teacher or to "set aside" their concern until the next available moment.

Just as all people and situations are unique, so too are the conflicts and disagreements that arise. There are always many circumstances to consider; therefore, we employ a flexible conflict resolution strategy based on the ideas of nonviolent communication and restorative justice. Our resolution policy is designed to actively involve the learners, thus providing them an opportunity to develop the very necessary skill of diplomatic conflict resolution.

### Home Base Non-Violent Communication Techniques

We encourage each other and the children to:

1. Enter conflict resolution with the intention of finding resolution, not with the intention of finding fault or being "right."
2. Take time or find a space to breathe and relax a moment prior to conversation.
3. Express our own needs and feelings rather than accusing, blaming, or pointing fingers at others.
4. At the heart of many disagreements are misunderstandings, we strive to listen respectfully with the intention of really understanding another's point of view.
5. Be willing to take responsibility for our actions, even if no harm was intended. Avoid justifying ourselves.
6. Work together to find a solution that is acceptable to all parties by being willing to make concessions to find common ground.

## Discipline Policy

In order to establish these techniques as protocols, and to ensure that our learning community thrives in the safest possible environment, we have established a 3-tier model of problem solving combined with specific behavioral expectations and consequences. The safety of our community is paramount. We reserve the right to make decisions as situations present, if and when safety should become compromised. As per the social justice framework, Home Base Learning Center believes that all students are deserving of equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and treatment in their interactions with other community members.

Tier I consists of a 4 step problem-solving model designed to be used independently by students. Once invited to problem-solving by a peer, students may not refuse to participate.

Tier II would be implemented when adults deem a situation or behavior to be beyond the scope of peer resolution. Tier II interventions consist of problem-solving solutions introduced by staff members. Students are expected to abide by any such decisions.

Tier III is reserved for only the most serious behavioral issues. A team of staff members, along with parents, will meet to discuss the incident. At the close of discussion, solutions offered by a staff team will be non-negotiable.

## CURRICULUM

### A Culture for Learning

Home Base Learning Center strives to create a culture for learning by explicitly and implicitly promoting student independence and growth, open-ended inquiry, team spirit, and high expectations. It is a comprehensive program built on the Scouting curricula and infused with common core and next generation science standards.

Home Base engages three central tenets to achieve this.<sup>5</sup> First, relationships between young people and non-parental adults are key to positive development. Second, young people need to acquire skills that are meaningful and empower them to navigate the world more successfully. Third, young people need opportunities to assume leadership roles in meaningful ways.

To achieve the above, teachers are guided by the following ideas and philosophies of teaching and learning:

Project-Based Learning – Students gain knowledge and skills by working for extended periods of time to investigate and respond to authentic, engaging, and complex questions, problems, and/or challenges. The projects are the foundation for the authentic study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum.

Emerging Understandings – Children’s understanding will emerge, based on individual entry points into the topic at hand; as well as ways in which individual children, groups of children, and teacher guidance and facilitation work to construct their understandings.

Constructivist Approach to Teaching and Learning – Teachers and children work together to construct new understandings. Both are stakeholders in the process with the teacher often acting as facilitator of materials, experiences, culture/environment, etc.

Scouting – Home Base Learning Center is based on the ideals and curricula of the BSA. Each member will be registered as a Scout and will be required to adhere to the values and expectations in the Scout Oath and Law. Although students will be actively participating in Scouting activities, they may choose if they would like to be recognized publicly for their achievements or not.

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<sup>5</sup> Lerner, R. M. (2007). *The Good Teen: Rescuing Adolescence from the Myths of the Storm and Stress Years*. New York, NY: The Crown Publishing Group.

## Place-Based Learning / Outdoor Experience / Nature as Teacher

Attention to, appreciation of, and understanding of one's place in the natural world is the culture in which the curriculum sits. The outdoors will serve as the classroom whenever possible; utilizing local landscapes, opportunities, and experiences, specific to those available at New England Base Camp. Children will engage in projects and curricula in the outdoors, where they will learn and practice the skills of self-regulation, problem solving, cooperation, and negotiation. Children's whole selves—their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual lives—will be nurtured in the context of forming strong connections to the natural world and to their human community. Through this practice, we also aim to re-establish a healthy balance of indoor and outdoor time in young people's lives, as well as foster a sense of interdependence and care for the earth.

### A Day in the Life

In keeping with the belief that creating a space of physical, social, and emotional safety is of utmost importance, days at Home Base Learning Center will follow a predictable structure with established routines. Within these structures, there will be a fluid use of time and many opportunities for choice. However, children are expected to learn with their teachers, who have the responsibility of meeting the mission and goals of the school.

### Sample Daily Schedule

8:30-9:00	Arrival: Families will drop off their children at their designated area. Children and teachers will spend this time engaged in free-play as they ease their way into the day.
9:00-9:10	Walk to Cabin and Daily Housekeeping: Take care of belongings and get ready to start morning meeting.
9:15-9:45	Morning Meeting & Snack: Each day will begin with the whole group gathering together. This will be an opportunity to welcome everyone to the space and establish community for the day. Additionally, this will be used as time to review and or create learning goals for the day. Before morning workshops, children will break for snack.
10:00-10:30	Free-Play & Nature Exploration: Our version of "recess" where children enjoy unstructured play time outdoors around our cabin or in the forest.
10:30-12:00	Morning Workshops: During this time, children and teachers will engage in activities related to the theme, including reading, writing, and math. This will include teacher guided, student selected, indoor and outdoor time, 1-1 time with teachers, small group work, etc.

12:00-1:00	Lunch & Free-Play: Teachers and children will gather together for a meal with established routines and rituals that invite a mindful approach to mealtime. A minimum of 20 minutes will be devoted to sitting altogether, eating in community, followed by more outdoor unstructured, child-led, play time.
1:00-2:30	Afternoon Workshops: During this time, children and teachers will engage in activities related to the theme. This will include teacher-guided, student-selected, indoor and outdoor time, 1-1 time with teachers, small group work, etc.
2:30-3:00	Clean Up and Closing Activities: The space will be cleaned and organized for the day
3:00-3:15	Pickup Time

### Guiding Principles to Support a Group Learning Environment

Willingness to Engage in Activities and Lessons – Home Base learners should come prepared with a willingness to engage in activities and accept redirection when appropriate.

Ability to Attend – Home Base Learning Center supports development in the areas of concentration and focus; however, coming to Home Base with basic listening abilities is essential for individual and group learning.

Respect – Love and respect for all is at the forefront of what we do at Home Base Learning Center. We strive to be gentle with one another in words and actions; in doing so we provide space for ourselves and others to take risks in our learning.

### Learner Agreements

We commit to doing our best by engaging fully, participating and having fun.

We commit to strengthening ourselves, each other, and the community.

We commit to listening fully with our ears, eyes, heart, and whole self.

### Parent Communication and Assessment

Parent Communication – We believe open communication is vital to a healthy community. If parents have a concern or suggestion, please bring it to the teachers right away. As we have limited time at pick-up/drop-off, please schedule a time to speak with one of the teachers if you would like to have a longer conversation about your child.

More formal conferences will take place in face-to-face meetings in December. A virtual check-in will occur in April.

The Learning Process and Assessment – At Home Base Learning Center our focus is nurturing your child's genius. All young children are natural learners, constantly trying to figure things out and achieve the next level of mastery. We help keep that spark alive by cultivating a love of learning and guiding your child's innate ability to learn. If they have yet to learn or master a skill, this is an opportunity rather than a deficiency. Life is a learning journey, not a race; learners are not 'ahead' or 'behind.'

We are committed to keeping your child at their learning edge. That includes both academic and emotional intelligence. Crucial to the concept of being a lifelong learner, is a *healthy relationship with personal challenges*. We challenge everyone at Home Base Learning Center to embrace increasing levels of depth and complexity in their learning adventures.

To that end, Home Base Learning Center views assessment as a tool for understanding children across all domains. Assessment is ongoing and largely formative as opposed to summative. It serves as a means for teachers to meet children where they are and support their individual growth. Such assessment will largely be in the form of teacher observation and anecdotal notes to be shared with families and children.

Our teachers will be keen observers of human development and the natural world, assessing and facilitating children's creative interactions based on interest, risk, opportunities, and offerings that may arise from the children, the environment, or the families.

## HOME BASE: A COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

### New England Base Camp

New England Base Camp (NEBC) is a part of the Spirit of Adventure Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Located within the Blue Hills Reservation of New England, NEBC is the home of Home Base Learning Center. We are most fortunate to partner with NEBC to provide homeschool families with an unparalleled educational resource.

New England Base Camp is a vibrant resource that simultaneously supports multiple programs and communities. NEBC opens each weekday at 5am with the pool and typically closes around 10pm. Throughout these long days there are many users coming and going, each seeking their own unique educational and outdoor experience. We collectively strive to foster a diverse and respectful environment based on the attributes of Scouting.

Home Base utilizes the Scout curriculum and resources and as such each participant is enrolled in Scouting and receives an adventure card with all program benefits (see <https://www.newenglandbasecamp.org/adventure-card/>). This membership provides all students and families the opportunity to take advantage of family discounts at Boston family area attractions, year-round NEBC programs, and advancement opportunities. Adaptations specific to homeschooling are welcome and encouraged to meet the needs of all children and families.

### Home Base Family Participation

We embrace the spirit of family-centered, cooperative education and welcome parent/family participation within and outside of our program hours. Inherent in Home Base is a spirit of community that allows for individual strengths and weaknesses, and for differences in energies and commitments. We will enhance this spirit throughout the year, and grow and sustain our community, through volunteerism and regular family gatherings, parent education and speaker series, potlucks and all-family campouts, and regular formal and informal communication between educators and families.

A cooperative community requires work and time. The following is a list of required contributions and opportunities for family participation (for dates, please refer to the calendar in the Nuts and Bolts section of this Handbook):

1. Participation in Orientation @ Base Camp (*required*) – Before the start of our program we will hold an orientation for parents and caregivers. This will be an important on-boarding event, an opportunity to become acquainted with one another, our program, and our policies.
2. Participation in Meet the Teachers @ Base Camp (*required*) – Students will come to campus to get to know their teacher and allow their teachers to get to know them, completing some 1:1 activities to help educators gain a better understanding of where each child is on their learning journey.
3. Attendance at community meetings (*required*) – Parents/caregivers will meet once every other month, either in-person (at Base Camp) or virtual (Zoom meeting) formats. Whenever possible the in-person meetings will be tacked onto scheduled social events or the end of the school day, with childcare provided as needed. Both parents are urged to attend, but attendance is mandatory for at least one parent. Each family may miss no more than 2 meetings per year. These meetings are for business, discussing child development, and to give members an opportunity to learn more about what is happening in the program, and to share concerns and make suggestions.
4. Completion of health forms, CORI checks, and all other required documents (*required*).

5. Work as a teacher-assistant in the classroom - We welcome parents, caregivers, or family members who would like to present a "class" to reach out to our teachers to discuss involvement in our programming.
6. Participation and support for fundraising and enrollment events – One or more fundraising or enrollment events will be held each year. Each family is encouraged to participate.
7. Participating in clean-up and/or renovation projects.
8. Cooperation when extra help is needed, e.g., committee work, social events, etc.

## Family-Teacher Relationship

At Home Base Learning Center, the Family-Teacher Relationship is at the heart of our cooperative education community. Through regular and timely communications around individual learning goals and group projects, families and teachers work together to create an integrative "home-school" experience for our children. The year is organized into thematic units (please refer to our calendar in the Nuts and Bolts section of this Handbook for approximate start/finish dates for each unit). A detailed plan for these thematic units will be shared with families in advance of their occurrence, so that families can anticipate them and think creatively about how to plug into them outside of program hours. Our professional educators are essential resources for our families and can be consulted throughout the year around developmental milestones, learning goals, and group-level dynamics.

Parent/teacher conferences may be initiated by either the parent or the teacher at any time during the school year. Please feel free to ask teachers at any time for a conference concerning your child. As noted in the Parent Communication and Assessment section, more formal conferences will take place in face-to-face meetings in December.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### Lunch and Snacks

Mealtime is an opportunity for gratitude, nourishment, and coming together in community. Children should bring two healthy snacks and lunch each day in a lunchbox that ideally fits into their backpack (more information about Clothing and Supplies can be found in the Nuts & Bolts section).

We strive to create little waste at Base Camp, so please send food in reusable containers with utensils (if needed) packed in a lunchbox and water bottle (full, refillable). In warmer weather, please include an ice pack and foods that are best kept warm should be brought in a thermos. Please note that while there is access to a refrigerator, there is no access to a microwave. Children are discouraged from sharing food, due

to family preference and allergies/sensitivities. If your child has a food sensitivity or food allergy, parents must provide detailed information to Home Base Learning Center.

We welcome the opportunity to celebrate your child's birthday at Home Base Learning Center. Please check with the teachers about what is a safe and respectful snack for all to enjoy for you to bring to school.

## Sick Policy

There is a strong connection between a child's health and their development. If there have been changes in your child's sleeping/eating patterns or they've been going through a large transition at home, etc., please share this information with the teachers. Since we are very active throughout the day, if your child is feeling ill at all, please keep them home as rest is imperative when a child is under the weather. Children must be free from diarrhea, vomiting, and fever for 24 hours before returning to Home Base Learning Center. If your child is ill and will be staying home, please inform the teachers by text or phone no later than that morning.

During program hours, if a child has symptoms that suggest illness such as fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Please see the addendum at the end of this Handbook for additional guidelines pertinent to Covid-19 and set-forth by New England Base Camp. *Please note: these policies are subject to change based on local, state, and federal guidelines.*

## Medical Form/Immunizations

Along with your child's up-to-date medical and emergency contact information, please submit a copy of your child's immunization records or exemption form. These forms must be completed and on-file with staff before any child can participate in our programs.

## Injuries

Staff members are trained in CPR/First Aid and will carry basic first aid kits at all times. If a minor injury occurs, staff will administer basic first aid and the parents will be notified at pick-up. If a serious accident occurs, staff will call 911 and parents will be called immediately.

## Ticks

We will aim to have bug spray available and will have lint rollers on hand for use on pants/shoes after hikes to catch crawling ticks. However, we highly encourage caregivers to be diligent about tick checks at pick-up and at home at the end of the day. A good routine to help your family remain healthy is to wash clothes or place all articles in a hot drier for 20 minutes to kill any stowaways, and to carefully check each individual for ticks after time in the woods. If a tick is embedded, we will call the family of the child and, if the tick is removed, we will save it (if possible) so that the family can have it assessed for possible diseases. Ticks can be photographed and the photo submitted to TickEncounter at the University of Rhode Island for a customized tick report ([https://tickencounter.org/tick\\_identification](https://tickencounter.org/tick_identification)). Ticks, themselves, may also be sent via postal mail for testing at the Laboratory of Medical Zoology, UMass Amherst (<https://www.tickreport.com/>).

## NUTS AND BOLTS

### Pick-up/Drop-off

Parking: Please park in a spot and accompany your child to their drop-off area.

Drop-off time: 8:30 am to 9:00 am (if you arrive after 9:00am and your group has moved up to the cabin area, please walk your child up cabin road to be sure we receive them)

Drop-off procedure: Weather permitting, drop-off will occur at your group’s designated drop off area.

Families and children are welcome to gather together until no later than 8:55am, at which point teachers and students will walk together, with their belongings, to their cabins to begin their day. If you are simply dropping off your child, please make eye contact with the teachers and verbally acknowledge you are transferring stewardship of your child.

Pick-up time: 3:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Pick-up procedure: Students and teachers will meet families at your group’s area where you will make eye contact and get verbal acknowledgement you are taking responsibility for your child.

### Calendar

Please mark all these dates on your calendar.

Week of:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Over the summer....		Parent Orientation at Base Camp Tues. Aug. 31, 7-8:30pm	
Sept 6		Meet the Teachers!	Meet the Teachers!
Sept 13: Unit 1 begins	Welcome Back! First day of program: Monday, Sept 13, 2021		
Sept 20			

Sept 27		Parent Meeting Sept 28, 7pm	
Oct 4			
Oct 11	Indigenous People's Day, Oct. 11 no program		
Oct 18			
Oct 25			
Nov 1			
Nov 8			
Nov 15		Parent Meeting Nov 16, 7pm	Reflection & Celebration: Nov 17, 1:30pm
Nov 22: Unit 2 begins			
Nov 29			
Dec 6	Parent/Teacher Conferences, afterschool	Parent/Teacher Conferences, afterschool	Parent/Teacher Conferences, afterschool
Dec 13			
Dec 20-Jan 2	Winter Break		
Jan 3	First day back		
Jan 10			
Jan 17	M.L. King Jr. Day no program	Parent Meeting Jen 18, 7pm	
Jan 24			Reflection & Celebration: Jan 26, 1:30pm
Jan 31: Unit 3 begins			
Feb 7			
Feb 14			
Feb 21	February Vacation Week		
Feb 28	First day back		
Mar 7			
Mar 14		Parent Meeting Mar 15, 7pm	
Mar 21			
Mar 28			Reflection & Celebration: Mar 30, 1:30pm
Apr 4: Unit 4 begins			

Apr 11			
Apr 18	April Vacation Week parent/teacher virtual checkins		
Apr 25	First day back		
May 2			
May 9			
May 16		Parent Meeting May 17, 7pm	
May 23			
May 30	Memorial Day no program		End of Unit 4
June 6			
June 13			Reflection & Celebration Last day of program, June 15, 1:30pm

### Snow Days/Delayed Starts

In the case of inclement weather, Home Base Learning Center will sync to Milton Public School's delays or cancellations. However, there may be times when we make a call different than Milton for the sake of our varied communities. Please pay attention to Slack, email, and texting. Otherwise, internet resources for Milton Public School Closings are here:

Milton Public Schools Website: <https://www.miltonps.org/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/miltonpublicschools/>

MA School closings & delays from WBZ, CBS Boston: <https://boston.cbslocal.com/closings/>

### Slack & Email

While we will use email as a means for many general, group-wide announcements and updates, our primary communication platform will be Slack. Slack is a wonderful platform for organizing and participating in online discussions, small-group and academic updates, and parent committee work. All families are required to be on Slack as this will be our primary means of communication. If you need help with Slack, please contact Kira.

Once you are signed into Slack, you will have automatic access to certain channels and will be added to other required channels. There are additional, optional channels you may join by clicking on the "channels"

heading in the left-hand column of the screen to see a list of all the channels. You may add yourself to any channel you wish from there.

To set preferences around notifications and other customization, you can click on your name at the top of the left-hand column, and then click preferences. Settings for when you are notified about messages can be made there, and the preferences can be the same or different between your desktop and mobile formats.

## Clothing and Supplies

Please ensure your child is always dressed appropriately for the outdoors in all sorts of weather. It is best to assume that your child's clothes will get dirty and wet and please consider temperature, precipitation, and wind in choosing clothing for the day. Since weather is often unpredictable, dressing in layers is best. Children should always wear closed toed shoes (boots on wet days or sneakers on dry days), unless water shoes are suggested by the teachers for the day ahead.

We are outside for a large portion of the day - every day, every season, in all weather, and believe fully in the saying, "there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." The best fibers to dress your child in for wet and cold weather are polypropylene, fleece, silk, and wool. Wool is especially good for retaining heat if it gets wet. Please no cotton in the winter! When cotton gets wet, it has no warming ability and keeps you cold. In warm weather, cotton T-shirts and pants are fine. Please make sure to label all clothing and gear, including water bottles, food containers, etc.

### Fall/Spring Clothing Guide

What to wear (temps range from really hot to really chilly, so dressing in layers is essential!):

- Shorts and short sleeved shirts are fine for hot days (with lightweight long-sleeved shirt and pants in backpack)
- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants
- Fleece sweatshirt or wool sweater
- Closed toe shoes with socks
- Waterproof rain gear (mud pants or puddle pants) and lined rubber boots should be worn if rain is in the forecast

Backpack: Full water bottle, space for/extra layers (sweatshirt, sweatpants, raincoat, rain pants, etc.). Please make sure lunchboxes fit inside backpacks.

### Winter Clothing Guide

What to wear:

- Insulated, waterproof boots with one pair of thin wool socks: Wool socks, silk or synthetic liners are a necessity – please no cotton!
- Base layer: Merino wool, silk, or polypropylene long underwear top and bottom
- Mid-layer: Long sleeve wool or fleece sweater and fleece pants/sweat pants
- Over layer: Insulated waterproof jacket with hood and insulated, waterproof pants (bib snow pants work well), waterproof mittens, insulated liners are a necessity
- Fleece or wool hat: Hats with ear flaps stay on and keep children warmer

Backpack: Full water bottle, space for/extra layers (mittens, neck-warmer, hat, scarf, extra fleece or down layer, etc.). Expect child to be adding and subtracting layers as necessary depending on the weather.

Footwear – Bogs and Muck boots are the best for cold, wet, and snowy weather. These boots are insulated so they may cause sweaty feet in warmer weather but adjusting sock thickness helps. Traditional rubber rain boots are not a good choice on rainy days, as they leave feet cold and tend to come off easily in muddy areas and while hiking. In warmer weather, sneakers or hiking boots (ideally waterproof) are appropriate. Keen-like sandals are also a great option.

Rain Gear – Simple, lightweight rain gear that the children can always have in their packs is important. Rain pants are VITAL - necessary for comfortable and fun play outside on many days at Home Base Learning Center. Please make sure rain gear is waterproof and not just water-resistant. Breathable, lined rain gear that moves with your child will be most comfortable. Thick plastic/vinyl jackets constrict children's movement. Jackets with a mesh liner are best, since the soggy jacket will not touch their skin.

A Change of Clothes – Please make sure your child has a labeled Ziploc or other waterproof bag with a change of clothes (all labeled) - 2 socks, 1 underwear, 1 pants/leggings, 2 shirts. WINTER change of clothes should include - 1 underwear, 2 extra wool socks, 1 pair of long underwear, 1 pair of fleece pants, 1 extra fleece or wool hat, and 1 extra pair of insulated, waterproof mittens. These items can stay in your child's bin at school as long as you check each day to make sure items are replenished.

Backpack – Each child should be outfitted with a backpack. Backpacks must be water resistant/proof if possible, large enough to fit all gear but not go beyond the child's bottom, and have a chest strap clip (see below section on Great Gear Brands for backpack recommendations).

Lunchbox, Snack Containers, Water Bottle – Each child should bring a lunchbox, which can fit inside their backpack if needed (for days when lunch will be consumed out on the land). In addition to a nourishing lunch, please pack two healthy snacks in reusable containers, as well as a full reusable water bottle (stainless steel is best).

Bug Spray/Sunscreen and First Aid Kit – As noted in the HEALTH AND WELL-BEING section on Ticks, we will provide some bug spray (for emergencies) and will have lint rollers on hand. You may also prefer to pack a travel-size bug spray for your child, as well as sunscreen and a simple first aid kit that may include hand sanitizer, band aids, and arnica gel.

Great Gear Brands – These are some gear brands and sources that have been helpful in outfitting kids with everything they need!

- Generally helpful online stores: REI, L.L. Bean, Land's End, Sierra Trading Post
- Local Shops: New England Base Camp (NEBC) Scout Shop (located in the Egan Center), The Natick Outdoor Store
- Backpacks: REI makes very nice kid sized hiking backpacks. You can also check the NEBC supply store in the Egan Center, or look for smaller packs through North Face, LL Bean, and Deuter.
- Rain Gear: Polarn O Pyret, Oakiwear, Playshoes, L.L. Bean
- Winter/Snow Boots: Bogs, Muck Boots
- Hiking Boots: Keens, Merrells, Plae
- Base Layers: Mountain Warehouse makes affordable merino wool base layers, L.L. Bean's Wicked Warm Expedition Balaclava Top was a hit with every child who wore one this year.
- Socks: Smart Wool and Darn Tough merino wool blend socks
- Mittens: Land's End Squall Waterproof Mittens
- Parkas and Snow Pants: Land's End has reinforced knees and grow-with-me seams for two seasons of wear! REI, North Face, and Columbia have carried favorite snow jackets in the past.

## Resources for Homeschool Reporting

Home Base is a homeschool resource and not a licensed or accredited school, and so each child who attends the program must have a homeschool education plan filed with their own town's Department of Education each year. Some resources to help in that process are:

Massachusetts Home Learning Association

<https://www.mhla.org/>

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc.

<https://www.ahem.info/>

## ADMISSION AND TUITION 2021-2022

Please note that we are aware of, and sensitive to, the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our programming and keeping our students, staff, and families safe is our top priority. To that end, we have developed a program management plan, complete with programming details, adjusted tuition costs, and guidelines for families. Please be sure to read this plan in its entirety, on the last page of this Handbook.

Home Base Learning Center offers three schedule options which can be combined to provide, supplement, or support most families as they seek to provide an enriching experience for their children. All Home Base Learning Center programs follow the same guiding principles, are led by the same group of highly qualified educators and instructors, and follow the same basic yearly and daily schedule, including:

- Full academic year calendar, September 13, 2021 through June 15, 2022
- Following Milton Public School for *most* vacations, holidays, and snow days
- Drop off 8:30-9:00am, pickup 3:00-3:15pm
- Morning snack break and community lunchtime
- Intended for children ages 5-10

Tuition	Program & Description
\$8,400 – full year	3-day Program   Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday <i>Our most popular and comprehensive program, offering three consecutive days per week for the academic year. Children will be a part of an academic community, learning and playing together while working on projects within designed units.</i>

Tuition	Program & Description
	Single Day Session Schedule Fall: Sept 9 – Dec 16   Winter: Jan 6 – Apr 7   Spring: Apr 14 – June 16
\$995 per session \$2,835 – full year	STEAM Sessions   Thursdays <i>Multi-week sessions designed to give children a deeper dive into a given topic such as art, science, or engineering. Each session is very hands-on and will culminate in a final project for kids to showcase their learning.</i>

### Admission & Tuition Information & Process

As a cooperative community, we draw strength from both our diversity and our philosophical alignment. Our admissions process is designed to determine whether there is strong philosophical fit between prospective families and our community’s mission. Through phone conversations and Base Camp visits, program documents and relevant readings, we aim to provide prospective families with the information they need to commit with confidence. Families wishing to participate should understand and accept the responsibilities of membership, as discussed throughout this handbook.

Home Base budgets expenses closely and relies on all families to pay their tuition on time so we can meet our bills. Professional educators are hired to run this program and to work with families to support educational goals. Our tuition and payment schedule is outlined within the Enrollment Form/Commitment Letter, which families must complete and submit along with their deposit to hold their child’s spot in the program.

Tuition for the 3-day program is \$8,400 per child for three days per week, and shall not be discounted for absences, even extended absences due to travel, other activities/commitments, etc. A non-refundable deposit of \$250 is included in the tuition and due with the completed Enrollment Form/Commitment Letter to reserve your child’s spot in the program. The remaining balance (\$8,150) may be (1) paid in full by the start of the school year or (2) paid according to the following payment schedule:

- \$250 Non-Refundable Deposit at Registration
- 20% (\$1,630) due on or before July 1, 2021
- 20% (\$1,630) due on or before September 1, 2021
- 20% (\$1,630) due on or before November 1, 2021
- 20% (\$1,630) due on or before January 1, 2022

- Final payment of 20% (\$1,630) for 2020-2021 due on or before March 1, 2022

Note: You may pay by check, log in and pay online, or call Angela Rzeszut (617-272-3514) and make a credit card or electronic check payment over the phone.

Families unable to meet these payment schedules should discuss options with NEBC staff.

Tuition payments may be made by check or credit card. Please make checks payable to The Spirit of Adventure Council. Tuition payments made by check must be predated (according to the above payment schedule) and collected with the first (July 1, 2021) payment of 20% of the remaining balance. Checks will be cashed by the Spirit of Adventure Council on or after the check date.

If a child is withdrawn from Home Base Learning Center for any reason, the family remains responsible for tuition through the end of the 2020-2021 program year.

## STAFF DIRECTORY AND ROLES

Chuck Blanchette

*General Manager/Camp Director, New England Base Camp*

Ask me about the New England Base Camp facility. I am the general manager and camp director of the New England Base Camp and am located on site at the camp.

Chuck.blanchette@scouting.org

774-223-2367 (c)

Jonathan Pleava

*Interim Scout Executive, CEO, Spirit of Adventure Council*

When all else fails, reach out to me. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Spirit of Adventure Council and I am located sometimes at the Base Camp and other times at the Council Office in Woburn.

Jonathan.pleava@scouting.org

Darrin Johnson

*Director of Program, Spirit of Adventure Council*

Darrin.Johnson@scouting.org

817-480-9237 (c)

Kira LaFosse-Baker & Judy Pritchard

*Lead Educators, Home Base Learning Center*

Ask us about the day-to-day experiences of your child at Home Base Learning Center. All arrangements/correspondences about your child should be directed toward us.

**kira.lafossebaker@scouting.org** | 978-580-9842 (c) **judy.pritchard2@scouting.org** | 781-738-4428 (c)

Angela Rzeszut

*Office Manager, Spirit of Adventure Council*

Ask me about billing and registration questions. I am the office manager and am located at the Spirit of Adventure Office in Woburn, MA.

angela.rzeszut@scouting.org

617-272-3514 (w)

Heather Sheehan

*Program Support Staff, New England Base Camp*

Check in with me when you are at the Base Camp. I can answer questions about where you can find the kids, other activities that are happening at Base Camp, and bearded dragons. You can also feel free to drop off any paperwork or payments with me and I will make sure that they get to the right places. I am located at the reception desk of the Egan Center on weekdays.

Heather.Sheehan@scouting.org

617-272-3501 (w)

Amy & Dan Warren

*Founders and Organizers, Home Base Learning Center*

The Founder and Organizer advises on and approves the mission, vision, policies, and outcomes for the Home Base program. In collaboration with member families and the staff of Spirit of Adventure Council, the Founder and Organizer counsels on matters of culture, human development, and pedagogy. The Founder and Organizer manages communications with prospective families, the general public, potential funders, media outlets, the academic community, and the National Service Center BSA.

617-519-1180 (Amy's cell); [amy.warren@alumni.tufts.edu](mailto:amy.warren@alumni.tufts.edu)

339-203-1555 (Dan's cell); [dwarren73@gmail.com](mailto:dwarren73@gmail.com)

## DIVERSITY & HARASSMENT/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Learners will be exposed to a variety of religions and cultures in an educational setting. Home Base Learning Center Mentors will often explore different holidays as part of the cultural studies program but do not teach belief, dogma, or personal spirituality. School rituals such as observing moments of silence are designed to promote the strengthening of mental focus and clarity and offer gratitude. Home Base Learning Center is fortunate to have families of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds and we enjoying having families share these special things with the school community. We believe these differences provide valuable learning experiences. Families are encouraged to contact a Mentor to talk about sharing their customs, rituals, music and special foods associated with the observance of religious holidays with the school community.

Home Base Learning Center is committed to maintaining an emotionally and physically safe learning environment. We do not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind; verbal or physical. This includes, but is not limited to, unwanted touching, disrespectful language about a person's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation,. Should anyone experience or become aware of harassment or bullying at Home Base Learning Center, please report it to a Mentor immediately. All reports will remain confidential. All reports will be explored and dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Repercussions for bullying or harassment may include suspension or expulsion.

The Home Base Learning Center embraces diversity of all kinds and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious affiliation, sexual orientation or preference, age, marital or family status, disability, veteran status, or other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law in admission, financial aid, employment, athletics, or any other aspect of its educational programs or activities. Our children come from a broad section of backgrounds, lifestyles, and economic levels.