Camp Keystone Family Handbook

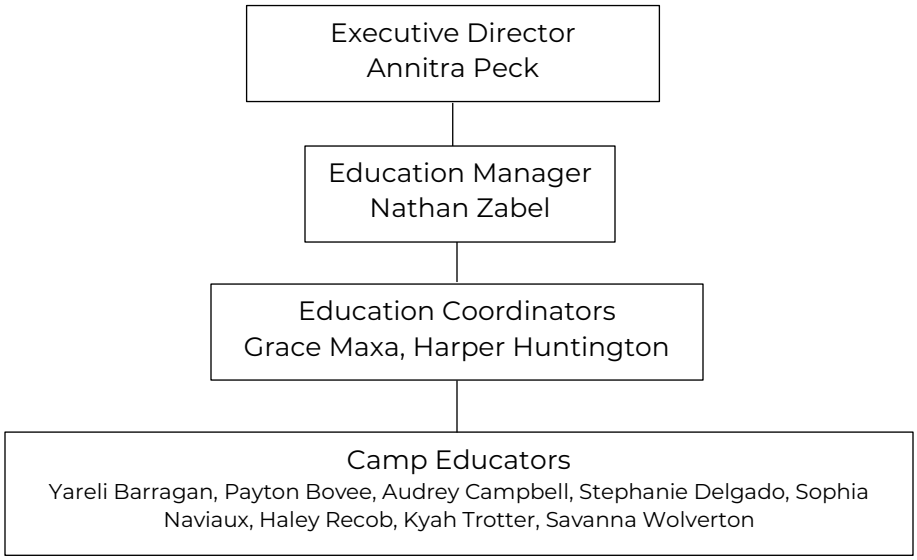
Summer 2025

Thank you for registering for Camp Keystone! We are excited to explore outside with your camper this summer. This Handbook outlines our policies and procedures, along with what you need to know to be prepared for camp. For more information, or with any specific questions or reasonable requests for accommodation, please see contact information below.

Contact Information

NSEA Education Manager
Nathan Zabel – nzabel@n-sea.org | Office: 360-715-0283 x120 | Mobile: 360-306-0772
NSEA Education Coordinators
Grace Maxa – gmaxa@n-sea.org | Office: 360-715-0283 x104 | Mobile: 608-692-4289
Harper Huntington – hhuntington@n-sea.org | Office: 360-715-0283 x104 | Mobile: 425-753-3383
NSEA Front Desk: 360-715-0283
NSEA Interim Executive Director
Annitra Peck – apeck@n-sea.org | Office: 360-715-0283 x105 | Mobile: 360-303-9866

Camp Keystone Organization Chart



The Education Manager oversees the day-to-day operation of Camp Keystone and is the primary point of contact for parents/guardians. The Education Manager works with the Education Coordinators to oversee and support the Camp Educators, who facilitate the camp programming and are responsible for campers. In the absence of the Education Manager, the Education Coordinators will assume those duties. In the absence of both the Education Manager and Education Coordinators, 2 of the Camp Educators will be designated as “admin” for the day and assume the shared responsibility of those duties.

Camp Keystone Philosophy and Goals

Camp Keystone is an outdoor, nature-based program where campers 4-6 years old will uncover the wonders of the natural world through the lens of a salmon. NSEA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or marital status in the provision of services.
The goals of Camp Keystone are as follows:

- Connect youth to salmon and the environment through outdoor place-based summer programming.
- Engage learners in critical thinking, investigations, and actions that build awareness of and concern for the wellbeing of people and our planet.
- Support both child development and conservation values, cultivating confidence, social skills, and resilience through interactions in nature.
- Provide families in Whatcom County with equitable access and culturally responsive instruction to increase environmental literacy.

Curriculum for Camp Keystone is centered around these goals and the outdoor-based instruction method which will benefit campers and their development. Each week of camp is centered around a theme that connects to salmon education and is supported through outdoor instruction, unstructured play, and open-ended activities that encourage curiosity.

Daily Schedule

Camp Keystone will operate this summer Monday – Friday starting on June 23 through August 22. There are two options of camp – half day and full day. Half day camp is for campers 3-6 years old, will have 2 groups (the Ocean group and Estuary group), and will run from 8:30am – 12:30pm. Full day camp is for campers 5-6 years old, will have 1 group (the River group), and will run from 9:00am – 3:00pm.

No two days of Camp Keystone are alike, thanks to NSEA's emergent learning curriculum. Staff will facilitate activities based on the needs of the group each week. This will lead to enhanced exploration and discovery, supporting unique needs, developing social and communication skills, and encouraging decision-making and problem-solving; all important social-emotional skills at this age. Additionally, campers will be engaged in activities that support physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development throughout the week. The sample schedule below is an idea of what a typical day of camp will be. Each week of Camp Keystone is unique, and combines the emergent, youth-driven approach with exciting field trip locations to Birch Bay State Park, Larrabee State Park, and others. Throughout the summer, campers will get to learn all about salmon and how they are important for watersheds, trees, bugs, and so much more!

<u>Half Day</u>

8:30am	Welcome and salmon circle
9:00am	Nature theme introduction
10:00am	Snack and stories
10:30am	Outdoor exploration and investigation
12:00pm	Snack and closing circle
12:30pm	Goodbye, see you soon!

Full Day

9:00am	Welcome and salmon circle
9:30am	Transportation to field trip site
10:00am	Snack and stories
10:15am	Nature theme introduction
12:00pm	Lunch, stories, and rest time
1:00pm	Outdoor exploration and investigation
2:00pm	Snacks and stories
2:15pm	Transportation to NSEA
2:45pm	Closing circle
3:00pm	Goodbye, see you soon!

Activities built into the nature theme introduction such as cooperative group games, scavenger hunts, and hikes along trails will support physical activity of campers. Social and emotional development will be supported through outdoor exploration and investigation where unstructured play is a large component of this and campers work collaboratively to build shelters, look under logs, perform skits, utilize the mud kitchen and outdoor craft areas, and play together as a group. The Salmon Circle and nature theme will support cognitive development through salmon yoga and songs to learn about salmon and their lifecycle, along with activities and arts and crafts.

Payment, Cancellation, and Refund Policy

When you registered, you paid your 10% deposit, which is non-refundable and holds your camper's spot in camp. The remaining balance of your summer camp registration is due by June 1st. Payment can be made online using this link.

For families receiving DCYF subsidy to attend camp: you and NSEA will receive a letter identifying how much is owed per month, and what DCYF will be subsidizing per day. The subsidy does not cover any days of enrolled camp where your camper is absent. The combined amount of parent/guardian monthly payment and DCYF subsidy does not fully cover the cost of each week of camp, so the difference will be your responsibility, and will be due by the first day of camp each month. NSEA will work with subsidized families on a case-by-case basis to coordinate this process.

Requests to withdraw from camp must be made by June 1st. If a cancellation needs to be made up to this date, we are happy to offer a refund (minus the 10% non-refundable deposit). Alternatively, as space allows, we can move you to a different week. This policy ensures NSEA can adequately staff each week of camp while making sure families on the waitlist for camps have clarity early in the summer.

Each group of half-day campers (Ocean and Estuary groups) will have a maximum of 10 campers, with 2 Camp Educators, or a 1:5 adult to camper ratio.
The group of full-day campers (River group) will have a maximum of 12 campers, with 2 Camp Educators, or a 1:6 adult to camper ratio.
If a camp's registration is low (less than 6 campers), you will be notified at least 2 weeks in advance. You will have the option of moving to a different camp, or getting your payment fully refunded.

Would you like your camper to attend with a friend? If you didn't designate this when you registered, email Nathan at nzabel@n-sea.org at least 1 week in advance. To ensure your camper is correctly grouped, please specify the name of your camper's friend for each camp – both your camper and their friend must be registered for the same camp!

Packing List

NSEA runs summer camp rain or shine! An a licensed, outdoor, nature-based program, we will be outside the whole time, with access to indoor bathroom facilities. Weather can be unpredictable even in the summer, so please send your camper in comfortable clothing that can get dirty, along with a change of clothes.
Below is a packing list of items to send your camper with so they are prepared for each day:

- Backpack labeled with their name
- Extra set of clothes
- Raingear
- Sturdy shoes or rain boots – no flip-flops please!
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Snack
- Lunch and extra snack (full day camp only)
- Reusable water bottle

There will be designated times each day to eat snack. NSEA does not provide snack, so please ensure you send enough food for your camper to eat during snack time or lunch time for full day campers. There will not be access to a refrigerator and snack will be kept in campers' backpacks when not being eaten. Snack will not be shared by campers, to accommodate food sensitivities or allergies of campers. If snack is forgotten, NSEA has a supply of allergy-free snacks that will be provided.

We do not provide sunscreen or bug spray – if you would like your camper(s) to have either or both, please make sure they are prepared for the sun and bugs before drop off. Please consider leaving items from home, such as toys or stuffed animals, at home. These can be distracting, and tend to get lost, and we are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Bathrooms

- Our bathrooms are located inside NSEA's office buildings.
- Nature potty is optional in the forest. Children have a private area to use and clean their hands afterwards.
- Children coming to camp should be potty trained. For our program, this means:
    - Children know when they need to go to the bathroom and are able to communicate that with teachers.
    - Children can pull down their layers on their own and pull them back up.
    - Children can wipe themselves, and wash and dry their hands independently.
- We know, however, that accidents do happen and reminders on steps are helpful.
    - Staff will verbally guide children in hand washing and toilet procedures.
    - If there are accidents/wet clothes, they will be placed in plastic bags and sent home with child.

        - Children will be given the opportunity to clean/change themselves.
        - Staff will help children to clean up and change only when absolutely necessary.
    - Staff will remain outside of the closed bathroom when a child is inside. If a teacher does enter the bathroom, the door will remain fully open.

Allergies or Medication: Allergies and medications administered were listed when you registered for camp. All medication must be in its original container and properly labeled with child's name, date the prescription was filled or the medication's expiration date and legible instructions for administration. NSEA staff will administer medication to campers following the instructions, document the medication administration, and communicate with you if your camper needs medication while attending camp.
Do not send any over the counter medication with your camper(s). All unused medication will be returned to parents at the end of camp or disposed of.

Drop off and Pick Up

Campers must be dropped off and picked up at the NSEA campus – 3057 E. Bakerview Rd. For directions, view this map. Upon arrival, stay to the left of the cones and follow the Camp Keystone signs on a one-way path behind the shop and to the drop off and pick up area. You will be directed where to park by an NSEA staff. If parking is full, please be prepared to wait until a space opens up.

Drop off for half day campers begins at 8:30am and is from 8:30 – 8:45am. Pick up begins at 12:30pm and is from 12:30 – 12:45pm.
Drop off for full day campers begins at 8:45am and is from 8:45 – 9:00am. Pick up begins at 3:00pm and is from 3:00 – 3:15pm. Please be on time for both drop off and pick up.

If you are going to be late, call Nathan's cell phone at (360) 306-0772, Grace's cell phone at (608) 692-4289, or Harper's cell phone at (425) 753-3383.

A parent or authorized adult must sign in and out their child every day when arriving and leaving. Campers will be released only to those individuals authorized. Be prepared to show a valid ID, such as a Driver's License. Please keep NSEA staff updated on changes, as any people not listed on the registration paperwork will not be able to pick up campers.

Appointments – We realize it may be necessary at times to drop off or pick up your camper outside of the designated times for appointments or other engagements. If you need to arrange this, contact Nathan (nzabel@n-sea.org or (360) 715-0283 x120) at least 1 day in advance to coordinate a late drop off or early pick up.

Transportation and Field Trips

Throughout each week of camp, we will be transporting campers offsite to various locations. The primary location for the field trip is a property located along Tenmile Creek, known as the "Tenmile property." The round-trip transportation time is approximately 30 minutes, and the property is located in Bellingham, at the end of Dinkle Road. This private property is owned by landowners who have graciously worked with NSEA since Camp Keystone started in 2021 to allow campers access to the salmon-bearing Tenmile creek

and 80 acres of land surrounding it. The property has a network of trails, boardwalks, observation platforms, open fields, and forest where campers can participate in activities supporting the weekly theme while also having abundant opportunities for outdoor exploration and investigation.

Half day campers will go once each week to the Tenmile property. Campers in the Estuary group will go on Wednesdays each week and campers in the Ocean group will go on Thursdays each week. Full day campers will take field trips on Monday afternoons and Tuesday – Friday of each week to various locations, including Tenmile property, Birch Bay State Park, Larrabee State Park, Hovander Park, Hundred Acre Wood, and others that support the learning. We will leave from NSEA's campus after drop off and return before pick up. The following policies will be in place while campers are being transported for the field trip:

- Transportation will be in NSEA's shuttle bus, which is regularly serviced and properly maintained, and has a current license and registration from Washington State.
- The bus will be driven by NSEA staff who are trained in the operation of the bus, along with have a safe driving record.
- The bus will be equipped with a first aid kit and NSEA staff will carry a separate first aid kit while on site at the field trip location.
- Transportation will be in compliance with Washington Child Restraint laws utilizing seat belts for all campers and booster seats that are current and in good condition for campers who need them. The use of booster seats will be based on height of each camper.
- All camper information and parent/guardian information, along with medication (if applicable) will be with NSEA staff at all times.
- NSEA staff will carry working radios and cell phones to communicate with each other and parents/guardians, if necessary.
- The ratio of adults to campers will be maintained during the field trip, and campers will be supervised at all times with no camper left unattended either on the bus or at the field trip location.

Health Policy

NSEA's priority is to ensure campers are safe and healthy, and will monitor campers at all times, maintaining communication with parents/guardians if campers are sick.
If your camper is sick, do not bring them to camp. This means they are exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100° or more
- Sore throat or coughing
- Runny nose or watery eyes
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Headache or Earache
- Eye discharge or pinkeye
- Lice, rash, or scabies
- Symptoms associated with colds, flus, strep throat, chicken pox, or other contagious disease, including COVID-19

Adults must inform NSEA camp staff immediately if a child contracts contagious disease or exposed to one. NSEA will post a notice to alert others. Children being treated for a contagious disease may not return to our facility until danger of infecting others is over. All incidents of contagious disease are reported to the Public Health Department.

If your camper becomes sick while they are at camp, you will be notified immediately and asked to come pick them up ASAP, to reduce exposure to other campers. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact you listed on your registration paperwork will be notified and asked to pick up your camper. Any campers who need first aid, such as a bandage because of a cut or scrape, will be treated away from other campers to prevent the exposure of blood or bodily fluids.

All parents/guardians of campers filled out medical information during registration, including allergies, medication needs, medical conditions, and additional needs or accommodations. NSEA staff will be aware of any existing conditions and able to care for campers with special needs or health needs.
At each day of camp, opportunities will exist for campers to access bathrooms with flush toilets and hand washing stations. These will be utilized at transition times, such as after drop off, before and after snacks and lunch (full day campers), and before pick up. Handwashing will be done frequently and will always be done before and after eating snack and lunch (full day campers), after using the bathroom, and before pickup at the end of camp. In the event a handwashing station is not close and washing is needed (such as in the forest), hand sanitizer will be in the backpack NSEA staff has with them and will be used as an alternative.

Shared surfaces, such as tables, chairs, counters, and bathrooms will be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected thoroughly at the beginning and end of each day of camp using a bleach solution that follows the Department of Health's Guidelines for bleach solutions.

Injuries: All camp staff will be certified in Adult and Child First Aid, CPR, and AED. Staff will have first aid kits with them at all times. All injuries will be assessed and handled utilizing the following 3 tiers:

- Light (cuts and scrapes) - First aid will be administered, and parent/guardian will be notified at pickup. Incident will be documented.
- Moderate (headache, vomiting) – Initial first aid will be administered, and camper will be separated from the group if necessary. Parent/guardian will be notified immediately, and course of action will be agreed upon. Incident will be documented.
- Severe (broken bone, head trauma) – emergency services will be contacted, and parent/guardian will be notified immediately. Incident will be documented.

All incidents will be documented by camp staff and kept in a secure location.

Emergency Preparedness

NSEA staff will be trained to respond to all emergencies, and the protocol for an emergency will be to ensure the safety of campers and then contact parents/guardians.

NSEA's campus is equipped with a building that can be used as an emergency shelter and is large enough to safely and comfortably fit all campers and staff. Each group of campers has a designated backpack that will include a first aid kit and medication (if applicable). Please refer to the contact information listed above. Outlined below are procedures that will be followed in the event of specific emergencies.

Fire

In the event of a fire that is discovered indoors, such as the bathroom facilities, NSEA staff will immediately sound the alarm, get the backpack with first aid kit and medication (if applicable), and evacuate campers out of the space. Assistance will be given to any campers who cannot walk independently to ensure everyone vacates the space. NSEA staff are trained on evacuation routes out of each space. Other NSEA staff will be notified and 911 will be called. Campers will be monitored for safety while emergency personnel are en route and on site.

In the event of a fire that is discovered outdoors such as in the forest, NSEA staff will immediately sound the alarm, get the backpack with first aid kit and medication (if applicable), and evacuate campers away from the location of the fire. Assistance will be given to any campers who cannot walk independently to ensure everyone vacates the area. Other NSEA staff will be notified and 911 will be called. Campers will be monitored for safety while emergency personnel are en route and on site.

Earthquake

In the event of an earthquake, if campers are indoors, such as the bathroom facilities, NSEA staff will immediately ensure campers take cover in an area that is away from windows, hanging objects, and exterior walls. This entails dropping to the ground and crawling under a sturdy table and then holding onto one of the table legs. In the absence of a table, campers will drop to the ground and crawl next to an interior wall that is away from windows. Campers will stay covered until the earthquake has stopped, at which point NSEA staff will get the backpack with first aid kit and medication (if applicable) and evacuate campers out of the space. Assistance will be given to any campers who cannot walk independently to ensure everyone vacates the space. NSEA staff are trained on evacuation routes out of each space. Other NSEA staff will be notified and 911 will be called. Campers will be monitored for safety while emergency personnel are en route and on site.

In the event of an earthquake, if campers are outdoors, NSEA staff will immediately get the backpack with first aid kit and medication (if applicable), and evacuate campers to a location that is away from tall trees, buildings, and utility wires. Assistance will be given to any campers who cannot walk independently to ensure everyone vacates the area. Other NSEA staff will be notified and 911 will be called. Campers will be monitored for safety while emergency personnel are en route and on site.

Lockdown

In the event of a public safety concern where an individual is harming or attempting to harm others, a lockdown will occur. If indoors, NSEA staff will immediately alert other staff and will then close and lock all doors of the building they are in, lower the blinds on any windows, and turn off the lights. Campers will stay in the room away from windows and doors and will stay there until an "all clear" is given.

If outdoors, NSEA staff will immediately gather all campers together in a group, stay outside, and find a sheltered place out of direct line of sight, such as in the forest and remain there until an “all clear” is given.

Strong winds
Dangerous high winds may affect the ability for campers to be safely outside. In the event of a wind advisory, NSEA staff will take measures to prevent campers from going into areas affected by wind, such as by snags or trees with dead branches. In the event of a high wind warning, camp will be canceled and parents will be notified. A refund will be given for any days of camp that are canceled due to a high wind warning. In the event of dangerous conditions that occur due to wind while camp is running, campers will take shelter in the emergency shelter until it is safe enough to return outside.

Extreme heat
Prolonged periods of time outdoors in hot weather can be unsafe for campers and measures will be taken by NSEA staff to ensure campers are staying hydrated. In the event of a heat advisory, NSEA staff will take more frequent water breaks with campers and spend more time in the shade. In the event of an excessive heat warning, camp will be canceled and parents will be notified. A refund will be given for any days of camp that are canceled due to an excessive heat warning.

Air quality
NSEA staff will monitor the air quality using the Washington Department of Ecology website. If the air quality is listed as unhealthy for sensitive groups or worse, camp will be canceled and parents will be notified. A refund will be given for any days of camp that are canceled due to poor air quality.

Any changes to camp due to the extreme weather events listed above will be communicated in advance to parents and any program cancellations that occur will result in a pro-rated refund based on the number of days of camp that were canceled. In the event camp has to be canceled after drop-off has already occurred, or if one of the above emergencies occurs, parents/guardians will be immediately contacted by NSEA staff using information provided during registration. NSEA staff will ensure all campers are safely picked up by an authorized person and continue to contact parent/guardians and/or emergency contacts until all campers have been picked up.

Activity Risk Assessment

Camp Keystone is designed to be facilitated outdoors, however; this presents unique risks to campers. Below are policies addressing various potential risks to campers.

Water Activities: There is access to an artificial stream along with wetland ponds at NSEA’s campus. All of these are shallow (less than 2 feet deep). Campers will not be wading or swimming in these bodies of water and NSEA staff will ensure campers are not entering the water. NSEA staff will be trained and able to enter the water in the event a camper falls in, and each wetland pond is equipped with a life-saving floatation ring. The change of clothes packed or NSEA dry clothing will be utilized so the camper can change.

Tree climbing: Staff will monitor campers at all times when they are climbing on trees or tree branches. They will inspect the forest area and remove hazardous objects, such as rocks or sharp objects, along with inspect for loose branches. Campers will be allowed to climb to a height of 30 inches off the ground and will be within reach of NSEA staff so any fall will not cause significant injury.

Wildlife: Campers will not intentionally approach any wildlife either at NSEA's campus or while on the field trip. However, chance encounters may occur. Campers will be respectful of wildlife and give them space while watching from a distance. Typical encounters include birds, frogs, and insects. In the event there is an encounter with a potentially dangerous animal, such as a bear, raccoon, cougar, or coyote, NSEA staff will direct campers away from that animal and ensure the area is clear of the animal before returning.

Behavior Expectations

To maintain a safe and cooperative setting, NSEA staff will outline behavior expectations, set boundaries, and establish routines. Staff will be trained in positive reinforcement and group management tactics to promote appropriate behavior. Additionally, staff will adopt a consistent care policy where staff will remain with the same group of campers for the duration of the week to maintain consistent care of campers and foster the building of trusting relationships. Campers at all times will be under the supervision of one of the staff leading their group, or another staff in the absence of one of their typical leaders. By enrolling in camp, you and your camper(s) agree to the following guiding behavioral principles:

- Be Kind
- Be Safe
- Be Helpful

At no time will campers be physically restrained, unless if a child's safety or the safety of others is threatened. If a child must be physically restrained, it will be done in a way that limits the restraint to be as gentle as possible, limited to the minimum amount of time necessary, be developmentally appropriate, and only done by trained NSEA staff.

If a camper is not following these guidelines, and behavior is a challenge to the respect, safety, and equity of all campers, the following system will be put into effect:

- First Incident – parent/guardian will be notified of the incident, and a collective course of action will be laid out for that camper.
- Second Incident – parent/guardian will be notified of the incident, and any modifications to the course of action will be laid out for that camper.
- Third Incident – parent/guardian will be notified of the incident, and camper will be dismissed without refund.

NSEA staff will work with campers and consistently communicate with their parents/guardians at drop off and pick up to take steps to address any issues and avoid dismissal from Camp Keystone. However, expulsion will occur if a camper repeatedly exhibits behavior that threatens the physical, emotional, or mental well-being of the other campers attending or NSEA staff. Additionally, inappropriate or unsafe behavior from a camper's parents/guardians will not be tolerated on NSEA's campus and may result in dismissal from camp.

Parent/Guardian Communication

At the end of every week, parents/guardians will be emailed a summary of the week, which will contain highlights of the week's activities, samples of projects that were worked on, and photos of campers.

Additionally, there will be opportunities for parents/guardians to meet with teachers and ask questions the week before their camper(s) attend Camp Keystone – if interested, please email Nathan at nzabel@n-sea.org.

Thank you for registering! We are excited to explore the wonderful world of watersheds and salmon with you and your camper. For any questions, please reach out. We'll see you at camp!