



Earth Friends Outdoors Homeschool Family Guidelines

Irvine Nature Center is launching the Earth Friends Outdoor Homeschool Program under the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, and the local Health Department. These procedures have been instituted to keep you and your children healthy and safe. It is imperative that all caregivers are aware of and follow all procedures. **Please share these guidelines and the Welcome Letter sent via email in the weeks leading up to the initial class with all individuals responsible for picking up or dropping off your child as well as any emergency contacts.**

Irvine Nature Center staff will do everything reasonably possible to provide a safe environment for your child to grow, learn, and connect with others and the world around them. However, no list of restrictions, guidelines, or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure to any virus, including COVID-19, as it can be transmitted by asymptomatic persons. More than ever before, our program strives create a community in which we all care for the commUNITY as a whole: students, staff, and all their families. Please join us in the maintaining a healthy environment.

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CLASS OFFERINGS AND LOCATIONS

For the current school year, all Earth Friends classes will be limited to groups of 12 students and 2 teachers and will not mingle with other classes at any time. At this time we strongly discourage families from enrolling individual children in multiple classes per CDC recommendations to limit the mixing of group cohorts.

Nearly all activities will occur outdoors. Except during inclement weather (see below), classes will hold drop off, gathering circle time, snack, closing gathering, and pick up all outdoors in our newly assigned *Class Groves* (the “*Glen*” or the “*Upper Amphitheater*” near the driveway}). The *Glen* will be reserved for the Forest Explorers younger age classes. The *Upper Amphitheater* will be used by the older age classes. The Nature Preschool has exclusive use of the Outdoor Classroom Monday-Friday and the picnic area just outside the Outdoor Classroom on Tuesday and Thursday, thus these areas will be unavailable for us

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and for your families during our class times. Of course, we will still spend the bulk of our class time out on the trails!

Incident Weather

In the event of thunder, lightning, torrential rain, strong winds that result in the closing of trails, or prolonged periods of excessive cold or hot temperatures, we will move class indoors to the Fern Rooms. Please note that since we will still be outside on cold, hot, or rainy days as much as possible, please read the recommended gear list and dress your child appropriately for a full 3 hours outdoors in the elements! For information about weather related closures or delays, please see Make Up Days and Long Distance Learning.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Please note, the following policies and procedures **are subject to change at any time** due to rapidly changing conditions surrounding the epidemic. They are current as of the date on this document.

Staff and students may NOT attend if they or a household member...	Until ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested positive for COVID-19 	they meet the CDC criteria for discontinuation of home isolation and have a doctor's note clearing them to return to Earth Friends. The ECE Director will also consult with the Health Department who will determine when the individual is permitted to return.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits any symptoms of any contagious disease (including those listed in the COVID-19-Like Symptoms box below) 	they have been cleared from their doctor or they have been fever/diarrhea/vomiting free for 24 hours without the aid of medication. If symptoms qualify as a COVID-19 like illness, until they are tested and have a negative test.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is known to have had prolonged contact with an individual with a positive case of COVID-19. The CDC defines prolonged contact as w/in 6feet for at least 15 min. 	If they child was exposed: 14 days after date of last prolonged contact. If a family member: the child may attend so long as no one in the household develops any symptoms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is known to have had prolonged contact with an individual with COVID-19 symptoms (as defined in box below). The CDC defines prolonged contact as w/in 6feet for at least 15 min. 	If they child was exposed until the individual has been tested and has negative test results. If a family member: the child may attend so long as no one in the household develops COVID-19 like symptoms.

To aid Irvine Nature Center in assisting the Health Department in contact tracing and to best promote the health and safety of all participants and staff, Earth Friends families and staff should promptly notify the ECE Director and Head of Homeschool Programs if their child has been in attendance in the 48 hours prior to they or any member of their household(s)

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<p>COVID-19-LIKE SYMPTOMS THAT EXCLUDE AN INDIVIDUAL FROM PARTICIPATION (since last day in attendance)</p>	
<p>New onset cough or shortness of breath or new loss of taste/smell OR 2 or more of the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever of 100.4 degrees+ • Chills • Muscle pain or ache • Sore throat • congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea or vomiting • Diarrhea • Headache • fatigue • Runny nose
<p>Seasonal allergies or pre-existing conditions with these symptoms require a doctor's note.</p>	

- tests positive for COVID-19
- exhibits symptoms of a COVID-19-like illness (please see the box above for symptoms)
- were informed they had been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or had prolonged contact with an individual with COVID-19-like illness symptoms. This includes a parent /caregiver's possible exposure to COVID-19 at their employment and the caregiver was present at their workplace w/in the last 14 days.

Failure to promptly inform the Director of these items may result in the unintentional spread of disease, a prolonged closure (per the Health Department requirements) and possible dismissal from the Earth Friends Program.

Upon informing the ECE Director, they will inform families/staff if they are able to attend or if they need to self-quarantine and for how long, based on consultation with the Health Department and Irvine's Deputy Director. If your child is exhibiting a cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste/smell OR two of the symptoms above, you will be required to get a PCR COVID-19 test for your child. If a family member has a COVID-19 like illness as defined above, your child will not be permitted to attend until the family member has a negative PCR test. Even if you suspect symptoms are related to a pre-existing health condition. Under no circumstances should the child, staff person, or any other member of their household attend or visit Irvine until the recommended period of self-quarantine has been completed.

Health Screenings

To assist us in maintaining a healthy environment, all students and staff must participate in a daily health screening prior to starting their class. During the health screening, the Director of Early Childhood Education and her assistant will ask caregivers a series of questions about their child's health as well as the health of any household members. A list of the questions to be asked are on the following page. Parents may take their child's temperature with their **own personal thermometer** and show the Director or her assistant the reading to be recorded. This temperature and the question answers will be recorded and kept private per HIPAA laws. If a family does not have their own thermometer and they prefer to take their child's temperature, they may use Irvine's non-contact thermometer. To do so, the parent or caregiver must use hand sanitizer and don gloves prior to taking the child's temperature using the thermometer. After, the caregiver will dispose of their gloves and the thermometer will be wiped with an alcohol wipe per CDC guidance.

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Any individual who refuses to answer the Health Screening questions, fails the screening, or has a fever of over 100 degrees will be unable to attend class. An individual will fail the health screening if they or **anyone in their household** has a COVID-19 like illness as defined on the previous page, is being tested, awaiting the results of a test, told to quarantine, or had close contact with an individual that has COVID-19 or symptoms. That child/staff person will need to return home, self-quarantine, and await further directions from the Director. When appropriate the Director will contact the Health Department for further guidance and then inform families.

Health Screening Questions

Since your child's last attendance, has your child **or anyone in your household** had any of the following symptoms: shortness of breath, cough, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, fever of over 100 degrees, chills, muscle ache, headache, sore throat, fatigue, gastrointestinal conditions (vomiting, nausea, diarrhea), congestion, or runny nose?

Since your child's last attendance, has your child **or anyone in your household** been diagnosed with COVID-19 or instructed by any health care provider or the health department to isolate or quarantine?

Since your child's last attendance, has your child **or anyone in your household** been tested for COVID-19, awaiting test results, or is anyone planning on being tested?

In the last 14 days, has your child **or anyone in your household** had close or prolonged contact with anyone with COVID-19 or any of possible COVID-19 symptoms that you are aware of?

In addition, individuals with any of the symptoms/conditions in the box to the left should not attend class, but is not considered a probable case of COVID-19.

OTHER NON-COVID SYMPTOMS/CONDITIONS RESULTING IN EXCLUSION (any single symptom)

- Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Fever of 100 degrees or more (99.5 if taken via armpit)
 - Unexplained rash
 - Infectious pink eye (until cleared by doctor and on antibiotics for 24 hrs)
 - Head lice (until treated)
 - Green or yellow runny nose if paired with other symptoms
- *Staff and children must be fever/vomiting/ diarrhea free for 24 hours w/out the aid of medication before returning or have a doctors note.*

During the health screenings, staff will keep a social distance of 6 feet as much as possible.

When Symptoms Develop After Drop Off

If an individual develops symptoms consistent with a COVID-19- like illness or typical exclusionary symptoms during class they will be sent home without exception. A child with symptoms will be isolated from the rest of the class but still under supervision until they are picked up. Children must be picked up promptly if they are ill. Please ensure that the contact information you provide for yourself and emergency contacts is up to date. Once the child's family is contacted, the ECE

Director will refer to Health Department and CDC guidance. The rest of the affected Irvine community will then be informed of any actions to be taken.

Possible Quarantine & Closure

We will follow all guidance and recommendations from the Health Department and licensing when it comes to any confirmed or possible exposure to COVID-19. If we are informed of confirmed case of COVID-19 at Irvine, the affected class(es) will close for a *minimum* of 48 hours to fully disinfect, consult with the Health Department, and identify any further actions. During that time, families and staff must self-quarantine and stay in close contact with Irvine to report any symptoms in themselves or their households. Doing so may enable us to resume classes earlier per the Health Department.

If a member of the student or staff member's household (but **not** the child/staff) was told they need to quarantine due to a **possible** exposure to an individual with COVID-19 or COVID-19 like illness, the child/staff may still attend Earth Friends Outdoors. However, the family must closely monitor all individuals in the family for any and all symptoms. If anyone in the household develops symptoms that meet the criteria for COVID-19-like illness above, the Director must be informed and the child/staff will be excluded from attending Earth Friends Outdoors.

If a member of the student or staff member's household (but **not** the child/staff) was told they need to quarantine due to a **confirmed** exposure to an individual with COVID-19, the child may/staff may still attend class **so long as no one in the household has any symptoms**. Families must closely monitor all individuals (including taking temperatures). If *any* member of the household develops any **one** symptom from the COVID-19-like symptom list, then the child/staff will be excluded and required to get a COVID-19 PCR test prior to returning.

In all instances, we will consult with the Health Department. Length of exclusion, any necessary quarantine, and/or closure will be determined by these entities.

The very best thing you can do to ensure the health of other students and staff and help Earth Friends Outdoors remain open is to err on the side of caution. **If your child or a household member has any of the symptoms in the box, they will likely need to stay home and you must contact the Director immediately.**

Allergies and Asthma

If your child has life-threatening allergies or asthma, please ensure that this information is included during registration. If your child will carry emergency medication (such as Benadryl, an epi-pen, or an inhaler), please complete the appropriate Medication Authorization Administration Form and Allergy Action Plan. These forms will be emailed to you upon request and will also be on our website for you to download. All medication must be labeled with your child's full name. If your child will self-carry, please ensure they know how to properly carry, handle, and administer the medication. If you have any questions about these forms, please reach out to the Director of ECE.

Health Advisory Notification

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When Irvine is informed of a child of staff person that developed a communicable disease or possible COVID-19 like symptoms within 48 hours of attending school, Irvine will inform families in that child's class. This communication will be provided so that parents can monitor their children for any symptoms and to make informed decisions about their child's attendance. The identity of the student/staff will be kept confidential.

TRAVEL

As of 03/09/2021, Governor Hogan has rescinded all travel restrictions to and from Maryland. The CDC continues to strongly urge all Americans to refrain from travelling. With that said, Irvine will no longer require staff, volunteers, or program participants to self-quarantine upon returning from out-of-state travel or to be tested. While we strongly recommend that staff, volunteers, and program participants are tested after returning from out-of-state travel, this will no longer be a requirement for participating in Irvine programming.

If you choose to travel outside of the state or host out of state guests, we **encourage** you to

- 1) follow [CDC recommendations](#) to make your travel as safe as possible,
- 2) get tested 3-5 days upon the travelers' return (during which time a child may not attend Irvine's programs), and
- 3) closely monitor your child and family members for any symptoms for 14 days.

If an individual does develop possible symptoms, we encourage you to inform your doctor of your recent travel. A child or family member that develops symptoms after travelling will need to follow all regular exclusionary precautions as outlined in these guidelines.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP

For the foreseeable future, only students and staff will be permitted inside the Irvine Building or Earth Friends Class Groves. This includes the classrooms, Fern Rooms, Exhibit Hall, bathrooms, and the Class Groves. Instead, all drop offs and pick-ups will occur outdoors. If you must enter the Irvine classroom spaces due to an emergency, all caregivers must wash their hands, wear a face covering, and maintain 6 feet of distance. Family events like seasonal hikes and class campfires will be reviewed closer to those dates to see if they can be held safely with accommodations or changes. All other special events will be cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Drop Off

Please make every attempt to have your child use the restroom before arriving or use the porta-potty upon arrival.

To provide ample time for health screenings and to promote social distancing of families at drop off, we are implementing a staggered arrival. Each class will be divided into 2 groups so that half the students from each class come at 9:15, and the other half at 9:30. Families will be assigned an arrival time, but

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will have an opportunity to swap with another family if their assigned time is not preferred. This information will be provided with your Welcome Letter. We ask for your patience with us during arrival. With time we will all get the routine down and it will go quicker. We promise we will do this as quickly as possible to get your child to class and you on your way!

As families arrive, the ECE Director and her assistant will greet them inside the Irvine driveway. All parents/caregivers, students, and their siblings will stay in their cars for the health screening (please see above). If a child is not cleared to attend, their car will simply pull ahead and turn around to return home. Once a child passes the health screening, the parent/caregiver proceed to the drop off area (see below).

Parents/caregivers will walk their child to their Class Grove (the Glen or Upper Amphitheater). Caregivers/parents are not permitted to enter Class Groves while students are present. Parents and children should say their goodbyes at the easels welcoming families just before these Class Groves.

Forest Explorers Classes: Families must park in the parking lot and walk their child to down the path to the Glen just outside the Woodland Garden on the lower section of the Understory Loop Trail.

Older themed Earth Friends Classes: Families may park and walk to the Class Grove area just off the Bauer Road near the driveway. OR Just after health screening before the drive turn rights, take the road to the right towards the Bauer road. Once you go through the gate you can stop and drop your child off. You will then exit through the Bauer driveway right onto Garrison Forest Road. Signs will be posted.

Please note, this is for drop off only! For pick up you must park and pick up your child.

If you are dropping off children in both classes: Please park and drop off the child in Forest Explorers and then either walk your child to their Class Grove OR return to your car and drive them to the drop off right by their Grove.

On days classes must start indoors due to inclement weather, parents/caregivers will walk their children to the side door near the tent. A teacher will be waiting for the child there and will escort them to their class.

Teachers and parents should keep a 6 foot distance from each other at all times.

Parents/caregivers, students, siblings over 2 years, and teachers must wear a face covering in case distancing is not possible. (ex. helping children and parents with goodbyes).

Pick-Up

Classes will hold their closing gatherings in their Class Groves. **All parents/caregivers must park in the Irvine lot and pick up their child at their child's Class Grove.** Caregivers may not enter the Class Grove or classroom and instead must wait for teachers to dismiss their child to them. **Parents/caregivers, students, siblings over 2 yrs, and staff must wear a face covering while picking up their child and**

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maintain a 6 feet distance. During inclement weather, we will dismiss from the front door of the building please leave the areas in front of the doors quickly to make space for other families.

Please note, it is more important than ever that students are picked up on time. In addition to normal duties, staff now have additional cleaning and disinfecting to do every day. Some of our teachers may teach additional classes and have only a narrow window of time to take care of themselves and prepare for their next group, therefore, children must be picked up promptly at 12:30. Families who have not picked up by 12:40pm will be charged \$10 plus and an additional \$1 per minute after that. Please call educators' cell numbers to let us know if you are running late. Thank you!

If your child is going to be picked up by someone other than an emergency contact person or a guardian, please inform teachers before dropping off that day.

SUPERHERO TOOLS- FACIAL COVERINGS, SOCIAL DISTANCING, & HANDWASHING

The Earth Friends program will refer to students, their families, and teachers as superheroes as they help keep one another healthy. Classes will employ 3 main tools as superheroes: face coverings, social distancing, and handwashing.

Facial Coverings

All staff will be required to wear facial coverings for the duration of class.

Currently, in Baltimore County, all children over the age of 2yrs must wear face-coverings in indoor spaces. Earth Friends students will be *required* to wear facial coverings during health screenings, drop off, pick up, and while indoors. The Earth Friends educators will strongly encourage students to wear their face coverings whenever we cannot maintain social distance while outside (so long as children are not engaged in running games). We realize that wearing a face covering may be uncomfortable for many and simply not possible for some. However, like any new habit there is a certain degree of encouraging and practicing that can take place so that children ages 5-12 can become more comfortable with wearing a mask. Therefore, any child that cannot wear a face-covering will *not* be required to wear a face covering except during the health screening, drop off at the class grove and as we gather for circles at onset and dismissal of class. If a child is touching their mask frequently, seems bothered by it, or is taking it off, we will simply ask the child to remove it and store it in their backpack. If staff notice a child is regularly unable to wear a mask, parents will be consulted, and a plan put in place to best ensure proper social distancing for that child in lieu of face coverings.

Therefore, all students must have several face coverings on hand at class daily. We recommend having at least 2 masks. Any type of cloth or disposable face covering will be accepted, however, please consider how difficult they are to put on. We request all student face coverings have elastic straps that do not require tying or a neck gaiter for easy application and removal. If face coverings cannot be safely

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hanging around necks, they will be placed in a paper bag. **All face coverings must have the child's full name on the inside of their child's mask.**

What will encouraging students to wear masks look like? At the beginning of the class series we will directly teach students about being superheroes to help everyone stay healthy and safe. During these lessons we will discuss the importance of wearing face coverings and how to use them appropriately. We will do this in a developmentally appropriate way, similar to what preschool did in [this video](#) for the younger group. This will be more direct and straightforward for older classes. We will revisit this after a prolonged break as long as the local health department and the CDC recommends face coverings be used.

During the school day, teachers will pro-actively encourage students to wear their masks at appropriate times. For example, "We're going to be close together/inside right now. Let's be Superheroes and wear our masks. That will help us all stay healthy." We will encourage children to wear them when they are unable to space out (like when we are looking at a cool nature find for example) or when we know we will need to be close to assist a child with a routine self-help skill. When appropriate, we will very gently ask a child to put their face covering on if we are getting close enough to console or coach a child and only when the teacher senses the child will be open to it. This will not be the case during a medical emergency or when emotions are very high.

It takes time to become accustomed to wearing face masks. Therefore, before the start of the class series, please have your child practice putting on and taking off their personal facial coverings and getting used to them. A positive parental and familial outlook will help our Earth Friends community.

Social Distancing

Earth Friends educators will do their best to attempt social distance between students in the following ways:

- Plan activities that naturally lend themselves to more social distancing
- Alter or refrain from engaging in activities that require physical contact between students (such as tag games and shared materials)
- Use visual cues or markers to show students appropriate distance from one another
- Divide each class into two smaller groups, each with a teacher, for larger group gathering times (such as circle and closing gathering). While separate, they will be close enough to see and hear one another for safety. The make-up of these groups will change and be flexible.
- Establish and encourage physically distant ways of showing affection and congratulations (ie air hugs, "long distance" high fives, and animal calls)
- Keep a wide 6ft+ distance from other groups and the public on Irvine's grounds

However, these efforts cannot be 100% foolproof without completely limiting children's play and social development. Children learn through interaction and play with one another; positive, caring interaction is one of the very goals of education. Children will likely show affection towards one another or physically

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touch during play. When this occurs, teachers will encourage children to do so in the safest way possible and gently remind students to be superheroes. There could be moments when students and staff are close together and teachers will physically comfort an upset child, assist with putting on and removing gear, etc. We will console upset children, we will help them with boots and zippers, we will be the loving teachers we are. We will do all we can to be safe while still maintaining a practice that is developmentally appropriate and child-honoring.

Hand Washing

All individuals (including staff and children) must wash their hands frequently throughout the day and at the following times:

- Upon arrival
- Before and after putting on a face covering
- Before and after helping a child put on a face covering
- After touching face or ears
- Before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- After using the restroom
- Before morning circle and after our hike
- After touching another person.

All individuals will use a proper hand washing method using soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20seconds before rinsing and drying off with a paper towel. When a sink and soap are not available, a hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol will be used under supervision of staff.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

The Irvine Nature Center will increase our cleaning and disinfecting efforts and routines. During the day, staff will disinfect touched surfaces in bathrooms between groups. Communal items and frequently touched surfaces will be disinfected whenever possible between uses and at the end of each day by educators. An EPA registered cleaner and disinfectant approved for fighting COVID-19 will be used for all cleaning and disinfecting. If indoor spaces are used we will use a CDC approved disinfectant to spray down surfaces. Materials that cannot be disinfected easily will either not be used or rotated through periods of use and quarantine between use in different groups.

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SNACKS

Our snack policies and procedure have changed depending on your class, so please read this carefully. Each family is responsible for bringing a small snack for their child each day. We have moved away from our family style snacks due to health concerns. Children's snacks should be packed in small, sealable and reusable containers or bag. Snacks will not be refrigerated and should be trail friendly. If the snack requires a spoon or fork, please provide one.

All snacks must strictly follow the food guidelines below.

Suggested Trail Friendly Snacks
Fruits or vegetables Whole grain pretzels or crackers Granola or fruit/nut bars (no peanuts) Crackers with nut butter/cheese Trail mix *please send snacks ready to eat in reusable container or bag

We strongly recommend that all snack containers and water bottles be washed after each class.

Before the start of the class series please practice opening and closing snack containers with your child. Not only will this make them more independent, it will help limit the amount of time teachers must be closer to students.

Food Allergies

Please disclose your child's dietary restrictions and allergies during registration form **prior** to the start of class.

Food Guidelines	
We strive to have snacks that are natural and full of good protein to help fuel our bodies for our hikes. <i>Earth Friends is peanut free. Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts.</i> We encourage you to use reusable packaging rather than one time use packaging.	
Students may NOT bring:	Irvine will not serve (parents may send for their child):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanuts or any items containing peanuts • Sugary snacks or desserts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat products • Any peanut products

ITEMS FROM HOME

Each student will need to bring a backpack to and from class each week. Inside they should have a full set of seasonally appropriate clothing and a water bottle with a **covered** straw or mouth piece. For more details on these items and weather-related gear, please see the Recommended Gear List. A full set of extra clothes contains socks, underwear, pants, shirt, and in the winter sweatshirt or sweater. Please plan to check your child's bag daily for soiled clothes and gear!

For the foreseeable future, the **only other items a child should bring from home include:**

- Rain gear or snow gear
- Snack (as specified above "Snacks/ Meals" above)

These items must be taken home and cleaned daily.

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Students may not bring lovies or toys from home. If your child truly needs a transitional object, please touch base with your child's teachers before the start of the school year.

MAKE-UP DAYS AND LONG DISTANCE LEARNING

Each class series has a built-in one-week period for a make-up due to COVID-related closure **or** weather event. After that initial make-up week is used, we will make a reasonable attempt to provide distance-learning activities. After initial notification of a closure, you will receive additional information within 48 hours of the make-up day at the end of the session or any plans for long distance learning during the period of closure. Long distance learning *may* take the form of virtual class meetings and activities, resources sent to you virtually, and/or kits of physical materials for your child to use that you would need to pick up from Irvine.

If Irvine must cancel more than one class due to a COVID-related event, families will be offered a discount of 50% of the tuition for the duration of the closure. Please be patient as Irvine Nature Center processes any refund as this may need to be arranged remotely if the whole center is closed. Due to the strong recommendations from health care professionals to limit the mixing of groups, we will **not** be providing individual students make up days for missed classes due to illness or absence. Nor will a refund be awarded in such absences.

Inclement Weather

Irvine Nature Center reserves the right to cancel or end a class early due to emergency weather conditions based on concern for safety of families and staff. If inclement weather makes driving conditions dangerous, we will delay or cancel class. Irvine Nature Center determines its own closings and delays. Any decision to cancel or dismiss class early will be made by Irvine's Deputy Director. Safety will always be first in guiding our decision.

If Irvine Nature Center closes due to extreme weather, Earth Friends Outdoors will be cancelled. If Irvine delays opening till 9:30, Earth Friends Outdoors will start at 10:30am. If Irvine opens at 10 or later, classes will be cancelled.

In the event of severe weather developing after arrival, Irvine Nature Center reserves the right to dismiss early to ensure the safety of students, their families, and our staff. Such early dismissal will be done only in extreme circumstances. If the Deputy Director deems that it is unsafe for class to continue as normal even if we were to move indoors, parents will be informed via phone call.

Please check your email for a message from the Director of ECE regarding class delays or cancellations. As always, please do not come to school if your location is not yet safe for travel. For any weather-related questions, please contact the Director directly. You can also check Irvine's website, www.ExploreNature.org, Irvine's social media pages, or tune in to WBAL or WJZ for a weather update.

Please remember the one make-up day at the end of the program is the only one we have. Once it is used, there will not be another make up day and no refund will be given for weather-related closures.



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COMMUNICATION

We realize that some of these new policies and procedures will inhibit the regular face to face check-ins with your child's teachers. Therefore, we will be more reliant on technology to help us do so. In the weeks prior to the first day of class, we will send a Welcome Letter which will include a gear/supply list, staggered arrival group assignment for health screening, and a description of what to expect the first few days of class.

Earth Friends educators will send weekly emails sharing photos and descriptions of that week's adventures.

Who to contact when and a handy reference of numbers is on the following page below so that you can display that in an easy to access spot in your home.

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Who to Contact

We would like to reiterate the importance of honest, open, and timely communication about your family’s health or exposure to COVID-19.. We need your help to keep our students and whole community safe. All information will be kept confidential.

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s day: your child’s teachers. Before the start of the class series we will provide information on how to best do so.

If you feel that your concerns are not being addressed or if you have questions about school policies: please contact the Head of Homeschool programs, Stephanie Holzman, or the Director of Early Childhood Education, Katie Rooney.

If you are unsure if your child should attend due to possible symptoms or a possible exposure: contact the Director of ECE directly.

If your child is going to be absent for any reason: contact the Director of ECE directly. Doing so helps us keep families and staff all safe. **Please report any and all illness or questions about exclusion directly to her.** She can be reached in the following ways:

- Mon-Fri: 10-2pm Office phone (443) 738 9223
- Outside of these hours: Cell phone (443) 379 4605
- Anytime: RooneyK@ExploreNature.org

If this is a pressing matter such as an illness, please call first. If you do not speak to her directly, please leave a voicemail and **include your phone number**. Then please follow up with an email. Thank you.

If you have questions about tuition payment: contact the ECE Program Coordinator, Moriah Munsch

For grievances to which you feel you have not received a satisfactory response: contact the Director of Education or the Deputy Director of Irvine.

If an urgent matter arises during the school day: call Katie directly at the numbers below. Please call if you are running late or there is a change in pick up for your child that day.

Contact Information

Katie Rooney Director of Early Childhood Education	RooneyK@ExploreNature.org M-F 10-3:30, Office: (443) 738 9223 All other times, Cell phone: (443) 379 4605
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