



Camp Counselor Handbook

Revised for Summer 2020

Arlington Center for the Arts Camp Values

Our camp is a community

We create a feeling of welcome and belonging
We create a feeling of engagement with campers, families, counselors, teachers and staff
We create a feeling of safety to explore and experiment without judgment
We honor each person's unique creativity and honor the art/music they create
We support and celebrate creative expression
We support and celebrate stepping out of your comfort zone
Our counselors love working with kids and maintain a positive camp atmosphere at all times

We believe in the power of the arts

We are much more than an "arts and crafts" camp
We believe in learning and growing through the arts
We inspire campers' creativity with quality art experiences that are innovative, engaging, challenging, skill-building and fun
Our teachers are inspired and inspiring arts educators
Our camp creates integrated arts experiences that balance visual arts, music and theater
Our camp creates collaborative art-making and inspires teamwork

We believe in fostering growth and empowerment

From the YAA to Camp to CIT & Teen programs, we create an atmosphere of growth and mentoring.
Our CIT & Assistant Counselor programs are special places of growth and stepping up
We mentor our Counselors and Teachers to grow in their jobs

We believe in smooth, efficient administration and effective systems

We strive to respect people's time by creating systems that are clear, efficient and humane
We maintain a positive customer service and "can-do" attitude

We value our people and believe in the power of gratitude

Our people are our power. We actively find ways to thank our staff, counselors, teachers, families and campers for sharing their talents and being part of our community.

Please note: ACA does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability, or marital status.

Staff

Tom Formicola, Executive Director

Office staff report to the Executive Director. Questions concerning payment should go to the Executive Director. Tom can be reached at tom@acarts.org.

Cat Beaudoin, Education and Programs Manager

Teachers, coordinators and counselors report to the Education and Programs Manager. If you are running late or have become ill and need to be absent, please call Cat at **(860)-605-8653** and email her at cat@acarts.org.

Michael Mahin, Camp Director

All daily operations of the camp are overseen by the Camp Director. The Camp Director and Education and Programs Manager work in conjunction with one another. Michael can be reached at michael@acarts.org or at his cell at **(781)-724-7475**.

Pam Shanley, Operations Manager

All staff report to the Operations Manager regarding art materials, props, and facilities management. Pam can be reached at pam@acarts.org or at **(617)-872-5143**.

Aneleise Ruggles, Communications Director

All questions about camp promotion should be directed to the Communications Director. Aneleise can be reached at aneleise@acarts.org.

Lorraine Kilby, Office Administrator and Registrar

All questions about registrations and camp payments should be directed to the Office Administrator. Lorraine can be reached at lorraine@acarts.org.

Camp Coordinators

The Camp Coordinator oversees the daily operations of the camp. Counselors should contact the Camp Coordinator regarding questions or concerns related to daily camp operations, including camper info and behavioral management.

Camp Structure & Sample Schedule

ACA will be offering 3 in-person camp programs during the 2020 summer camp season:

At St. Paul's Lutheran Church (929 Concord Turnpike, Arlington, MA 02476)

- **Vacation Arts Camp (Gr 1-6)**: a full-day program (8:45am - 4:45pm), running August 3 - September 4

At the Arlington Center for the Arts (20 Academy, Arlington, MA 02476)

- **Art Academy (Gr 3-6)**: a full-day program (8:45am - 4:45pm), running August 17 - September 4
- **Teen studio (Gr 6 -10)**: a half-day program (1:30 - 4:30pm), running August 3 - September 4

More info about our summer arts camps, including weekly themes and descriptions, can be found at: <https://www.acarts.org/summer-arts-camps>

Sample Schedule:

Each week, counselors will receive a schedule and camp roster with student names and ages. Relevant camper medical and/or behavioral info will be communicated to counselors at the beginning of the week.

**** For the Summer 2020 season, counselors will be assigned to work with one particular group and teacher, in a designated classroom, for the duration of the week. ACA will not be able to run camp-wide times (snack, lunch and outdoor times will be spent in the designated classroom or outside on a rotating basis).**

The ACA Vacation Arts Camp (VAC) and Art Academy programs run **Monday - Friday, 8:45am-4:45pm.**

For VAC and Art Academy:

Counselors should arrive at ACA by 8:15am each morning. **All counselors will work about 7 hours each day, exact schedule TBA.**

*** Please note, this schedule is subject to change. Counselors will receive a specific schedule for each camp week they're assigned prior to the start of the week.*

8:15 am: Counselor & Staff Arrival

8:45 – 9:30 am: Arrival of Campers

- Staggered drop-off by group
- Camper will arrive in a 10-minute window for their particular group
- Upon arrival, an ACA staff will be waiting outside the building to conduct a verbal and visual symptom check, collecting the Parent Attestation form and sign the camper in for the day
- A counselor or camp admin member will then lead the camper into the building and walk them to their assigned classroom

- Campers, in their groups, will engage in ice-breaker activities and warm-up games with their Teacher/Counselor

9:30 - 10:30 am: First Activity/Rotating Recess Schedule

- Students will remain in their assigned classroom for their first activity.
- In the classroom: Groups who are in their classroom for the full hour may engage in visual art projects for the duration of the activity period. Groups splitting their time between the classroom and outside may choose to engage in group games, storytelling, etc.
- On a rotating basis, 2 groups will each spend 30 minutes outside at a time (on different parts of the grassy area)

Outside time:

- o Groups 1 & 2: 9:30 - 10:00
- o Groups 3 & 4: 10:00 - 10:30

10:30 - 10:45 am: Student hand-washing & classroom clean-up

- Students will wash their hands in their groups before eating snack

10:45 am - 11:15 am: Snack & Games

- Students will have snack & engage in some interactive games in their classrooms with their assigned staff

11:15am - 12:15pm: Second Activity/Rotating Recess Schedule

- Students will engage in their second activity of the day.
- In the classroom: Groups who are in their classroom for the full hour may engage in visual art projects for the duration of the activity period. Groups splitting their time between the classroom and outside may choose to engage in group games, storytelling, etc.
- On a rotating basis, the subsequent 2 groups will each spend 30 minutes outside at a time (on different parts of the grassy area)

Outside time:

- o Groups 5 & 6: 11:15 - 11:45
- o Group 7: 11:45 - 12:30

12:15 - 12:30pm: Student hand-washing & classroom clean-up

- Students will wash their hands in their groups before eating lunch

12:30 - 1:00 pm: Lunch & Games

- Students will have lunch and play some interactive games with their groups

1:00 - 2:00 pm: Third Activity/Rotating Recess Schedule

- Students will engage in their third activity of the day.
- In the classroom: Groups who are in their classroom for the full hour may engage in visual art projects for the duration of the activity period. Groups splitting their time between the classroom and outside may choose to engage in group games, storytelling, etc.
- On a rotating basis, 2 groups will each spend 30 minutes outside at a time (on different parts of the grassy area)

Outside time:

- o Groups 1 & 2: 1:00 - 1:30
- o Groups 3 & 4: 1:30 - 2:00

2:00 - 2:15 pm: Student hand-washing & classroom clean-up

- Students will wash their hands in their groups before eating their snacks

2:15 - 2:45pm: Snack & Games

- Students will have snack & engage in some interactive games in their classrooms with their assigned staff

2:45pm - 3:45pm: Fourth Activity/Recess Rotating Schedule

- Students will engage in their fourth activity of the day.

- In the classroom: Groups who are in their classroom for the full hour may engage in visual art projects for the duration of the activity period. Groups splitting their time between the classroom and outside may choose to engage in group games, storytelling, etc.
- On a rotating basis, the subsequent 2 groups will each spend 30 minutes outside at a time (on different parts of the grassy area)

Outside time:

- Groups 5 & 6: 2:45 - 3:15
- Group 7: 3:15 - 3:45

3:45 - 4:00pm: Student hand-washing & classroom clean-up

- Students will wash their hands in their groups before heading outside for pick-up

4:00 - 4:45pm: End-of-day group games & pick-up

- Students will engage in group games with assigned staff
- Groups will be released to parents in a staggered fashion, in 10 minute windows
- Camp staff will conduct an exit visual/verbal symptom check and report any relevant health information to the parent/guardian picking up
- ACA staff will check IDs (touchless) to make sure they are on the authorized pick-up list before releasing the camper
- Children who have not yet been picked up will be brought to the grassy area by their counselor and will remain with their counselor/other children in their group until their parent arrives

4:45pm: Counselors exit

Friday Show & Share

While ACA traditionally offers a Friday Show & Share for camp families to come watch their creative campers in action at the end of the week, this will not be possible during our 2020 camp programs.

However, should you have skits, songs or special art projects you are working on with your group that you think camp families would enjoy seeing, please connect with the Camp Director! We can film and/or photograph activities and share them with families if desired. Student artwork can also be photographed and included in the Camp Newsletter, which gets sent out on the Thursday of a given camp week.

Photos and/or video of student work can be emailed directly to Michael, Camp Director, at michael@acarts.org.

COVID-19 Policies & Procedures

Please make sure to thoroughly review **ACA's COVID-19 Camp Safety Plan** ([click here](#)), for a comprehensive list of the safety precautions and procedures ACA will be taking for the 2020 camp season re: COVID-19.

As a reminder:

- All counselors, teachers, staff & campers must wear masks at all times ([your mask needs to be over your nose and below your chin](#) at all times)
- Counselors, teachers, staff & campers will undergo a verbal/visual symptom screening process before entering the camp facility each morning
- Counselors will be assigned to a particular group (of no more than 10 campers), as well as a Camp Teacher, with whom they'll be working for the duration of the camp week
- Counselors will conduct all camp activities in their assigned classroom or outside (on a rotating basis, as denoted in the camp weekly schedule)
- If you or someone you live with are medically vulnerable, please consider whether in-person camps are a safe employment option for you this summer

Talking to campers about COVID-19:

We know that our camp programs will look and feel very different this year, and understand that some campers may have reservations about attending in-person programming this summer. At ACA, our highest priority this summer is to provide creative arts opportunities for kids in a way that is safe and aims to minimize risk.

While we will provide all camp families with our **2020 Camp Safety Plan** ([click here](#)), it is important for our instructors and staff to also familiarize themselves and feel comfortable and confident in their ability to enforce and communicate our COVID-19 safety precautions and procedures with campers.

We also recognize that developments related to COVID-19, and some of the changes to our own camp programs, may be distressing or scary for some campers. Below, you can find resources about effective and constructive ways to talk to campers about COVID-19.

- Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>
- How teachers can talk to children about COVID-19
<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teachers-can-talk-children-about-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Although ACA will do our best to offer reasonable accommodations and behavioral, as well as social/emotional, support for campers, the health and safety of all of our campers and staff is of the highest priority. Parents with concerns about their child's ability to comfortably engage in ACA's camp safety policies and procedures this year will be directed to talk to our staff prior to the start of camp.

Counselor Expectations

Behavior Expectations:

Our campers look up to our counselors to model appropriate behavior and enthusiasm for the program. Our program emphasizes compassion and fun; please be encouraging and supportive of all campers. Any behavioral issues with campers should be sent to the Camp Coordinators.

Please remember these expectations:

- Safety first at all times – please do your best to anticipate accidents before they occur, particularly during outside time. This is where most injuries happen.
- Be prompt and reliable – tardiness reflects poorly both on you and our program.
- Take directions from teachers and staff – if you are feeling restless or like there is not anything to do, reach out to the teacher and ask how you can be most helpful.
- Do your best to include all children in every activity to keep a positive group dynamic. If you have a camper that is not interested in the project or activity, **they are allowed to sit out.** But it's best to encourage a camper to try an activity first, if possible.
- Speak positively and with respect to all children. If you keep a happy demeanor and tone, it is more likely that your campers will listen to you when you need to be firm.
- Be friendly, enthusiastic, and helpful to parents. Remember, for many parents, this is their first time at ACA, too. If you greet them warmly, they are more likely to be interested in sending their child back to our program.
- Dress appropriately – Please remember that this is your place of work! Unaltered ACA t-shirts should be worn daily and flip-flops are not allowed at camp. You will be doing a lot of running around, so sneakers are encouraged; wear clothes that you are not hesitant to get dirty.
- Be attentive and present – when you are with campers, this is your time to get to know each of them. This is not your time to text, make phone calls, or socialize with other counselors.

Counselor Expectations (Pt. II)

Below is a list of criteria that we expect from counselors. If at any time, you would like feedback on positive or challenging experiences, please set up a meeting with Cat, our Education & Programs Manager. **During the summer, all counselors will receive an evaluation.**

LEADERSHIP

Enforces a safe environment for all campers
Enforces a respectful, friendly environment for all campers
Demonstrates understanding of ACA rules and procedures

CAMPER INTERACTION

Takes appropriate initiative in camper activities
Is enthusiastic and engaged
Collaborates on strategies to assist campers
Is engaged and helpful in the classroom

COMMUNICATION

Communicates and cooperates with teachers
Communicates clearly and well with camp families
Follows directions from staff
Communicates needs for support and guidance

IN THE WORKPLACE

Is prompt and reliable
Is positive and courteous
Seeks to improve
Maintains professional demeanor
Your employment is contingent upon these criteria and we expect you to put forth your best efforts to meet these expectations. If you do not, the following steps will be followed:

1. Verbal reminder from staff and extra training
2. Verbal reminder and note in employee file
3. Employee Evaluation
4. Your employment is contingent on the above criteria, and if you are not able to perform, your contract may be terminated.

If you have questions about the expectations of your position, please ask!

First Aid & Emergency Procedure

All incidents resulting in an injury to a camper or staff person must be brought to the attention of the Camp Coordinator or ACA staff to be logged.

- Do not move a child who has endured a serious fall. Send a counselor to retrieve an office staff member.
- If a child has endured a small or mild injury (scrape, nosebleed, cut, etc.), please send the child to the office with a counselor to receive first aid from an office staff person. After the child has been administered a band aid, medication, etc., counselors should take the child back to class. All incidents of injuries, however minor, must be brought to the ACA office to be logged in our injury log.
- Never leave a child alone. Never leave your class alone without a teacher, counselor, or staff member to supervise.
- If a child is having an allergic reaction, an office staff member must be notified immediately to administer the child's Epi-Pen.
 - Due to the prevalence of nut allergies, any tree nut snacks and lunches are prohibited from entering ACA.
 - During the camp day, all medications are in a clear plastic box in the office. In case of any emergency, stay with the child and call for counselors to get the Epi-Pen and call 911.
- In case of an emergency that requires medical assistance, teachers may be called upon to remove campers from the immediate environment, alert office staff, or meet the ambulance in front of the building and escort medical professionals to the site of the incident.
- Please add the office phone number, **(781) 648-6220**, to your phone so that you can call for assistance if needed. **Please also save the following Staff Contact info to be used in the event of an emergency:**
 - Michael Camp, Camp Director: **(781)-724-7475**
 - Cat Beaudoin, Education and Programs Manager: **(860)-605-8653**
 - Pam Shanley, Operations Manager: **(617)-872-5143**
- **Please note:** ACA will have a defibrillator on-site

In case of a fire, we will meet outside the building (find more info about weekly fire drills further on in this document).

For other non-medical emergencies (storm, intruder, missing child), an office staff member should be notified and all summer staff should wait for further instructions for how to proceed.

Abuse & Neglect:

If you have **any** reason to believe that a child is experiencing abuse or neglect (whether physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual), an ACA staff member must be notified immediately.

All workers in the US that work directly with children are considered "mandated reporters" of abuse – we must notify DCF of **any** suspicion immediately, by law.

Warning signs of abuse:

- Unexplained injuries – bruises, scratches, burns, etc.
- Changes in behavior – aggression, depression, anxiety, etc.
- Returning to earlier behaviors – thumb-sucking, wetting pants, fear of the dark or strangers
- Expressed fear of going home
- Changes in eating
- Changes in sleeping – appearing consistently tired or fatigued
- Lack of personal care or hygiene
- Risk-taking behaviors
- Inappropriate sexual behaviors

ACA Rules and Regulations

Rule of Three:

You should **NEVER** be in an enclosed space with only one child. If only one camper needs to use the bathroom, ask him/her to bring a buddy (or you may bring a CIT).

Bathroom Policy:

Counselors escort children to bathrooms and stay with them until they return to class. Use only the bathrooms designated for ACA.

Child Behavior Management:

A child who consistently disrupts the class or behaves in an unsafe manner may be brought to the ACA office for a “cool down” period. The Director of Education & Programming will make a determination at that time regarding further action and involvement of parents.

All ACA programs prohibit the following practices:

- Spanking/corporal punishment
- Cruel/unusual punishment
- Depriving children of outdoor time, meals, snacks
- Force feeding/making children eat against their will
- Using food as a consequence
- Disciplining for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet
- Confining child to any piece of equipment
- Excessive timeout (not to exceed one minute for age of child)

All campers are allowed to quietly sit out if they do not want to participate, but this does not mean that they get another activity.

Behavior Management Strategies:

- All behavioral issues should be conveyed to a staff member so that they can relay the information to the parent.
- Be clear about classroom expectations – kids need to know “the rules” up front.
- Remind kids about the rules, expectations, and plans throughout the class period with as much precision as possible. **Give warnings before transitions!**
 - Ex: “We will be working on our art projects for 20 minutes, then cleaning up, and then heading outside.”
- Give kids **choices** – if a child has trouble with competitive games (for example), let them know that such a game is coming up and they can choose to participate or not. **Campers have the option of “sitting it out,” reading, or free draw.** Remember, camp is fun!
- If a child looks like they are getting upset, ask frequently if they are in need of a break. If they do, they have the option of spending time in the office doing a relaxing activity.

- **Do not touch the campers.** If you have campers that have trouble keeping their hands to themselves, remind them that we need to respect each other's personal space.
- If a child seems anxious or agitated, giving them something to fiddle with is helpful – a pipe cleaner, a piece of clay, a squishy ball, or even paper. Or, try taking the child on a short walk in the building.
- Try giving a disruptive or anxious child a special job in the classroom.
- Be mindful of each child's special interests to make them feel welcome, seen, and heard.
- Always be lighthearted and keep your voice calm and soothing. Stay positive! You can always ask for help.
- If you need to speak to a child about their behavior, do so outside of the classroom/away from their group. These matters should be kept private.

Bringing Campers to the Office:

As the counselor, **you are not expected to discipline** behaviors that go beyond regular classroom interactions. If necessary, you may bring a camper to meet with one of Camp Coordinators or other staff members in the office.

You should involve a staff member when a camper's actions include:

- behaviors that endanger the safety and wellbeing of any camper, counselor or teacher
- behaviors that repeatedly disrupt and distract the entire group
- use the staff as a back-up for behaviors that you feel unequipped to handle on your own

When you bring campers to the office:

- Do not recap the negative behaviors for the staff members; instead, please deliver the camper to the staff member, **fill out an incident report** in the gallery and give the report to the staff member.

Non-Discrimination at ACA

At ACA, we do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability, or marital status.

We are more than happy to offer accommodations to anyone who needs them. If you have a question regarding the abilities and learning styles of the campers in your classroom, please speak to the Education and Program Manager.

It is our responsibility to make sure that everyone at ACA feels welcomed and valued. Therefore, it is important to know the dos and don'ts of language when interacting with a person with a disability.

DO SAY:	DON'T SAY:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A person with a disability- She uses a wheelchair- He has a cognitive disability- She has a learning disability- He has autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A cripple, handicapped, special needs- She is wheelchair-bound- He is mentally impaired- She is learning disabled- He is autistic

Always use person-first language; for example, a person who is blind rather than a blind person.

Do not make assumptions about what a person wants or needs. Take their lead, listen, and then respond according to their instructions. It is always permissible to offer assistance. If the person declines, do not insist on helping.

Do not make assumptions about a person's abilities based on visible disabilities or the lack thereof.

Guidelines for Further Camp Inclusivity:

In keeping with our firm belief in fostering a safe, inclusive, and comfortable environment for everyone, ACA utilizes the following practices in regards to respecting and recognizing gender identities:

- Using those gender pronouns requested by the person in question
- Using any names and/or nicknames requested by the child/staff member
- Allowing for reasonable accommodations including comfortable access to restrooms and/or other organization facilities

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Education & Programs Manager.

Communication

Attendance:

If you have committed to a camp week, we expect that, as a working professional, you will keep this commitment. Calling out at the last minute causes undue stress to your coworkers and peers, as well as disappointing the campers who look forward to seeing you each day. Make note that your attendance and timeliness are incorporated into your pay.

- If there is an emergency and you need to be absent, you must **CALL** the Education & Programs Manager, Cat Beaudoin, at (781) 648 - 6220 (office), (860)-605-8653 (cell), and email her at cat@acarts.org. Please do not assume that your message has been received unless you get a reply.
- You **MUST** check your email regularly. There may be important reminders for the upcoming camp day that you will be expected to know.

Payment:

All ACA staff are paid on a biweekly schedule. All checks will be put into the mail or paid via direct deposit every other Friday unless otherwise discussed. If you have an issue with your check, please contact the Executive Director either in the office or via email at tom@acarts.org