



Thorne Nature Learning Pods Safety Handbook

We realize that this document is in English, we are in the process of having it translated. Please contact Regina at 720.601.4964 or regina@thornenature.org if you require translation assistance.

Nos damos cuenta que este documento está en inglés, estamos en el proceso de traducirlo. Por favor contacte a Regina al 720.601.4964 o regina@thornenature.org si necesita ayuda de traducción inmediata.

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Founded in 1954, the mission of Thorne Nature Experience is to build Earth stewardship by providing youth with joyful, hands-on, place-based environmental education experiences that foster an emotional connection to nature.

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Welcome

Welcome to the Thorne Nature Learning Pods! This is your copy of Safety Handbook. This handbook contains important information about the policies and procedures that we have in place to keep our programs safe. Please read it thoroughly and keep it in a convenient location in the event you need to reference it at a later date. You can contact the School Programs Manager (paul@thornenature.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank You,
Thorne Nature Experience Staff

Building and Physical Premises

All staff and volunteers working with children at the Arts HUB participate in a Building and Physical Premises Safety Training, including the identification and protection from hazards and the handling and storage of hazardous materials and disposal of bio contaminants.

The Coal Creek Trail Corridor and each location that the program visits has a detailed Safety Plan, identifying and protecting against hazards specific to the site. Each day, staff check the area for hazards before the start of the program and actively communicate important information with children.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan

Situational emergencies such as floods, fires, tornados, and local shootings require different responses. Responses may include: Evacuation from The Arts HUB to Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center (SMEEC) or alternate location (if SMEEC is not safe), Shelter in Place, or Lockout/Lockdown depending on the location and resources available. The School Programs Manager will notify parents/guardians as soon as possible with information about the emergency or disaster via text messages and email. See the section “Notification and Reunification with Parents/Guardians below” for more information.

Evacuation

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, staff will safely move children to the SMEEC.

Evacuation Procedures:

- The responsible staff member should assess surroundings to ensure children can safely move.
- The responsible staff member will ensure those children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs will be accounted for and evacuated with attention to ensuring they have their necessary equipment and medication with them.

Shelter in Place

When evacuation is not possible due to immediate hazards or external threats, the responsible staff member will move children to the indoor classroom or other room in the Arts Hub and remain there until the School Programs Manager communicates instructions.

Lockout/Lockdown

If there is an external threat, children will be moved to the indoor classroom or other room in the Arts Hub and a lockout may be appropriate. The responsible staff member moves children to the indoor classroom and ensures the building is secured. If the threat is inside the building, a Lockdown may be the safest response. During a lockdown, the responsible staff member move children to a room that can be secured. Staff turn off lights, maintain silence, and move the group away from sight.

Notification and Reunification with Parents

If an evacuation results in moving children to SMEEC, and the meeting location for parent/guardian pick-up changes, all parents/guardians must be notified as soon as possible of this change and how they can be reunited with their children. The School Programs Manager will communicate with parents via text messages and email, and if it is safe, there will be a Thorne staff member at the scheduled meeting location to direct parents/guardians to the alternate meeting location.

Continuity of Operations

In the aftermath of an emergency or disaster, Thorne Nature Learning Pods will continue operations of the program at SMEEC (or an alternate location if SMEEC is not available).

Procedures for Natural Hazards & Emergencies

Natural Disaster Preparedness

In case of a natural disaster emergency like a flash flood, tornado, or wildfire, staff will immediately move their groups indoors into the Arts Hub, will contact 911, and will remain in a safe location in the building, like the theater, until danger passes or help arrives.

Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as is safely possible about the emergency and the status of their children.

Bodies of Water

While water is a great place to explore and learn in nature, it can also be a potential hazard. To ensure the safety of children, Thorne has specific policies in place when children are in or around water:

1. When children are in or around water, a staff member will actively supervise children and keep each child in their sight, hearing and in close contact at all times. An additional staff member will be called to supervise before the group becomes too large or dispersed for one person to adequately supervise.
2. Children will not enter the water above their knees.
3. Children will not enter the water if deep or dangerous conditions exist.

Extreme Heat/Cold Policy

In the case of extreme heat or cold that could threaten the safety of participants, Thorne takes precautions to keep children safe. On hot days, staff keep children in the shade as much as possible, and also take regular water breaks to keep everyone hydrated. On cold days, staff will ensure children have appropriate clothing before going outdoors, and when outside will stay dry and warm by staying active. Thorne staff will monitor weather and temperatures and follow the Child Care Weather Watch Wind Chill Factor Chart and Heat Index Chart, and in extreme cases, children will go indoors.

Flash Floods

Flash flooding is one potential hazard that could be encountered during Thorne Nature Learning Pods. In case of heavy rain, the program will not go near rivers or creeks. If a flash flood occurs without warning, staff will immediately move their groups to higher ground. This may mean climbing a hill, going to the second story of a nearby building, or climbing on top of large boulders or automobiles. Staff will contact 911 and remain in a safe place until danger passes or help arrives. If a flash flood warning is in effect, children will remain indoors at the Arts Hub.

Hail

Hail is a common weather phenomenon along Colorado's Front Range, especially in the summer. In the event of hail, children should cover their heads with their backpacks or hold their coats above their heads to create a shield. Staff and children will remain in a safe place and protect their heads and faces. In the case of extreme weather that could threaten the safety of Thorne participants, children will retreat indoors.

Lightning

In the case of lightning that could threaten the safety of Thorne participants, children will be indoors. If lightning is distant, the School Programs Manager will watch conditions, note changes, and notify teachers. If lightning comes within 10 miles of a site, children will be moved indoors.

Tornado

Tornado warnings do occur in Boulder County and funnel clouds are occasionally sighted. If staff sees a funnel cloud nearby and/or if they hear warning sirens, children will be moved indoors immediately. The group will seek shelter in an open room in the Arts Hub, away from large furniture.

Wildfires/Smoke

In the case of a nearby wildfire that could threaten the safety of Thorne participants, children will be moved indoors. If wildfires are distant, but smoke is present or visibility is less than five miles (this may change throughout the day), Thorne will also move children indoors. In addition, Thorne's School Programs Manager checks both the Office of Emergency Management and the Health Advisory website each morning that smoke or fires are occurring nearby to determine if groups should be moved indoors.

If staff observe a small fire in the outdoors, they will move away from it immediately and call 911 to make a report. If they are caught in the vicinity of a wildfire, cover may be taken in a creek or pond by wading into the water and remaining there. If the fire comes very close, children should crouch down in the water and submerge their bodies, including their heads if necessary. If Preschool is caught in a fire while indoors, they will follow the emergency fire procedures of the Arts Hub. Staff will remain with children and proceed outdoors as quickly as possible. If groups are unable to exit the building, children should crouch or lie on the floor and cover their faces with a wet cloth or clothing.

Protection from Potential Hazards

Road Crossings

When crossing any road, staff will implement the sandwich method to ensure the safety of children, with one staff in front and one in back of the group.

Identifying Where Children are at all Times

Thorne Staff will maintain sight and voice contact with children at all times while children are under their supervision. Thorne Staff will conduct silent headcounts every 15 minutes and verbal headcounts before and after transitions.

Missing Person(s)

Staff are responsible for accounting for each child in their group whenever the class is separated into groups. Staff will perform a silent count every 15 minutes. Should it be discovered that a child is missing from the group; staff will not send the group out to search for the missing child, but rather have the group remain together. Instead, a Staff member will do a thorough search of the area, and children will be taught to stay in one place if they find themselves lost or separated from the group. Staff will fill out an Emergency/Incident Report to document the incident.

Active Shooter

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and/or populated area.

In a situation with an active shooter the staff who sees and/or hears the active shooter will use a cell phone to notify all staff of the emergency by clearly stating, “**There is an active shooter on the premises at [describe location].**” Staff will perform a fast head count of children. If children are at a different location (ex: bathroom), the staff member who is supervising those children will be in charge of getting them to safety.

Staff will communicate to the children that there is dangerous person in the area and will advise them that it is very important to follow directions. Emergencies are dynamic situations. It is critical that staff and children are prepared to react quickly and respond to different scenarios and changing conditions. The plans below are based on the Standard Response Protocol developed by the “I Love U Guys” Foundation and the Active Shooter Response Plan developed by FEMA/ready.gov.

Lockout-Secure the Perimeter: If danger (shooter) is outside of the building, Staff will:

- Bring any children involved in outside activities indoors if this is the safest place.
- Proceed to a room that can be locked or barricaded.
- Lock all doors and windows, turn out the lights and stay away from the windows, perform a group headcount.
- Call 911 and advise the dispatcher of what is taking place and where the group is located.
- Remain on the line to give the dispatcher any further information that may be needed.
- Remain in the room until the situation is cleared by police.

If the shooter is inside the building: RUN, HIDE, FIGHT:

- Run:
 - If there is an accessible escape path, Staff and children will attempt to evacuate the premises immediately.
 - Staff will be sure to:
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind. Clearly and concisely communicate to the class where the group will be going.
 - Have children leave their belongings behind.
 - Help children escape with one staff member in the lead and one staff member behind the last student, if an additional staff member is available.
 - Staff will not attempt to move wounded people.
 - Do a headcount and call 911 when the group is safe. Describe shooter, location, and weapons to 911.
- Hide:
 - If evacuation is not possible, Staff will find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find the group.
 - The hiding place should:
 - Be out of the active shooter’s view
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in the group’s direction
 - Do not restrict the groups options for movement
 - To prevent an active shooter from entering the group’s hiding place, Staff will lock the door and blockade with heavy furniture. **This is a lockdown situation.**

- If the active shooter is nearby, Staff will:
 - Silence cell phone and/or walkie talkie
 - Have group hide behind large items (ex: cabinets, tables)
 - Have the group remain quiet
- If evacuation and hiding out are not possible: Staff should remain calm and dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location. If Staff cannot speak, they should leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- Fight:
 - AS A LAST RESORT, and only when Staff and/or Participants lives are in imminent danger, Staff should attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throwing items and improvising weapons
 - Committing to his/her actions

If the group is outside and a shooter is in the vicinity RUN, HIDE, FIGHT:

- Run:
 - If there is an accessible escape path, Staff and Participants will attempt to evacuate the premises or go to a secure building immediately.
 - Staff will be sure to:
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind. Clearly and concisely communicate to the class where the group will be going. Staff should reference site-specific safety plans for more information.
 - Have Participants leave their belongings behind.
 - Help Participants escape with one staff member in the lead and one staff member behind the last student, if an additional staff member is available.
 - Staff will not attempt to move wounded people.
 - Do a headcount and call 911 when the group is safe. Describe shooter, location, and weapons to 911.
- Hide:
 - If evacuation is not possible, Staff will find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find the group.
 - The hiding place should:
 - Be out of the active shooter's view
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in the group's direction (ex: near a boulder or large tree)
 - Do not restrict the groups options for movement
 - If the active shooter is nearby, Staff will:
 - Silence cell phone and/or walkie talkie
 - Have group hide behind large items (ex: boulder or large tree)
 - Have the group remain quiet
- If evacuation and hiding out are not possible: Staff should remain calm and dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location. If Staff cannot speak, they should leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- Fight:

- AS A LAST RESORT, and only when Staff and/or Participants lives are in imminent danger, Staff should attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throwing items and improvising weapons
 - Committing to his/her actions

Questions

If you have additional questions, you are always encouraged to contact our office at info@thornenature.org or 303.499.3647.