



Thorne Nature Learning Pods Parent Handbook

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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.

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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Welcome

Welcome to the Thorne Nature Learning Pods! We are honored to have your child in our program. This is your copy of the Parent Handbook. This handbook contains important information that is essential to our ability to serve you and your child effectively. Please read it thoroughly and keep it in a convenient location. Refer to it when you have questions about our policies. Please let the School Programs Manager (paul@thornenature.org) know if you have any questions or concerns.

To help us provide the best experience for your child, we encourage you to communicate with your Thorne instructor openly and regularly about your goals for your child's time with us and your family's experience with our program. The more we know, the better we are able to serve you both. You can also contact the School Programs Manager (paul@thornenature.org) at any time. We invite you to work together with us to help your child experience the best our program has to offer!

*Thank You,
Thorne Nature Experience Staff*

Statement of Purpose

Thorne instructors will provide nature based enrichment programming and help to support students with their assigned learning program from their BVSD teacher. Thorne is not providing supplemental education. Nature Learning Pods will spend a minimum of two hours exploring and playing in nature, weather permitting, and will balance outdoor time with a focus on virtual learning assignments. Parent/guardian should expect that not all BVSD provided online assignments for the each day will be fully complete during the hours of the Nature Learning Pod program. In this case, parent/guardian should assist student to complete remaining work at home.

Enrollment

Families interested in enrolling can contact info@thornenature.org. If you need assistance and/or cannot access the link, please call 720-601-4964. If space is available, the Nature Kids Community Liaisons or Administrative Director will follow up with families to gather additional information and answer questions to ensure this program will be a positive experience for your children.

PREREQUISITE: Previous participation in a Thorne or NKJN program. Scholarships are only available for Lafayette residents. Support is available for families in need of technology, food, transportation, etc.

Required Forms for Enrollment:

- Signed form signifying that parents/guardians have read Thorne’s policies and procedures, including COVID-19 Health Policies and Procedures
- Medical Forms and Immunization Record*
- Parent/Guardian Release and Sunscreen & Insect Repellent Permission Form
- Release and Indemnity Waiver
- Health Care Plan/Medication Forms (if applicable)

*** Immunization:**

Thorne is committed to following the State of Colorado’s laws pertaining to schools, health forms, and immunization records. Colorado’s Immunization Certificate must be completed for every student each year. Thorne will accept non-immunized or under-immunized children with a signed immunization exemption form.

The records of children enrolled in Thorne Nature Learning Pods are confidential. Parent/guardian can request a copy of their child’s immunization record.

Tuition and Fees

2020-2021 Tuition:

The cost to participate is on a sliding scale starting at \$1,500/month (approximately \$12.50/hour); however, low-income Lafayette families can participate free of charge and middle income Lafayette families experiencing a significant COVID-19 financial hardship can apply for a partial scholarship.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for the payment of all scheduled days, whether or not their child attends the program. Credits will not be issued for vacations or closures due to holidays or inclement weather. Tuition for the months of November and December and March will be prorated to accommodate for program closures for Thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break. Refunds will be awarded for any day that the program is cancelled by Thorne for reasons other than severe inclement weather, including closure due to a public order related to COVID-19.

Deposit

There is a deposit of one month’s tuition due at the time of registration for new families. The deposit will serve as the last month tuition and Thorne will refund any unused portions of the deposit in accordance with its rules around program withdrawal or any Thorne initiated cancellation of the program other than severe weather.

Program Duration and Withdrawal

The program will remain in effect for each student enrolled until BVSD is able to offer full-time, in-person learning to that student. Parents/guardians can withdraw from the program on the first of any month with a minimum of one month’s notice. In the event BVSD moves to a partial in-person learning schedule, Thorne will adjust its program model to accommodate remaining childcare needs during a typical school week at a prorated cost.

Parents/Guardians wanting to withdraw their child must provide written notification to the School Programs Manager (paul@thornenature.org). Following such notification, the parent/guardian remains responsible for payment of tuition for one month beginning the first day of the month after written notification is received. The School Programs Manager may or may not decide to enroll another student immediately or at any time within the one month window during which the parent/guardian is responsible for payment. If a new student is enrolled to replace the student that is withdrawing, the parent/guardian of the withdrawing student will not be responsible for tuition beginning the date that the new student begins attending the Preschool as long as the new student has agreed to pay the same or more tuition.

General Nature Learning Pod Information and Procedures

Ages of Thorne Participants

Children enrolled in grades 1-5 can attend Thorne's Nature Learning Pods. Group size is maintained at a maximum ratio of up to 10 children per one adult, unless otherwise noted. Children must be enrolled in a BVSD elementary school or BVSD Universal.

Location

The Arts HUB: 420 Courtney Way, Lafayette, CO 80026

Outdoor programming will take place along the Coal Creek trail corridor, which offers a diverse habitat for children to play and learn, and is just a 10 minute walk along a trail from the Arts HUB.

Hours/Program Year

Thorne Nature Learning Pods run Monday-Friday from 8:30 am-2:30 pm. The program starts August 26, 2020.

Thorne's Administrative Office at Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center is open Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm. *Hours may vary during COVID-19 pandemic.*

Daily Schedule

Once we learn BVSD's online learning schedule for each student in our program, we will create a daily schedule for each grade level. We will adapt the schedule as necessary throughout the year according to the needs of participants. A minimum of 2 hours will be spent in outdoor play and exploration each day, weather permitting.

Holidays and School breaks when Center is closed

The program will follow the [Boulder Valley School District calendar](#) and will be closed on days that Boulder Valley School District is closed.

Inclement Weather Closings

Thorne Nature Learning Pods will not operate when snow or extreme weather create conditions which are dangerous for young children and their families to travel to and from school. In making the decision to close, we will follow the lead of the Boulder Valley School District. Check

the BVSD website or your local TV stations for the latest information. Thorne will also send out updates via text and email.

Rain Days/Lightning

For children, rain can be as much fun as a sunny Colorado day, as long as they are dressed appropriately. Thorne Nature Learning Pods will still conduct the outdoor portion of its program on rainy days, so please make sure to always pack a waterproof layer for your child. It is Thorne’s policy to hold programs regardless of rain, but in the event of lightning, we will retreat indoors.

Outdoor Gear/Clothing

Children will be outdoors at least two hours per day while at the Thorne Nature Learning Pods and should be dressed according to the weather. Children need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Sneakers, well-fitting hiking boots, rain boots, snow boots, or closed-toe sandals work best.

If you need assistance or financial support to acquire any supply or clothing item, contact Regina@thornenature.org.

Clothing recommendations for each season include:

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
-Waterproof Rubber boots or Hiking boots -Jacket or sweatshirt -Rain jacket w/hood -Rain pants Hat -Gloves/mittens -Sun Hat	Waterproof/insulated snow boots -Waterproof snow pants -Waterproof winter coat -Multiple insulating layers -Waterproof mittens/gloves (2 pairs) -Scarf/neck cover -Hat/ear covers -Wool/fleece socks	-Rubber boots or Hiking boots -Jacket or sweatshirt -Rain jacket w/hood -Rain pants -Hat -Gloves/mittens -Sun Hat	-Close-toed sandals or shoes -Sun hat

All clothing should be LABELED, including boots, mittens, coats, etc. Many will look the same. Although staff members will do their best to keep track of clothing, Thorne is not responsible for lost articles of clothing.

All children must have one change of clothes. The change of clothes will be kept in the child’s backpack or in the classroom at the Arts HUB. A zippered plastic bag (Ziploc, etc.) or other waterproof bag is an ideal storage container for these clothes, since this allows teachers to be able to properly store wet or soiled clothing if necessary. Changes of clothes should include underwear, pants, shirt, and socks and should be changed for each season.

For outdoor programming, please provide your child with a backpack every day containing a large full bottle of water (make sure it doesn’t leak), a non-perishable snack, sunscreen, insect

repellent (during buggy months), a fleece or sweatshirt (even on warm days), a hat, a waterproof rain jacket (even on clear days).

Learning Materials and Supplies

For virtual school programming, please provide your child with a second backpack or bag with an electronic device including charging cord (computer, tablet) that allows them to access their BVSD virtual learning content, headphones, and any required school supplies on the list provided by their BVSD teacher.

If you need assistance or financial support to acquire any of the require learning materials, contact Regina@thornenature.org.

The Nature Learning Pods staff ask that children not bring items such as toys, games, phones, or money from home in order to keep personal belongings from getting lost or broken.

Lost and Found

Throughout the school year, a Lost & Found box will be located at the Arts HUB- please check regularly for lost items.

Meals and Snacks

The family must provide children attending Thorne Nature Learning Pods with their own snacks, sack lunch, and water.

If you need assistance or financial support to purchase meals and snacks, contact Regina@thornenature.org.

All food should be ready to serve (meaning fruits peeled, sliced, etc. if necessary), and ideally in containers that children are able to manage independently. The Teacher, under child care licensing requirements, must check lunches brought from children's homes to determine if they meet one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. If the child fails to bring a meal, or if the meal meets less than one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs, Thorne will supply an adequate meal. Sharing food is strongly discouraged amongst the children for health and safety concerns. Safe drinking water is available to children at all times if water is forgotten or more is needed. Children are provided with the means for washing their hands prior to eating.

We plan to eat snacks and meal outdoors on most days, though we will use indoor space at the Center on some cold days for eating.

Policies on Guidance, Positive Instruction, and Discipline

Thorne Nature Learning Pods maintain a respectful early learning and care environment and support the social and emotional competence of children. Thorne promotes positive behavior through mentorship, acknowledgement, and encouragement. Staff are trained in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and behavior management techniques. These are practiced daily with

children, and individualized support is provided as needed. With a focus on SEL, Thorne fosters self-confidence and empathy for others through self-awareness, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

When necessary, staff will provide individualized social and emotional intervention supports and plans for children with input from parents/guardians of the child. Individualized plans focus on the encouragement of positive behavior, redirection, safe de-escalation, and adaptations to encourage successful participation in the programs. Discipline shall be constructive or educational in nature, and may include such measures as separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, or praise for appropriate behavior with the intent of reducing challenging behavior. As a policy, children will not be subjected to any physical punishment or ridicule from Thorne staff. If additional support is needed, Thorne will access an early childhood mental health consultant or other specialist as needed through Mental Health Partners of Boulder County. Thorne staff will strive to prevent expulsion unless absolutely necessary for the safety and well-being of the other children.

Challenging Behavior Issues and Consequences

Staff are trained in how to deal with challenging behaviors and how to develop individualized plans for children who need them. Behavioral issues and interventions will be documented on a written incident report and communicated to parents/guardians and the School Programs Manager. The plan of action will clearly outline interventions that will be used and the behavioral expectations that are required for the child to be allowed to remain in the program.

If appropriate individualized plans are ineffective and the child continues to behave inappropriately and/or interferes with the safety or learning of other children, the School Programs Manager will evaluate whether or not the child may remain in the program.

Participant/Parent/Instructor/BVSD Communication

It is very important that parents/guardians stay up to date and informed about the emotional, physical, and academic wellbeing of their child. We encourage the parent/guardian to communicate daily with their child about their wellbeing and experience in the program. We also encourage the parent/guardian to be in close and regular contact with their child's BVSD teacher to understand how they are performing academically. The parent/guardian should contact their child's Thorne instructor to relay any information that is important to the child's emotional, physical, and academic well-being or that is relevant to ensuring the child is able to succeed in and fully benefit from the Nature Learning Pod program.

Thorne staff will work to monitor wellbeing through the following processes:

- **Daily check-in:** to review day's assignments, determine any technology or supply needs, and ensure readiness for outdoor play.
- **Weekly one-on-one:** to discuss overall wellbeing, broader academic goals, and mental health of each child. It is important to note that Thorne educators are not professional

counselors nor will they make assessments of children. The educator will use this check-in to build healthy relationships with your children based on trust and mutual respect.

- **Constant presence:** Thorne educators will be present throughout the program for questions as they arise and redirect behavior that is harmful or distracting to self or others

Through these processes, Thorne instructors will be able to gather up to date information on the wellbeing of each participant. The Thorne Instructor will contact the child's parent/guardian to relay any information that is important to the child's emotional, physical, and academic wellbeing or that is relevant to ensuring the child is able to succeed in and fully benefit from the Nature Learning Pod program.

Unless directed otherwise by the parent/guardian, the Thorne instructor from time to time may contact the participant's BVSD teacher directly for assistance in ways that can best support the participant's wellbeing and success in the Nature Learning Pod program.

Special Activities

Special Activities are defined as activities that typically are not part of the Nature Learning Pod's schedule or curriculum. Thorne provides a list of special activities it offers to parents or guardians, and notifies them in advance of all activities that occur away from the center (see field trips). Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to indicate to Thorne staff if they do not want their child to participate in an activity.

Field Trips

During field trips which include any programming not delivered at the Arts Hub or along the Coal Creek Corridor, the ratio of 1 staff per 10 children will be maintained, and children will be actively supervised at all times. Staff will carry an itinerary of events and a copy will remain at the Center and at Thorne's headquarters at all times. Staff will carry information about each child, including: name, address, and phone number of the child's physician or other appropriate health care professional, and written authorization from parent(s) or guardian(s) for emergency medical care. Additionally, a list of all children and staff on the field trip will be kept at Thorne's headquarters and the Center. Each day that Thorne participates in a field trip, parents/guardians must provide written permission for the child to participate in the activity at a specific location and date.

Transportation

Thorne will not transport children in vehicles for the Nature Learning Pod Program.

Use of Technology

The use of technology will be allowed to support academic learning. All television, recorded media, computer, tablet, cell phones, video games, and other media devices are prohibited during snack or meal times and nature based outdoor programming except with special permission from the instructor. Participants will only be allowed to view TV/Videos that are required to complete assignments provided by the child's BVSD teacher.

Handwashing

Handwashing per the guidance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities will be met at all times. Handwashing will always occur after using the toilet and before eating. Handwashing will be supervised and taught to children when necessary.

Special Needs

Thorne is an equal opportunity employer and is cognizant of both federal and state legislation that support opportunities and fair treatment for all. Thorne's Anti-Discrimination policy is outlined in its Employee Policies Manual and staff are advised of the policy during their orientation. Thorne makes efforts to accommodate children with disabilities and who have special needs in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Titles I-V. Our facilities are wheelchair accessible and Thorne makes efforts to enroll and place children with disabilities in our program.

Due to the outdoor venue and physical nature of the program, children must be sighted and ambulatory to attend Thorne Nature Learning Pods. There are several hikes that are not suitable for non-sighted children as they are steep with loose rock, posing an accident hazard to the child. If your child has a disability other than those listed above, please contact the School Programs Manager to see if accommodations can be made. Teachers are not specifically trained in care for children with disabilities, so often times we recommend that a parent or guardian attend to accompany the child. Our primary concern is for the safety of all children.

Illness

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be following Thorne's COVID Health Policies and Procedures.

Communicable Illnesses

When a child shows signs of a severe or communicable illness, they will be separated from other children, the parent/guardian notified, and a doctor or medical facility consulted as needed regarding treatment. In case of a known communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia or shigella, the Director will report to the local health department pursuant to regulations of the State Department of Public Health and Environment and contact all parents/guardians of children in care.

Accidents and Injuries

A written report is submitted when any accident or injury, however minor, occurs while the children are in our care. If the accident or injury is minor, the parent/guardian will be notified at the end of the day. For more serious accidents or injuries, Emergency Medical Services will take the child to the nearest medical facility or that which is stated by the parent/guardian on the Medical Authorization and Release Form, and the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted immediately. If a child receives any care from a medical professional for an injury that occurred while in the care of Thorne, parents/guardians must report this to Thorne staff and staff must complete the child care licensing online injury report within 24 hours.

All staff are trained in Thorne's Incident and Emergency Procedures and Safety Plans. Staff are also trained and receive certifications in Standard Precautions, First Aid, CPR, and Medication Administration. Staff must carry a fully stocked first aid kit, Thorne's Policy and Safety Handbook, and Thorne's "Incident and Emergency Flow Chart" at all times.

Visitors

All visitors must arrange their visit through the School Programs Manager, who will notify the staff of the reason for the visit as well as the date, time, location, and number of visitors to expect. All visitors must sign in with the on the day of their visit on the "Visitor Log" which includes: name, date, phone number, address, reason for visit, and a driver's license number. A written policy regarding visitors will be posted and a record maintained daily.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Thorne will not be allowing visitors to the program except those required by BVSD to provide academic support or deemed necessary by the Thorne School Programs Manager to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each participant.

Filing a Complaint

Thorne Nature Learning Pods are licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a child care facility. See the Director for a copy of the most recent Report of Inspection. Thorne provides written information to parents/guardians at the time of admission and staff members at the time of employment on how to file a complaint concerning suspected licensing violations. This information includes: "To file a complaint about this facility contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203, 303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876"

Parental Notification

Thorne will notify parents/guardians if the program is no longer able to serve children. Thorne will notify parents or guardians in writing of significant changes in its services, policies, or procedures so that they can decide whether the center continues to meet the needs of the child.

If a child is withdrawn from a Thorne program for any reason, the parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the School Programs Manager (paul@thornenature.org) in writing.

Pick Up and Drop Off Policies and Procedures

Release of Children

All children will be signed in and out daily by their parent/guardian. Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the "Parent/Guardian Release Form" and the center has written authorization. Thorne staff are responsible for knowing who is on the form when releasing children.

Late Pick Up Policy

Parents/Guardians must arrive to pick up their child at the designated end time of the program. If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the program, staff will attempt to reach parents/guardians and other contacts listed on the emergency form and the parent/guardian will be charged a \$1 per minute child-care fee. If a child still has not been picked up an hour after the end of the program, authorities will be notified and a child care fee of \$1 per minute will be assessed. In any case, authorized staff will remain with children until a parent or guardian picks them up. Staff will check all rooms and account for all children before leaving for the day.

Late Arrival

In the event you must drop off late or pick up early, please text your Thorne instructor with the time you plan to arrive and they will reply that they are aware of your timing. Upon arrival at the Arts Hub, proceed to the main, North entrance of the building. The person picking up or dropping off should not enter the building. A Thorne staff member will be stationed at the lobby to assist you with sign and sign out procedures. Please knock and wait to be greeted. If someone is not there to greet you, please text or call the number listed on the main door. If you do not receive an immediate reply, please text or call your instructor and Thorne's School Programs Manager (317.908.7039).

Unauthorized Pick-Up

Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the Parent/Guardian Release Form. In an emergency situation, a parent/guardian may confirm an additional person to pick up his/her child over the phone through verbal authorization. In the case that someone not listed on the form or verbally confirmed by the parent/guardian tries to pick up a child, the child will not be released and the individual will be asked to leave. Authorities will be contacted if necessary.

Absences

If your child cannot attend on any given day, please contact the School Programs Manager, Paul Humes, via text or phone call at 317.908.7039. If your child is absent because of an illness, you must contact the School Programs Manager as soon as possible. See Thorne's COVID-19 Health Policies and Procedures for more information.

Community

Thorne values building a strong, supportive, inclusive community between classmates, families, and staff. Thorne believes that a healthy, rich, meaningful sense of community within our programs cultivates the human connection that is equally as important as nature connection.

Communications

Thorne has an open door policy on communication between staff and parents/guardians. Staff are available before and after the program each day for informal check-in conversations. Regular, ongoing communication between family and school is the best way to ensure that Thorne staff are able to provide a positive, supportive experience that is meeting children's needs. The Thorne staff do their best to keep parents/guardians informed about daily happenings and program updates. At a minimum, parents/guardians will receive daily

communication about their child's academic progress for virtual learning. If you ever have any questions about the Nature Learning Pods or your child's experience, please contact the School Programs Manager.

If it is necessary to contact Thorne staff during program time, enrolled families can reach out to the School Programs Manager, Paul Humes, at 317.908.7039. This number will be monitored between 8:00 am – 3:00 pm on program days. Please use this only when necessary so that staff can remain engaged with children as much as possible during program hours.

Health and Safety Plan

Thorne is deeply committed to the operation of a program that is safe, organized, thoughtful, and will improve the health and well-being of children in our community. To this end, all staff and volunteers 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.

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.

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)

Children will be taught to stay put if they ever become separated from the group and call out for help. Should it be discovered that a child is missing from the group, a staff member will stay with the group while another methodically searches the area for the missing child and calls out their name until they are found.

Medication Policy

All Thorne Staff are trained in Medication Administration, First Aid, CPR, and Standard Precautions. If a child needs medication administered while under the care of Thorne, parents/guardians must complete all necessary medication forms. When possible, parents/guardians are encouraged to administer medication to their child prior to and after the programs instead of sending medication. When necessary, staff with Medication Administration Certification will keep and administer medication with the required medication forms (written parental consent AND authorization of the prescribing practitioner). Without these required forms, the child with a reported medical condition will not be permitted to attend the program. Medications must be kept in the original labeled bottle or container and must contain the original pharmacy label. Over-the-counter medication must be kept in the originally labeled container and be labeled with the child's first and last name. Medications will be kept in an area inaccessible to children but carried if group is away from the Center. Controlled medications must be counted and safely secured, in a locked container. A written medication log must be kept for each child and is part of the child's records.

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

All Staff and volunteers are background checked for a criminal history and abuse and neglect. Thorne staff read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to state law. Thorne staff are also required to complete an annual Child Abuse Prevention course. Staff who have reasonable cause to suspect or knowledge of a child who has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed a child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect will immediately report the incident to the School Programs Manager and the proper reporting agency. If a parent/guardian believes that his/her child has been abused, s/he should seek immediate assistance by calling The Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-844-CO-4-Kids.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan

Please see details of our plans for emergency situations located in a separate safety handbook.

Parent Handbook Sign Off

(Program copy)

My signature below indicates that I have received the Thorne Nature Learning Pods Parent Handbook, and I understand and accept responsibility for all that is involved in having my child(ren) in the care of Thorne Nature Learning Pods. I also understand that my child and I are responsible for adhering to all of the policies and procedures as stated in this Parent Handbook. Failure to abide may result in my child's dismissal from the program.

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date