

Great Blue Heron
Community School Handbook

2021-2022

September 2021

Wantastegok (Brattleboro), Vermont

Dear Parents and Guardians,

To start us off, we want to acknowledge that Great Blue Heron Community School operates in the unceded Abenaki Homelands – more specifically the Elnu Abenaki Homelands. The Abenaki have been, and are currently still living, in relationship with this area for more than 10,000 years. We, at Blue Heron and Vermont Wilderness School, want to continue to share and mentor youth into deeper relationship with this area and to do so with increasing awareness of the history of this place and relationship with the Abenaki and other Indigenous peoples.

The purpose of this handbook is to deliver important information about our policies, how we operate, what you and your children can expect and also what the staff, Program Directors and Vermont Wilderness School Office expect from each of you. Before we get into that, we would like to share a bit of who we are and how we have formed.

Over the years, Blue Heron Community School has been very much a community grassroots based offering and would not be possible without the contributions, creativity, patience and dedication of the many families, staff and individuals involved in organizing, meeting, mediating, dreaming, and setting up these programs. We are grateful to everyone's contributions. Whether you are new to Blue Heron or returning, we need your support as the children venture out into the woods of Moosewood (Camp Arden) and Greenwood for another year of learning and growing together.

Great Blue Heron Community School is a learning community that has been evolving since 1999 when 22 homeschooled children and nine staff and interns came together at Littlewood in West Brattleboro (then owned by co-founder Brian Robertshaw) under the name of Oyase Community School. The program began with a request from the Brattleboro Homeschooling Group for Brian Robertshaw to weekly teach a day on wilderness living and naturalist skills. Knowing he needed help with such a large group, he went looking and reconnected at a gathering with Mark and Luz Elena Morey. The Moreys joined Brian in Brattleboro and also invited several young folks inspired by a vision of long term mentoring youth in nature connection. A couple months in, Steve Young joined Brian, Mark and Luz Elena in both running Oyase Community School and setting up the non-profit Vermont Wilderness School. This completed the founding team of four.

In 2020, we retired the name "Oyase" (see section later in this handbook for more on this name) and now call the program Great Blue Heron Community School, or Blue Heron for short. From the very beginning, we have had a relationship with the Great Blue Heron. On that first day during the naming ceremony in which children, staff and community drew out names of animals and plants that live in the region, it was asked who they would be as a group of people. A Great Blue Heron flew over the circle and it was decided that Great Blue Heron would be our group name. Whenever we have considered changing our group name, the Great Blue Heron has returned to remind us who we are regardless of

whether the program is managed by Vermont Wilderness School, Community Wilderness Initiative (community council that ran the program for 5 years), or both. The Great Blue Heron has also come to us regardless of where we are. We have met in many different locations over the years and the Great Blue Heron has greeted us in many of those locations including one of our longterm homebases at Moosewood (former Camp Arden) along the Wantastewk (West) River.

Additionally several staff and students had encounters with Great Blue Herons leading to them joining and finding a home in our community school. This includes one of our elders, Hank Wolcott, who occasionally answered to Grandfather Great Blue Heron.

We are grateful to be returning to Moosewood (Camp Arden) on Thursdays and Greenwood on Tuesdays this year.

Blue Heron has been meeting at Camp Arden since October 2006. It is owned and stewarded by Sam Farwell after acquiring it from his parents Calvin and Jillian Farwell. Calvin, Jillian, Sam, and their extended family have been pleased with our respectful relationship and have welcomed us back to their land for as long it continues to be a mutually beneficial and respectful relationship of co-existing at the Camp Arden land. In 2006 we nicknamed their land Moosewood after we had many encounters with Moose sign on the land as well as a story from Jill where she encountered a Moose on the land for the first time just before our first day.

For a second year, we are also offering a day of Blue Heron Community School at the Greenwood Campus on Tuesdays. We have been offering programs in the woods of the Greenwood Campus and adjacent lands since Foxwalk Forest School (ages 5-7) began in 2014. We continue to foster a respectful, caring relationship and hope to continue to be welcome at Greenwood. (That includes respectful driving on the campus for drop off and pick up!) This year we are happy to have Foxwalk Forest School resuming and running concurrently with Tuesday Blue Heron CS.

Community involvement at programs will continue to be limited because of COVID prevention protocols. We currently do not have community elders, aunts and uncles dropping in periodically to visit, help out and contribute as we have in the past. We do not expect to be able to have our usual big community gatherings four times a year (Thanksgiving Feast, Celebration of Light, Blue Heron Overnight & Community Dinner, and End of Year Acknowledgements & Celebration). We hope to find ways for us to continue to build our intergenerational relationships and support of the program.

We are looking forward to this 23rd year of Great Blue Heron Community School!

Thank you for reading.

Amy Hyatt, Senior Program Director (Tuesdays & Thursdays)

Bob Etzweiler, Co-Program Director (Tuesdays & Thursdays)

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Vision of the Program

(Developed and Articulated by Community Council in 2006 with amendments addressing current situation)

Great Blue Heron Community School is a dynamic learning 'Village' in the Woods for children ages 7-15 that meets September to May weekly with occasional weeks off. A staff of skilled, experienced, and dedicated nature-based educators team up with parent and community volunteers to create a multi-age learning environment for earth living skills, nature awareness and group relationship skills. Blue Heron is a place to learn and practice skills of life-sustaining relationship and caretaking the natural world and each other.

Groupings, depending on COVID community infection levels, will vary from 5-6 students with one lead instructor to 10-12 students with two instructors. We occasionally have a teen helper, intern, or adult volunteer added to the groups. These groupings are based on requests, interests, and what directors suspect will make for a good group dynamic. Often these groupings are based by developmental age but not always.

In the context of spending time in the natural world with a variety of others, the goals are for the students to grow in these areas:

- Awareness and knowledge of who they are in relationship to self, others, nature, and Spirit/Ancestors/Future Generations
- Knowing that they have a gift that is needed and wanted
- Caring for themselves in the natural world in a variety of conditions
- Caretaking each other and the natural world
- Peace of mind and a sense of belonging to the world and to each other
- A life-long desire and capacity to learn
- Being of service
- Being fully, exuberantly alive

Tangible skills such as shelter building, lost-proofing, fire-making, naturalist knowledge, ecology, tracking, wildcrafting plants for food, medicine & materials, permaculture, etc. are shared by instructors to foster learning the above more intangible skills and the development of the above qualities.

The learning and relationship-building that occurs in this program provides a grounding for other types of experience such as extended overnight survival experience, specific skills series (ex. Bow making and hunting), or rites of passage. *These specific types of experiences are beyond the scope of a once a week 6-hour program.*

Blue Heron provides an opportunity:

- for children and teens who have a passion for nature, earth living skills, and relationships to spend time with peers and adults beyond their immediate families who affirm and foster that passion;
- for children and teens to know that they have a gift to bring to the world and to be encouraged to develop that gift in the context of being in nature with others;
- for the building of long-term, possibly lifelong, relationships among the families, staff, and other people involved in the program that are committed to nature awareness, earth living skills, caretaking the natural world, and being in good relationship with each other, creating a web of support for the children, teens and future generations in the region.

Our Methodology

Many families come to us asking, “what will my child learn or experience by coming to your program? Will they learn to build a shelter? Make a fire? Track animals? How does what they learn track with state standards and learning objectives?”

Probably yes to all these, and we won’t fully know until we are together immersed in the land together in the moment of each day. Our methodology is learning through immersion and what emerges out of the synergy of the students, the staff, the web of life, the season, and the weather of that day. Our staff each come to the day bringing their own depth of experience, skills, knowledge, and relationships with the land and with others. They initiate curiosity, respect and invitation to become increasingly at home outside and knowledge of how to take care of themselves and others in a variety of weather conditions.

Our staff also bring skills in establishing a safe-enough learning environment for students to learn together and from each other. We look for students’ learning edges, providing them a touchstone with safety and trust that allows them to grow and take risks that feel good rather than overwhelming.

Example: A child tentatively exploring whether they can balance on a log crossing a stream. Other children in the group may run across comfortably. Others may cautiously yet confidently cross. Another one or two may be nervous. We support the tentative child in learning how they can develop the skill to cross... or find another way to cross the stream!

The learning possibilities are endless and emerge out of our real-time experiences. In addition to what the land community provides, our staff bring their own projects and questions to inspire the students. I still remember my first day of the program as an apprentice instructor. The lead instructor arrived wearing a hat made of dogbane cordage and a pack basket made of black ash with a white cedar bow drill set. He had made all of these. The students (and I) were inspired and wanted to learn how to make or use some of these.

The learning that unfolded from there: I needed to learn how to identify dogbane, where to find it, when and how to harvest the dogbane. Then learn how to process the dogbane for fibers...then how to

make cordage from the fibers. Then how to put together the cordage to make a hat! A step beyond that, I am learning how to care for the dogbane patches so that the dogbane continues to grow and regenerate.

So maybe your child is attracted to that dogbane hat and goes on that learning journey. Maybe they become fascinated with learning to read the tracks of mammals, insects, wind, rain, and plants on the landscape leading to an interest in conservation biology...starting with a day when a bobcat walked on a perfect tracking snow morning gifting us the opportunity to follow that bobcat. Maybe your child becomes fascinated with learning to identify and cook wild edibles during a year when there is an acorn mast!

What we do know is that we are setting up the conditions for children (and adults) to explore, learn, learn how to learn, and develop respectful relationships with each other and with all the creatures and beings that make up the local web of life. Additionally, we are setting up the conditions to learn more about how to take care of all these relationships, to be in responsive, caring relationships, valuing the gifts each person and being brings to this Life. We do this with an eye to the future – that all of us may continue to survive and thrive.

We also bring learning about how to navigate both the joyful and the difficult situations that arise through our differences, our different Needs, and our different pasts. This includes awareness of our collective and individual deeper intergenerational past – the gifts AND the wounds.

Through all these activities we are seeking to companion each youth growing into an adult who knows themselves as an individual with unique gifts and purpose in an interconnected web of relationships – able to both take care of themselves and contribute in a Life-Affirming way.

- ***Amy Hyatt, Senior Program Co-Director***

What Happens in a Program Day

What's in Our "Bag" of Activities - Overview

Through games, exercises, skills development and application, adventures, research, music, movement, storytelling, drama and visual arts, students will explore the following areas according to interest and desire:

Awareness and Observation

- awareness skills
- tracking skills
- learning about each other
- listening skills
- enhanced sensory awareness
- knowledge of place
- lost-proofing

Wilderness Living Skills

- building and using natural shelters
- firemaking and campfires
- edible and medicinal plants
- permaculture & caretaking of the land long term
- Earth living crafts and toolmaking
- cooking outdoors/ using water outdoors

Community Living Skills

- group adventures in nature
- oral tradition
- respect of self, each other, and nature, including appreciation of differences
- peacemaking
- cooperation
- communication skills
- ceremonies and celebrations
- creative expression

A Typical Day (with COVID Prevention Format)

Before leaving home for a day of Blue Heron, you will do a health check - make sure your child doesn't have a temperature, and hasn't been exhibiting any signs of illness. If your child is developing symptoms or is not fully over being sick, please stay home. This applies to any signs of illness whether the common flu, COVID, chicken pox, etc. We know in the past that some youth so love coming to Blue Heron that they will insist on coming even as they are getting sick or getting over being sick. This year, they really do need to stay home until fully recovered.

Arrival: Approximately 9am - We will be assigning staggered start times, to allow for Health Checks.

You will be arriving, parking, and waiting in your car with masks on. The Site Director or Assistant will come by and do a health check - just confirming that all is good. Once your child is checked in, then they can go join their pod group.

Each pod of students will be spread out with specific Drop-off & Pick-up locations to reduce mixing and congestion. We will send you more instructions for that as we get closer to the first day.

Once everyone in a pod has arrived, they will head out into the woods for a day of exploring, playing, learning, and taking care of each other. When and if COVID spread levels decline, we will gradually allow for activities combining pods etc. We look forward to the day when we can do large group morning circles and afternoon story circles... and we are going to be very cautious approaching that. Please see our website for current protocol levels.

Over the 2020-2021 year, we have successfully found a lot of ways to be together while being mindful of reducing the risk of passing on airborne viruses. This includes longtime favorite games such as Eagle Eye, Firekeeper, and Reverse Capture the Flag (a sneaking version of Capture the Flag). We have adapted ways of learning fire making and cooking over the fire. Exploring, tracking, building shelters, and fairy houses continue to be totally possible. And storytelling as well!

Each pod will develop their own rhythms adapted to who is in the group, their interests, their character, and their learning edges. Each pod will have a base camp with a shelter that allows for varying levels of physical distancing and has one or more firepits. Each pod will be doing morning pod check-in and an end-of-day check in. What happens in between is the magic of the group!

Here's one pod rhythm that happened for a pod Amy was leading this summer. This particular pod was made up of 9-11 year olds who have a passion for fire making, cooking, and crafting.

Sample Day Flow in Small Groups all day

- Arrival and hanging out until everyone has arrived - sometimes with an awareness activity that involves observing or looking for objects hidden in the arrival area.
- Group check in. How is everyone?
- Head further into the woods to our basecamp. Our basecamp had a tarp rain shelter and then three spaced out fire pits so that youth could work on fires and fire-related projects in pairs.
- Fire-challenge followed by snack
- Focus projects and chatting while working on hands-on projects - wearing masks whenever within 6 feet of each other.
- Periodically take a movement break by playing Jedi Training Center or other game (modified by COVID prevention awareness).
- Lunch
- Venture out on a wander with games mixed in.
- Return to base camp. Pack Up.
- Closing Circle - Best Part of the Day, Ideas for Next Time, Any Challenges from the Day
- Head to pick up

Storytelling from me (and occasionally others) was interlaced throughout the day - sometimes as part of the morning challenge, sometimes as part of a pause in the afternoon wander.

Pick up Approximately 3pm! You will have an assigned staggered pick up time in correlation to your morning drop off time. (Please stay in or right by your car)

Packing List

Please pay attention to the weather and dress appropriately. During some of our days we can start out at 32 degrees and warm up to the 60s. Other times of the year it is around 15 degrees and warming to 32 degrees. Having layers is really useful. Also adjust the shoes for the weather and ground conditions. Later this fall we will share more about weather and illness cancellations as well as strategies for a successful Blue Heron day when it is cold!

What to Bring

- Two Masks** that your child is comfortable wearing and using. One to be wearing and one as a backup in case the first one gets wet or lost.
- Personal pocket-size bottle of hand sanitizer.** If you find one your child really likes, you can keep reusing it throughout the year, filling up from a larger bottle.
- A Bandana** as a backup third mask AND to use as a blindfold for activities. We don't use blindfolds every session, but they are handy for different activities.
- A Substantial Lunch** – Please be careful about bringing anything that will spoil, and be sure that there is a good amount of protein and/or fat. Our bodies need protein and fat to keep us warm, whether it is 50 degrees and rainy or 15 degrees and sunny! NOTE: We do often have a cooking fire at lunch time, but not always. **If you send food to cook, please have it be supplemental to a good lunch that doesn't require cooking.**
- A Substantial Snack** – Please no candy, heavy sugar items, or just chips. Most children eating a bunch of sugar, especially processed sugar, will be high energy and will then have a harder time with the physical distancing and self-regulation. Exploring the woods and being out all day in the cooler months uses a lot of energy and having food such as nuts, seeds, and cheese really helps.
- At least a Liter or Quart of water or juice, preferably 2** (no soda please) – On an average low exertion day, we use up 2 QTs of water that needs to be replaced. When we exert ourselves, such as when playing, climbing and hiking, we sweat and breathe out water a lot more. Water is key to our brain's functioning. When we get dehydrated, we start to mumble, bumble, and fumble— not to mention getting cranky and not wanting to participate. So please send water!
- On cold days, we recommend sending warm water (or tea or hot chocolate) in **insulated bottles**. Most of us have difficulty drinking cold water on a cold day. You can turn an uninsulated water bottle into an insulated water bottle by wrapping it in a sock, towel or t-shirt.
- Rain Jacket (or Poncho) & Rain Pants** – Rain jacket and rain pants can be critical on a really rainy day. They also make for a good outer shells during the winter, helping children and teens to stay warm and dry. Note: "Snow pants" are often water resistant rather than waterproof. When you are playing in snow all day, you can end up wet! Waterproof rain pants over the snow pants can be helpful.

- Backpack** to carry lunch, snack, water bottle, and other small items (important for this to be a comfortable pack for a child to carry around on hillsides, etc. We do move and that can be challenging if a child's stuff is in a carry bag).
- Medications** – If your child needs to take a medication during the day, please give it, along with written instructions, to a lead staff member when you drop off your child. *If your child is known to be allergic to bee/wasp stings and you have an EpiPen or equivalent, please be sure your child's instructor has access to it and written permission to use it in such an emergency.*
- Locking Blade Knife or Sheath Knife (Optional)** – Advise your child that they are not to take the knife out or use it without first asking and receiving permission from their lead instructor.

What to Wear

- Footwear** – Sturdy sneakers, hiking shoes, rain boots, or winter boots, as appropriate to the weather. Your child can keep an extra pair of shoes or boots on site as a backup.
- Clothing** – We do get dirty, so wear clothes that can get dirty. Students will also appreciate wearing earth-tone clothing that will help out in games involving hiding and camouflage.
- Tick Precautions** – Ticks do occur on most of our program sites. Light color clothing can help with spotting ticks. We recommend you use your family's precautions around tick prevention. Staff will periodically remind students to do tick checks, especially when we have moved through an area or done an activity more likely to bring us into tick habitat. Staff carry tweezers for tick removal.

Items to bring in a 2nd Bag (to store on site)

We recommend bringing a second bag, with some or all of the following items. We can store the bag in a storage shed (Camp Arden) or a staff member's car so that your child doesn't need to carry it around all day. If it is stored in a staff member's car or tarp covered area (i.e. at Greenwood location), this bag will need to go home at the end of the day.

- **Warm Clothing** for chilly or rainy days - fleece, wool shirts/sweaters, or other non-cotton clothing. (Wet cotton saps body heat rapidly and can lead to hypothermia.)
- **Extra set of clothes** to change into, just in case.
- **Rain/sun hat** A broad brimmed, breathable hat to keep out the sun, bugs and rain.
- **Shoes that can get wet** (old sneakers, water shoes or sandals in warm weather and waterproof snow boots in winter. Please, no flip-flops).
- **Rain Boots**
- **Sunscreen and/or Bug Spray (Optional)** if your child is especially sensitive. Generally these are not issues from September to May when Blue Heron Community School meets.

Winter Packing List & Cold Weather Strategies

Food and Warm Drink Strategies

Our bodies need a lot of food and water to keep our inner fires burning in the midst of staying warm in the cold. Both hydration and food are more critical in winter than in the other three seasons, and it is also at times more challenging. Our bodies especially need higher-calorie foods that include protein or fats. We burn through carbohydrates very quickly in winter (like burning softwood twigs) and we need the denser proteins and fats to keep us going longer (like burning hardwoods in a wood stove). And then we need warm water/liquids to keep everything moving inside. So keep the following in mind:

- Send warm liquids to drink (warming teas, hot chocolate, hot water, etc.)
- On especially cold days, hot chocolate with butter or coconut oil melted in is very tasty, and our bodies can really burn through that fat (this is a common winter camping strategy).
- You can warm up water that goes in water bottles and then put the water bottles in an insulated sleeve or an old wool sock to keep from freezing. Most of us have difficulty drinking cold water on a cold day.
- Snacks and Lunch with Fats and Proteins - like nuts, cheese, dry meat, avocados. (We recognize that some children may not be so open to these kinds of foods and will "only" eat rice, nori, corn chips, etc. Go ahead and send those along with the higher-calorie food, and we will work on getting them to understand they need the high-calorie food when out in the winter woods).

Clothing

- Outer Waterproof Shell (Top & Bottom)** – This could be the outer part of your winter coat or could be a raincoat and rain pants over top of warm layers.
- Waterproof insulated winter boots** – It's important that they have both good insulation and are waterproof. **Regarding insulation - it is also important that your child can wiggle their toes and move their feet. If you stuff the boots so full of insulation that the feet can't move, that cuts down on circulation and results in cold feet. Multiple layers of wool socks is good, as long as your child can move their feet.**

We recommend waterproof winter boots with wool liners that can be removed, dried, and put back in (like Sorels or Kamiks) rather than the cold weather Bog boots that trap moisture inside and are hard to dry out. If you are using boots like Bogs, please pack **2-4 pairs of extra wool or winter wicking socks.**

- Warm base layers that wick moisture** – On cool wet days or cold winter days, it’s really incredibly helpful and often critical that students have layers that are “wicking” and keep them warm even when damp. This can be wool, silk, or a variety of synthetics such as polypro, fleece, or Thinsulate. Please avoid cotton. Cotton is notorious for sapping body heat when damp or wet.
- Warm layers of wool, fleece, silk** (avoid cotton)
- Warm Hat** (and pack an extra in backpack)
- Balaclava or neck warmer** - It's really great to be able to protect the neck and even have that overlapping with a warm hat.
- Mittens or Gloves** - send extra pair in backpack
- Glove liners**
- Socks** - recommend wicking sock liner and wool (or synthetic) socks. Send an extra pair of socks in backpack.
- Three COVID Face masks** - in our experience last year, we found that face masks get damp much faster in the cold which creates the hazard for chafing on the nose, mouth and chin. Having dry ones you can switch between is really helpful.
- Face Mask for Warmth (not to be confused with a COVID face mask!) (Optional)** On days with cold wind, having some sort of face mask can be really good - a scarf or balaclava can often address this.

In backpack with lunch and snack: extra pair of socks, hat, and gloves/mittens. Other extra clothes and layers can be kept in separate bag, labeled and in the shed so that the children are not carrying a ton more weight in clothes.

We do recognize that some children tend towards being very warm while others are often cold. If we have good clothing in layers to work with, we can help the children to learn how to take care of themselves in the cold, adjusting to when they are overheating and when they are cold. Sometimes this comes with the hard lessons of "oh, I left my coat exposed to the wet and now it is wet when I put it on." We do our best to help children realize where and how to store the clothes... and we don't always catch it in time. Part of the learning. (We are always paying attention to "what are the consequences to what is happening and what is our margin of safety?")

End of the Day Strategies: On these cold days it is really good to have a snack and warm drink for your child to help them warm up if they have gotten cold towards the end of the day. A couple of years ago, one of our parents started bringing hot potatoes wrapped in foil that the children could warm their hands or tuck in close to their bodies...and then eat as a snack later!! Hot water bottles can serve similarly.

Inclement Weather & Weather Cancellations

As the saying goes, “there is no bad weather, just inappropriate clothing!” That said, there are days when weather conditions are not optimal or safe for being outside of a shelter for long periods of time. Part of our goals at the program is mentoring the children in how to take care of themselves, enjoy different weather conditions, and learn the signs and risks of our bodies shutting down—i.e. survival skills. When conditions are unsafe to go outside, we will do as our ancestors and tell lots of stories, sing, play games, and enjoy community under a tarp or in shelters built by the children and adults! In cases of severe cold (below 10 degrees plus wind chills), major wind, or downpours (like tropical storms), we do cancel due to hazardous conditions getting in and out of the forest (or possible hazardous driving conditions).

Generally, as long as it is safe to drive to the program, we will be running the program. However, if driving conditions are unsafe, we do cancel.

We will email you if we cancel and ask you to reply by 7:30am to confirm you have gotten the message. If we haven't gotten a reply from you, we will call you between 7:30a-8a. You can predict whether we cancel by monitoring **Windham Southeast Supervisory Union decisions**. **If WSESU is cancelled or delayed two hours, assume Blue Heron is cancelled for the day**. If road conditions are anticipated to still be bad at 8am, we do cancel (rather than delay) because we prefer to get a full 6 hour program day in. On the other hand, if it looks like travel conditions will be decent by 8am, we often go ahead and run the program on WSESU delay days. We will email you to confirm cancellation OR to let you know we are going to go ahead and meet.

If severe weather comes in unexpectedly during our session, we will keep children safe and notify families to come and pick them up early.

For Windham Southeast Supervisory Union cancellation and delay information, check out <https://wtsaradio.com/cancellations/> or listen to FM 96.7 WTSA. Also VPR's website has also gotten much better with posting closure and delay information for our area: <https://app.vpr.org/school-closings/>

If a cancellation occurs, we will meet on the next Make-up Day scheduled on the calendar. If we have more cancellations than allotted for on the calendar, we will add days to the end of the year within reason.

Cancellations due to COVID Outbreak in our Community or State Shelter-in-Place Orders

If the program is forced to close again due to COVID-19, we may offer families who wish to stay connected to their friends & instructors ways to keep in touch via distance-learning options, as we did in spring 2020. We are happy to discuss the ways to do this that can minimize screen time.

We have added an additional make-up day at the end of the year which we will use if needed. If the number of weeks we have to cancel exceeds the number of make up days, we'll offer you a refund for those missed days, minus one. See our [Refund & Cancellation Policy](#) for more details.

Conduct Agreements – Safe Space & Risk

Children and teens are expected to have a desire to deepen their ability to respect themselves, each other, and the Earth.

Students will help to formulate conduct agreements at the beginning of the program to create a respectful and safe-enough space for the group as a collective.

Students are expected to be able to listen, follow directives, and share their feelings, needs, and thoughts with staff and other students (with support from staff as needed).

If there are children or teens who disagree with what the accepted 'rules' are or have difficulties following the agreed-upon rules, they will be given the choice of sitting and 'watching' the group instead of participating. If they do not want to integrate but still want to be at the program, there are different approaches which might be tried. At this stage, we will initiate a dialogue with the child's parents or guardians to explore what is going on for the child and problem-solve. If we find that it is not working out for the good of the whole group for a student to stay in the program, we will come to that agreement with the parents or guardians having been in dialogue.

If conflict arises between two or more children, the staff will mediate and help the children to resolve the conflict. If the conflict is not resolved or continues in a different form, parents or guardians will be contacted to discuss what is going on and asked for input on the issue or pattern. If the conflict is not able to be resolved, it is possible that someone may need to leave the program for the time being.

Children and teens are expected to be able to participate in all group activities. If, for temporary or extenuating circumstances, there are times when participating with the group is not appropriate for the wellness of the person, staff will be supportive. If there are ongoing difficulties, parents or guardians will be notified and, if not able to be resolved, may result in the individual needing to leave the program.

Similarly, if parents or guardians are aware of their child having difficulties with the program or individuals in the program, it is important for the parent/guardian to contact the pod lead instructor or the program director. Some children can be very discrete or shy in the context of the group— not revealing how they are feeling, whether that be positive or negative. It is very helpful for parents/guardians to let staff know what their child is feeling or experiencing in the program so that we can make adjustments.

If staff feel that the particular needs of a child cannot be met, the staff will explore options, seek outside coaching, or suggest that participation at the program be discontinued. In the latter case, the family will be refunded their money paid for incomplete sessions.

We occasionally have the circumstance that parents/guardians are sometimes present on the land during the program helping out. We ask that parents/guardians recognize that during the program the staff are facilitating the day and ask for parents/guardians to defer to the staff. If a parent/guardian observes student behavior that appears unsafe, the parent/guardian is encouraged to bring it to a staff member's attention to handle. If a parent/guardian observes an unsafe situation and a staff member is not available, you may intervene then find a staff member to bring resolution to the situation. If a parent/guardian has an issue with something occurring, we ask that you discretely pull a staff member aside to discuss the concern. Sometimes we may ask to discuss the issue in more depth after the program day—during the program day staff need to be focused on the experiences of the students and can't always spend a significant amount of time resolving an issue with a parent/guardian during the program day.

COVID prevention

For the 2021-22 School Year (Sep – May) we are using a 4-color system.

Each color corresponds to a different level of protocols as you'll see below. If pandemic conditions worsen, we'll alert you that we are shifting to a higher level, and if they improve, we'll alert you that we're shifting to a lower level. We will review these rules with students at the beginning of the year, and as needed thereafter. See also our [Covid-19 Protocols](#) page on the VWS website.

We are starting the year at ORANGE.

	Max. Group Size	Masks	Distancing	Travel
VT STATE GUIDANCE (as of 8/2021)	No maximum outdoor group size	Encouraged for people interacting indoors, but <u>not required</u> for anyone.	Encouraged for unvaccinated people, but <u>not required</u> for anyone.	No requirements for travel-related testing or quarantine.
VWS - GREEN	<u>15</u> per pod and <u>no</u> maximum sizes on multi-pod activities.	Mask-wearing <u>not expected</u> ¹ .	<u>Not required.</u>	No requirements.
VWS - YELLOW	<u>15</u> per pod and up to <u>60</u> in a facilitated multi-pod activity.	Masks worn <u>rarely</u> ² .	<u>When unmasked, 3 ft distance required</u> ⁵ .	No requirements.
VWS - ORANGE	<u>15</u> per pod and <u>no</u> multi-pod activities allowed.	Masks worn <u>occasionally</u> ³ .	<u>When unmasked, 3 ft distance required</u> ⁶ .	Check-in with program director <u>required</u> before high risk travel ⁸ .
VWS - RED	Maximum of <u>9</u> per pod and <u>no</u> multi-pod activities allowed.	Masks worn <u>frequently</u> ⁴ .	<u>When unmasked, 6 ft distancing required</u> ⁷ .	If Vermont announces new requirements for travel or quarantine, we'll publish those here.

1. Anyone at VWS programs is welcome to wear a mask more frequently than is called for in these levels of awareness.
2. Masks may be required at times of clustering or when deemed prudent by staff. Parent/guardian must indicate permission to opt out of masking when NOT distanced.
3. Masks required when within 3 feet of others. That includes arrival and pick up clustering times; light touch games, or occasional short activities like lighting a fire with others.
4. Masks required when within 6ft of another person.
5. When masked, brief light physical contact will be frequently allowed (tag & similar games, 2-3 people cooking together around a fire, two-person fire-by-friction lesson, etc.). Extended physical contact activities (rough-housing, holding hands, piggy-back rides, etc.) will not be allowed.
6. When masked, brief light physical contact will be occasionally allowed.
7. When masked, 3 ft distancing required unless brief close contact needed for emergency.
8. Examples of high-risk travel include: attendance at large gatherings, long-distance train or bus trips, traveling on a cruise ship or river boat, and more.

If someone attending the program is diagnosed with COVID-19

We are taking COVID-19 prevention seriously, and making plans for what happens if someone is diagnosed can help us be safer overall. We will share information here about our COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan and can provide further information upon request.

If we are notified that someone on-site at one of our programs has received a positive COVID-19 test, health department guidance is that everyone in their pod - or who came into close contact with them (such as a sibling in another pod) - may not return to the program until:

- If unvaccinated: they have adhered to a strict 14 day quarantine, OR
- If unvaccinated: Three days after exposure received a COVID-19 PCR test administered by a qualified health professional and results were negative
- If Vaccinated: Have no symptoms three days after the last exposure.

From the beginning of the pandemic through May 2021, we were in close dialogue with Vermont Department of Health in developing our protocols. They felt that as long as all our other prevention protocols are being adhered to, the risk of transmission at our programs is low enough that it is safe for other pods to continue operating even if one pod is quarantined due to exposure.

If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19 we ask that you grant permission to provide specific information about what pod your child is in to the contact tracer, or to us, so that we do not have to shut down that entire program day.

In addition to that, your child is welcome to **return to programs after being ill** under the following guidance and *after checking in with the Program Director*:

If COVID test results are NEGATIVE, they can return to the program after:

- It has been 24 hours or more of no fever without the use of feverreducing medicine, AND
- Other symptoms have improved.

If COVID test results are POSITIVE, they can return to the program after:

- It has been 24 hours or more of no fever without the use of feverreducing medicine, AND
- Other symptoms have improved, AND
- 10 days or more have passed since any symptoms appeared.

Risk & First Aid

Risk is a part of living life fully and learning about ourselves, our boundaries, and the world around us. Moving beyond our comfort zones is where we start to learn and grow. At the same time, if we reach too far the risk overtakes learning, becoming overwhelming and potentially dangerous. The staff provides a safe container for our students to take risks to learn and grow as individuals and as a part of the greater community. There is a delicate balance to strike— between stretching beyond the comfort zone but not too far. And these zones are different for each student. One student may enjoy leaping over cliffs and scaling down rock faces but be terrified of sitting alone in the woods. Another student might be just the opposite. Risks come in many different forms: emotional, physical, relational, etc. The staff is aware of the different territories of risk and are trained to manage them and foster growth in each student's sense of self, place, belonging, and autonomy within community.

Regarding physical risks, prevention and awareness is our main first aid policy. We keep track of hazards very closely and intertwine this awareness with our curriculum areas such as knife and saw safety, proper use of different tools, awareness of dead trees and potential falling limbs, ticks and tick borne illnesses etc. We also work with the children around prevention of hyperthermia (over heating), hypothermia (loss of heat), and frostbite, particularly regarding proper clothing, dry socks and shoes, zipping up coats, drinking water, and eating appropriate foods. These hazards now include COVID-19 prevention.

Lead staff carry first aid kits at all times and are equipped to deal with minor injuries. Lead staff all have first aid training and awareness of the additional first aid challenges presented in a wilderness situation. A wilderness situation is defined as 2 hours from hospital emergency care. The vast majority of our program activities do not fall in this category, because we are usually close enough to a road and within short drive of a hospital that extensive wilderness first aid measures are not necessary. However, under certain conditions and in certain areas of our program sites, it could take 2 hours to extract an immobilized person and get them to an EMT squad at the entrance to the program site. That said, we have not had any injuries necessitating such measures. Additional First Aid information is available on the Medical Form / Waiver that you reviewed upon registration..

Regarding emotional risks, our staff is committed and experienced in creating a group atmosphere that values all members of the group, celebrates each child's gifts, and helps each person learn from our mistakes, including forgiveness and reconciliation, so that we grow stronger as a community. At the same time, we are not trained counselors or therapists, and there may be some dynamics or physical limitations beyond our skills. If such arises, we seek counsel of those who are trained, and if unsuccessful in working with a dynamic, we may have to ask a student to leave the program, acknowledging that conditions/capacities may change over time.

Bare Feet

As many of our families, staff, and students know, it can be a joy as well as informative to walk barefoot on the ground. For anyone who has been jabbed with a stick or stepped on a sharp stump or glass or metal, we also know that walking barefoot is a risk. As such we ask that students wear footwear unless explicit permission has been granted by staff members for a particular activity. If your child is one who dislikes wearing shoes, we have in the past set-up written agreements with parents regarding their child going barefoot in general. Please talk with your Program Director if you would like to set up such an agreement. That said, all children and teens need to have shoes and socks with them and if a staff member requests that the shoes are put on, the shoes get put on. Regardless of parental permission, shoes need to be worn in 50 degree or colder weather. Nerve damage to the feet is way too imminent under such conditions for any kind of lengthy exposure.

Communicating with Field Staff - We are in Partnership with You & Your Child

As a long-term mentoring, community based program, we are in a partnership supporting your child to learn and grow. That means staff and families being in communication. As staff we will be communicating to you periodically to share “story of the day” and updates on what is happening with your child. Occasionally, that may include contact about issues emerging in the pod group. Similarly, if you are aware of your child having difficulties with the program or individuals in the program, it is important for you to contact the pod lead or Program Director. Some children can be very discrete or shy in the context of the group, not revealing how they are feeling--whether that be positive or negative. With these children it is very helpful for parents/guardians to let staff know what their child is feeling or experiencing in the program so that we can make adjustments.

In the past, we have encouraged parents/guardians to check in with staff at the end of the day if needed, but because of COVID prevention protocols, we are now not able to do that at the end of the day. We will be sharing with you the emails and phone numbers for contacting your child’s pod leader and Program Director. Please reach out to us to let us know what’s happening – especially if you and/or your child has concerns.

If it is a lengthy dialogue, we can schedule a time to meet or have a phone call conference.

In case of Emergency – we will provide you with Emergency Phone contacts for program days. This can be used if something is delaying you for drop off or pick up, if your child is going to absent unexpectedly, or if something happens during the day and you need to reach us.

Beyond the Program Day: Continuing the Learning

Because of our holistic teaching style, students learn slowly, experientially, layer upon layer. Thus, moments can happen like: "What did you do today, honey?" "Nothing."

There are still ways to follow through as parents or guardians. Examples include:

- Find out the latest "mystery question" from staff and encourage your child to do further research on the mystery;
- Create a place in your home where your child can display special mysteries or crafts that they bring home;
- Create a naturalist library to encourage researching mysteries such as "who is my animal ally any way and where might I see my animal friend?" Golden Guides, Reader's Digest Guide to North American Mammals and Fauna, Peterson's Field Guides, and Peterson's First Field Guides are all excellent books to have in a naturalist library;
- Have your child journal events from the day (drawings and/or writing);
- Have your children teach you or siblings games, songs, or projects from the program;
- Have your child share a story from the day at bedtime;
- Ask your child about the story shared at the end of the day.

Support, resources, and community for parents

Although some opportunities that we used to offer in the past are currently dormant (e.g. all-community celebrations), there are other options for connection & support available NOW:

- Connecting with other families: we will share contact information to facilitate family-to-family connections AND we will create an email- listserv - through Google Groups - for each Blue Heron day that will allow messages to a wider audience.
- Structured group learning: we offer programs for parents & adults who want to enrich their own mentoring & nature-connection. Amy Hyatt's [monthly distance learning workshops](#) are most directly relevant to Blue Heron parents and our full adult program catalog [can be found here](#).
- One-on-one resourcing: if you or someone you know is looking for support in parenting/home-schooling/mentoring in a nature-connected way, [take a look at this webpage](#).

Administration:

Administrative matters (such as forms, payments, payment notices, etc) are being handled through the Vermont Wilderness School Office. The Office is reachable several ways:

You can call us at **802-257-8570**

If you have questions about payments, payment plans, financial aid, or registration email Elissa, our bookkeeper, at bookkeeper@vermontwildernessschool.org.

If you have messages/questions about things like the calendar, website issues, policies, med forms, packing lists, how to get to the location, who is on staff, or anything that is not financially related **then email office@vermontwildernessschool.org and either Ash or Elissa will respond.**

If you have messages/questions about your program & day, such as letting us know about absences or late arrivals, curriculum, content, group dynamics, etc **then contact the relevant Program Director for each day.**

Tuesdays & Thursdays: Amy Hyatt, Hyatt@VermontWildernessSchool.org

Vermont Wilderness School Office
PO Box 2585
Brattleboro, VT 05303
802-257-8570
www.VermontWildernessSchool.org

Office@VermontWildernessSchool.org

Addendum A:

A more in-depth Land Acknowledgement

The following information is some of what Amy and others have learned. And we want to acknowledge its incompleteness. We welcome corrections or clarification from others, especially from Abenaki and other Indigenous peoples.

One of the conditions of Vermont being accepted as the 14th state to the newly formed United States of America was that they show documented sales of the land from the Indigenous Peoples. The settlers in what became known as Vermont made the case that “no indigenous” people lived on this land – they merely migrated through the area on their way to areas in Quebec and in Massachusetts. The young USA then took this false explanation and let the state join the “union.” This ignored the actual experiences of living and interacting with Abenakis and evidence of many multi-generational burial sites, village sites, and sacred areas throughout what became the state of Vermont.¹

In reality, Abenaki peoples have inhabited and been in relationship with this land for 10,000+ years. In 2011 and 2012, four Vermont-based bands of Abenaki were recognized by the State of Vermont. They are the Missisquoi, Koasek, Elnu, and Nulhegan. This effort included extensive documentation and evidence of continuous presence in the lands known as Vermont from 1000s of years ago to present day. During the 250+ years when there were supposedly “no Abenakis” in Vermont, many Abenakis passed as Gypsies, river rats, French-Canadians or European. Even with “passing,” many were identified by the Vermont State Government and targeted for forced sterilization (along with others deemed “degenerate”) during the Eugenics Project (1928-1963).²

The Vermont Abenaki are part of the larger Wabanaki Confederacy, and their family groups extend from the east coast to the western edge of Lake Champlain where the Wabanaki Confederacy (including Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki and Penobscot) borders the Haudenosaunee Confederacy – particularly the Kanienkeha:ka (Mohawks).

We highly recommend learning more of the history of the Abenaki, Wabanaki Confederacy, and other indigenous peoples of the New England area. Especially pay attention to “King Phillip’s War” which included the Massacre & Battle of Turner’s Falls. Colonial Settler history describes King Phillip’s War as lasting from June 20, 1675 – April 12, 1678. Sagamo Roger Longtoe Sheehan and other indigenous people describe the war as lasting much, much longer. That said, arising out of this long-term war, many Abenakis moved to areas in present day Quebec such as Odanak and Wolinak (Abenaki reserves in

¹ Public talks by Sagamo Roger Longtoe Sheehan, Rich Holschuh, Judy Dow, Lisa Brooks and Vera Longtoe Sheehan – all except Rich are Abenaki. Rich is Micmac, Wendat and European heritage and is a Native-appointed public spokesperson for the Elnu Abenaki and a member of the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs (VCNAA).

² Talks by Judy Dow, “Reclaiming the Ancestors: Decolonizing a Taken Prehistory of the Far Northeast” and other published works by Dr. Frederick Wiseman, and online articles.

Canada). Some were adopted into Haudenosaunee communities and Anishinaabe communities. This creates the conditions for the claim a hundred years later that “no Natives” lived in Vermont in the 1780s during the formation of the United States of America government. Check out books by Abenaki authors and historians Dr. Lisa Brooks, Dr. Frederick Wiseman, and Joseph Bruchac.

Further Reading:

Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War by Lisa Brooks

Interesting to read beside “Mayflower: A story of Courage, Community and War” by Nathaniel Philbrick who is a European Settler Descended scholar and covers the same time period as Lisa Brooks’ book.

The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast by Lisa Brooks

Seven Sisters: Ancient Seeds and Food Systems of the Wabanaki People and the Chesapeake Bay Region by Frederick Matthew Wiseman

The Voice of the Dawn: An Autohistory of the Abenaki Nation by Frederick Matthew Wiseman

Reclaiming the Ancestors: Decolonizing a Taken Prehistory of the Far Northeast by Frederick Matthew Wiseman

At Lake Between: The Great Council Fire and the European Discovery of Lake Champlain by Frederic Matthew Wiseman and others

Our Stories Remember: American Indian History, Culture and Values through Storytelling by Joseph Bruchac

Roots of Survival: Native American Storytelling and the Sacred by Joseph Bruchac

Bowman’s Store: A Journey to Myself by Joseph Bruchac

Also recommended:

Sokoki Sojourn Blog: Rich Holschuh <https://sokokisoourn.wordpress.com>

Vermont Abenaki Artists’ Association <http://abenakiart.org/> Host annual Abenaki Cultural Festival in May at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum; variety of educational events around the state; and yearly 4-day teacher training workshop in August on teaching Abenaki history and culture.

Abenaki Arts & Education Center <https://abenaki-edu.org/> - Sharing Abenaki educational resources with classrooms across N'dakinna. Run by several Abenaki, and the resources have all been vetted by Abenaki scholars, educators, and culture bearers.

Ndakinna Education Center <https://www.ndakinnacenter.org/events/> (Started by the Bruchac family. They do both outdoor education and Abenaki language courses).

Nolumbeka Project based in Turner's Falls Area <https://nolumbekaproject.org> – Host annual Pocumtuck Homelands Festival (August) and annual remembrance day of the Battle of Great Falls in May.

All My Relations Podcast: <https://www.allmyrelationspodcast.com/>

Native Appropriations Blog: <http://nativeappropriations.com/>

Healing the Wounds of Turtle Island: <https://www.healingturtleisland.org/> (I know many folks involved with VWS have attended portions of these gatherings over the last three years. There is one more happening in Maine next year, and then the healing ceremony will be moving to another portion of Turtle Island.)

Sherri Mitchell's Work: <https://sacredinstructions.life/>

Addendum B: Some Program History & Retiring the Name “Oyase”

August 21, 2020

Dear friends,

We are writing to let you know that the Vermont Wilderness School is retiring the name “Oyase.” This letter explains why. We hope you will read it, share your questions, and join us in making this important change.

The Vermont Wilderness School's nature connection programs operate in unceded Abenaki Territory, in the homelands of the Elnu and Sokoki Abenaki. We, the current staff and board of VWS, acknowledge the genocide, theft of land, and attempts at cultural erasure which have for hundreds of years been perpetrated by white European settlers upon the Abenaki and all other tribes on this continent and around the globe.

The Abenaki still live and embrace their identity, culture, and traditions, in Vermont and elsewhere, and this land is still their homeland.

Much of the ecological knowledge and earth living skills, as well as some elements of songs and stories, that we have shared in VWS programs has come from the Indigenous peoples who have over a 13,000 year relationship with North America/Turtle Island. We acknowledge the many ways we have benefited from the skills and approaches which have been shared by— and in many cases taken from— Indigenous peoples.

How did “Oyase” become the name of VWS’s Community School?

The name “Oyase” came from two of VWS’s founders, Mark Morey & Luz Elena Morey, who in the 1990s had spent time with Lakota teacher Tony Ten Fingers of the Oglala Oyate. Tony shared in a workshop that “oyase” means “a burning desire in our hearts to know something.” The word is commonly found as part of the phrase “Mitakuye Oyasin,” a phrase often translated as “All My Relations.” Tony further taught that Mitakuye means “the living creation is one being.” Together they mean, according to Tony Ten Fingers, “I have a burning desire in my heart to know how I fit into the Creation which is one living being.” (quotes from Kamana 3 Nature Awareness Trail).

As VWS’s founders discussed what to name the program in 1999, “Oyase” was suggested, asking: “isn’t this what we want to ignite in the hearts of all the students? A burning desire in our hearts to know something?”

Why stop using the name “Oyase”?

There is a history of white settler-run summer camps and outdoor education programs using Indigenous names and words to name programs, often without permission, collaboration, ongoing relationship, or the participation of indigenous people as participants or staff. (See [Notes on Camp: A Decolonizing Strategy](#).)

While the naming of “Oyase Community School” in 1999 did emerge from a series of interactions between VWS’s founders and Tony Ten Fingers, that relationship is no longer active. There is also no current formal relationship between the program and any other Indigenous person or group.

Taking names, language, or other elements of cultures from Indigenous peoples for our own use is harmful. The responsible commitment is for us to learn the true histories of

the Indigenous peoples of this place, to recognize their sovereignty and land rights, and to support their efforts to sustain their cultures.

What will the new name be?

The program is now called the **Great Blue Heron Community School**. As you may know, this bird has been a special relationship throughout the history of VWS, and is pictured in our logo.



We will no longer refer to the program as “Oyase”— we have already started referring to the group of four weekday programs as the “Blue Heron programs.” More nuance may be added to this name as we learn and grow!

How can you help?

As with any change, this may take some getting used to. This will be especially true for the children who are currently enrolled and for whom the name “Oyase” is synonymous with how they spend their weekly Thursdays. What we can do as adults is model by committing to the change, and starting right away to refer to the program as the “Great Blue Heron Community School.”

This moment is an opportunity to educate children in VWS programs that we are living in Abenaki/ Wabanaki Confederacy homelands and to teach about Native history, land rights and the struggle tribes face to maintain their cultural autonomy. Our children have open hearts and consciences, and they are often the first ones to embrace social justice.

Where do we go from here?

For many years we have been in a process of building stronger relationships with members of the Elnu and the Sokoki Abenaki and learning ways that we can act as better allies to the Abenaki and other tribes of this region.

We will continue to recognize, appreciate and explore the complexities of our relationships to Native teachings and practices, and the relationships VWS has had with Tony Ten Fingers (Oglala Lakota), Gilbert Walking Bull (Oglala Lakota), and other Native teachers. These teachers influenced and helped shape our early years, and we will continue to remember and share the gifts we received from them, while also continuing to re-examine our programming in relationship to our mission, vision, and core values as an organization.

VWS's commitment to taking an active stance on decolonization has been many years in the making. In 2019 we hired a group of experts to teach and guide our path forward. This includes endawnis Spears, Chris Newell, and Jason Mancini, of the Native-owned consulting organization Akomawt Educational Initiative, and Jessica Dolan, a scholar of indigenous and environmental studies. Stay tuned for more updates on our progress.

Please be in touch if you have any questions or ideas to share. We are so grateful for the vitality of this community. Together with you, our evolution continues!

In relationship,

Sam Stegeman, Executive Director

Amy Hyatt, Program Director

Bob Etzweiler, Program Director

The VWS Board of Directors:

Ingrid Burrows, Rafe Halsey, Shannon Herrick, John Lee, Kalia Lydgate, Jason Morris, Gia Neswald, Alan Roberts, Mishka Viscardi, Rj wplk

Addendum C: Program Calendar

The most accurate calendar information can be found on the Blue Heron Resources webpage in our Google Calendar: <https://vermontwildernessschool.org/programs/gbh/gbh-resources/>

Blue Heron Tuesdays - Greenwood		Blue Heron Thursdays - Camp Arden		
Date	Session #	Date	Session #	Notes
9/28	1	9/30	1	
10/5	2	10/7	2	
10/12	3	10/14	3	
10/19	4	10/21	4	Monthly
10/26	5	10/28	5	
11/2	6	11/4	6	
11/9	7	11/11	7	
11/16	8	11/18	8	Monthly
11/23	Off	11/25	Off	
11/30	9	12/2	9	
12/7	10	12/9	10	
12/14	11	12/16	11	Monthly
12/21	Makeup Day	12/23	Off	
12/28	Off	12/30	Off	
1/4	Off	1/6	12	
1/11	12	1/13	13	
1/18	13	1/20	14	Monthly
1/25	14	1/27	Makeup Day	
2/1	15	2/3	15	
2/8	16	2/10	16	
2/15	17	2/17	17	Monthly
2/22	Off	2/24	Off	
3/1	18	3/3	18	
3/8	19	3/10	19	
3/15	20	3/17	20	Monthly
3/22	Makeup Day	3/24	Makeup Day	
3/29	21	3/31	21	
4/5	22	4/7	22	
4/12	23	4/14	23	Monthly
4/19	off	4/21	off	
4/26	24	4/28	24	
5/3	25	5/5	25	
5/10	26	5/12	26	
5/17	27	5/19	27	Monthly
5/24	Makeup Day	5/26	Makeup Day	