



2021 Youth Programs Parent Handbook

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Durango, CO 81301

Durango Nature Center

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Durango, CO 81301

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I. Introduction and Program Goals

Welcome to SJMA's Youth Programs. We hope you and your child enjoy this outdoor learning adventure with us. SJMA truly values families, like yours, who participate in our programs and show support for environmental education opportunities available for our community's youth.

COVID-19 has dramatically changed the nature in which we operate our programs. Please be sure to review the current policies pertaining to COVID-19 in the Appendix of this document or on the SJMA website.

As an integral member of our community, San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) inspires a positive personal relationship with and respect for nature through providing nature, science, and environmental education to the students and communities of the Four Corners.

Our programs strive to provide fun and safe experiences that allow all children to grow an appreciation and understanding of nature through curiosity and respect of their natural community. Our goal is to empower children using the **ACORNS** Philosophy to guide us. Be:

Active - in your program group and your community

Curious - ask questions, try new things, explore

Outside - get the physical & mental benefits of the outdoors

Respectful - to yourself, your neighbor, and to nature

Nature - nature education is the way we learn life lessons

Safe - all participants will always be safe!

II. Registration Policies and Procedures

A. Register Online

Families can submit a registration form, including all waivers and release agreements, health forms and payment through the SJMA website. If needed, hard copies of registration forms can be provided to be delivered in person or by mail to our office.

B. Ages of Participants and Group Size

To participate in our elementary programs, students must have completed Kindergarten. Our childcare license prohibits us from serving youth who have not completed Kindergarten. Please note, the



state requires a waiver for any 6-year-old who has completed kindergarten, but are not yet 7-years-old. Their spot at the program is not guaranteed until we receive this waiver. We need to apply for waivers as soon as possible, no later than April 20th. If you have a 6-year-old who would like to attend, please call (970) 715-1092 or email astimax@sjma.org as soon as possible. While the size of the program may vary, the participant to counselor ratio will always be less than 15:1 (per state policy).

C. Admission and Payment

Group numbers are limited according to transportation, staff, and location. Therefore, admission operates on a first come, first serve basis. We must receive at least a half payment, credit card number, or establish an agreed upon payment plan in order to secure your child's registration. We accept cash, check, or online credit card payment. Once registered, parents will receive a confirmation email from SJMA staff. SJMA reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any point for any reason.

D. Fees, Scholarships, and Membership Discounts

Program Fees

Please refer to the [SJMA Website](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding registration fees.

Scholarships

Full and partial scholarships are available to qualifying families who would not otherwise be able to send their children to our programs. Scholarship applications can be found on the program page of the SJMA website. We strive to make our programs available to all families.

Membership Discounts

SJMA Family Members receive a 10% discount on program registration fees. To become a member of SJMA visit: <https://sjma.org/get-involved/join-us/>

E. Refund Policy

For cancellations and change of program, please contact SJMA's education department by phone (970) 715-1092. Cancellation Policy: Fees are fully refundable (less a \$20 non-refundable administrative fee assessed per program registration) up to 14 days prior to the start date of your child's program. You may email your refund request to astimax@sjma.org and our response (within 24 hours) will be confirmation of receipt in your email. If you do not hear from us then we have not received your request. Please see our Refund and Payment Policy for details on emergencies, last minute cancellations and more.



F. Returned Check Policy

Checks are accepted as a form of payment and are appreciated, as they cut down on credit card fees. In the case of a returned check, a \$25 administrative fee will be collected in addition to the amount owed. Another form of payment is required within 48 hours of notice or your child's enrollment will be cancelled.

G. Program Cancellation

A program may be cancelled due to low enrollment, which is less than half of maximum capacity, one week beforehand. All enrolled families will be contacted directly by email. If your child is enrolled in a program that has been cancelled, you can choose to apply your payment to another SJMA program or receive a full refund.

A program may also be cancelled due to inclement weather. We will decide by the night before or the morning of the program and alert parents by email and phone. Please be sure we have the best number and email at which to reach you. Per our program policy, there are no refunds in the event of inclement weather.

III. Program Information and Procedures

A. Program Schedules

For program schedules, please refer to the SJMA website: <https://sjma.org/learn/> and select the program for detailed information

Most families use our transportation, but if you plan to drop your child(ren) at the Nature Center:

Durango Nature Center

63 County Road 310

Durango, CO 81301

From Durango: Take US Highway 550 south towards Farmington 12 miles from Farmington Hill. At the base of Bondad Hill, turn left at the blue Nature Center sign onto County Road 310/318. Make an immediate left onto "River's End Lane" and travel less than 1/10 mile to the parking area. Travel time from Durango is about 20 minutes.

B. Drop off and Pick Up

Arrival and Drop Off

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Parents are expected to sign in their child directly with the Lead SJMA Instructor or authorized SJMA staff members at the designated location. Your child should come prepared with the necessary items and belongings needed for the program. If there are any last minute changes to your child's needs, emergency information, or other arrangements please inform the Lead SJMA Instructor at this time.

Late Arrival

If your child arrives late to the program, the SJMA instructor will try to contact parents before departure, but will not delay the rest of the group for one family or child. Please notify the Lead SJMA Instructor in advance if you plan to drop your child off at the site, or need to make other arrangements.

Absences

If your child cannot attend on any given day, please contact the Lead SJMA Instructor's cell phone before the program day begins. There is no alternative child care provided should their child arrive after the group has left.

Pick Up Policy, Release of Children, and Unauthorized Pick Up

We ask that all parents/guardians present themselves and check their child out directly with SJMA staff at the designated location. Children will not be released to anyone waiting in a car. SJMA staff will have a roster and sign out log with them at pick up, and reserve the right to ask for photo identification if they feel it is necessary.

SJMA staff will only release participants to those parents, guardians, or emergency contacts listed on the child's Registration Form. Please be sure that all information is complete and accurate when completing the registration form. We require advance notice or written permission if someone other than those listed on the registration form are allowed to pick up a child from our programs. In an emergency situation, a parent may confirm an additional person to pick up his/her child over the phone through verbal authorization. In the case that someone who is not listed on the form or previously confirmed by the parent 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.

Late Pick Up

If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the program, we will make attempts to reach parents and other contacts listed on the emergency form and the parents will be charged a \$1 per minute child-care fee. If a child still has not been picked up by 6:00pm, authorities will be notified. In all cases, please call the Lead SJMA Instructor or the SJMA office to inform them of late pick up.

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Instructors will remain with children until an authorized person picks them up.

C. Transportation

SJMA is responsible for any child it transports and abides by applicable State and Federal motor vehicle laws. In order to provide transportation using the SJMA van, we must have signed Transportation and Liability Releases for each participant, included on the Registration Form. We will not use personal vehicles to transport children, unless in the event of an emergency. All children under 8 years old must use a car/booster seat, in accordance with Colorado state law. We will only get in and out of the van at locations designated on program itinerary, with the exception of a roadside emergency stop. Please see page 14 for our detailed ***Driving Policies***.

Please notify the SJMA instructor if your child has permission to independently walk, ride a bike, or use another form of transportation to and from SJMA programs. SJMA staff will communicate with parents to make sure the child arrives when expected if they are traveling without an adult.

D. Required Gear List

PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S ITEMS WITH FULL NAME!

- 1) Sturdy backpack to carry supplies
- 2) Canvas bag or duffel bag to store swimming clothes during day/regular clothes during river activities
- 3) At least two liters of water (2 Nalgene bottles or 1 full-size camelback) There is NO potable water available at the Nature Center or on the trails; we bring a limited supply of water each day to refill bottles.
- 4) Snacks: two nutritious snacks, easy to eat and clean up while on the go
- 5) Lunch: Please pack a nutritious, healthy lunch that will keep your child fueled for an entire day outside. Keep in mind that refrigeration is not available at the Nature Center. Please, NO candy or gum.
- 6) Clothes: Please provide your child with durable play clothes appropriate for bushwhacking, hiking, and outdoor play. Long shorts or lightweight pants are best protection for legs. Brimmed hats are great sun protection, Junior Naturalists will be exposed to it all day!
- 7) Change of clothes: spare shirt, pants or shorts, socks and underwear (or warm layers)
- 8) Swimming Clothes and Towel
- 9) Hiking Shoes: sturdy, closed toed shoes with traction on the bottom, preferably lace-up or velcro. Supportive and comfortable tennis shoes or hiking boots are best. Please send your participant to our program wearing their hiking/tennis shoes (not river shoes). Flip-flops, Crocs, or slip on shoes are not acceptable at any time.



- 10) River Shoes: waterproof sandals with a heel strap, waterproof shoes, or old sneakers. We are not responsible for shoes that float away in the river.
- 11) Sunscreen and Insect Repellent. Please send your child with sunscreen on in the morning, we will reapply throughout the day (see page 12-13 for sunscreen/insect repellent policy)
- 12) Sunglasses (optional)
- 13) Medications: Please be sure to let us know if your child requires medication, and complete the appropriate [Medication Authorization Form](#) during registration. In order for your child to receive medication at our program, all medications must be properly labeled and stored according to policy regulations. (see pg 13 for medication policy)

E. Belongings and Personal Items

Please do NOT bring any toys, money, personal electronic devices (cell phones, ipods, or video games) weapons, knives, fireworks, matches, candy or gum to any SJMA program. SJMA staff will confiscate these items for the duration of the program session. If you have any questions about appropriate daily gear or personal items, we are more than happy to assist you. Feel free to contact us before the program, or discuss with your child's instructor at the beginning of the program. SJMA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

F. Lost and Found

We ask that all personal belongings be labeled with the participant's name. If a labeled item is found, it will be returned to the child as soon as possible. At the end of each day we will make an effort to match lost items with their owners. All "lost and found" items will be displayed at the end of the program session as part of our session clean-up. Lost & Found will be kept for one week after the program and can be found in a bucket inside our office. SJMA offices are located in the Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court. All unclaimed items will be added to our bin of extra clothes, or will be donated to a local charity. Please do not bring items of great value to our program. **SJMA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.**

G. Meals and Snacks

We ask that families provide all necessary snacks, meals, and water needed during the day for each child. We also ask that all participants come to the program already nourished with a complete breakfast. Unless otherwise planned, SJMA will not provide food for participants, although back-up snacks are available if needed. We have fresh drinking water available to refill participant water bottles at all times.



Lunch will be eaten within four hours of the start of the program. While we will discourage dairy and meat products for snacks, instructors will ensure that any such items will be consumed during morning snack or by lunchtime. Under child licensing requirements, the instructor must check participants' lunches to determine if they meet one third of the child's daily nutritional needs. If the child does not have a meal, or if the meal is not adequate for one third of the child's daily needs, SJMA must supply an adequate meal, and the parent will be notified and billed.

For concerns for participants' health and safety, sharing food is strongly discouraged among participants. All participants will wash hands with soap and water and/or hand sanitizer before eating and after using the bathroom.

H. Positive Instruction, Participant Expectations, Discipline, and Consequences

SJMA strives to create and maintain socially and emotionally respectful learning environments by cultivating respect, compassion, and healthy communication among all staff and participants. Discipline shall be constructive or educational in nature, and may include such measures as praise for appropriate behavior, separation from problem situations, and/or talking with the child about the situation. Management by positive example with the well-behaved children often creates an environment of attention the child is attempting to gain. Children will not be subjected to any physical punishment or ridicule from the instructor or participants. It is imperative that one child does not hinder the experiences that SJMA has to offer to those who want to learn in nature. SJMA has a zero-tolerance policy toward physically aggressive, violent, and emotionally abusive behavior.

Participant Expectations

SJMA programs operate with the expectation that all staff, parents, and participants follow the "3 Rs".

1. **Respect for self** (be kind to and take care of yourself, make safe choices, advocate for your own needs, and have a positive attitude)
2. **Respect for others** (be kind and listen to group members, support and include everyone, follow all directions, keep each other safe, and respect wildlife)
3. **Respect the environment** (we follow principles of Leave No Trace and respect the habitats of all living things)

Prior to participating in a SJMA program activity, children will be instructed on the behavior expectations, fundamental safety procedures, and any additional rules governing the land (whether it be private or public land, Colorado State Parks, Open Space, US Forest Service, or BLM). As the first step to creating a positive environment in which all participants feel safe to explore, play, and learn,



each family will be asked to read and agree to the following behaviors asked of each SJMA program participant before the start of a program:

SJMA Safety and Behavior Expectations (please review with your child):

- 1) Participants will show respect for the whole group and support others during the session. Interrupting group members, name calling, and physical altercations (ie, hitting, biting, slapping, or punching) are never ok.
- 2) Participants will show respect to the group by participating in all activities. Feeling nervous when trying something new is normal. We ask participants to be willing to try all activities at least one time.
- 3) If a participant has tried an activity and would still like to sit out, he/she may do so. SJMA asks participants to respect all group members and wait quietly while the activity is completed.
- 4) participants will not swear or use inappropriate language of any kind. Please respect an instructor's request to stop using language they feel is inappropriate, without argument.
- 5) SJMA instructors will offer open lines of communication with all participants, and ask participants to communicate with instructors when feeling upset or unhappy about something, explaining how they are feeling and why. Pouting, moping, yelling, and crying are not appropriate ways of communicating.
- 6) participants may never wander off alone while at a SJMA program. Participants must communicate with their instructors if they need to leave the group to use the restroom.
- 7) While hiking, participants must stay on trail between SJMA instructors positioned in the front and back of the group. participants must follow any other boundaries given by instructors for other games and activities.
- 8) If a participant becomes separated from the group, that participant should not wander to look for the group. That participant should stay where they are and call out or make noise, making it easier for the instructor to find them. The rest of the group will stay together and follow the directions given by the instructors.
- 9) All participants must carry plenty of water and be equipped with appropriate protective clothing against the natural elements such as pants, shoes, hat, waterproof jacket, and a warm layer.
- 10) Children are not permitted to remove anything from the environment (wildlife, nests, berries, stones, flowers, etc.) without the permission and directions from the instructor.
- 11) Any and all wildlife should be treated with respect. Children are not allowed to chase or threaten wildlife in anyway.
- 12) Children are not permitted to throw rocks, sticks, or other objects endangering themselves, other participants, animals, or instructors.



- 13) Guns, knives, weapons of any kind, or electronics (such as video games, ipods, or cellphones) are not permitted at SJMA Programs. Instructors have the right to confiscate the item until the end of the program.
- 14) Instructors and participants will work TOGETHER to enjoy their time as a group, learning, playing, and experiencing the natural world.

Discipline, Consequences

If a participant chooses not to follow the above behavior expectations, the following action steps will be taken. This may or may not be after a verbal reminder(s), and depends on the severity of the infraction and the safety of all participants.

Behavior Action Steps

- 1) First infraction results in timeout, allowing the participant time to reflect on his/her behavior. Timeout will be followed by a discussion with their instructor. This is an opportunity to clear up any confusion the participant may have about the Behavior Expectations
- 2) Second infraction results in a phone call and/or a written incident report to parent(s) by the instructor. The instructor and parents will have time to discuss the issues that have come up and the instructor's expectations for the next day. Parents and participants can use this opportunity to review the Behavior Policy and reflect on what behaviors need to change for the following day. A plan of action will be created.
- 3) Third infraction results in a phone call to the parent(s), requesting that they come and pick up their child from the program. Participants who cannot commit to the Behavior Policy after these steps will be asked to leave the program and not return for the rest of the session. **NO REFUND WILL BE GIVEN FOR ANY STUDENT ASKED TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM DUE TO A 3RD BEHAVIOR POLICY INFRACTION.**

SJMA reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any point for any reason.

IV. General SJMA Program Policies and Procedures

A. General Policies

- 1) Program activities will conform to all local, state, and federal regulations and standards including Colorado State Childcare Licensing.
- 2) Staff to child ratios during SJMA programs will remain 1:15 at all times.



- 3) Before participating, all Participants will complete and submit the following required forms: Registration Form, including signed Parent/Guardian Waivers and Agreements, Certificate of Immunization, and any medication forms if applicable.
- 4) All SJMA staff members will complete the following paperwork: SJMA Policies & Procedures, Employee Handbook, Medical Information, Emergency Contact Information, and pass a Background Check with a fingerprint card; also complete required training including Child Abuse Reporting, Standard Precautions, Transportation, Emergency/Disaster Procedures. In addition, Lead SJMA field instructors must have valid CPR, First Aid, and Medication Administration training certificates; 15 hours of annual training.
- 5) SJMA Staff members will signify that they have read and understand SJMA program policies and that compliance is mandatory and a condition of employment.
- 6) Background checks will be done for all SJMA staff members through local state and federal agencies
- 7) SJMA Field Instructors are responsible for ensuring that cell phones are fully charged before taking them into the field.
- 8) SJMA Field Instructors will be trained on SJMA program procedures in the case of an emergency or incident.
- 9) In the absence of a Program Director, the Executive Director will maintain the ability for constant communication with all SJMA Field Staff during programs.
- 10) Participants and SJMA Instructors will wear shoes at all times during the SJMA program hours, except when sleeping during overnight programs.
- 11) Participants will not swim or enter water above their shoulders at any time.
- 12) Participants and SJMA Instructors will not ingest any wild flora during a SJMA program.
- 13) Participants will not carry or use weapons, including but not limited to: pocket knives, hunting knives, and guns.
- 14) SJMA staff members will not subject Participants, Visitors, Interns, or the general public to physical punishment, ridicule, violence, abuse and neglect.
- 15) SJMA has zero tolerance for violence. Any Participant or SJMA Staff member that behaves violently towards a Participant, Staff members, or general public will be removed immediately from participating in SJMA's program and/or employment will be terminated.
- 16) Child Abuse Policy- SJMA 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. Staff Members who have reasonable cause to suspect or knowledge of a participant that has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed a participant being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect will immediately report the incident to the Executive Director. Either the



staff member or the Executive Director will file a report with the La Plata County Department of Social Services if necessary and appropriate. If a parent believes that his/her child has been abused, s/he should seek immediate assistance from the County Department of Social Services: La Plata County Human Services: Tech Center Plaza, 10 Burnett Court, First Floor, Durango, CO 81301; La Plata County Human Services main number: (970) 382-6150. La Plata County Human Services child abuse and neglect reporting number: (970) 385-6438

- 17) SJMA has a zero tolerance policy for use of drugs or alcohol. Any Participant or SJMA Staff Member suspected of use of alcohol or drugs prior to or during any SJMA program will be removed immediately from participating in SJMA's program and/or employment will be terminated.
- 18) SJMA has a zero tolerance policy for inappropriate touch, sexual innuendos, sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse. In the event of any of the above or related actions, the Participant or SJMA Staff member will be removed immediately from participating in the SJMA program and/or employment will be terminated.
- 19) SJMA Staff members will be trained and how to handle concerning behaviors and warning signs of sexual abuse, included in their Mandatory Reporting training.
- 20) If age-appropriate, child-to-child sexual exploration occurs, SJMA Staff members should intervene without humiliation, and report occurrence to Executive Director and parents via an Incident Report.
- 21) SJMA staff members will never be alone in an enclosed space with a Participant, including in a bathroom or a tent.
- 22) Parents and SJMA' Executive Director must sign a letter of acknowledgement prior to any SJMA staff member communicating with or doing activities with Participants outside of SJMA programs.
- 23) Participants and SJMA staff members must respect each other's privacy when using restroom facilities. If a Participant needs assistance, the SJMA Instructor must ensure another adult is present.
- 24) Participants must be clothed (shirt and shorts/pants or swimwear) at all times during SJMA program hours. If a Participant needs to change clothes, this must be done in private and if assistance is needed, the SJMA Instructor must ensure another adult is present.
- 25) Participants and SJMA instructors should not touch any potentially dangerous plants or animals, including dead animals like bats and rodents which carry diseases.
- 26) SJMA cultivates positive child, staff and family relationships through various methods of communication and interaction. SJMA Instructors incorporate daily social and emotional student check-in times and are available for individual check-ins throughout the day to promote positive relationships with children. SJMA has an open door policy on communication between staff and parents. SJMA Instructors will do their best to inform the parents or guardians of the child's behavior, progress, and social and physical needs. SJMA staff members and Field Instructors are



available before and after the program each day for this purpose as well as being available by phone.

B. Safety and Health Policies

- 1) All SJMA Program staff will be trained in CPR, First Aid, Standard Precautions, and Medication Administration and hold valid certifications for each of the above prior to leading groups of SJMA participants. Mike and Adriana are also certified Wilderness First Responders.
- 2) Emergencies and Incidents occurring while participants are in the care of SJMA require Instructors to file an emergency/incident report as soon as reasonably possible after the emergency/incident and before Participant involved in the emergency/incident leaves for the day. All emergencies/incidents will be reported to parent/guardian and Executive Director and medical supplies must be replaced in first aid kit on the day that the emergency or incident occurred.
- 3) SJMA Instructors will maintain sight or voice contact with Participants at all times while Participants are under their supervision. Periodic headcounts of participants will be conducted by SJMA Instructors, and each time the group arrives or departs from a location. While moving, there will be at least one SJMA Instructor in front of the group, and one SJMA Instructor as a sweep behind the last child.
- 4) SJMA Lead Instructors will carry a stocked and approved first aid kit and SJMA Emergency Action Plan at all times when participants are in their care.
- 5) SJMA Instructors will not apply ointments, sprays, or lotions (including sunscreen and insect repellent) without written permission from parent/guardian on the completed registration form.

a) Sunscreen Policy

SJMA Instructors and staff are not allowed to apply ointments or topical lotions to participants without written parental permission. Complete the Sunscreen Release during your registration process if you would like your child to have assistance in the re-application of sunscreen during snack and lunch breaks. If you sign this release, your child's instructor will assist with applying sunscreen to bare surfaces including the face, tops of ears, bare shoulders, arms, legs, and feet. Sunscreen will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by staff will be reported promptly to the parent/guardian. Please provide sunscreen labeled with your child's first and last name with a minimum of SPF 15, and apply it to your child before leaving for the day. SJMA has SPF 50 (Banana Boat Sport) on hand if children need to use it. Contact us if you would like additional information on sunscreen and safe sun habits.

b) Insect Repellent Policy



SJMA instructors and staff are not allowed to apply ointments or topical lotions to participants without written parental permission. Complete the Insect Repellent Release during your registration process if you would like your child to have assistance in the re-application of insect repellent during snack and lunch breaks. If you sign this release, your child's instructor will assist in applying insect repellent to bare surfaces including the face, neck, bare shoulders, arms, legs, and feet. Insect repellent will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by staff will be reported promptly to the parent/guardian. If you would like your child to wear insect repellent, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the preferred product labeled with the child's first and last name. SJMA has insect repellent that contains 7.9% DEET (Cutter Sensations Insect Repellent with Aloe and Vitamin E) on hand, if needed. Contact us if you would like additional information on insect repellent.

6) Medication Policy. All SJMA Lead Instructors are trained in Medication Administration, First Aid, CPR, and Standard Precautions. If your child needs medication administered while under the care of SJMA, please complete the appropriate forms during registration. When possible, parents are encouraged to administer medication to their child prior to and after the program instead of sending medication to the program. When necessary, a SJMA staff member with Medication Administration Certification will keep and administer medication with the required medication forms with 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. This is for their safety. Children should not transport medications to and from the program; this includes medication placed in a backpack or lunchbox. For any and all other medications such as eye drops or antibiotics, complete the *Permission of Medication Administration* form. **Please note that medication includes inhalers, Epi-pens, Benadryl, homeopathic remedies, over-the counter drugs, and/or anything used to treat a condition. Prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medications for eyes or ears, all oral medications, topical medications, inhaled medications, and certain emergency injections can be administered only with the written order of a person with prescriptive authority and with written parental consent. If your child has an asthma-related medication such as an inhaler, complete the *Asthma Care Plan*. If your child has an allergy-related medication such as an Epi-pen or Benadryl, complete the *Allergy and Anaphylaxis Care Plan*. 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. Controlled medications must be counted and safely secured, in a locked container. A written medication log must be kept for each child by SJMA staff. This log is part of the child's records.



C. Illness, Accident, Injury, & Emergencies

All Lead Instructors are trained in SJMA' Incident and Emergency Procedures and have received certifications in Standard Precautions, First Aid, CPR, and Medication Administration. Lead Instructors must carry a fully stocked first aid kit and the SJMA Emergency Action Plan at all times. SJMA is required by law to give a written Incident Report to the Executive Director when any accident, however minor, occurs while the children are in our care. If the accident is minor, the parent will be notified at the end of the day. For more serious accidents or injuries, the child will be taken by Emergency Medical Services 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 says that they are feeling ill, they will be taken to the Program Leader and given the option to sit, lay down, or rest to see if it passes. Children will be encouraged to drink water and/or have a snack if appropriate. If after 10 minutes they are still feeling ill, they will be asked if they'd like to go home. If yes, the parents will be called immediately to pick up their child..

If a child vomits, has a bathroom accident, or experiences an injury that results in bleeding while at the program, instructors will remove all of the children away from the contaminated area. An instructor will use waterproof gloves to treat injuries or to clean the contaminated area, and the area will be disinfected with a broad spectrum disinfectant, such as a 10% bleach solution. Children will not be allowed near any contaminated area for at least 30 minutes after the area has been treated. Waste will be stored in a sealed ziploc or garbage bag and disposed of at the nearest trash receptacle.

D. Communicable Illness

If a child is ill, please keep them home so that they can get better and protect the health of the other participants and adults. If a child has had a fever within 24 hours before the start of the program, we ask that they stay home. 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.



E. Driving Policies

It is a policy that children will not be transported in personal staff vehicles unless in case of an emergency. SJMA will transport participants in a 15 passenger van, owned and insured by SJMA. All drivers will abide by SJMA' van policies, including:

- 1) There will be two adults in the van while children are present.
- 2) Children are not permitted to ride in the front seat of a vehicle
- 3) Children must remain seated and secured in a seat belt at all times while the vehicle is in motion. SJMA staff will check that seat belts are properly fastened before departure.
- 4) Children are not permitted to stand or sit on the floor of a moving vehicle and their arms, legs, and heads must remain inside the vehicle at all times.
- 5) Children are loaded and unloaded out of the path of moving vehicles.
- 6) All children under 8 years old must be in an appropriate car seat or booster seat, in accordance with Colorado State Law.
- 7) Children may not consume food or drink (other than water) while in the van.
- 8) The driver will not use a mobile phone while the vehicle is in motion.
- 9) Drivers will operate the vehicle in a manner that is appropriate for the prevailing traffic, roadway, and environmental conditions.
- 10) Drivers will not exceed the posted speed limit and will obey all traffic laws.
- 11) Drivers will be responsible for paying all traffic and parking violations.
- 12) Drivers will not be under the influence of any substance that may impair their driving, including drugs and alcohol.
- 12) Another SJMA staff member must "spot" while the van is in reverse and transporting program participants.

F. Special Activities and Vehicle Transportation

Before each program, parents will receive a list of the activities offered, as well as a daily itinerary of activities. Parents may notify the SJMA instructor if they do not want their child to participate in an activity. The itinerary will be followed as closely as possible, and in the case of an emergency or change in itinerary, the office staff will be notified immediately. Parents can contact the SJMA office at any time to determine the exact location of their child. SJMA will provide transportation to all participants who have signed the required transportation agreement and waiver. If needed, parents may transport their own children to the activity, but must make arrangements with the SJMA instructor ahead of time. Staff to child ratios will remain at 15-1 during all activities and transportation, and staff will actively supervise children at all times. If an emergency should occur on the road, emergency procedures as outlined on page 19 will be followed.



G. Disabilities and special needs

SJMA makes efforts to accommodate children with disabilities and who have special needs, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Titles I-V. We ask that families clearly communicate their child's needs and SJMA will provide accommodations and support as best we can, depending on staff availability, program location, and the extent of the child's needs.

Due to the outdoor venue and physical nature of our programs, children must be sighted and ambulatory to attend SJMA programs. There are several activities and hikes that are not suitable for non-sighted children. Steep trails, loose rock, and other hazards pose an accident hazard to the child. Instructors are not specifically trained in care for disabled children, so often times we recommend that a parent, guardian, or aide attend to accompany the child. Our primary concern is for the safety of all children.

The Durango Nature Center has limited handicapped accessibility, but we are able to accommodate children with walking disabilities with advance notice. Please call us to discuss this, or any other needs of your child.

H. Weather Policy

SJMA Staff will be informed of expected weather before each program. SJMA will not cancel a program according to weather forecasts, but will consider weather when planning outdoor activities. It is SJMA policy to hold programs regardless of rain – please make sure to always pack a waterproof layer for your child.

In the event any program is under a severe weather condition, our primary concern is SAFETY first. All participants will be led to an immediate shelter, either indoors, outdoors, or into the SJMA van, depending on the weather circumstances and location. Normally we will "wait it out," keeping children occupied and safe, and continue the program once conditions are safe. However, if the weather does not improve, the program may be dismissed. If this were the case, all parents/guardians and/or those listed as emergency contact people would be contacted directly by SJMA staff with directions on how to pick up their child. Per our program policy, there are no refunds in the event of inclement weather. If there are extreme extenuating circumstances that force SJMA to cancel a day's program, there will be no refunds.

For all weather related emergencies/natural disasters, please see pages 17-19 for the ***Procedures for Possible Situational Emergencies (Disaster/Fire Plan)***.



I. T.V./Video Policy

Although it is extremely rare for SJMA to include T.V. or videos in any program, videos that contain educational or nature-related content and are applicable to the program’s goals may be shown. If a program will include T.V./Video, the parents will be notified of the movie prior to its show-time and asked for a signed T.V./Video Release, approving of the video. If a parent is concerned about the movie chosen or the family doesn’t include movies in their lifestyle, the parent must inform the instructor of this and an alternative activity will take place.

J. Visitors

All visitors must sign in with the SJMA Instructor or Program Leader upon arrival on the day of their visit, show identification, and fill out the visitor log. SJMA instructors will remain and supervise the participants while the visitor is present.

K. Filing a complaint

SJMA’s outdoor programs 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 Report of Inspection. SJMA provides written information to parents 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.*

L. Parental Notification

SJMA will notify parents/guardians if the program is no longer able to serve children. SJMA 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.

V. Procedures for Possible Situational Emergencies (Disaster/Fire Plan)

In the event of any emergency, 911 will be contacted immediately. Adriana Stimax and Mike Bienkowski are certified Wilderness First Responders and are equipped to handle an emergency until emergency personnel arrive. SJMA instructors will notify the Executive Director as soon as possible.

If participants must be evacuated from their location, they will go directly to the SJMA offices located at the Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court, in the Tech Center.



Available instructors, the Executive Director, and other office staff will notify all parents/guardians of the emergency and/or evacuation directly via email and phone. Participants will only be released to those listed on their registrations forms, unless verbal permission has been given. All participants will be checked out with a SJMA instructor or other SJMA Staff member.

A. Flash Floods

Many SJMA Programs meet near or along creeks, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. Flash flooding is one potential danger that could be encountered during SJMA programs. In case of a flash flood, instructors will immediately move their groups to higher ground. This may mean climbing a hill, going to the second story of a nearby building, or climbing on top of large boulders or automobiles. Instructors will contact 911 and remain there until danger passes or help arrives.

B. Hail

Hail is a common weather phenomenon in the high elevations of the Durango region. In the event of hail, Participants should cover their heads with their backpacks or hold their coats above their heads to create a shield. Cover may be taken in a rock shelter or under a tree, but if the hail is accompanied by lightning, programs WILL NOT seek shelter in either of these sites. They will remain in place and protect their heads and faces.

C. Wildfires/Structural Fires/Smoke

In the case of a nearby wildfire that could threaten the safety of SJMA participants, participants will be evacuated to an indoor facility (the SJMA offices in the Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court). If wildfires are distant, but smoke is present or it is not possible to see 5 miles because of smoke (this may change throughout the day), SJMA will also move participants indoors. In addition, SJMA Instructors check both the Office of Emergency Management and the Health Advisory website each morning that smoke or fires are occurring nearby a SJMA program location to determine if the program should be moved indoors. If Instructors observe a small fire in the outdoors, they will move away from it immediately and call 911 to make a report. If they are caught in the vicinity of a wildfire, cover may be taken in a creek or pond by wading into the water and remaining there. If the fire comes very close, Participants should crouch down in the water and submerge their bodies, including their heads if necessary. If participants are caught in a fire while indoors, follow the emergency fire procedures of that building. Instructors will remain with Participants and proceed outdoors as quickly as possible. If groups are unable to exit the building, Participants should crouch or lie on the floor and cover their faces with a wet cloth or clothing.



D. Lightning

All SJMA Programs follow the lightning “30/30 rule”: If it takes less than 30 seconds to hear thunder after seeing the flash, lightning is near enough to pose a threat and participants are immediately evacuated to an indoor shelter, depending on location (the Pavilion at the Nature Center) until 30 minutes after the storm has ended. If lightning is distant, SJMA Instructors will watch conditions, note changes, and notify all instructors of potential evacuation. If a lightning storm comes on immediately, Instructors and groups should NEVER take cover in a rock shelter or under a tree. In the high country or in exposed areas, Participants should assume “lightning position” by crouching on the ground and wrap their bodies over and around their legs, making themselves as small as possible, with 20 feet of distance between each other. As little as possible should touch the ground. If carrying metal objects such as butterfly nets, Participants and Instructors should throw them as far away from them as possible.

E. Extreme Heat

In the case of extreme heat that could threaten the safety of SJMA participants, SJMA takes precautions to keep participants safe and cool. Instructors keep participants in the shade or in the water as much as possible and take regular water breaks to keep participants hydrated. To assist with keeping participants hydrated, there are two 5 gallon water jugs available to refill water bottles, and extra water bottles are available. In very extreme cases of temperatures over 105 degrees, participants will be evacuated to an indoor facility.

F. Tornado

If a funnel cloud is seen nearby and/or if warning sirens are heard, Participants should be moved indoors or to shelter immediately. If in a building, groups will seek shelter on the bottom floor or basement, away from large furniture. If outdoors, groups will seek shelter on the ground, away from trees or other potentially unstable objects. Refuge may be taken in a road culvert, rock shelter, or cave, away from the entrance.

G. Missing Person(s)

It is crucial that Instructors can account for each member of their group at any given time. Instructors should perform a silent count every 15 minutes. Instructors must avoid placing themselves in situations where they are alone with only one Participant. Should it be discovered that a Participant is missing from the group; the instructor will not send the group out to search for the missing Participant. The group should remain together at all times. The instructor will have already told Participants to stay put if they become separated from the group, and locating the individual will be a simple matter.



H. Injury or Illness

If the situation is LIFE THREATENING (anaphylaxis, medical emergency, Diabetic emergency, or any incident that results in a change in level of consciousness) instructors will call 911 immediately and care for the patient using their emergency response and medical training until emergency personnel arrive. The rest of the group will be supervised and occupied by other SJMA instructors.

I. Active Shooter

If indoors, participants will be led to find cover behind solid objects, locked rooms or closets. If outdoors, participants will be led to find cover, lying low to the ground under shrubs, bushes, trees.

J. Roadside Emergency/Auto Accident

In the case of an emergency while transporting participants in the van, or if the SJMA van is involved in an auto accident, the van will be immediately moved to as safe a place as feasibly possible and come to a complete stop. All passengers will be unloaded to a safe place away from the traffic and outside the vehicle. One instructor must stay with the passengers, both SJMA instructors will remain at the scene of the accident. Instructors will render any injured person reasonable assistance or request emergency medical assistance as necessary. Law enforcement authorities and the Executive Director will be contacted as soon as possible.



APPENDIX: Policies and Procedures Related to COVID-19

All SJMA programs at this point in time will have a modified format. That format will be:

- Held on local public lands within the San Juan National Forest near Durango as well as at the Durango Nature Center
- SJMA is pleased to continue the Durango Nature Studies (DNS) program tradition and all programs will be led by DNS and SJMA educators
- Smaller groups will allow for safe social distancing and provide more personalized interactions: ten or fewer children per group with two or three counselors and at least one Wilderness First Responder-Certified teacher
- We will transport when it is safe to do so at the capacity recommended by the state. If we are transporting your child, we expect them to wear a mask while in the van and we will keep the windows open
- No shared snacks, you will need to support your child with snack, water and lunch
- Families will be expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms
- Participants will be asked to maintain 6 ft. of social distancing and wear face-masks while we explore our local forests and watersheds
- Daily temperature checks will be conducted by program counselors
- We ask that parents please support the group by having conversations with your children about social distancing, using the restroom outside, and the expectation of long(ish) periods of physical activity