



THE CITIZEN SCIENCE LAB[®]

**Summer Camp
Parent / Guardian
Handbook**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Summer Camp at The Citizen Science Lab! We are excited to welcome back old friends and to have new people join our Laboratory family!

No matter whether you have been coming for years, or if this is your first time joining us, our mission is the same: to ensure that every child has access to the hands-on, exciting, and thought provoking summer! Nothing instills and supports a love of STEM like a week of being fully immersed in a college level science lab.

We aspire to have something for everyone in every week of summer camp. Whether it is color-changing chemistry, solving a crime through forensic analysis, or even just a chance to hang out with our animals, we want to make this the best summer ever for your camper(s)!

To help us do that, we have put together this Handbook to give you some details on what to expect, and to hopefully answer some questions that you may have. We understand that sending someone to camp for the first time (or the hundredth time) can be a little nerve wracking, so we want to make sure we can help alleviate some of that worry.

So we invite you to take some time and look through this Handbook, to familiarize yourself with what to expect, and make sure you are totally ready for camp!

If you have any other questions, or you just want to speak with a staff member, you can also reach out to us by phone at 814-830-3100 or email at cslhq@thecitizensciencelab.org.

We look forward to seeing you at camp!

The Citizen Science Lab Team

Pick Up and Drop Off

The Basics

Drop Off begins at 9AM and **Pick Up begins at 3PM**. Please note that our staff need time to prepare and get set up for an exciting day of camp, so the doors will not be opened for drop off until 9am. Also make sure you have submitted your required waivers (available via Connect by Care, where you registered) before bringing your camper in. *Without completed waivers, you will not be able to drop your camper off.*

Please note that we do require guardians to bring their campers up to the Laboratory itself, and then come back up to the Laboratory again at the end of the day to retrieve them. In past years, we have found that some guardians prefer to stay in their vehicles and send the campers up the stairs by themselves, but unfortunately this leaves some unsupervised time for the campers as they make their way up the stairs, and has the risk of them going into the wrong office. Our number one concern is making sure your campers are safe, so please make sure to bring them all the way into the Lab!

Remember that there will be many guardians trying to drop off or pick up their campers, so this process may take a few minutes. We ask you to be patient and please wait in either the lobby outside of the Lab, or in the inner lobby near our offices and fish tank for pickup.

For pickup, we will usually start calling out individual campers to go up to the front of the Lab as guardians arrive. At that point, you can sign them out and head on your way! It's a good way to avoid a big rush of campers coming through the door and trampling their guardians!

If you need to pick up your camper early for a trip, medical appointment, or other planned activity, please let us know as early as you are able. This will also allow us to have your camper ready when you arrive.

Location

The Lab's address is 1699 Washington Road, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15228. We are on the second floor of the Landmark building, in the same plaza as a Dollar Bank. Technically the entrance to our plaza is on Highland Road, but most mapping software will guide you to that entrance by just putting in the address.

Sometimes a GPS (particularly Apple-based devices) will give people confusing directions once they get closer to the building, and tell you that the building is located in the middle of the street on Washington Road. If that happens to you, you can simply head towards the Dollar Bank at 25 Highland Road and that will also take you into our plaza.

You will enter the Landmark building from the lobby on the narrow end of the building and take either the stairs or elevator to the second floor. We are the only ones on the second floor, so you can just walk right in through the glass door!

You may also see the Appendix if you'd rather see a map with that information!

Feel free to call us at 814-830-3100 if you get turned around.

Signing In and Out

We require all campers to be signed in at the beginning of the day, and signed out at the end of the day. This is to ensure that we know both who is dropping off, and who is picking up at the end of the day.

When you registered, you were given the opportunity to add other adults as caregivers who are approved to pick up and drop off your camper. If another adult comes to pick up your camper and is not on the list, we will have to contact you directly which may delay pickup times. Please make sure to double check that everyone you approve to pick up your camper is on the list, and that you have input the correct contact information. If there is a family situation where someone is explicitly not allowed to pick up your camper, please inform us of that as well.

If you find yourself running late, or something changes during the day, you can also feel free to call or email us if you need to change a pickup person.

It's also pretty common for campers to make friends during camp, and eventually carpool with another family. If you would like to add someone, such as another camp family, to your pickup list, please let us know.

Public Transit

The Citizen Science Lab is also located next to a public bus stop, and under a mile away from a Metro stop (Or "The T"). We recognize that some campers (especially in our teenaged camps) may be riding the bus, taking the Metro, or walking to reach us, so please make sure to let us know if that applies to your camper.

This way we can check in with you directly about modified sign in and sign out procedures, and so we can let you know if they do not arrive at camp as planned.

Please note that we are not able to pick up campers from public transit stops, and we are not responsible for campers who take public transit or walk to camp when they are not in the Laboratory.

General Camp Policies

Safety

Safety is our number one priority.

As you can imagine, the Laboratory setting provides a lot of unique opportunities, and unique challenges that we ask our campers and guardians to be aware of.

During your camper's time with us, they will potentially be using a wide variety of chemicals, reagents, solutions, microbes, machines, tools, and other equipment that you wouldn't find in another summer camp. Some of these materials are things that many people wouldn't see or use until college!

But with all of those amazing opportunities, that means we have some fairly specific safety rules for our campers.

- Campers should not touch Laboratory equipment or materials without permission.
- Campers will be required to wash their hands frequently, both to ensure sanitized conditions for experiments, and to ensure camper safety.
- Campers will be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment.
- Campers should not touch their face or their mouth without washing their hands thoroughly in advance.
- Campers must wash their hands after touching animals.
- Campers must keep all personal belongings (including backpacks, unworn sweatshirts, electronic devices) in the cubbies in the front of the Lab, not on their desks or the floors around them.

If you have spent much time in a Laboratory environment, you may also be thinking about more specific items such as an Emergency Eye Wash station and an Emergency Shower. We do have both of these pieces of equipment and a stocked first aid kit readily available in case of emergency. It never hurts to be prepared!

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

At different times, campers will be required to use a variety of PPE to make sure that they are being safe for themselves, fellow campers, and staff. All of these PPE items will be provided to campers, as necessary:

- Nitrile Gloves
- Goggles or Eye Protection
- Lab Coats

If a camper is unwilling or unable to follow our safety rules or use our Personal Protective Equipment when required, they may have to sit out of certain activities.

Behavioral Expectations

We expect all campers to be able to behave safely and responsibly while at The Citizen Science Lab. This includes:

- Campers will follow instructions from TCSL volunteers, interns, and staff.
- Campers will use equipment and materials in a safe manner, with instruction from TCSL staff.

- Campers will use Personal Protective Equipment appropriately and when instructed to do so.
- Campers will refrain from using inappropriate or insulting language, especially in regards to other campers, volunteers, interns, or staff.
- Campers will treat other campers, volunteers, interns, and staff with respect.
- Campers will not engage in unwanted physical contact with other campers, volunteers, interns, and staff.

We work hard to ensure that all of our campers, volunteers, interns, and staff have a safe and welcoming environment in which to learn and work. We have built a community of people from widely ranging backgrounds, with many different beliefs, interests, and thoughts, and we want to ensure that members of our community are treated with respect.

With that in mind, we take any insulting, violent, or discriminatory language or actions very seriously. If Laboratory staff determine that a camper is taking part in violent or discriminatory behavior, they may be asked to leave and be barred from returning for the rest of camp and future programs.

Equipment and Material Expectations

We have a wide range of equipment, chemicals, and other materials here at The Citizen Science Lab. We acknowledge (and hope) that this is extremely exciting for our campers, but we want to make sure that campers are treating these materials and equipment with respect, and being safe.

As you can imagine, some of the materials that we have here at the Lab can be very sensitive so moving them around or trying to use them without instructions can cause them to stop working or not work as well. We ask that you remind your campers to always ask before using or touching something in the Lab that they aren't sure about. This is both for the safety of our campers, and our equipment!

To help make that easier, we have much of the equipment labeled, with descriptions of what it does or how it works. That way when a camper sees something, they can often get a quick answer, or it can spark more excellent questions!

General Camp Information

Daily Schedule

The exact daily schedule for activities will vary depending on the camp, the day, and how long specific activities will take. Broadly speaking, we use the following schedule:

9am - Drop Off

9:15am - Morning Activities

Noon - Lunch Break

1pm - Afternoon Activities

3pm - Pickup

Lunch Break Reminders:

Lunch is to be provided by the parent/guardian.

We ask that you do not pack any peanut butter, peanuts, or tree nuts, due to allergy concerns. Please note that if there is someone in your week of camp with severe allergies, we may make other requests for the safety of those campers.

Please note that we have very limited microwave and refrigerator availability, so please do your best to pack items that do not require refrigeration or microwaving. You are encouraged to bring your own small coolers to keep items cool if necessary.

While we do not provide lunch, there is a water cooler for campers to use as well, so everyone is encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to help do their part and reduce plastic waste.

Indoor Spaces

Due to the nature of our experiments and the physical location of the Lab, we spend most of the day inside the Laboratory. We do try to take the campers outside for some fresh air a little bit every day, but most of our experiments are best done in a laboratory setting.

Fortunately, we do have a lot of indoor space to work with! The Citizen Science Lab is composed of five separate and unique Laboratories, with campers moving between rooms depending on the projects or experiments they are working on.

This also gives campers the opportunity for a change of scenery or a moment away from the group if necessary.

The Animals

Here at The Citizen Science Lab, we are fortunate to have some of the best staff, interns, and volunteers imaginable! Though some of them aren't strictly human.

When you walk into the Lab, one of the first things you'll see is our big saltwater fish tank. While it is always a popular pastime to watch Homie the Clownfish snuggle into his Anemone, this tank isn't the only place where you may find a new animal friend.

One of our Laboratories is entirely dedicated to animals. Our animals are important to our mission because they act as ambassadors for various fields of science, and they serve as a good way to take a break for many of our campers.

We have the following animals:

- Saltwater Fish
- Freshwater Fish (in our aquaponics tank!)
- Bearded Dragons
- A Ball Python
- Tarantulas
- Mealworms (for animal food)

Whenever we talk about animals, the next question is always "can I touch it?" and the answer is "sometimes". Since our animals are important to our mission, we also want to make sure they are treated with respect and compassion too.

Sometimes an animal doesn't want to be touched or leave their enclosure, and in that case we may not be able to take those animals out and handle them. And while of course we won't touch the fish, we do strive to make sure that campers who feel comfortable have the

chance to touch or hold at least some of our animals. Rarely does a week go by without at least a couple of the animals coming out to play!

Smells and Sounds

Being in a Laboratory setting means that there may be some sounds or scents that are unfamiliar to campers, and some of those might be relatively strong. For example, we use cabbage juice in an experiment to determine the pH of household items like ammonia! Both the samples and the cabbage juice are both very potent. This is just one example.

In terms of noise, much of our equipment will make some type of noise. The larger and louder equipment lives in the farthest room away from our normal teaching spaces, so the sound is generally much lower. But it is still important to note that there may be some sounds to get used to.

If you have a camper who is sensitive to strong sounds or smells, please let us know and we'd be happy to talk with you about what we can do to make them the most comfortable.

Clothing

While we provide all PPE, there are some clothing related rules that we hold in the Lab as well for the safety and comfort of our campers. campers are required to wear:

- Closed shoes (no sandals, keenes, chacos, crocs) that cover the entire foot
- Hair Ties (if they have long hair) to pull back hair if necessary.
- Bringing long pants or covering for bare legs is recommended in case of spillage.

On that note, sometimes camp can be a little bit messy! We do periodically use things like food colorings or dyes, which can stain clothes (hence the lab coats we mentioned earlier) so it may be worth considering whether to wear that brand new white t-shirt, white pants, and white shoes combo!

Camp Instructors

The Citizen Science lab camp instructors generally range from college students engaged in STEM majors to seasoned scientists with advanced degrees. We also have the occasional advanced high school camper, and volunteers that come from a wide variety of backgrounds to join the team. Have you ever met a microbiology researcher, a mechanical engineer, or a certified architect? Your camper may just end up learning from some this summer!

All staff, volunteers, and interns are subject to thorough background checks before working at The Citizen Science Lab.

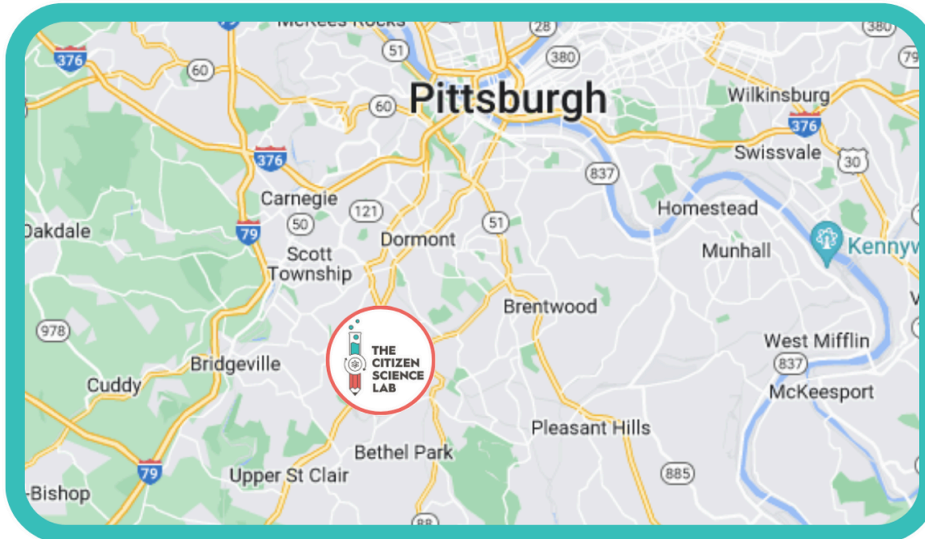
Phone Usage

We do some pretty amazing things at The Citizen Science Lab, and sometimes campers will get so excited that they want to share those cool things with other people. If a camper wants to take a photo of something they are working on, or maybe take a photo with some new friends they made, that is often allowed as long as it is not distracting or disruptive.

Every day we will also have a lunch break, during which campers will be able to quietly use their phone to read, play games, take photos, or for similar uses. We generally request that campers do not make phone calls during the day, unless there is the need to reach a parent or guardian.

Please note that we reserve the right to have campers put away their cell phones in their cubbies or in a manager's office if they become a distraction or disruption.

Getting to the Lab



The Citizen Science Lab is located at 1699 Washington Road, Suite 200, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. This puts us in the South Hills of Pittsburgh, about 8 miles south of Downtown, on the edge of Bethel Park and Mt. Lebanon .

While our physical address is on Washington Road, you will have to enter our plaza off of Highland Road. Most GPS units will take you directly to the parking area, though occasionally Apple products will stop you on Washington Road, not in our parking lot.

If this happens to you, we share a plaza with a branch of Dollar Bank. You can put in their address (25 Highland Road) and it will also take you into our plaza.

Upon parking, our office can be accessed by entering the main lobby (on the short end of the building), and going up to the second floor. The Lab takes up the entire second floor, so come on in!

