

Thorne
Ecological Institute



Thorne Natural Science School Parent Handbook 2010

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Dr. Oakleigh Thorne, II, Founder and Honorary President

Founded in 1954, the mission of Thorne Ecological Institute is to build Earth stewardship by connecting kids to nature through hands-on environmental education experiences.

Spring 2010

Dear TNSS Parents,

Welcome to the 53rd Anniversary of Thorne Natural Science School, providing hands-on environmental education in Colorado! We have been very busy preparing for 2010 and have strengthened our TNSS program in many ways. This handbook is just one of the additions to improve our system for you and your family. As we strive to align with our environmental mission, we are reducing paper waste by utilizing eCommunication. We highly recommend that you read through the handbook, for it contains important information. We look forward to this summer and exploring Colorado's diverse ecosystems with your family! Please call us (303) 499-3647 with any thoughts or questions you may have.

For the Earth,

Erin O'Neill
Education Director

TNSS Checklist:

Return to Office as Soon as Possible:

- ___ 1. Student's Immunization Record (if not on file from last year)
- ___ 2. Medication forms (if applicable, also available online)

Bring on first day of class and give to teacher:

- ___ 1. Insect Repellent and Sunscreen Permission, and Parent/Guardian Release (Forms available online)
- ___ 2. Student's Immunization Record (if it is not on file from last year or mailed in)

Send your student to class daily with:

- ___ 1. Day Pack
- ___ 2. Sunscreen
- ___ 3. Insect Repellent
- ___ 4. Sturdy, comfortable shoes and a change of water shoes in a plastic bag
- ___ 5. Hat, jacket or sweatshirt **and** rain gear (weather can change suddenly)
- ___ 6. Non-perishable, healthy snack (ex. Pretzels, trail mix, fruit)
- ___ 7. Full bottle of water (Liter size or larger)
- ___ 8. Healthy lunch (for full day/afternoon session students)

Thorne Ecological Institute's Thorne Natural Science School Purpose, Policies, and Procedures

Purpose

The Thorne Natural Science School (TNSS) was founded in Boulder in 1957 by parents and volunteers to provide experiential science education to children in the out-of-doors. The Thorne Natural Science School strives to provide children with an ecological background that will inform their concern for the environment and lead to appropriate and responsible action. Under the leadership of outstanding teachers, youngsters visit local ecosystems where their appreciation of the natural world is enhanced by hands-on experiences.

Ages

Children ages 5 ½ (who have completed Kindergarten) through 15 can attend the program. Thorne Ecological Institute strongly recommends that children have completed Kindergarten due to bus transportation and so that they have the social interaction and group participation skills necessary to safely enjoy this out-of-doors program. Children are divided into the following age groups for classes: 5.5-6.5, 6-8, 9-11, and 12-15. Class size is maintained at a maximum ratio of 12 children per 1 adult, unless otherwise noted. Teaching Assistant opportunities start at age 16 and up. TNSS also offers classes for children ages 3 – 5 accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Admission, Deposit, and Fees

Registration is not complete until Thorne has received the registration form completed in full, payment, and the child's Immunization Certificate. Children are not officially registered for a class nor allowed to attend a class unless the Immunization Certificate or a copy of it is in Thorne's possession.

Enrollment fees are paid at the time of registration. If registering online, 20% of the total tuition is due at the time of registration. You will have until August 17, 2010 to submit full payment, otherwise your card will be automatically charged the full remaining balance on August 18, 2010.

Scholarships for tuition are available for children from families who could not otherwise afford the program.

Discounts

We offer **Early Bird Registration** to those who register online or by phone, fax, e-mail, or mail before March 21, 2010. Those who register before March 21, 2010, will benefit from a 15% tuition discount per class.

Those who register on and after March 21, 2010, for a morning and afternoon class for the same week benefit from a \$10 discount for the combined registration. This discount has no expiration, but does not apply to classes added at a future date.

Class Cancellation and Refund Policy

Class size is limited to 12 students, unless otherwise noted. All classes must have at least 4 students to run the class. A class is cancelled due to low enrollment two weeks beforehand. If your child is enrolled in a class that Thorne cancels due to low enrollment, you can choose to switch into another class or receive a full refund.

If a parent is considering the removal of their child from a class, the first option is to switch the child into a different week of class during the summer. If cancellation is necessary, refunds* will be allocated based on the chart below. Call 303-499-3647 with questions.

Cancellation Fees and Refunds*

- 14+ days notice: 80 % refund
- 7 – 13 days notice, but spot **is** filled: 75% refund
- 7 – 13 days notice, spot is **not** filled: 50 % refund
- 3 – 6 days notice, but spot **is** filled: 50% refund
- 3 – 6 days notice, spot is **not** filled: 25% refund
- After 3pm on Friday before class: No Refund

- Withdrawal the week of class: No Refund

***To process ANY refund**, Thorne Ecological Institute requires a letter with the parent name, student name, class title, class dates, and reason for cancellation. This letter may be mailed, e-mailed, faxed, or dropped by the office and **MUST BE** received by the refund deadlines referred to above.

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.

Scholarships

Scholarship assistance is available. You may download the scholarship form from the website. Please contact the Program Director at 303-499-3647 or e-mail info@thorne-eco.org with questions. Please complete the scholarship application (front and back) and the registration form and return. It is recommended that this is completed as soon as possible as scholarships are awarded on a first-come first-serve basis.

Donate a tax-deductible half or full scholarship to offer the TNSS experience to a young person who otherwise may not be able to attend a TNSS class.

Switching Classes

Please make sure that your child is in the appropriate class upon registration. If you *must* switch your child into another class, let us know immediately so that we can try to accommodate you. There is no guarantee.

Transportation

****It is a TNSS policy that children will *not* be transported in personal staff vehicles.****

Boulder TNSS students will be transported from Boulder High School by school bus to and from the designated trail location daily, and also for those participating in the Afternoon Session with TNSS. It is a Boulder Valley School District policy that no bikes are allowed on school buses. This is to prevent possible injury in the case of an accident. Please make separate accommodations for your child's bike if this applies.

******* If your child is participating in a Boulder TNSS morning bike class such as Biking and Birding, Biking Boulder's Greenways, or if s/he is biking AND also participating in the Afternoon Session, alternative transportation must be arranged. Thorne Ecological Institute does not allow children in personal vehicles. As we fundraise this year to purchase a company van to transport students, we ask that you make alternative arrangements for the transportation of your child between classes. Options to consider are to coordinate with a friend; ask your neighbor, nanny, or other family members; look into children's transportation services; and if your child is old enough to use the RTD. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience.

Parent Drivers: Parents of children in Boulder biking classes, Bird Banding, Fly Fishing classes, Wild Skills Advanced, and Survivor Skills will receive a schedule of the pick-up and drop-off locations two weeks before the start of the class. Carpooling is an option that parents may organize on the first day of class.

Special Field Trips

Transportation on special field trips is arranged by agreement between the Thorne Instructor and the child's parents. Parents are asked to volunteer their transportation to the special field trip site. All volunteer drivers will complete a volunteer transportation info form, submit a copy of their insurance and driver's license, and assume responsibility for children in their vehicle between the meeting site and the designated location. The parent or Thorne volunteer must remain with the children until the instructor arrives at the site. The drivers should caravan to the site with the class instructor in the lead. TNSS does not have its own vehicles to operate. All drivers must comply with applicable laws of the Colorado Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Division, and all city and county ordinances. All drivers must be sure that each child is properly belted when the trip starts and throughout the trip. Each child shall be restrained in a personal car seat or seat belt. Children's head, arms, and legs shall remain inside the vehicle at all times. Drivers will refrain from smoking and talking on cell phones while driving and should pull over if cell phone communication is necessary.

Inclement or Excessively Hot Weather

In the event of inclement weather, teachers are instructed to follow directions as described in the Safety Handbook. Instructions may vary according to weather type (flood, lightning, tornado, etc.). Ask the Director for a copy of the Safety Handbook if you would like to see it. In the event of excessively hot weather, teachers will mist students with a spray bottle to keep them cool, encourage frequent water breaks, decrease level of activity, and move to a shady location. In extreme situations such as lightning, classes will be held in an indoor location such as the facility at Sombrero Marsh.

Rain Days

It is our policy to hold the program regardless of rain – please make sure to always pack a waterproof layer for your child. In the event of inclement or potentially hazardous weather, the program will be held inside at the pick-up or at an alternative site. If there are extreme extenuating circumstances that force us to cancel a day's program, there will be no refunds.

Late Arrival/Absences

If your child cannot attend on any given day, please contact the Director's cell phone (that you receive on the first day) and leave a message before 8 a.m. The Director checks for voice mail messages from parents daily regarding their child's attendance. Parents are advised that there is no alternative day care provided should their child arrive after the bus/class has left. Children who arrive late may be taken by the parent to the class site, as instructed by the Director.

Pick-Up Policy

All children must be signed in and out daily with their Instructors. Please park car in a parking space in the lot and get out to sign your child in and out. Don't Idle Your Car - Idling gets 0 miles per gallon and for every 2 minutes of idling, you burn as much gas as it takes to drive 1 mile. Idling is linked to increases in asthma, allergies, heart and lung disease and cancer...not to mention air pollution and global climate change. If you're waiting for more than 10 seconds, turn your car off!

Keep the bus lane clear. Cones will be set up to designate this area. Parents must arrive to pick up their child by 12pm for morning session or by 5pm for full day/afternoon session unless otherwise noted in the class description. If a child is not picked up by 12:15pm after the morning session or by 5:15pm after the full day/afternoon session, we will make attempts to reach parents and other contacts listed on the emergency form and the parent will be charged a \$15 child-care fee. If a child is not picked up by 6 p.m., authorities will be notified and a child-care fee of \$30 per ½ hour will be assessed. In all cases, please call the Director or the center to inform her of the late pick-up.

Release of Children

Students will only be released to those individuals listed on the Parent/Guardian Release Form. Please be sure to fill out this form to give to the Instructor on the first day of class.

Accident Reporting

All staff is trained in Universal Precautions, First Aid, CPR, and Medication Administration Certification. Thorne Ecological Institute is required by law to give a written report to the 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 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.

Emergency Procedures

In case of an emergency in the field, the Director and Thorne office will be notified immediately, and if it is an emergency, the parents will also be notified. Emergency telephone numbers are carried by the Instructors as well as First Aid kits at all times. The staff carries a copy of the transportation and medical authorization forms (including the procedure for contacting local authorities, the parent or legal guardian, and handling illnesses) for each child with them at all times. The original form is kept on file at the Thorne office.

Identifying Where Children are at All Times

Instructors are responsible for routine head counts throughout the day and during transition periods (i.e. bathroom visits, snack, after activities, etc.) Additionally, the Instructors are required to perform head counts at the beginning and end of each day and when students are boarding and exiting the buses. Should a child become lost, the Instructor or Teaching Assistant will backtrack to where they were seen last. If the child is not found in this effort, the Instructor will contact the Director and emergency personnel. Emergency contact numbers are listed in a folder that is carried with Instructors at all times.

Lost & Found Belongings and Personal Items

Throughout the summer, many students leave belongings on the school bus or at the Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center in Boulder. The Lost & Found box is located at the Center. If you suspect your student left something behind while with TNSS, call or come by to look through the box. If an item is labeled and found, it will be returned to the student the following day. Items not labeled or claimed by the end of the summer will be donated to a local thrift shop. We strongly recommend that parents label jackets, hats, backpacks, lunch bags, water bottles, and other personal items so they may be returned to their owners.

Hiking

Prior to participating on a hike, children will be instructed on the fundamental safety procedures to be used while on the trail, procedures if he/she becomes lost, proper health and sanitation procedures on the trail, and rules governing the land (Colorado State Parks, Open Space, and US Forest Service). All students must carry plenty of water, sunscreen, and insect repellent and be equipped with protective clothing against the natural elements such as a hat, *waterproof* jacket, and a fleece. Each TNSS Instructor is certified in First Aid, Child CPR, Universal Precautions, and Medication Administration, and carries a stocked and approved First Aid kit at all times.

Children are not permitted to remove anything from the environment (wildlife, nests, berries, stones, flowers, etc) without the permission of the Instructor. Poison ivy is avoided at all times. If contact with poison ivy is suspected, the instructor will wash exposed skin with soap and water, and the parents will be notified.

Shoes must be worn at all times by the students. Sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes are particularly recommended when wading in shallow water (ponds or streams) to study aquatic life. It is recommended that students carry water shoes in their backpacks. ***Children are not permitted to swim at anytime.*** Wildlife observed along the trail should be treated humanely. Children are not permitted to throw rocks or other objects endangering animals or classmates. Children are not allowed to chase animals or threaten them in any way.

ADA

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

Meals and Snacks

Children attending the TNSS morning program must be provided with his/her own snack by the parent, such as a light, non-perishable healthy food and water. Safe drinking water is available to students at all times if water is forgotten. If the child fails to bring a snack, TNSS can supply the child with one. A small supply of non-perishable, peanut-free snacks is kept in stock. Children are provided with the means for washing their hands prior to eating.

Full day students are asked to bring a lunch to eat in the afternoon program. The Director collects the lunches from parents in the morning and stores them at the Center. The Instructor, under child care licensing requirements, must check lunches brought from children's homes to determine if they meet one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. If the child fails to bring a meal, or if the meal meets less than

one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs, Thorne must supply an adequate meal, and the parent will be notified and billed.

TV/Video Policy

Children attending the Afternoon Session, after a week of good behavior are rewarded with a "party" on Friday to celebrate the week. The party may consist of cookies cooked in the solar oven, a piñata contest, releasing any critters caught during the week back to their homes, and watching a child-appropriate video with popcorn and lemonade. The parents are notified of the movie before Friday after the kids choose the movie. If a parent is concerned about the movie chosen or the family doesn't include movies in their lifestyle, the parent must inform the Teacher of this and an alternative activity will take place.

Student Back Packs

Please provide your child with a back pack every day containing a full bottle of water (make sure it doesn't leak), a non-perishable snack, sunscreen, insect repellent, a fleece or sweatshirt (even on warm days), a hat, and a *waterproof* rain jacket (even on clear days). The weather can change suddenly. We encourage your child to bring along any helpful items from home such as a butterfly net, a bug box, water shoes, or a field guide. We discourage and ask that you *not* allow your child to bring electronics, cell phones, money, pets, toys, stuffed animals, and games, as they are distracting to the class. Knives and other weapons are prohibited.

Medication

Please contact the Director if your child needs medication administered while under the care of TNSS to complete the necessary forms. Parents are encouraged to administer medication to their child prior to and after TNSS. When necessary, the Director or Instructors with Medication Administration Certification will keep and administer medication with the required medication forms with written parental consent AND authorization of the prescribing practitioner. Children should not transport medications to and from TNSS; this includes medication placed in a backpack, such as an inhaler or Sudafed. Without these required forms, the child will not be permitted to attend TNSS. This is for their safety. The forms are available online. If your child has an asthma related medication such as an inhaler or nebulizer, complete the Asthma Medication Form. If your child has an allergy-related medication such as an epi-pen or benadryl, complete the Allergy Medication Form. For all other medications such as eye drops or antibiotics, complete the General Medication form. **Please note that medication includes inhalers, Epi-pens, Benadryl, homeopathic remedies, over-the-counter drugs, and/or anything used to *treat* a condition.

Teacher Forms

Please make sure to bring the Parent/Guardian Release and the Sunscreen & Insect Repellent Permission Form to class on the first day to give to the teacher. If you have not turned in the Immunization Card to the office before the first day, please bring it to give to the teacher on the first day.

Sunscreen Policy

TNSS teachers and staff are not allowed to apply ointments or topical lotions to students without written parental permission. Complete the Sunscreen Permission Form if you would like your student to have assistance in the re-application of sunscreen after snack-time. If you sign this release, your child's teacher 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 with a minimum of SPF 15, labeled with your child's first and last name, and apply it to your child before leaving for the day. Thorne has SPF 30 and SPF 45 on hand if you need to use it. Contact us if you would like additional information on sunscreen and safe sun habits.

Note: Personal sunscreen must be labeled with the child's first and last name.

Insect Repellent Policy

TNSS teachers and staff are not allowed to apply ointments or topical lotions to students without written parental permission. Complete the Insect Repellent Permission Form if you would like your student to have assistance in the re-application of insect repellent after snack-time. If you sign this release, your child's teacher 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. It is the parent's responsibility to provide insect repellent that contains either DEET or is 2% soy-based. When using a repellent with DEET, it is recommended that a concentration containing between 10% and 30% DEET be used with children. DEET should not be applied more than once a day. Repeated application may increase the potential toxic effects of DEET. DEET should not be used in a product that combines the repellent with a sunscreen. Contact us if you would like additional information on insect repellent or West Nile Virus.

Note: Personal insect repellent must be labeled with the child's first and last name.

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is mainly transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Due to the outdoor setting of our programs, WNV is a concern though mosquitoes cannot be avoided, even at home. Application of insect repellent that is soy-based or containing DEET is the best prevention for mosquito bites outdoors. As an outdoor-based program, we strive to introduce children to local, diverse ecosystems each day. TNSS staff is instructed to immediately leave an area where there are an abundance of mosquitoes. They are instructed to remind children to re-apply repellent when necessary (see Insect Repellent Policy). The Director is in communication with the Boulder County Health Department and the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department regarding any positive WNV sites or cases. This information will be directly communicated to TNSS parents as soon as it is available. More information is available through the Center for Disease Control at 1-888-246-2675 (English), 1-888-246-2857 (Spanish), or www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/westnile/index.htm, the Colorado Department for Public Health and Environment at 1-877-462-2911 or <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/wnv/index.html>, or <http://fightthebitecolorado.com>.

Visitors

All visitors must arrange their visit through the Director. The Director will notify the Instructor of the reason for the visit as well as the date, time, location, and number of visitors to expect. All visitors must sign in with the Director on the day of their visit.

Discipline

Discipline shall be constructive or educational in nature, and may include such measures as separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, or praise for appropriate behavior.

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 classmates. If appropriate discipline measures by the Instructor are ineffective and the child continues to behave inappropriately and/or interferes with the safety or learning of other students, Instructors are asked to contact the Program Director immediately. In this case, the Director will accompany the class to observe the child's behavior and the teaching and discipline methods of the Instructor. The parent will be informed of the situation and a plan of action will be implemented. Refunds are not given if a child must be removed from a class. It is imperative that one child does not hinder the experiences that Thorne Natural Science School has to offer to those who want to learn in nature. TNSS has a zero-tolerance policy toward physical/violent behavior.

Child Abuse

Any staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect, or knowledge of a child that has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect will immediately report or have another staff person report to the County Department of Social Services or local law enforcement. A Central Registry Inquiry Form from the State of Colorado Department of Social Services and fingerprints are submitted and checked by the State for every TNSS staff person upon employment.

If a parent believes that his/her child has been abused, s/he should seek immediate assistance from the County Department of Social Services.

Boulder County Department of Social Services: 3400 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304, (303) 441-1000
Jefferson County Division of Human Services:

900 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden, CO 80401 (303) 271-1388

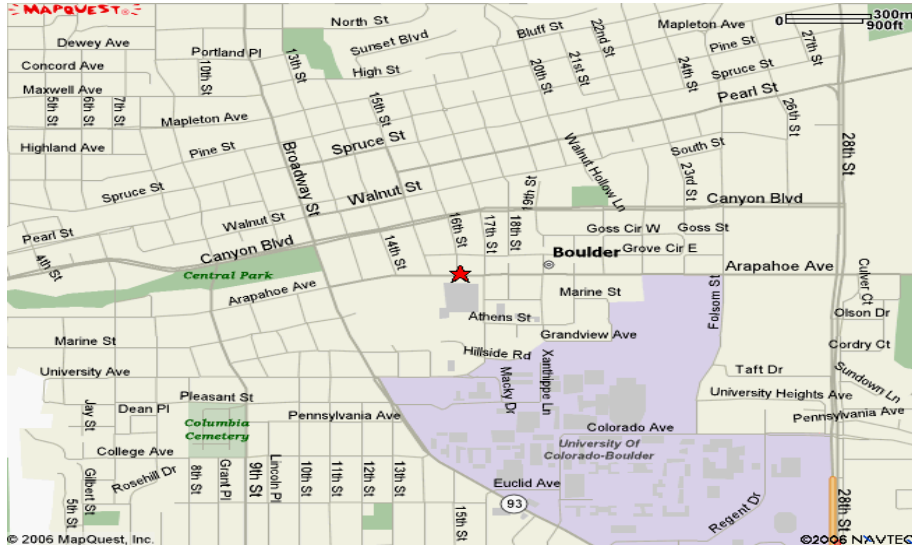
Filing a Complaint

Thorne Ecological Institute's Thorne Natural Science School is 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. To file a complaint about this facility contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203, 303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876. Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

Directions

Boulder Morning Site: Boulder High School, 1604 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302

*Please note that this location is different from the summer of 2005. Boulder High School is located on the South side of Arapahoe between Broadway and 17th Street. The teachers and class signs will be in the North parking lot. Please arrive by 8:15 a.m. to check-in with the Instructor. The bus departs promptly at 8:30 a.m. Pick-up is at 12 p.m. for Morning Session students at the Boulder High School North parking lot.



Boulder Afternoon Site: Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center, 1466 N. 63rd St., Boulder, CO 80303, (303) 499-3647

From Boulder, drive East on Arapahoe Ave. Turn **RIGHT** (South) on 63rd St. Ignore the “No Outlet” sign and follow this road as it curves left. The marsh will be on your right. When you see gas pumps on your left, look for an opening in the fence on your right to enter our parking lot and you will also see our building. There is a sign on the building that says, “Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center,” and a sign by the door that says, “Thorne Ecological Institute.” This building is on Boulder Valley School District property. Afternoon Session pick-up is at 5:00 p.m.

