

BLACK ROCK

CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Youth Art Academy Handbook

2026

Revised: January 2026

WELCOME TO BLACKROCK SUMMER OF 2026!

We are elated that you have chosen BlackRock Center for the Arts to provide your camper with an enriching, educational, and fun time at camp. This summer we are #ARTHAPPENHERESUMMER25. It is our priority to make sure that your camper is safe and has an enjoyable time while in our care, so we have created the following handbook outlining our policies and procedures for our programs. This handbook applies to Summer Camps, Before Care and After Care. Please make sure you read this handbook thoroughly and review applicable policies with your camper.

In addition to this handbook, we take many steps to make sure we are providing your camper a safe environment. Licensed by the Maryland Department of Health.

All camp staff members are required to have fingerprinting and a background check performed. Camp Directors and staff also receive training in CPR, First Aid, and camp safety.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Front Desk at 301-528-2260. You can also email us at educationdept@blackrockcenter.org.

Thank you so much for coming to BlackRock for your child's summer camp fun!

Reva Thompson
Director of Education/Camp Director
BlackRock Center for the Arts
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(240) 912-1061

BLACKROCK CAMP CONTACTS:

BlackRock Center for the Arts
12901 Town Commons Drive
Germantown, MD 20874

Front Desk: 301-528-2260
Fax: 301-528-2266
General Question Email: educationdept@blackrockcenter.org

CAMP MISSION:

To inspire young artists, we aim to foster relationships through authentic expression and ignite the sparks of creativity, while offering unwavering support for artistic growth in an inclusive environment where young talents can lead the way.

HOW WE DO THIS

At our summer programs, we fulfill our mission by encouraging creativity in an open and understanding environment, where artistic guides lead by example, accompanying young artists as they discover their passions.

WHY WE DO THIS

At our summer program, we passionately pursue our mission because we believe in the transformative power of the arts. We strive to inspire, connect, create, lead, and support, as we wholeheartedly believe that nurturing young talent in this way not only enriches individual lives but also contributes to the cultural vitality of our community. We inspire the next generation of artists, performers, and advocates of the arts.

CAMP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT POLICIES

- Parents **MUST** sign their camper in and out of camp every morning and afternoon.
- Dropping off your camper by car without signing them in is not permitted.
- Campers who leave the building without permission are subject to being suspended or dismissed from programming at BlackRock.
- All sign in/out tables will be located in the main lobby. After-Care sign out will take place in the Wet Studio or another designated area.
- For your camper's safety, only the individual(s) designated at the time of registration as having permission, can pick up your camper. Additionally, the person completing registration is the only person who can add or delete individuals with pick-up authority. For questions on adding or deleting individuals, please reach out to the Camp Director at educationdept@blackrockcenter.org.

- Teens older than 14 years of age may be dropped off or walk to the BlackRock Center to attend camp. All teen campers above the age 14 are required to sign in and out of camp each morning. Failing to sign in and out of camp can lead to suspension or dismissal from camp programs at BlackRock.

PICK-UP POLICIES

- Parents are expected to pick up campers promptly at the close of the camp. Students that are not picked up by 3:30 PM will be taken to aftercare where a daily rate of \$25 is charged.
- Late-Fee Payments are due at the time of pick-up (cash or check). If you feel you may arrive late during the camp week, please consider our After Care option for campers K-8th grade. Thank you for your cooperation in advance.
- Students that are picked up after 6:30 PM are subject to a fee of \$10 per 15 minutes of lateness.
- Authorized individuals for pick-up should be prepared to present their license for student safety.

BEFORE CARE POLICIES

- Before Care is **ONLY** available for those campers registered in camps at BlackRock during the day. Before Care can be purchased for a full week or daily, for a fee of \$15.00 per day due at the time of drop-off.
- Parents can drop campers off as early as 7:45 AM to the care of camp counselors and staff before the start of the program day. Parents may not drop off campers prior to 7:45 AM.
- Before-Care campers will be offered the chance to do craft projects, board games, warm-up activities, watch movies or simply relax and read before the start of a busy day.

AFTER CARE POLICIES

- After Care is **ONLY** available for those campers registered in camps at BlackRock during the day. After Care can be purchased for a full week, or by the day for Summer Camp. Should there be an emergency situation, and a family requires last minute accommodations a drop-in After Care fee of \$25.00 is due at the time of pick-up..
- Registered After-Care campers can be picked up anytime between 3:30 – 6:30 pm. Please make every effort to pick up campers before the 6:30 pm closing time, as staying later affects not only camp staff but also BlackRock Front Desk staff. Please see our Pick-Up Policy on late fees.
- After-Care campers will participate in fun recreational games and projects. At least one day a week there may be an option of a G rated movie for campers to watch.
- If your camper attends After-Care, please pack a non-perishable snack in his/her backpack.

ATTENDANCE

- Please notify BlackRock of absences or schedule changes as soon as possible. You can do this by emailing educationdept@blackrockcenter.org or by calling 301-528-2260. We ask that you let us know as soon as possible so we can notify camp staff.

- If you need to pick up your camper early, bring a signed note to your camper's counselor at morning check in or email educationdept@blackrockcenter.org. TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF YOUR CAMPER, ALL EARLY PICK-UPS MUST BE MADE AT THE FRONT DESK. We appreciate your cooperation in an effort to keep all campers safe.
- To avoid disruption of group activities and to ensure the safety of all our campers and staff, we ask that you come to the Front Desk with any messages, lunches or forgotten items for your camper. We will have the items or messages delivered directly to your camper.
- Visitors are not permitted to interact with campers or counselors during camp hours.

STUDENT PERFORMANCES, GALLERIES AND SHOWCASE

- Every two weeks in Performing Arts Camp and every week in InspireArts the program will culminate in shared art reflecting the interpretation of a musical or theme. That product will reflect various forms from student art galleries, stage performances, virtual showcases, etc. Families will be invited to share in these experiences. Details regarding the culminating showcase will be communicated on Monday of showcase week.

FOOD AT CAMP

- **Camps at BlackRock are NUT FREE.** Please do not pack nuts or nut products in your camper's lunch, including nut butters, Nutella, fruit and nut bars, etc. We have a number of campers that are extremely allergic, so we ask that everyone commits to a nut-free environment for the safety of all.
- If a lunch is found to contain nuts, parents will be contacted and asked to bring an alternative lunch for their camper. BlackRock does not have food or snacks available for campers.
- Please pack a non-perishable lunch and snack. The use of an insulated lunch bag or freezer pack is recommended. Lunch will not be refrigerated.
- Campers are not permitted to share, trade, or swap food with each other. Since an increasing number of campers have severe food allergies, it is critical that you instruct your camper to not share food with other campers.
- Campers do not have access to microwaves, so please do not pack something that needs to be heated in your camper's lunch.
- Since your camper will be participating in physical activity, it is important for campers to bring water bottles everyday to camp to stay well hydrated, especially during warm weather. Bottles should be labeled with the camper's full name.
- If your camper attends After-Care, please pack a non-perishable snack in his/her backpack.

STAFF/PARENT COMMUNICATION

- Staff/parent conferences may be arranged as needed. If you want to speak with a camp staff member or would like a conference with camp staff and Camp Director, please feel free to call 301-528-2260. To request a conference, please make an appointment in advance.

CAMPER AND PARENT FEEDBACK

- We welcome feedback. We want your camper to have a happy, successful experience. Please feel free to call or email with your feedback, suggestions or ideas at any time: educationdept@blackrockcenter.org or 301-528-2260. We also

encourage you to complete any post-camp surveys or questionnaires that we distribute. These are extremely helpful to us when creating the structure and program of camps.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

BlackRock campers should abide by the following rules:

- Show respect to other camp participants and respect their rights. Treat everyone with courtesy and consideration.
- Show respect to camp staff, and cooperate fully with their instructions.
- Know and follow the rules of the camp.
- Communicate in an appropriate manner, which means not using foul language or gestures, harsh words or tone of voice.
- Conduct themselves safely and responsibly. Understand that horseplay, unwelcome teasing or other unkind behaviors are not allowed.
- Refrain from deliberately causing bodily harm to other participants or staff. Understand that pushing, kicking, hitting or fighting is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Use program equipment, supplies, and facilities properly.
- Respect the property of others.
- Be fully responsible for actions and understand that irresponsible behavior will result in a break from activity, suspension or dismissal from Camp.

The following are consequences (in succession) for inappropriate behavior during camp:

- **1st Warning:** student engages in inappropriate behavior and is asked to stop.
- **2nd Warning:** student engages in inappropriate behavior a second time, or repeats the previous behavior after being asked to stop. Parents will be notified at the time of pick-up if a student received two warnings in one program day.
- **Removal from the Classroom:** if a student engages in inappropriate behavior after receiving two warnings, they will be removed from their current classroom or activity and a call will be made to their parents detailing the inappropriate behaviors in which the student engaged. Depending on the behavior, parents may be asked to pick up their child from camp. Once parents have been contacted, and if the staff doesn't feel it is necessary for the child to be picked up, the student may return to class. The incident will be reported to the Chief Program Officer.
- **Conference/Talk with Parents/Guardians:** if the Chief Program Officer feels it is necessary, parents and camp staff may be asked to engage in a conference about their student's behavior before the student can return to class.
- **Suspension or Removal from Program:** If a student needs to be removed from the classroom multiple times, a conference between the camp/education staff and the parents/guardians has taken place and a student continues to engage in inappropriate behavior, The Director of Education may ask that the child be suspended or removed from the program. No refunds will be given in these cases.
- **BlackRock Center for the Arts reserves the right to excuse a child from camp due to repeated inappropriate behavior at any time.**

BULLYING

- Bullying involves expressing power through humiliation, seeking to harm, intimidation or coercion. BlackRock Center for the Arts supports the rights of everyone to participate and enjoy all activities, free from any form of bullying. BlackRock Center for the Arts will make every effort to promote awareness of the problem of bullying among all of its participants, and to respond quickly and effectively to complaints or disclosures of bullying.
- The act of bullying a camper is considered inappropriate behavior and is grounds for suspension or removal from a program at the discretion of the Chief Program Officer.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Our expectation is that all campers, staff and CITs, should refrain from cell phone use during the program day unless the device is being used for artistic or educational purposes, or to communicate with family members.

- Cell phones should not be used during camp.
- Ongoing issues with inappropriate cell phone use may result in dismissal from programming.

WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

- **Performing Arts and InspireArts Camps (Grades 1-5, 3 - 8 and CITs):** Backpack/knapsack, an extra pair of clothes (art can be messy!), lunch, optional snack, and water bottle. Campers should bring or wear socks for the dance studio. Campers are also welcome to bring a towel for out or indoor use. Campers may be asked to bring or wear special items (like a hat, scarf, sunglasses, etc.) for their final showcase or performance. Consider packing a folder for rehearsing scripts at home if applicable.
- **After Care (Grades 1-5, 3 - 8):** If your camper attends After Care, please pack a non-perishable nut-free snack in his/her backpack.

WHAT NOT TO BRING CAMP

- Campers should NOT bring toys, electronics, or personal items to camp (i.e., electronic games, jewelry, stuffed animals, etc.). **BlackRock is not responsible for damage, lost, or stolen personal property if it is brought to BlackRock.** Cell phones must be used for artistic or educational purposes or communicating with family members. All campers that bring a cell phone will be asked to leave it in their backpacks on silent unless approved by camp staff for one of the previously mentioned purposes. If campers need to be in touch with parents regarding pick-up, and other logistical matters, they should let staff know.
- If a CIT brings a cell phone to camp, it must remain on silent and may not be used unless they are on a break. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the CIT's phone being held by the Camp Director for the remainder of the day. If a CIT needs to be in touch with parents regarding pick-up, and other logistical matters, they should let staff know.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT AT CAMP

- Campers should wear comfortable, practical clothing to camp. Clothing should allow them to move freely and potentially get messy.

- Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes should be worn daily (sneakers or tennis shoes). **Sandals, flip flops or clogs are not encouraged - this is to reduce the risk of injury.** Dance shoes or socks only should be worn in the dance studios.
- During the summer the Mainstage and BlackBox Theater is often cool. We suggest your camper bring a sweater or sweatshirt.

CAMP T-SHIRTS

- Each camper at summer camp will only receive one complimentary camp T-shirt. Campers may be required to wear these camp shirts for the camp showcases and shows on the last day of camp for each session (Friday's)
- We do ask for shirt sizes at the time of registration and try our best to accommodate these requests, however there may be times when the requested size is not available and a different size shirt is distributed.

LOST AND FOUND

- Misplaced items will be gathered in the lost and found which is located in the lobby at the Front Desk. Please check the lost and found each week for any items that may have been lost. At the end of the summer, all unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization.

CAMP MEDICATION, SUNSCREEN & BUG REPELLENT

- Medication can be self administered or given by a certified BlackRock Staff member. If your camper requires over the counter or prescribed medication, an Authorization for Medication Form is required and must be completed by your camper's doctor. This form is available on BlackRock's website at <https://www.blackrockcenter.org/camp-policies>.
- BlackRock Center for the Arts does not assume responsibility for prescribed medication or non-prescribed medication administered by the camper to himself/herself.
- All authorized medications must be kept in a secure place at BlackRock. Parents are responsible for remembering to bring their camper's medications home with them at the end of a program session.
- In the event of any medical emergency, BlackRock Center for the Arts will administer first aid and/or seek emergency medical treatment for a camper. This is clearly stated in our registration policies and Student Waiver, which is initiated by the parent at the time of registration.
- Please be sure to list any current medication(s) and any medical conditions at the time of registration.
- We will be using latex paints during camp sessions. Please let us know if your camper is allergic to latex paint.

CAMP GROUPS

- Depending on the number of campers and nature of the camp, we may divide campers into groups. These groups are formed based on age, and can sometimes vary depending on the number of campers we have that are the same age.
- All campers in each designated camp will spend lunch time together and will meet as a large group in the morning and in the afternoon, so there is plenty of time for your camper to socialize with campers in other groups within their camp.
- Refunds will not be given for unfulfilled group requests or because your camper is unhappy with their group assignment.

MEDIA RELEASE

BlackRock reserves the right to use photographs and video taken in camp and/or their work for the purpose of instruction, and/or advertising and promotion of BlackRock and its programs, including social media. Participants will not receive compensation of any kind for use of these images. Participants release and hold harmless BlackRock Center for the Arts, its officers, and employees from any claims. If you do not agree, you must notify our [Camp Director](#) in writing..

COVID 19 SAFETY

If a camper tests positive for Covid, the camper will be given a credit for days missed due to quarantine requirements. Credit can be applied toward camp or running seasonal classes through Summer 2026. No refunds will be given. Families of children in close contact with someone who tests positive for covid will be notified. Testing is strongly encouraged in these cases.

CIT PROGRAM

MEANINGFUL SERVICE: service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

LINK TO CURRICULUM: service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and or content standards.

REFLECTION: service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.

YOUTH VOICE: service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

PARTNERSHIPS: service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

A CIT's role may include but is not limited to the following:

- Participate in mandatory, half-day CIT training prior to the start of summer. This takes place the week leading up to camp.
- Implement and assist in the execution of activities, projects and performances as needed.
- Maintain heightened awareness of participants and environment.
- Assist in the supervision of students at the beginning, end, and transitions throughout the program day.
- Engage enthusiastically in all activities, modeling and assisting camp participants.
- Serve as a mentor to all campers promoting a positive attitude, teamwork, social emotional well-being, appropriate language and conversations, and safety among participants.
- Build relationships with campers to engage and include, but not befriend, program participants.
- Collaborate with Directors or Counselors to answer programmatic questions and improve overall experience for all campers.
- Engage in weekly reflection, team building and young leadership modules.
- Complete all required paperwork, and the reflection statement in compliance with the MCPS SSL Form-560-50.

PROGRESS MONITORING: service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

DIVERSITY: service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Application Required Components:

- **[CIT Form Submission](#):** Interested candidates complete the BlackRock CIT Summer Camp Application, which includes a statement of interest.
- **[Reference Form Submissions \(2\)](#):** Candidates request reference forms from two adults (excluding all family members) who know the candidate's ability to fulfill program roles. *Submissions may include teachers, coaches, troop leaders, neighbors, or other role models in their community.
- **[Interview](#):** A brief fifteen minute interview, phone or in person, hosted by the Director of Education at BlackRock Center for the Arts. Candidates will be notified to set-up an appointment.
- **[Attend mandatory CIT Youth Leadership Training](#).**

Selected CITs will be notified with included registration information. The number of CITs selected will be based on camper enrollment projections for each camp. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply to the programs, and indicate the frequency of service.

Leadership Development Sessions:

Each week CIT participants will meet with the Camp Director during lunch to review and discuss Leadership Development Strategies. This is an informal opportunity for CITs to work together on topics related to leadership, goal setting, self esteem and much more.

SSL Forms:

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the MSDE K-12 Service – Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the MCPS SSL program requirements.

REFUND POLICY

- If a camp is canceled, a full refund is given.
- If a refund request is made two (2) weeks or more before the start date of camp, and tuition has been paid in full, you are entitled to a 50% refund or 100% BlackRock credit. The BlackRock credit expires after twelve (12) months from the issue date.

- If paying for camp with a two-part payment plan, and final payment has not been made, the initial payment is returned with a \$25.00 processing fee or 100% BlackRock credit of the amount paid. The BlackRock credit expires after twelve (12) months from the issue date.
- If you cancel within two (2) weeks of the camp start date, no refunds or credits will be issued.
- If you are accepted into the CIT program, tuition is non-refundable.
- Refunds are processed 6-8 weeks after the request is approved and will be made using the method of payment used to purchase the class. Credits last for one year from the date issued and cannot be requested later as a refund.
- If a camper must leave camp due to a positive Covid test and quarantine requirements, they will be given a credit for missed days. Credit can be applied toward camp or running seasonal classes through Summer 2026. No refunds will be given.

US IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT INTERACTION POLICY

BlackRock Summer Camp is committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for all children, regardless of their immigration status. Our staff are trained in how to proceed if US Immigration and Customs officers come to BlackRock.