

# Camp Survival Guide 2024



# Welcome!

We are excited to have you on board for Camp 2024! Camp is a special place that only works because of the amazing staff we have. We're going to have a fun filled summer!

In this guide you'll find:

- The expectations for you as a staff member
- Ideas of how to include and engage every camper
- Behavior management strategies
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Phone policy
- Tentative schedules for the Summer
- Important phone numbers

# Expectations

Whether you're a camper turned counselor, brand new to camp or a long time returner, it's better to know what is expected before we begin rather than teetering in the unknown.

You don't know what you don't know right?

To put everyone at ease, to get everyone on the same page, and to hopefully help answer some questions we've broken down our day to show what it entails.

Remember the best thing you can do is lead by example!

# The Morning Bus Ride

If you ride the bus you're one of the first faces kids will see and you could set the tone for their day.

- Lead monitors will check campers in as they arrive on camp brain
- If you're not a lead monitor you're still important! Say good morning to every camper.
- Set boundaries for where they can play/wait for the bus.
- Play/talk with the campers while waiting and on the bus.
- Once on the bus spread out! It's important that the counselors are spread out on the bus. This is not a time to put your headphones on and get lost in your phone.
- Our job on the bus is to make sure our campers are safe but that doesn't mean it has to be boring.
- Lead monitors: once everyone is on the bus do a final count to make sure you have everyone before leaving

# Arrival/Breakfast

When you first arrive at Camp:

- Put your stuff down and check in with your team.
- Say good morning to your fellow counselors and campers that are already there.
- Don't forget to get breakfast!
- When you go up for breakfast encourage campers who haven't eaten yet to get breakfast too - many will want to play but when the whistle is blown breakfast is over
- If you finish breakfast before the whistle go play! Enjoy the morning sun, join a game, look for groups of campers without a counselor, look for campers who are alone, encourage them to join you

# Gym

- Each gym session will open with 5 minutes of "open gym" and a consistent warm-up. Encourage all campers to get accustomed to the daily routine and get into the groove.
- Listen to the instructions each day and assist the campers in following directions and getting started.
- Join in on the fun! The campers look up to you and get excited when you participate in the activities and games.
- During gym, campers like to grab water or use the restroom. Your help is greatly appreciated in accompanying the kids to the water fountain or restroom.
- Encourage the campers to help clean up the equipment at the end of each gym session - the gym should look the same as when your team entered.
- Each gym class will end with a breathing exercise before the campers are dismissed to the next activity. Help the campers get settled and encourage them to participate in the mindfulness activity.



# Field

- Once you are familiar with daily routines (i.e., warm up lap followed by circling up to do stretching), don't wait for the coach to give out those directions -- show leadership
- Listen to activity directions so that you can also answer camper questions during the activity
- Attend to camper behavior so it doesn't just fall on the coach
- Encourage participation and participate yourself, but remember to make the games about the kids
- Encourage all campers to help clean up before leaving

# Art

- Spread out at the tables! There shouldn't be more than 2 counselors at a table.
- Offer to help pass out materials
- Help campers with their projects as needed - Not everyone will choose to do the project of the day and that's ok but the coach is only one person so help is appreciated!
- Do an activity! Try the activity of the day, draw with a camper, make a bracelet, just do something. If you're sitting doing nothing that's what the campers will want to do too
- Encourage ALL campers to help clean before leaving or going to the bathroom. The room should look like the same as when your team entered.



# Team Time

- Listen
- Follow Mark's directions
- Be involved
- Model expectations

# Game Room

- Play Fair
- Be gracious winning and losing - No sore winners and no sore losers
- Keep the chairs where they are - No wheeling chairs around the room
- Counselors should be spread out
- Clean up before leaving - Leave how you found it
- Kids can never be alone - have a counselor go with anyone going to the bathroom

# Courts

- Don't just sit or stand around, do the activities with the kid.
- If you see a kid is struggling, help them back into the activity.
- If you seem disinterested in an activity, that translates to the kids, have fun, be active.
- If you're playing a game with the kids, let them win! Don't make it so obvious, but let them win.

This isn't about you, it's about the kids. They will be so excited to tell people they beat their counselor, it can make their day, or their week.

# Swimming

- Get changed as quickly as possible and then help encourage kiddos to do the same.
- Walk to the Y with one person in the front, one in the back and then others are spread throughout the middle.
- Once in the pool have one or two people help pass out life jackets and goggles and then GET IN THE WATER
- Try not to complain about the water. If you complain the kids will too.
- Follow Jason's lead and directions.
- Encourage kiddos to walk/swim away from the wall. Most of them will be able to stand as it's only a few feet deep.

# Transitions

When moving from activity to activity it's important to make sure you have all your campers on your team. The best way to do this is to line them up. Different ways to line your campers up can include:

- Birthday
- Alphabetically (forward or backwards)
- Ask questions, for example, If you have an older brother, line up, older sister, younger sister, only child, etc.
- Color
- Pick a line leader (Pick a new leader every time)

As you move make sure counselors are spread throughout the line. This helps prevent conflict and losing anyone while moving.

Make sure the team thanks the coach your leaving before moving out!

# Water/Bathroom/Snack

If you need to get water or go to the bathroom or a camper asks to go, ask the rest of the team if anyone else needs to go. Before leaving make sure your other counselors know how many you have with you.

The best time to go is at the end of an activity but these can be used as breaks for some campers as well.

At snack time:

- Let campers pick snack first
- Encourage campers to get a squirt of sanitizer
- Remind campers to say please and thank you
- Encourage campers to use the bathroom and fill water bottles
- Remind campers this is a time to sit, cool off, and



# Lunch

Campers will be called up to get lunch by teams. This is where we can teach campers patience, to wait their turn in line, healthy choices and manners.

- Remind campers to sit quietly to be called up
- If anyone brought a lunch from home they should wait until their team is called to open their lunchbox and start eating
- All campers should get lunch before counselors
- Campers and counselors eat with their teams
- No one gets seconds until everyone has had some. If there is enough Mark will call "Seconds!"
- Again please let campers go first for seconds

# Freetime

After you finish eating with your team please go play!

This is the least structured time for our campers so this is the time that problems tend to arise the most. This can best be avoided if counselors are with groups of campers.

Just like after breakfast, counselors should join a game, look for groups of campers without a counselor, look for campers who are alone, encourage them to join you and other campers.

This is also a great time for bathroom runs.

# Announcements

Every morning after breakfast and every afternoon after freetime Mark does announcements. This includes the theme of the week, shout outs, what lunch is, any changes to the schedule and any other important information.

We expect campers to listen quietly to Mark. The best things you can do is:

- Remind campers to sit and listen
- Remind campers to turn their voices off
- Remind campers this is not a time for bathrooms (except for emergencies) or toys

# Afternoon Bus/Dismissal

If you ride the bus you're also one of the last faces campers will see and last experience of the day.

- Lead Monitors: Before leaving Camp make sure someone counts the campers (before and after getting on the bus)
- Once on the bus spread out! It's important that the counselors are spread out on the bus. This is not a time to put your headphones on and get lost in your phone
- Our job on the bus is to make sure our campers are safe but that doesn't mean it has to be boring.
- Lead monitors will check campers out as their people arrive on their attendance.
- Say goodbye to the campers as they leave..
- Set boundaries for where they can play/wait for their people
- Play/talk with the campers while waiting

# Phone Policy

The campers are not allowed to use their phone (or other technology) while at camp we expect the same for all of the counselors and staff

If there's an emergency or reason why you need your phone one day please let one of us know

If you're on your phone you are not fully keyed into the campers. Not only is this not safe but the campers notice.

A lot of our campers look forward to making connections with our staff (you're often the best part of their day) and that can't happen if you're on your phone all day.

After attendance your phone should be put away.

# Getting Campers Involved and Engaged

Engagement looks different for each camper. Our goal is to get every camper involved in the activity.

This can look like:

- Playing/doing the game/activity
- Keeping score
- Cheering on the team/player
- Doing the activity side by side with a counselor
- Doing one part of the activity (like kicking but not running)
- Taking breaks after a set amount of time

Remember campers are more likely to do it if all the counselors are doing it. They look to you!



# Behavior Management

- Be aware of your own body language, facial expression, volume and tone of voice
- Genuine praise - stay away from "good job" be specific "i love that you used your words!"
- Be clear and concise with what you are expecting
- Be consistent
- DONT PICK UP THE ROPE - Don't engage in a power struggle
- Know when to tag in another counselor.
- If you were part of why a camper is upset you will rarely be the one to de-escalate them

# Camper Conflict

Camper conflict will arise at some point or another this summer so strategies to try are:

- Recognize and validate feelings (I see you're frustrated)
- Listen to both sides and have the other peer listen too
- Come up with a plan together (i.e. timers, turn taking, rock paper scissors, seeking a counselor, using our words, ect)
- Praise and acknowledge when you see plan being done

# Have Fun!

Most importantly HAVE FUN!

Enjoy the games and activities, get into it, be silly, just be you!

This can be one of the most fun, exhausting and rewarding jobs if you let it be.