

Discover Camp Parent Handbook



Respect

Responsibility

Safety

Kindness



2024

Mission

Our goal is to provide children with a safe and enjoyable camp experience where they can develop skills, form friendships and enhance self-esteem.

We promote and expect (four) 4 basic principles: **Respect, Responsibility, Safety and Kindness.**

Most of all, we want your child(ren) to have fun! Our staff is trained and committed to providing a safe, welcoming environment.

Visit our website at GrotonCT.myrec.com to

Parks and Recreation State License Statement
Per Connecticut General Statute 19a-77 we are required to disclose that our programs are not licensed by the State Office of Early Childhood.

Items you should send with your camper

All Items should be labeled with child's name:

- All children must wear sneakers (no flip flops allowed).
- Swim suit and towel (on water days)
- Change of clothes
- Water bottle
- Snacks and lunch
- Backpack
- Spray sunscreen
- Hat (sun protection)
- Lifejacket for your child if you deem one necessary for aquatic activities.
- We highly recommend that campers leave their cell phones at home. If you need to reach your child, please call one of the camp phones

Do not send anything you do not want shared, broken or lost. *Discover Camp is NOT responsible for personal items.*

Drop-Off and Pick –Up

The first week your child attends, we ask parents to park and come into the café to meet our staff. Please plan a little extra time for drop off. Drop off must be between 8-8:30 and pick up between 3:30-4PM. Parents will pick up in front of the site in the drive way.

After the first week, parents will drop their children off in front of the site in the drive way between 8 and 8:30am without getting out of the car. A staff member will approach the car and screen the camper before they get out of the car.

To ensure the safety of your children, and to maintain safe ratios, we need everyone to drop off and pick at the times designated.

The doors are locked and the staff need to stay in their groups until dismissal.

Please note that children must to be dropped off between 8-8:30. Staff are not to accept children or meet a parent before or after this time. If there is an extenuating circumstance, you must make arrangement with Emily 860-501-2063 ahead of time.

As much as we like to accommodate you, this is a serious safety concern. The staff must leave the group where they are responsible for at least 9 other children to walk a long distance to meet you or bring the child to the front of the building. The campers and staff are involved in activities and it is often impossible to get them out in a timely manner.

Pickup is between 3:30-4PM. Parents will pick up in front of the site in the drive way.

Field trips

*If a child needs spending money, send it in in a zip lock bag with child's name on it. If a child cannot be responsible for their own money, it is the **parent's responsibility to hand it to the senior leader.** The Groton Parks and recreation is not responsible for the money.*

Diversity and Inclusion

Groton Parks and Recreation programs are inclusive. We make every effort to provide a welcoming environment for children of all types, including those with special needs. In order to create a successful and enjoyable environment for your child, please communicate any special needs or concerns with us early to allow us to plan for the best possible experience for your child. If you would like to request any type of modification for your child, please fill out an assessment form, call us at 860-536-5680.

Camp Staff and Ratios

Discover Camp is supervised by a professional and has two on-site directors. Campers are assigned to groups that are led by a senior leader and several group leaders. There is always someone present who is trained in first aid, CPR, medication administration and Epi pen. A majority of our staff members are between 15 and 22 years old. Prior to the start of the summer, all staff members take part in an in-depth training program. This training includes behavior management, recognizing illness, camp activity programming and safety.

Campers are assigned to age groups, Sorry, we can't accommodate special requests for camper-group placement for children who don't meet either age or grade determinations. We strive to adhere to the ratios recommended by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood.

Ages 5-6	Ages 7-8	Ages 9-12
Ratio 9:1	Ratio 10:1	Ratio 12:1

Registration and Fieldtrip Deadline

Registration for camp and field trips are due on by 11:59pm on Thursday for the following camp week.

Online registration is available on-line at GrotonCT.myrec.com

Discounts are available for camp and field trips. Please contact Groton Parks and Recreation (860)536-5680 to find out more.

Children signed up after the maximum enrollment is reached are put on the waiting list.

Cancellations & Refunds

Refunds must be requested 1 week before start of the camp week.

If we cancel a field trip, you will be refunded and camp will still take place.

We do not issue refunds for a child who is suspended or dismissed from camp due to behavior issues

Please contact us before registering if you have any questions regarding this policy.

Meal Program

Free breakfast and lunch are provided by the Board of Education's Summer Feeding Program for children under 18 at the all sites. Campers may also bring their own lunches. We do not have refrigeration at the camp sites.

Please alert us of any allergies at the time of registration. We will work closely with the Summer Food Program prior to the week your child attends to minimize any potential issues related to food allergies.

Child Abuse and Neglect

(Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a)

GPR is a mandated reporter, therefore the staff is required to report any suspicions of abuse or any direct reports made to us.

Injuries at Camp

If your child has a reportable injury that requires some treatment by the staff, you will be notified.

Contact information Phone Numbers:

Please call Recreation office at 860-536-5680 to get staff phone numbers.

Authorized Adults for Pick-up and Drop Off

Children are dismissed to parents at the end of camp in a "drive-through" pick-up.

If you have a restriction of who can pick your child up, please discuss with director the first day of camp.

Children who have permission to walk home unattended must be approved in advance.

Sunscreen

Please **apply sunscreen for your child before camp**. Counselors are available to reapply unexpired sunscreen after snack and in afternoon with spray sunscreen labeled with the child's name has been provided. **You must provide sunscreen.**

Late Fees

A late fee is charged for any child(ren) not picked up by the closing time. There are no exceptions or warnings. This “no exceptions” policy makes it easier to apply the late policy to everyone consistently and fairly. **The late fee must be paid before the child attends the next day of camp.**

Online payments are accepted. Families are charged only one charge for each occurrence. If you know you are running late, please contact your child’s site to inform them of the anticipated time of pick-up. It is helpful to know in advance so our staff can help your child adjust to the late arrival. **A late fee is still assessed.** This also helps the camp directors arrange for staff coverage during the minutes the child is remaining in the program. If a parent has not contacted the camp phone by closing time, the camp supervisor will attempt to contact the parents using the primary and alternate phone numbers provided. If camp staff members are unable to stay at the site to supervise your child(ren) who is/are being picked up late, officials will be called to remain with your child(ren) until you arrive.

\$10 6-10 minutes late
\$15 11-15 minutes late
\$20 16-20 minutes late
\$30 21-25 minutes late
\$50 after 25 minutes –

If You Have Concerns about Camp

All concerns must be communicated directly with the senior leader who is responsible for your child. Feel free to ask specific questions or offer suggestions in order to remedy a situation your child may be having at camp.

- A. Start with senior leader in your child’s group.
- B. If not satisfied, discuss with Director or Behavior Support Specialist
- C. If not satisfied, contact Supervisor Damayanti Rane-Castrodad
- D. If not satisfied, you will be referred to program supervisor Eileen Cicchese to address your concerns. 860-536-5691

Code of Conduct and Discipline

Discover Camp encourages fun, friendship, and safety in a positive atmosphere. To accomplish this, we have established behavior guidelines that revolve around our four basic principles: respect responsible, safe and kind.

For children who experience difficulty with this structure, staff members work with the child and their parents to create an individualized plan that meets the need of the child while ensuring the safety and trust of other campers.

Camp staff members treat each child with respect and set clear expectations and boundaries each day. Children are expected to show respect to their peers and staff, and to treat the facilities and equipment with care.

Frequent disrespect towards peers, staff or property may result in child’s dismissal from camp for a day or more.

At the start of each session, all camp rules, the reasons for them, and the consequences are discussed with campers. Our first step in preventing inappropriate behavior is to set clear limits as to what is expected. We attempt to redirect inappropriate behavior. If the problem continues, a **Behavior Form** is sent home and the Parent/Guardian to notify the parents. While it is not our policy to discourage participation because of behavior problems, in cases where there is no marked improvement of behavior, the child may be asked to stay home and/or be removed from the program. A sample Behavior Form is included at end of this handbook.

Behavior Protocol

Basic guidelines

If a child has behaviors that are not adhering to the 4 basic principles: Respect, Responsibility, Safety, and Kindness and staff have provided adequate interventions/strategies to support behavior. After the staff are given 2 warnings he/she will be written up for the behavior on the behavior form.

This is a tool to help us keep track of behaviors, call parents and to give the child an opportunity to change behavior and to be successful. Behavior forms should be completed if the child does not adhere to the commands and expectations. If we feel a child is deemed to be unsafe at camp or has been warned at least two times for their unsafe behavior, we will send a child home.

In the case of any aggressive behavior that could harm a staff member or camper, the child will be **sent home immediately**. A child may miss the following day at camp as a consequence.

If a child is sent home due to behavioral issues at camp, parents must meet with camp staff members prior to the child's readmission to camp. If this becomes a pattern, we will terminate the child from attending camp.

Bullying Policy

Our philosophy, which grows from our mission statement, affirms that each of our campers has the opportunity to experience a summer where they can explore new friendships, develop life skills and discover new talents free of judgment or negativity. We not only maintain a strict policy forbidding bullying, but our staff is trained to recognize incidents of bullying and intervene accordingly.

Discover Camp staff members address all bullying incidents seriously. We encourage our staff to promote open communication within their groups, so that campers feel comfortable letting us know if there are any problems at any point during their camp experience.

As a camp, we believe positive behavior comes from a cooperative effort between campers, parents and staff. While we make every effort to establish communication with parents before taking any major disciplinary steps, it is important

to note that fighting, demonstration of disrespectful behavior, hitting, biting, bullying, harassing and displaying dangerous or destructive behavior are grounds for immediate suspension and possible dismissal from camp. **Refunds are not made for suspensions or dismissals.**

Medication at Camp

If a child needs to take medication which must be dispensed at camp or requires a medication in the event of an emergency (i.e. food allergy, asthma, Epi pen), the child's physician **MUST complete the medication form and submit it to the office a minimum of 3 days before the start of the camp week**. Medication is brought directly to camp and given to the camp supervisor.

Tick Awareness

Children are especially at risk for Lyme disease and other diseases carried by ticks. These diseases can be serious and not always easy to diagnose – so prevention is key. Parents can help minimize exposure and protect their children by bringing playscapes into a sunny area, keeping grass cut short and deer off their property. When hiking, keep on the path, wear long pants, and stay away from rock walls and leaf piles. It's important to check children daily for tiny ticks, which often hide on the body, and remove ticks promptly. Remember to check any indoor-outdoor pets for ticks, which may be brought into the home. For more information contact Ledge Light Health District at 860-448-4883.

Photos at Camp

The leaders take many pictures at camp. We will not post picture on social media or use it publicly without your permission.