

PARENT HANDBOOK



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THE PARENT HANDBOOK

We understand that sending your child to camp is a big decision. For over 60 years, we've been entrusted by parents to take care of their kids and foster their social, physical and spiritual growth in an atmosphere of fun, safety, acceptance and care. This handbook is intended to help parents learn about and become comfortable with Camp Evergreen. We've compiled tons of camp procedure information into one convenient booklet. We've included information that many have specifically asked for, as well as some that you may have never thought to ask for. It's all about you, your kids, and your comfort. Our goal is to make sure you are confident in Camp Evergreen's ability to care for and nurture your child.

If you'd like more information after reading this booklet, or if you'd just like to talk to a real person at Camp Evergreen, feel free to contact us. Phone: 403-638-4230 Email: main@camp-evergreen.com

FAITH PRACTICE

The camp is owned by the Camp Evergreen Mennonite Brethren Ministries, Sundre Society; a non-profit and registered charity. We have roots in the Alberta Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and still maintain close ties requiring over half the board to attend an MB Church.

We share our faith in the redemptive and saving grace of Jesus Christ in all of our camp programs. We aim to do this with humility, grace, and patience, knowing that all of us have fallen short but are still loved by the God who created each of us in His own image. We share who Christ is, our own experiences, and encourage campers to consider a relationship with Jesus. There are two formal times when teaching takes place; both are 15-30 minutes long and are based around a story from the Bible, which we try to relate to everyday life. Teaching is also employed in many of our activities, which help us show how God is real in our lives.

Approximately 60% of our campers do not attend church, a fact that we take into consideration when we plan our programs and camps. We do not pressure anyone into belief, but simply trust that when people see the love of Christ in action, their hearts will be drawn toward Him. Our goal is that every camper leaves camp at the end of the week, knowing that God loves them, has value, and are created for a purpose.

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Camp Evergreen's Beliefs and Practices are found [here](#). Camp Evergreen is affiliated and takes its full [Confession of Faith](#) from the Mennonite Brethren Churches of Alberta.

Mission - Camp Evergreen is a place for all to connect, explore, and grow. We exist to see lives transformed through the power of Jesus.

Vision - Camp Evergreen is a year-round camp invested in creating amazing spiritual, educational, and recreational outdoor experiences for all. We value outreach, community, leadership, stewardship, and partnership in all we do.

Values – Outreach, Community, Leadership, Partnership and Stewardship.

ACCREDITATION

We engage multiple licensing and accreditation agencies, consultants, partners and vendors in areas ranging from medical and emergency procedures to food service and staff training. Camp Evergreen is accredited by the Alberta Camping Association. ACA supports, advances, promotes and accredits camps throughout Alberta. We are members of Christian Camping International.

INVESTMENT IN CAMPERS

Everything we do is for the kids. Everything we do is intentional. We've purposely designed every aspect of camp to accommodate the varying needs of campers of different ages. All of these considerations create a customized experience for each Evergreen Camper. Within our cabin groups, we value relationship and community building. This approach helps our Cabin Leaders identify their campers' developmental needs and challenge them in their growth.

OUR STAFF

All staff and volunteers are hired based on character first and foremost. We look for staff that have a committed relationship with Christ, that are invested in the mission and vision of camp, and that love children!

The staff and volunteers overseeing your children will fall into one of the following categories:

- **Jr. Cabin Leaders** - Typically, high school students who volunteer for anywhere between one week to a full summer at camp.
- **Sr. Cabin Leader** - Typically, individuals who have completed grade 12 and hold at least a two-month position.
- **A-Team Leaders** - Activity and Program leaders who are typically young adults who are four-month staff and specialize in leading activities and wide games throughout the week.
- **Out-trip Leaders** - Staff who lead our out-trip programs. These staff are typically young adults who are four-month staff and are more passionate about sleeping in tents and cooking over an open fire.
- **B-Team Leaders** - Year-round and/or four-month seasonal young adult staff. These staff are usually working on their post-secondary education. If a call home is needed, a B-Team member may be the person connecting with the parents.
- **Managers/Directors** - Full-time, year-round adult staff having high-level authority and oversight at the camp.

HIRING PROCEDURES & PROCESSES

We have a rigorous staff selection process that leads us to the best people. Our interview process covers where applicants are in their spiritual walk, maturity of faith, how to build relationships with the kids, experience working with kids, and overall competencies for the job.

STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING

All staff are interviewed prior to selection and are required to provide references. Those 18+ undergo a Criminal

Record Check and a Vulnerable Sector Search. All staff and volunteers are required to attend a week-long training camp at the start of summer. This training includes:

- Camp Evergreen's Mission, Vision, and Values including the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith which sets out what foundational beliefs we believe as an organization.
- Organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities.
- Child protection policies, procedures, and reporting.
- Managing behavioural challenges and escalation procedures.
- Camp Evergreen's Crisis Management Plan includes job specific operational and safety training.
- Sharing the Gospel with children and how to share their spiritual journey in an appropriate way.
- Working with diverse campers.
- Team building and staff community development.
- Personal spiritual formation and growth.

Our staff are enthusiastic, they love children, and want to provide Godly mentorship throughout the short time they will interact with your child. However, while we train them how to respond to various situations that arise at camp, they do not have the specialized training needed to deal with more serious issues (i.e., they are not "counselors" or therapists).

Activity staff receive training specific to their activity area with an emphasis on safety, proper use of equipment, engaging all campers and effective debriefs. In some high-risk areas, certification by industry associations is required.

CAMPER HEALTH AND SAFETY

MAJOR EMERGENCIES

With regards to emergencies that may occur at Camp Evergreen during your camper's week, Camp Evergreen has a detailed Crisis Management Plan that covers everything from an Unauthorized Person On-Site, Wildfire, or Extreme Weather.

In the event that a "major" emergency occurs, our staff, who are trained in our Crisis Management Plan, react and follow the lead of our Directors. Camp Evergreen is in consistent communication with our local Emergency Services and Mountain View County for evacuation, Lock-Down, or Shelter-in-Place, should the need arise.

EQUIPMENT AND ACTIVITY SAFETY

Each activity area at Camp has trained staff members responsible for leading the specific activity. Our Activities Director oversees all staff training and ensures competency is clearly demonstrated before staff are given approval to independently set up and operate activities. Areas of training include:

- Daily equipment checks and routine maintenance.
- Safe operation of the activity.
- Interacting with and supporting campers as they learn and experience new things.
- Incident response and reporting procedures.

The Activities Director also ensures that routine inspections and maintenance are completed and documented, and that worn, defective, or expired equipment is removed from service.

CHILD PROTECTION

Our child protection policies and procedures are extensive, but in summary - they are intended to keep your child safe from harm while in our care. Key pieces of this policy and procedure are:

- **Background Checks** - All adult staff, volunteers, and guests staying onsite for an extended period during summer camp are required to undergo a thorough criminal record check in the vulnerable sector.
- **Supervision** - All policies and procedures are designed to ensure campers are appropriately supervised and prohibit an individual staff member from being alone with a camper.
- **Staff and Camper Visibility** - Staff and campers are clearly identifiable and guests are personally escorted. Site security measures require visitors to check-in at the office when arriving.

EMERGENCIES AND MEDICAL NEEDS

We have an Emergency Response Plan to handle all reasonably foreseeable emergencies, for example: missing camper, injury or medical emergency, fire, severe weather, aggressive wildlife, chemical spill, or extended power outage. In addition to our ERP:

- Our lead staff and activity areas are connected via radios
- Our staff have CPR/First Aid certification. At least two of our staff members hold a 40hr advanced first aid certification
- The Sundre Hospital is 15 minutes away if further medical assistance is necessary.

MEDICAL NEEDS

In addition to the above, we bring in a volunteer “Medic” whose training goes beyond the standard first aid requirements. These individuals are typically trained as EMR, EMT, Paramedic, LPN, RN, or higher. You can meet the Medic when you drop-off your child. Our Medic(s) are responsible for:

- Storing and administering camper medications (prescriptions and over-the-counter) on a parent provided schedule.
- Dealing with health concerns and minor injuries that arise during the week.
- Administering First Aid when necessary.
- Determining when to escalate an incident to other medical professionals.
- Documenting each medical incident, whether small or large.

For the safety of all campers, all medications belonging to campers and staff staying in cabins with campers (prescription and over the counter) must be turned into the Medic(s) for secure storage. Please leave medications in their original containers and packed separately from other items. Medication should come with a label that includes your child’s full name, instructions for the administration, and a photo of your child. Epi-pens or inhalers are allowed to remain with campers if needed.

- Due to the high amount of medications that are turned in with campers, we would kindly ask that any non-essential vitamins and supplements not be sent with your camper. This helps reduce the amount of medications our Medic(s) administer.

ILLNESS

Camp is a close social environment. Most of the time, this is what makes camp so awesome and fun. This close social environment is also why, upon arrival and *before* you check your camper in, we will ask you if your child has experienced fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or if you’ve found lice a week before camp. If the answer is yes, please inform the office so that we can find you later dates or credit you for a future camp.

We do regularly clean and sanitize our facilities. We do our best to make sure all campers are routinely washing their hands. However, this closeness can mean your child may be exposed to a cold or flu. If your child does get sick, we will do our best to care for their needs, within reason. We will send a child home if their symptoms include:

- Fever.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.

Any combination of symptoms - even if non-serious - that exceeds what our staff can care for or that prevents their continued participation.

If your child is sent home due to illness/sickness, we will credit the time they have missed for a future program, either during the same summer or next year's program.

INJURY

Despite our many safety protocols, injuries can sometimes occur at camp. The most common are: bumps, bruises, minor cuts or abrasions, and strains or sprains. Most of these minor injuries can be dealt with onsite and campers can resume participation. If our staff determine that an injury is more serious, they may:

- Contact the parents to provide information about the injury and/or ask for guidance.
- Take the camper to a suitable medical facility. The closest and most convenient is the hospital in Sundre, approximately 15 minutes away.
- Contact Emergency Medical Services.

HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness or Separation Anxiety is common and does not need to be a negative experience for your child. Generally, we find that the best way to prevent homesickness from happening, or to mitigate its impact, is to keep the child focused on the exciting activities they are participating in and the friendships they are making.

1. Phone calls

- We know you may be curious how your camper is doing, but because of the size of our program, it is administratively difficult for our staff to facilitate calls between campers and home. Further, we find that such phone calls can make homesickness worse rather than better. For these reasons, we strongly discourage phone calls except under special circumstances. If there are any challenges with or concerns about your camper, we will contact you.
- With that said, we will **never** prevent a child from calling home or a parent from speaking with their child. We will, however, often ask them to wait for a more convenient time to make that call. Often, as time passes, and the camper becomes engaged with the camp program, the anxiousness fades and the desire to talk to a parent subsides. If not, we will happily facilitate a call.
- We will warn you "kid-sickness" is a real thing. 😊 Some parents experience an inexplicable yearning to hear from their kids while they're away at camp. We want to encourage you to that "no news, is indeed, good news". Here's what we find helps with kidsickness: Find a friend to talk to, go out and do something with your free time, and if you need to, give us a call to help reassure you.

2. Camper Mail

- We have an email where you can submit "Mail" to your camper daily. We typically deliver the mail once a day around lunch or tuck time. You can attach photos, crosswords, a note to say hi, or jokes. Typically, campers do not respond to this mail unless they specifically ask.
 - Email Camper Mail to: camper@camp-evergreen.com

3. Parent visits

- For security reasons, parent visits are only permitted under special circumstances. They must be prearranged with our Leadership Team. Please do not “drop by” - you will be turned away.

4. Fees

- We do not reimburse fees or missed days of camp when a camper goes home due to homesickness.

DIETARY NEEDS

We offer a wide variety of filling and balanced meals that are served cafeteria style. Each meal your child will get to choose from several food options, and we always cook enough to make sure that there is an opportunity for seconds after everyone has been served (except for dessert).

The table below shows some of our classic menu items, but our kitchen staff are imaginative folk who enjoy thinking up new options that kids love! The actual meals your child has will vary from this list.

Examples of meal options

Meal	Example Main Dishes	Example Side Dishes
Breakfast	Pancakes, waffles, breakfast burrito, eggs	Hashbrowns, oranges, sausages, bacon, fruit salad, cereal, yogurt
Lunch	Sandwiches, chicken fingers, wraps, taco salad, perogies	Salad, sliced veggies, fries, farmer sausage
Supper	Spaghetti & meat sauce, burgers, baked chicken, meatballs	Potatoes, rice, steamed veggies, salad, buns,

If your child has special dietary needs or food allergies and is unable to partake in all or a portion of our standard meals, please tell us ahead of time. Our kitchen staff work hard to make sure everyone has appropriate alternatives available to them (i.e. allergen free, gluten free, vegetarian/vegan, dairy/lactose free).

- However, we are a busy summer camp and are feeding approximately 220 people per meal. We are limited in how we can provide for diets that are unique or require specialized foods that differ than from those diets listed above to meet your child’s needs. In those cases, we may ask you to send pre-cooked meals or foods that we can provide for your child.

NUTS AND PEANUTS

Camp Evergreen is a “Nut Aware” facility. This means that nut and peanut products are prohibited from being included in any source we directly control (i.e. tuck, food the camp serves in the Dining Hall). We also strongly discourage campers and guests from bringing nuts and peanuts on site.

We cannot, however, fully control what others choose to bring to the site. Therefore, we cannot guarantee your child will not be exposed to a nut product while on-site.

INCLUSION

We want every child who comes to camp to feel welcome and part of the action. While your child is at camp, we make sure every camper is given individual attention and is included in the experience. We strive to meet the needs of every camper, whether they be physical, behavioural, dietary, or medical.

If your child has special needs, please detail them when prompted during registration (defined by what your child's school and teacher would consider special needs). This allows us to provide the best experience for your camper.

BEHAVIOUR

Camp is high activity, lots of new relationships and experiences, and routine things like sleeping, food, and washrooms can cause dysregulation, resulting in behavioural challenges in campers. We want Camp to be a safe space where children are free from emotional, verbal, or physical attacks, harassment of any kind, and where all treat each other with respect. This means Camp Evergreen has behavioural expectations for campers and staff that allow us to function securely and fairly as a camp community. When these behavioural expectations are not met, we have what's known as a "three-stage Intervention" that applies to both campers and staff.

To be clear, Camp Evergreen has a zero-tolerance policy for racial slurs, malicious comments intended to harm an individual, and aggressive physical attacks on another person. If any camper engages in any of the aforementioned behaviours, parents will be contacted and the camper will be picked up immediately. No refund or credit is granted for dismissals due to behavioural challenges.

We train our cabin leaders to manage minor disputes and conflicts between campers. Every cabin and out-trip go through a "Camper Commitment" that goes through expected behaviour, inappropriate behaviour, who to talk to if something is happening that should be, and that we all want to work together to have the best week of the summer.

As much as possible, we extend grace and provide opportunities for campers to adjust their behaviour before a greater level of intervention is required. We work directly with the camper(s) to come up with a solution that works for everyone. Typically, this occurs in three stages, but depending on the situation, we may, at our own discretion, escalate directly to Stage 2 or Stage 3:

1. **Conversations** - Our Cabin Leaders and/or Activity Leaders will talk with the camper(s) about the negative behaviours and the impact those behaviours are having. They reiterate expectations as to what is and is not appropriate behaviour. In most cases, minor challenges and frustrations can be solved at this point. We often ask our Head Counsellors, who are the resource staff for the Cabin Leaders, to assist at this stage.
2. **Involvement of Leadership Team** - If the camper(s)' challenging behaviour continues, we will involve a member of our Sr. Leadership Team. They will further talk with the child regarding the challenge or undesired behaviour and outline the consequences of continued non-compliance (i.e. Phoning parents, leaving camp). At this stage:
 - The camper's parents may be contacted and informed of the situation and asked for advice or insight on any history or reason for the behaviour; and
 - Our Directors will be made aware of the situation.
3. **Going Home** - If the camper's behaviour continues, a Director may determine that the camper's behaviour, disturbance or disruption of other campers, refusal to cooperate with camp staff, and/or is creating an unsafe environment that is no longer manageable by our team. If this happens, we will contact

a parent/guardian and request they come and pick up their child early.

- Decisions to send a camper home are final and need to be respected by parents.
- Please note that a camper sent home due to behavioural issues cannot enroll in future camps in the same summer season, but is welcome to come again the following summer. If a camper is sent home due to behavioural challenges, no refund or credit is granted.
- Examples of behaviour that will begin or escalate this process:
 - i. Name-calling, threats, or other abusive language.
 - ii. Crude or inappropriate jokes or comments (i.e. sexual, racial, derogatory, etc...), whether they are directed at an individual or not.
 - iii. Pervasive swearing.
 - iv. Intimidating physical posturing or gestures.
 - v. Initiating unwanted physical contact with another person.
 - vi. Failure to follow staff instructions.
 - vii. Refusal to take responsibility for actions or adjust behaviour when asked.

CAMPERS WITH DIFFERENCES OR SPECIAL NEEDS

We do our very best to integrate children with mild delays into our camp setting; a child who functions well on their own in a school setting may function well at camp. Due to the experience level and lack of specialized training of our staff, it is unlikely that we will be able to accept applications for children functioning *more than* two years behind their peers emotionally or socially. A camper may be sent home early if a Director determines that our staffing model and/or training and program structure are not meeting a child's needs. We would prefer to avoid this so if your child has special needs or differences, a conversation with our Director will help to determine whether camp is the right fit for your child.

We have found that even though a child may be independent at school, camp can be a much more intense environment. The days are longer, little opportunity for quiet or alone time, unfamiliar setting, etc. While our staff are trained to lead a cabin and activities, they don't have the additional training needed to handle specific developmental challenges. So while it is true that every summer we have children with special needs come to Camp Evergreen, we do not consider ourselves a special needs camp.

We have had positive experiences with children with ADD, ADHD, ODD, FAS/FASD, Cerebral Palsy, and high Autism Spectrum. Every child is unique, and our goal is to make sure our campers have a fun and successful week at camp. However, this may mean that we are unable to meet your child's needs in our camp environment.

AIDES

If your child can have a greater chance of succeeding as a camper with an Aid (ie: they currently need a full-time aid in school or require assistance with self-care, showering, behaviour support, or eating), we invite the opportunity to try! Having an aide on-site requires pre-planning to ensure compliance with our child protection plan. Please let us know when you register your child, as we allow Aids to accompany children to our camp free of charge. We love to see children succeed as campers, and it creates a safer environment for them.

REGISTRATION, PROGRAM, & CAMP POLICIES

HOW TO REGISTER

You can access our online registration at <https://weareevergreen.campbrainregistration.com/>
Registration goes live in early January.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We assigned all accommodations by the indicated biological sex on their registration form. Each category (Base Camps, Outtrips, and Developing Leaders) or program sleeps in unique accommodations:

- Base Camps: Large Cabins that surround our outdoor washroom block.
- Outtrips: Roughin' It Camps typically sleep in our tipis that are approximately 0.75km away from the main site. Adventure, Trails Away, and Charge typically sleep in our Outfitter/Wall Tents across the creek.
 - Due to the unpredictability of weather and possible flooding, we may be required to change one of the outtrip sites for safety.
- Developing Leaders sleep in our lodge, rustic cabins, and Mini-Lodge.

For Developing Leader and Outtrip Programs, we do not sort the accommodations beyond placing them by biological sex. Females will have one space (i.e. Lodge, tipi, wall tent) and males will have a separate one of their own. Depending on the size of the sleeping space, a leader may sleep in an adjacent space (i.e. lodge room).

For Base Camp:

- Sorting Campers into Cabins:
 - We sort our cabins by biological sex (male and female) and then by cabinmate requests. After that, we work to sort our cabins by age and then by home location to possibly facilitate connections after camp.
 - If alternate sleeping arrangements are needed, we will do our best to accommodate.
- Requesting a cabinmate:
 - During the registration process, you will have the opportunity to request a cabinmate for your child's week of camp. We know campers want to be with their friends. We will try our utmost to get any requested cabin mates (same biological sex) together in the same cabin. If you haven't requested a cabinmate and would like to, please contact the Camp Office to make these arrangements.
 - Please do not put more than one or two requests as this makes it difficult for our team when they are making up cabins and more likely that your request does not turn out the way you expect. A large group of friends coming together can cause socially challenging moments for the other campers in the cabin.
 - To ensure that your cabinmate request is honoured, please ask the parent/guardian of the other child to also request your child as their cabinmate,
- How many kids are in a cabin?
 - There are eight to ten campers in a cabin with two cabin leaders, the leader-to-camper ratio is 1:5.

CAMP PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY POLICY

To ensure proper supervision of all campers, your child is required to be present for all aspects of the camp program, however, their level of participation can be adjusted based on their needs/preferences. We won't force someone to participate in an activity or event if they don't want to, but they do need to remain at the activity/program location with their cabin.

PRIVACY

To ensure privacy for all campers, we require campers and staff to change in private (i.e. in a private washroom

stall, change room in a cabin, in a sleeping bag, etc...). We also require all campers wear pyjama tops and bottoms to bed.

FAIRNESS

We want each child to have a consistent experience regardless of their family's financial situation. Therefore, all campers are provided opportunities to select items from our "Tuck" shop and are given a camp t-shirt at the end of the week. These things are included in the price of camp. Please do not send money with your camper, they will not need it.

Moose Junction General Store will be open at Check-in and Pick-Up to purchase merch and any "road snacks" you may need for the journey home.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Visa or MasterCard can pay registration fees in full at the time of online registration, or with a Payment Plan.
- A deposit of at least \$75.00 per person is required within 1 business day of online registration in order to hold the camper's spot in his/her camp program.
- The balance of the fees are due no later than four weeks before the start of their registered camp.

If you wish to pay by cheque, money order or e-transfer, payment for the fees amount must be received **within 2 weeks of online registration**. Payment plans are available upon request. Please contact the Camp Office to make these arrangements within 1 business day of registering. Camp fees must be paid in full four weeks before the beginning of their registered camp. Make cheques or money orders payable to Camp Evergreen.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Prior to arrival at camp:

- Refunds will be issued up to 30 days before your camp commences, less a \$75 administration fee. Cancellations under 30 days require a physician's note to receive the full refund, less a \$75 administration fee.

During Camp:

- If we ask a camper to leave due to illness or injury, we will issue a credit toward next year's camp, prorated based on the number of days the camper attended. If space allows, we may be able to transfer the camper to another session later in the same summer. *There is no refund/credit for homesickness even if we determine the camper should go home.*

ILLNESS POLICY

Due to the concern of transmitting communicable diseases to other campers or staff, we are asking parents that if your child is ill with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea that they do not attend camp until they have been symptom-free for at least 48 hours. If your child develops any of these symptoms while at camp, parents will be contacted and they will be sent home until symptoms clear up.

We will make all possible efforts to move your child to a different week or refund your fees, according to our refund policy, if they are unable to attend camp due to illness. Therefore, we please urge you to ensure you do not send your child to camp while ill for the safety of other campers and staff.

TRANSFERRING PROGRAMS

If a camper needs to transfer to a different week or program, we will be glad to move him/her at no charge as space allows.

WAITLIST PROCEDURES

When any of the camps reach their capacity, we will create a wait list. The wait list is created on a first come, first serve basis. You will be contacted when a spot becomes available. If there are no remaining spots for that camp, we encourage you to look at the other sessions that are offered.

CAMPERSHIP AID

It is our philosophy that no camper should be refused access to camp because of the financial circumstances of their family, and we endeavour to honour each request. We do, however, ask for as much financial participation as possible from the family. Requests for Campership Aid can be made during registration by filling out the provided form. We require this form to be completed and your registration to be submitted for us to review your application. We will contact you regarding your acceptance.

HOW TO GET TO CAMP EVERGREEN:

