

Parent Manual



A HISTORY

In 1916, members of the First Congregational Church of Meriden began fellowship retreats to a parcel of land in Lyme, CT owned by a local farmer. Years later, the parcel was purchased by a member of First Church and donated to be utilized as a youth camp. Then, in March of 1954, the church sold Camp Claire for one dollar to Camp Claire, Incorporated.

Since those early years, campers and staff have come to Camp Claire from all over the world. For over eight decades, Camp Claire has forged a countless number of friendships that have been maintained and nourished by people who have been a part of the Camp Claire family. We strive to sustain those friendships by keeping contact with Alumni, and getting them involved in the years following their camp experience. Every year one or two weekends are dedicated to gathering Alumni for reminiscing and collecting thoughts on how to better preserve Camp Claire's experience for all.

Camp Claire is operated by a Board of Directors; a group of volunteers who have demonstrated a love for Camp Claire. Their main task, (among others) is to oversee finances, hire staff and maintain facilities. In the 1960's, Camp Claire became Camp Claire, Inc., a 501 C-3 not for profit summer camp. It continues to provide a quality camping program for children focusing on group cooperation and community building.

REGISTRATION

Camp Claire now accepts all registrations solely online!
We accept registrations on a first come, first serve basis.

A 50% deposit per session you are registering your child for is due at the time of registration. There is a **partially non-refundable** fee of \$100.00 per registration. The balance on your account must be paid no less than three weeks prior to your child's arrival at camp.

Receipt of the confirmation email letter indicates that your child has a place in the session(s) that you have requested. If there is a question about a session or if the session is filled, we will contact you to verify your child's placement.

You can register your child for more than one session, provided that it is age/grade appropriate. Approval from the Director is needed for a child to attend a session that is scheduled for a different age group.

If you have a cell phone number or phone number change, please make those changes with the Director at the time of registration.

All cancellations and changes need to be made in writing and need to be mailed or faxed into the office.

There will be no refunds for early departure once your child has arrived at Camp however, emergencies and illnesses will be examined on a case-by-case basis. The Camp Claire Committee reserves the right to make a decision in these particular instances.

It is important to understand the reasoning behind a policy of non-refund. Because of the limited space during certain sessions, a camper who is registered has been included in the total session number which is crucial to planning for food and programs. In some instances, a camper might have been turned away because a session was filled. If time constraint is an issue in registering, please call ahead to check that space is available however, please note that we will NOT reserve space until a registration, deposit and medical forms are received.

MISCONDUCT

Any camper who engages in illegal drugs, alcohol, abusive language, inappropriate sexual behavior/misconduct, or aggressive/violent behavior will be asked to leave camp, and parents will be contacted immediately. For other issues related to behavior, parent contact will be made and behavioral strategies will be implemented. If, after intervention, the behavior issue is not resolved, the camper will be sent home.

THERE ARE NO REFUNDS IN THESE CASES.

Camp Claire also reserves the right to refuse registrations as a result of a previous season's misconduct.

Parents are expected to set an example of respect. If any parent engages in verbal and/or physical abuse toward staff, the camper will be sent home.

NO REFUND WILL BE AVAILABLE.

RESIDENT CAMP CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT

CHECK-IN: Sunday: 2 PM - 4 PM

CHECK-OUT: Saturday: 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

AT CHECK-IN:

A parking attendant will provide you with a check-in route as you pull in. When you arrive at 2pm you can drive in the drive way, park briefly and unload your vehicle. Staff will be available to help bring your camper's suit cases to their cabin marker on the Volleyball court. Once unpacked, please drive up the access road to the field and park your car in the field. You will then check in with the director at the picnic table in the lower parking area. After checking in with the director and registrar, you will proceed to the nurse's station. Once done with the nurse, staff will be available to escort you and your camper to their cabin.

LUGGAGE

A Rubbermaid tote or a trunk is a great way to bring your clothes to camp.

SWIM TEST

Each camper is required to take a swim test upon arrival at Camp Claire. Our Pool Director will place campers in an appropriate level to accommodate their swimming ability. This helps ensure their safety at camp when participating in programs and classes that include water activities.

DAY CAMP CHECK-IN

- Camp begins daily at 9:00 AM
- You must check-in your camper each day when you arrive.
- Campers will be assigned a cabin and bunk for Rest Period/Siesta.
- Campers should also check in with their counselors.
- Check-out is at 5:00 PM

Parents may register campers for an additional ½ hour (8:30 or 5:30) for an additional \$10.00 per ½ hour. These arrangements must be made with the Director.

We know that on occasion, life happens, and you may be late. If this is the case, please call us to let us know. If this becomes a recurrent issue, we may have to assign staff to be responsible for your child, and there may be an additional cost.

Our camp phone is: 860-434-0368

Parents must notify camp if their child will not be attending on any particular day.

During the session, we may invite Day Campers to participate in an overnight. Permission slips will be provided at check-in.

CLOTHING & SUPPLIES

The following is a list for one week.

You do not need to double everything with the exception of underwear and socks.

PLEASE DO NOT PACK FOOD OR SNACKS

PETS OF ANY KIND ARE PROHIBITED

Sleeping bag/bedding:

You will probably want a sheet to put inside a sleeping bag for warm evenings. A fitted sheet is also recommended even if you have a sleeping bag to cover your mattress.

3 beach towels
2 bath towels 1 face
cloth pillow, 2 pillow
cases toothbrush and
toothpaste soap and
soap dish shampoo
hairbrush and comb
7 shirts
4 pairs shorts 10 pairs of
socks raincoat or poncho
lightweight jacket extra
pair of shoes/sneakers
sandals/water shoes
flashlight/extra batteries
6 pair of underwear
2 pairs of pants
2 sleep wear
1 sweatshirt 2
swimsuits
sunscreen
insect
repellant
laundry bag
optional: camera, costume, hats

LAUNDRY

As we do not have facilities to do laundry, please send your child with adequate clothing for the duration of his/her stay. Extra clothing may be mailed or delivered to camp on change over weekends.

BUNKING ASSIGNMENTS

One of the goals at Camp Claire is to create a loving community which is inclusive of all. Some campers are new and some have been coming for years. We encourage making new friends as part of this experience of community.

We limit a bunking request to one person, recognizing that for some newcomers, it will mean comfort in a new situation. We will try to honor a request, but cannot guarantee it can be filled.

Also, because we are a small community, we have dealt with past issues of campers feeling left out. Cliques can often be a form of segregation, and we try as best we can to discourage an atmosphere of negative behavior. Consequently, we reserve the right to move campers if we feel a serious problem has arisen.

REST PERIOD

Each day after lunch, campers are given some personal time to sleep, read, write letters, draw, or converse quietly with their new friends. This time of day is especially important to small children who may exert high levels of energy during the day.

MEDICAL FORMS AND ISSUES

By law, we cannot admit your child unless we have a current health form signed by a physician which includes a full immunization record.

All prescriptions are mandated by law to be properly labeled in their original containers with only the number of pills needed for the length of the session. If you are sending over-the-counter medications for your child, they must be clearly marked, and given to the camp nurse upon arrival at Check-In.

All forms of medication, including over-the-counter drugs must be noted on the health form. If you have a question about a particular medication, please consult the camp nurse.

Please remember to list all emergency contacts and all allergies.

If we need to seek medical care for a pre-existing medical condition, the visit must be covered by the parent's medical plan.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency we will follow the following protocols:

- If the emergency does not require transportation in an ambulance, the parent/guardian will be contacted and the parent will take the child to the hospital or their primary physician.
- If the emergency requires transportation in an ambulance, then one of the camp staff will accompany the child in the ambulance and the director will contact the parents/guardians. The parent or emergency contact person will be expected to meet the ambulance at the hospital as soon as possible.

In all circumstances, the child's health insurance is used as the primary insurance.

PROGRAMS & CLASSES

Daily classes (such as Arts & Crafts, Sports, Kayaking, etc.) are offered to campers as well as other creative classes (such as puppetry, theater, photography, etc.) which our staff may be trained in. Campers experience wonderful ingenuity, while learning a new craft.

Swimming lessons are also presented to campers to teach those who either have little or no swimming experience, or to those who want to refine the skills they already possess. Our Pool Director is supported by a team of lifeguards who oversee and help guide campers in their swimming abilities.

Theme-oriented programs are presented which often involve our staff of counselors leading campers in memorable activities. Programs such as: Carnival Day, Sock Hop, and Spook Night are some classic examples.

OUTINGS & OVERNIGHTS

We only take day trips, canoeing along the Connecticut River. The C.I.T's and L.I.T.'s will also be given the option of spending an overnight on Seldon's Island. During our final 2 week session, older campers are occasionally offered the opportunity to spend an overnight on Seldon's Island. Parents will be informed if this occurs.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Many photographs are taken during the week, including an all camp picture and individual cabin photos. A link will be provided to parents at the time of check-in where all photographs can be viewed.

CARE PACKAGES

We do allow care-packages to be mailed to camp, however be creative in what you send. Campers from past years can attest to the number of skunks and raccoons roaming at night in search of food. Since we would like to take every measure to eliminate the risk of wild animals entering the cabins, **we request that food NOT be sent to campers.**

VESPERS

Vespers is a time when we gather as a community and reflect on the day's memories, thoughts, and learning experiences. Some may consist of skits, songs, stories, and poems which are conducted by both staff and campers.

DIRECTIONS

From I-95

Exit 70

Follow CT 156 West (approx. 4.5 mi)

Take the FIRST LEFT after the Lyme Volunteer Fire Department

Then take a LEFT onto Cove Rd.

Take a RIGHT at top of the hill and

Welcome To Camp Claire!

Our summer season address is:

15 Oakland Ave.

Lyme, CT 06371

Phone: 860-434-0368

ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICY OF CAMP CLAIRE, INC., LYME, CT

You have entrusted your child's care to the staff of Camp Claire. We are committed to providing the best and most appropriate learning experiences possible for your child. Occasionally, there are factors in a child's appearance and behavior that lead to suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Connecticut law requires that all childcare professionals report suspected abuse or neglect to the authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and that the family be helped.

Our policy supports Connecticut laws in this regard and requires that all staff report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families' Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. At all times, the intent is to protect children from harm and to provide services to strengthen families.

All parents are required to read and sign the Abuse and Neglect form during the registration process online.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label all clothing, towels, and personal items with the child's name.

Please, **NO initials!** Unclaimed clothing will be held until the end of the season. Items will be washed and donated to shelters or other groups in need. Please call as soon as an item is discovered missing and we will do our best to locate it. Camp Claire is not responsible for any clothing items lost, stolen, or damaged.

VALUABLES

Do not bring valuables to Camp! Camp Claire is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

CAMP STORE

The camp store will be open on check-in and check-out days for your family to purchase a variety of Camp Claire themed clothing and accessories such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts and hats. **Please, do not send any cash!**

CALLING HOME

We discourage calling home during the first few days at camp to help with issues of homesickness. Any telephone calls made by campers must be made under the supervision of the Director or Assistant Director. Camp Claire does not allow campers to have cell phones in their possession during their stay. This is a liability issue and is necessary for the safety of our campers. **If a child is found with a cell phone they will be sent home with no refund.**

In respect to Camp Claire's environmental surroundings, no camper cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices are permitted.

MAIL

Mail is distributed each day (with the exception of Sundays). If you feel that your child may become homesick, please do not mail more than one letter each day. It is helpful in these instances that the following phrases **NOT** be used:

- "I miss you s-o-o much!"
- "I hope you aren't homesick"
- "I feel sad that you are away from home"
- "I cried when I saw your empty room"
- "The dog/cat misses you"

Emphasize what fun things you imagine must be happening at camp. Encourage your child with questions asking them to write home about their favorite things or new friends. Draw pictures, send cartoons.

If you have any questions about news or world events that might impact your child while at camp, please call and speak with the Director.

Helpful tips for writing home: Pre-address and pre-stamp postcards and envelopes. Pack paper, pencils, pens, crayons. Enclose favorite magazines, comic books, or other interesting publications which may help illustrate their experience at camp. Campers will have time during Rest Period to write home.

SPECIAL NEEDS

It is our mission to provide each camper with the environment that will nurture them and allow them to share in the riches of their gifts, and the gifts of others. This builds a wonderfully supportive community celebrating diversity. We have staff trained in many different areas, hoping to ensure a positive experience for all.

We encourage parent input to make sure that the programs and facilities meet the needs of your child. Camp Claire is a small camp in a beautiful location. Many of its buildings and locations of buildings were fixed years ago. We do our best, but also acknowledge that steep hills and roots do limit some campers.

If your child has a physical, mental, developmental, or dietary disability that requires special support, please contact the Director prior to registration. We will make every reasonable effort to meet your child's needs.

It is also important to let the Director know of any events in your child's life which may affect his/her stay away from home. Also important, please notify us if your child has had a recent change in any medications. This information can only help us in providing a supportive staff. We have dealt with a number of family and life issues. Each is treated with respect and confidentiality.

HOMESICKNESS

At times, homesickness is a part of camp life and not something to panic about.

We know from our past experience that not all campers will use the words "I'm homesick". Sometimes it manifests itself as misbehavior or a camper withdrawing to the outskirts of activities. For most campers, the times of day which are most difficult are Rest Period/ Siesta, bedtime, and occasionally in the morning before the day starts.

Counselors have been trained in opening a dialogue with campers and to refer to the Director, Assistant Director or Nurse when extra support is needed. We have been so proud of the staff in past years in their patience and empathy. We let the campers know that all of the staff misses their families too. Counselors are directed to communicate what happens each day so most fears can be alleviated if campers know what to expect.

The issue for parents to address in the case of homesickness (since many will experience it) is not to deny it. What most children need to develop are "coping skills" which are necessary in the growth of independence. Given time and patience (not panic!), each child can be helped to identify what they can do for themselves when feelings of homesickness arise.

PARENT / GUARDIAN VISITS

Camping fosters a certain level of independence for each child. Visits from parents can disturb the flow of programs and alter their experience. Approval from the Director must be arranged to prevent possible distractions (both for your child and the other children). Therefore, we ask that you first contact us if you wish to visit Camp Claire during your child's stay. Pre-Season visits or meetings may be arranged by calling our home office.

COUNSELORS

We have worked very hard to hire a staff that reflects our mission and have the campers as their main focus. Our senior counselors are 18 and older. Many are in the field of education. Junior counselors are 16 or 17 years of age, and are under the mentorship of the senior staff. Each cabin is staffed with a senior and junior counselor. There is always a counselor in the cabin at night with the campers. We rotate days and evenings off, mindful of keeping an equal ratio of senior and junior staff.

COUNSELOR-IN-TRAINING /LEADER-IN-TRAINING

Camp Claire offers Counselor-In-Training and Leader-In-Training programs as an excellent learning opportunity for 14-16 year olds. Both groups are involved in all aspects of camp and are encouraged to bring their enthusiastic, creative spirit to Camp Claire. Quality applicants should have previous leadership experience, have worked with children, and be of sound moral character. CIT and LIT campers go home on Saturdays between sessions.

Program Descriptions:

LITs: (14-15 yr. olds) attend three weeks of camp. LIT campers go home on Saturdays between sessions. This program is a general introduction to camp counseling; focusing on team building and developing the skills necessary to be a camp counselor.

CITs: (15-16 yr. olds) attend 4 weeks of camp with the possibility of being asked back for the final 3 weeks of camp. CIT campers go home on Saturdays between sessions. The CIT's will also learn team building, but the focus is on program development. They will become certified in Lifesaving, CPR and First Aid. CIT's learn more about the needs of campers of various ages and the responsibilities of the camp counselor.