



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CAMP CHRISTINA PARENT HANDBOOK SUMMER 2024



OLD COLONY YMCA—STOUGHTON BRANCH
445 Central Street, Stoughton MA
508.958.3739 | ischneider@oldcolonymca.org
WWW.OLDCOLONYYMCA.ORG

WELCOME, FROM THE CAMP DIRECTOR!

ENSURE A BRIGHTER FUTURE

It is our goal at Camp Christina to provide the building blocks necessary for child development. We hire summer camp counselors who we believe will be positive role models and provide your child with the tools necessary to develop friendships and confidence, set boundaries, and feel empowered. We ensure your children are in a safe community where their best interests are our #1 priority. It is our objective to provide a creative learning environment through our youth programs and activities. to engage, motivate, and boost self-esteem, and to light your child's individual and unique spark.

We are dedicated to producing a great camp with exceptional role models so you and your child can rest assured that you picked the right place for your summer experience. Those are the experiences and memories that last a lifetime... We are sure you will agree that Camp Christina is the perfect destination for your child and family! The summer camp staff and I are excited to meet your camper! See you all very soon!

Sincerely,
Isabel Schneider, Camp Director

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WELCOME!

Welcome to Old Colony YMCA Camp Christina, where we are for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We are delighted to offer a summer of fun, friendships, exploration, and discovery for children and teens. This handbook is designed to present our policies, procedures, overview of camp, arrival/departure information, important reminders, and communication options.

Camp Christina is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and local Board of Health. Parents may request copies of our background check policies, health care policies, and discipline policies as well as procedure for filing grievances.

CAMP CONTACT INFORMATION

FOR EMERGENCIES OR REPORTING ABSENCES

Camp Office | 508.958.3739

Camp Director

Isabel Schneider, ischneider@oldcolonyymca.org | 781-341-2016 x 289

Senior School Age Director

Jess Edlund, jedlund@oldcolonyymca.org | 508-816-6900

Executive Director

Ellen Greene, egreene@oldcolonyymca.org | 781-341-2016 x 262

Camp Nurse

774-480-4607 | Available by phone June 20th—August 25th Only

*Please note: During the camp day, camp leadership staff are not always available to take your call; however, all messages will be answered in a timely manner.

TUITION / REFUND POLICY

- \$60 registration deposit per week per child. This fee goes towards tuition, and is non-refundable.
- Payments must be paid in full upon registration, or auto-charge payments must be set up. **Tuition must be paid in full prior to your child attending camp.**
- Tuition refund may be awarded for medical reasons (doctors note required) or relocation of family with proper documentation with director approval. A formal request for refund must be made in writing.

CAMP OVERVIEW

STAFF RATIOS

Staff Ratios —Camper to Staff ratio is 1:10 for campers ages 7 and up. Campers age 4-6 will be in ratios of 1:5. We do not have the capability to support campers who need one to one supervision.

SWIM TIME and LESSONS

While at Camp Christina, your child will be participating in water fun, water safety, and swim lessons. This will be the time for the children to cool down throughout their camp days and learn more about being safe in the water! Campers who do not pass our swim test will spend half of their swim time in free swim, and half of their swim time in swim lessons.

CAMP LUNCH

Utilize our free lunch program or pack your camper with a lunch! All provided lunches are held to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. We cannot refrigerate your child's lunch, please pack your lunch in a cooler. We also can not heat up your child's lunch. All lunches will be stored in the shade. **WE ARE NOT A PEANUT-FREE CAMP!** If your child has a peanut allergy, please write it on your medical forms. All counselors will be notified and will make sure your child will not be near other children consuming peanut products.

Please provide a variety of snacks for your child. It is a very busy, active day, and lunch alone will not suffice.

CHILD SAFETY—WORKING TOGETHER

Everyone shares a responsibility to help keep children safe, ensure their rights are protected and that their needs are met. The safety and wellbeing of the children and youth in our care is our primary concern. Old Colony YMCA has zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior involving children, and we take multiple steps to prevent child sexual abuse within our organization.

STAY IN THE LOOP

- Be sure to stay up to date by checking your emails for our weekly camp updates!
- This year we'll be relying on ClassDojo to communicate with our families! Stay tuned for more information from our Camp Christina team on connecting to ClassDojo!

OFF HOURS CONTACT BETWEEN STAFF AND CAMPERS

The YMCA prohibits staff members from babysitting for, caring for, providing instruction to, or engaging in a social relationship outside of approved YMCA activities with children (other than family) who participate in YMCA programs or class activities. This policy is designed for the protection of all involved - children, staff members, parents, and the YMCA. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to talk to with the camp director.

CAMP OPTIONS FOR 2024

FUNDAMENTAL DAY CAMP (grades PreK-7th)

Perfect for our younger age groups, day camp packs in lots of opportunities to make friends, develop strong character, and have fun! Full week option only.

Activities include:

- **Pool** to splash around with your friends
- An **arts & crafts** space to invoke creativity
- An **archery range** to enhance your skills and accuracy
- A **Ropes Course** to build teamwork and confidence
- A **sports program** to release your energy
- A **science program** to experiment the unknown
- **Camp spirit** that includes a variety of theme days—visit our website for theme calendar!

SO MANY OPTIONS
ARE AVAILABLE! HELP
YOUR CHILD

LEARN
DEVELOP
ACHIEVE



2-WEEK Leader-in-training OPTION (Grades 8-9)

Leaders in training will spend some time during the week participating in camp activities (with a focus on teambuilding), and some time learning leadership skills, supporting camp activities, and working with the counselors in training.

4-WEEK Counselor-in-training OPTION (Grade 10)

Counselors in training (CITs) will have the opportunity to work with our Counselors as mentors while engaging with our campers in a hands on learning environment! CITs will gain additional experience through team building, asset development, service learning projects, and mock interviews. They will also be exposed to various trainings from some of our best YMCA leadership staff!

A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP CHRISTINA (SAMPLE SCHEDULE)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 8:00-9:00am | Extended AM Care (Optional, Additional Cost) |
| 8:50 -9:15am | Parent Drop Off and Bus Arrival |
| 9:15-9:30am | Morning Inspiration |
| 9:30-9:45am | Group circle reflection time |
| 9:45-10:30am | Archery |
| 10:45-11:30am | Swimming - free swim and lessons |
| 11:45am-12:30pm | Arts and Crafts |
| 12:45-1:30pm | Lunch |
| 1:45-2:30pm | Ropes Course |
| 2:45-3:30pm | Nature |
| 3:30-3:45pm | Group Reflection Time |
| 3:50-4:00pm | Parent Pick Up and Bus Dismissal |
| 4:00-5:00pm | Extended PM Care (Optional, Additional Cost) |

PREPARING FOR CAMP

CLOTHING

Plan on dressing your camper in comfortable clothes. Be sure the camper is familiar with personal items and can identify them in the event of a loss. Campers **MUST** wear closed-toe shoes that will provide some support and tread (sneakers work best). All clothing should be appropriate for outdoor play. We recommend sending them in clothes that are **OK** to get dirty, as our fun activities sometimes end with a lot of mess! All campers should bring a swimsuit and towel every day.

Label everything with your camper's name, including swim suits, towels, lunch boxes, etc.

BACKPACKS

Backpacks are good for transporting items to and from camp. Please label the backpack with your camper's name! Campers have a designated area to leave their backpack during the day. Backpacks with wheels are often more of a hindrance than a convenience, as they are hard to wheel over the grass, wood chips, and terrain.

LUNCH & SNACKS

Utilize our lunch program or pack your camper with a lunch! Lunches will be left at their group's meeting area. All campers should bring a refillable water bottle as we have water stations available to our campers at all times. There is no refrigeration available, but freezing a water bottle makes a great ice pack and a refreshing afternoon drink! We also **can not** microwave lunches, or pick up food from the café inside for campers. Pack lots of snacks for the busy day!

SUNSCREEN

We ask that you apply sunscreen to your child before you drop them off at camp each morning, and that you provide them with sunscreen to be kept in their backpacks. Sunscreen should also be labeled with your camper's name. Counselors will have campers reapply sunscreen multiple times throughout the day.

BUGSPRAY

We ask that you provide your child with bug spray to be kept in their backpacks. Items should be labeled with your camper's name. Counselors will have campers reapply multiple times throughout the day and depending on the activities they are participating in.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Camp is a natural setting to retreat from the amenities of electronic technology and to discover self-potential, group dynamics, friendships and nature. Cell phones, iPad/tablets, kindles, Nintendo DS/DSI, MP3 players, iPod, Pokémon or other trading cards, toys, etc. do not fit into the camp setting. Please do not send any valuable or meaningful items to camp with your child; leave these items at home. If we find campers using these items, we will hold them in the office until pickup

LOST & FOUND NOTICE

All lost & found items can be claimed at pick up and drop off. We strongly recommend labeling all camper items. Reminder: Campers need to leave their personal belongings and electronics at home. They are **NOT PERMITTED** at camp. **The Y and our staff will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronics or other items.**

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Up to date physical and immunization reports must be on file **BEFORE** the child attends his/her first day of camp! Children will be unable to attend camp if these reports are not on file. HEALTH FORMS: All required health forms must be completed in the registration packet. In accordance with state regulations, no child will be permitted to be at camp without all required documentation completed.

PHOTO NOTICE

The following photo release is contained in the camp application you have filled out for your camper(s). "It is understood and agreed that Old Colony Y reserves the right to take and utilize pictures, likenesses, videos, and testimonials of participants for promotional purposes including, but not limited to, reports, publications, brochures, emails, our website and other instances of online presence in perpetuity." If for any reason you do not want your child photographed, please be sure that you have written **"DO NOT PHOTO"** on the application.

RAINY DAYS and EXTREME HEAT

Rain Days: We ask parents to plan ahead as indoor space is limited. When inclement weather hits, our campers will be asked to move indoors and stay in one specific area of the building if necessary.

In the case of extreme heat, we utilize all shaded areas, implement extra swim/water activities, and we utilize indoors spaces to move some activities inside with A/C. We do request that you prepare your camper with clothes/gear for all weather. Camp leadership staff will make decisions during inclement weather to ensure safety for all campers.

MEDICAL CONCERNS

Care plan for Mildly Ill Campers

When a camper feels ill, the responsible counselor will remove the child from activities to determine whether the child is over-heated or over-tired. If after a period of time, the child still feels ill, the responsible counselor will take him/her to the nurse's station. After discussion and examination the camp nurse will determine if the child should be separated and lie down for a while, or if the parent should be called to pick up the child. The child who is not sent home will remain in the nurse's station until recovered to a point where he/she can rejoin regular camp activities.

Plan For Administering Medication

1. When a camper needs either prescription or non-prescription medication administered during camp time, the parent will fill out and sign the authorization to administered medication to a camper form. This form will be given to Camp Director or Nurse, along with the medication in its original container bearing the pharmacy label (showing prescription number, date filled and prescriber's name, name of medication, directions for use and patient's name). In the case of non-prescribed medication, the parent will write out and sign detailed instructions for dosages.
2. The camper's counselor will take the instructions and medications to the camp nurse, who will lock the medication in the storage cabinet (or put in refrigerator, as is appropriate) and log in the information on the child's daily log for medication administration.
3. When it is time for administration of the medication, the child's counselor will take him/her to the nurse's station to receive the medication from the camp nurse, who will log in each day's administration on an individual Daily Log of Medication Administration Form.
4. When no longer needed or at the end of camp, medications will be returned to the parents via the counselor or will be destroyed (parents will indicate in their written instructions which they prefer).

We do recognize that inhalers and epi-pens may need to travel around camp with the camper. If this is the case, our nurse will work with parents on determining the best plan for storage/travel of the medication. Please feel free to contact our nurse with your concerns.

Plan of Emergency Care

In the event that a camper requires immediate emergency care a camp counselor, camp nurse, or camp director will begin EAP by dialing 911.

Campers will be brought to the nearest available hospital. Most emergency will be transported to: **Good Samaritan Medical Hospital** at 235 N Pearl St, Brockton, MA 02301. Phone: 508-427-3000

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance is taken at the beginning of every day. If a child shows up late, you will need to bring them to the office to check in. If your child will be missing a day, please call or email the camp leadership.

ATTENTION PARENTS

ALL persons **INCLUDING PARENTS** picking up campers must have a **PICTURE ID and be listed as authorized on your registration form.** This is necessary to maintain the highest of safety standards.

CAMP ARRIVAL INFO

Extended AM Care 8:00-9:00am AND Parent Drop Off 8:50 - 9:00am

Please follow the route as designated by your camp team. A camp staff will escort your child to his or her group. All drop off will be rolling.

Bus

Please arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to your buses scheduled departure. A staff member will meet you at a designated area to check your camper in. Buses will arrive at camp at 9am and all campers will be escorted to their groups to be checked in. *All bus times are approximate and stop locations are subject to change.

Late Drop Offs

All late drop offs **MUST CALL** the camp office (508-958-3739) and bring your camper to the camp office to check in. It is crucial to make every effort to follow your drop off time.

EARLY DISMISSAL

- No child may leave the camp grounds for early dismissal without his/her parent or guardian signing him/her out in front of the camp with a leadership staff present.
- All early dismissals **MUST CALL** the camp office to be checking in and a staff member will meet you at a designated area with the camper(s).
- If a child is to be released early, we must be informed in writing or by phone call.
- **DUE TO DISMISSAL PROCEDURES: NO CAMPER WILL BE DISMISSED BETWEEN 3:00-3:45PM**

CAMP DEPARTURE INFO

Traditional Camp Pick Up—3:50-4:00pm AND Extended PM Care 4:00-5:00pm

Parent pick up will resemble parent drop off as it will be a rolling pick up procedure. Parents will enter the parking lot at Camp Christina with an ID ready. Parents will proceed to same location as drop off to sign out camper. Once ID is confirmed, camper will be escorted to the car by a YMCA camp staff.

Bus Pick up:

An authorized person must be present at the bus stop with an ID. If you are not present for the camper, he/she will be brought back to camp for dismissal. *All bus times are approximate and stop locations are subject to change.

Late Pick Ups

Late pick ups will not be permitted at camp. All campers must be picked up by 4:00 pm (or 5:00 pm if registered for Extended PM care). Any late pick ups will be charged an additional \$1.00 per minute. Inability to consistently pick up camper on time will result in termination of care.

WALKERS

A waiver must be signed to allow your child to walk or bike to and from camp or a bus stop with approval from the Camp Director. Child must be 12 years of age or older.

BUS TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

Camp Christina Stoughton bus requirements are as follows:

- One (1) bus for services Monday—Friday, June 24—August 16, 2024
- Buses must arrive and depart all site at times specified. No leaving early.
- Bus drivers will adhere to all YMCA expectations for customer service.
- After the route is completed, buses will return camper to camp if no parent/guardian is present at drop-off

2024 BUS SCHEDULE

Blue Bus - Randolph/Canton (Please note, actual bus color is yellow)

| # | Stop Location | Stop Address | AM | PM |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------|
| 1 | Randolph High School | 70 Memorial Parkway, Randolph | 8:00 | 5:05 |
| 2 | Randolph Middle School | 225 High Street, Randolph | 8:10 | 4:50 |
| 3 | Hansen Elementary (Canton) | 25 Pecunit Street, Canton | 8:20 | 4:40 |
| 4 | Canton High School | 900 Washington Street, Canton | 8:25 | 4:30 |
| 5 | Flowers by Ami (Cobbs Corner) | 1 Washington Street, Canton | 8:30 | 4:25 |
| # | Camp Christina | 445 Central Street, Stoughton | 8:50 | 4:10 |

Please arrive at the bus stop **at least 10 minutes prior** to your buses' scheduled arrival or departure time. It is important to have all parents and campers at the bus stop to ensure an efficient bus route. Please note that a child may not be left alone while waiting for the bus. A parent or guardian must be with the child to ensure proper safety. If your child is a "walker" and will be arriving and departing the stop alone, please be aware that you take full responsibility for their safety. The Old Colony YMCA is not responsible for the children until they are safely on the bus or signed out at the end of the day.

The opportunity to ride on the camp bus is a privilege that can be revoked if behavior issues occur on the bus. We expect campers to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, which includes:

- No yelling on the bus
- No destruction of the bus or personal property
- No food or beverage consumption while on the bus
- Remaining seated at all times

Please make sure you discuss proper bus behavior with your camper prior to the start of camp to ensure a safe and successful camp season. Unruly behavior, destruction of bus or personal property, or endangering the safety of the bus riders may result in exclusion of that person from using the bus.

ASSET DEVELOPMENT AT CAMP CHRISTINA

Camping experiences hold tremendous opportunities to build developmental assets. They take young people away from their everyday environment and create an asset-rich experience for the campers, linking them with caring adults and older youth, engaging them in stimulating, challenging activities, developing leadership skills, and cultivating positive peer relationships. Though individual camper experiences varied, a major study of camps by the **American Camping Association** found that overall, children, parents, and camp staff all reported improvements in positive identity, social skills, physical and thinking skills, and positive values and spirituality.

CAMP CHRISTINA IS DEDICATED TO INTEGRATE ASSET DEVELOPMENT THIS SUMMER BY

- Creating ways for young people to **build meaningful relationships** with peers
- Being clear about **boundaries and expectations**. At camp, we create a list of rules and expectations and enable the campers to offer their ideas.
- **Empowering young people by giving them choices** during activities. For example, if you have a craft activity, having two or three possible outcomes that use the same materials.
- **Integrating responsibility** and a service project into your camp activities. We ask that the children pick up after themselves, especially after lunch time. We also have the CIT group help throughout camp.
- Expecting camp counselors to be **role models**. We train them about this critical aspect of their role and how important it is for them to exhibit positive behaviors to campers.
- Engaging young people in **leadership** roles in our camp, particularly the CIT program. Veteran campers can be mentors for first-time campers.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING AT THE STOUGHTON Y ALL YEAR!

Y FAMILY NIGHTS (June 19th, July 13th, July 27th, August 10th , from 5:30-7:30)

Serving families has always been at the heart of the Y. We are a place they can find respite from social, economic and educational challenges, and learn how to overcome them. We desire for every family to build stronger bonds, achieve a greater work/life balance, and become more engaged within the community.

Throughout the summer we will have family nights for the whole family to experience camp!

YMCA MEMBERSHIPS Save you money

We hope that you will consider joining us as a member of the YMCA. If you are interested in becoming a member and benefiting from our savings on program rates, please contact our Membership Experience team for more information. You can still join ongoing monthly membership to get the reduced member camp fee!

Senior Program Director for Membership:

Nelson Fernandez

Email: Ncruzfernandez@oldcolonyymca.org

Phone: 781-341-2016 x 236

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Part of healthy youth development includes learning how to get along with others, managing conflicts, and working together as a team. Camp provides the ideal setting for these skills to develop. All types of youth come to Y camp. Some are excited to be there and adapt readily to the activities and excitement of the day, but other youth may be nervous or anxious about the camp experience. When youth are struggling in the camp setting, we want to do all that we can to help them have a positive experience.

Our philosophy of behavior management is that children do not want to act out or lose control. In fact, challenging behaviors sometimes occur when a youth needs extra attention, does not feel safe, or needs help managing overwhelming feelings. Our goal is to work with your child to provide them with the support they need to make a more positive adjustment to camp.

In support of this goal, we have a clinician and several behavior support specialists on staff who work in conjunction with the counselors to support all campers through difficult moments through making behavior plans, communicating with parents, and our restorative justice practices.

NOTE: Emergency and safety concerns are handled immediately. This includes: runaways, fights, assaults, fire setting, serious threat of violence or suicide.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

Restorative Justice is a system of formal and informal processes that build and sustain a culture of kindness, respect, responsibility and justice. This is achieved through emphasizing the importance of trusting relationships as central to building community and repairing relationships when harm has occurred.

Restorative Justice brings persons harmed by misbehavior and the person who harmed them, along with affected family and community members, together in dialogue that aims to build understanding, explore how the actions has impacted those involved, including the community, and develop agreements for what will be done to make things right. The result: truly meaningful justice for all involved.

At Camp:

When a campers experience conflict, a counselor will bring the two campers together to mediate a circle discussion. We ask all parties involved:

- What happened?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What do you need moving forward?

This approach enhances accountability for one's actions, and will encourage campers to engage in collaborative problem-solving. It builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships and focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking.

We are using the restorative justice framework to help heal harm, mitigate future harm, and build community.

CAMP SAFETY PLAN

Our goal is to make sure camp is a safe place for all campers and staff.

In support of this goal, we ask all campers to follow our camp safety expectations. Each week counselors review our 'R.E.A.C.H. for the stars' expectations with campers, outlined below.

Please review these with your child before camp starts as well.

VALUES PLEDGE

- I will be **responsible** for my everyday duties, the things I use, and the areas I use.
- I will be a caring and **empathetic** person to those who participate in the YMCA Program and the people in the YMCA building.
- I will be respectful of other people's feelings, property and body, and **accept** others for who they are.
- I will work towards making the camp **community** a safe place for all, and be respectful of the YMCA expectations.
- I will be **honest** when I make mistakes and honest when I have not done what I was responsible for.

R.E.A.C.H for the Stars



At camp, campers are expected to:

- Use appropriate language at all times (which does not include swear words or negative remarks to others)
- Keep their hands to themselves (not hit, kick, bite, or otherwise hurt other campers/staff)
- Ask permission before leaving a program area (campers are not to leave any area without adult supervision).
- Remain with their assigned group at least 75% of the time they are at camp (not need one on one support the majority of the day)

Not abiding by these expectations may result in suspension and/or removal from the program, for the safety of other campers and staff.

- **Hitting, fighting, or inappropriately touching another camper will result in the camper immediately being sent home for the day**, and camp staff will set up a meeting with caregivers to discuss next steps
- All other incidents will be handled as follows
 - ⇒ 1st incident: verbal warning
 - ⇒ 2nd incident: written warning, parents notified
 - ⇒ 3rd incident: camper sent home or suspended for 1-3 days, re-entry meeting
 - ⇒ More than 3 incidents may result in camper dismissal from the program

YMCA staff and management reserve the right to terminate a child from the day camp program if the child's behavior is disruptive to the program and/or compromises the safety of themselves, other children, and/or staff. Termination will extend to the after-school program and camp next summer.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

We hope to work in partnership with you to help ensure that your child has a positive camp experience. There are several things you can do to help in this process:

Talk to your child about the camp experience. Ask them to describe the activities. Ask who their friends are and what their counselor is like. While children often respond to the question, “What did you do at camp today?” with “Nothing,” we assure you that a lot of things happen at camp. Sometimes campers are too tired after the camp day, but they may be talkative on the morning ride or waiting for the bus.

Reassure your child. Children get anxious just like adults. They may worry about disappointing you. They may wish they could stay at home during the summer. They may have fears about swimming or bugs or not making friends at camp. These are all normal worries, and we want to work together with you to help them overcome some of their fears during the summer. You can encourage them to try new things and be open to new experiences.

Your child may be exposed to behaviors that the child has not seen or experienced before. Our camps are very diverse. We have children with developmental disabilities and from all walks of life. We have children attend camp who may have different behavioral needs or who have experienced traumatic life events. For the most part, this exposure is part of growing up and can be a positive experience as children learn how to be in community with all types of people. But it is not good if your child is scared or doesn't feel safe. We encourage you to contact us and come in to speak with us about the situation that may be troubling your child.

Give your camper the skills they need to succeed. Campers of all ages are working to develop interpersonal skills, and conflicts between campers are rarely one-sided. At camp, we work with campers to help them express their emotions and needs clearly, regulate their own emotions when they feel upset, and work with other campers to solve problems. It is helpful when these skills are reinforced at home, so campers can be the most successful at camp!

Help us problem solve. When campers have difficulty with some of these skills, or if they aren't having as much fun at camp, we want to work with you as caregivers to help develop supports and a plan to help them succeed. If your child is having difficulties, it may be hard for them to tell you or to give you reasons why. Specific questions may be helpful. Some things you might wish to ask include: “what feels hard about going to camp? Is there someone at camp you can talk to about your worries or difficulties? What would you change to make things better?” we want to work with you to help your child have a positive experience!

Understand your child may not see everything. When we have conversations with campers about their behavior, or meet with their caregivers, we do not do so in front of the group. We avoid shaming or embarrassing campers. So your camper may not know the steps that are being taken to make behavior plans, set consequences, or support other campers in making positive choices. Please know that we are always taking steps to make sure camp is safe for all.

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can infect the tissue (the “meninges”) that surrounds the brain and spinal cord and cause meningitis, or they may infect the blood or other organs of the body. Symptoms of meningococcal disease may appear suddenly. Fever, severe and constant headache, stiff neck or neck pain, nausea and vomiting, and rash can all be signs of meningococcal disease. Changes in behavior such as confusion, sleepiness, and trouble waking up can also be important symptoms. In the US, about 350-550 people get meningococcal disease each year and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 10-20% may lose limbs, become hard of hearing or deaf, have problems with their nervous system, including long term neurologic problems, or have seizures or strokes. Less common presentations include pneumonia and arthritis.

How is meningococcal disease spread?

These bacteria are passed from person-to-person through saliva (spit). You must be in close contact with an infected person’s saliva in order for the bacteria to spread. Close contact includes activities such as kissing, sharing water bottles, sharing eating/drinking utensils or sharing cigarettes with someone who is infected; or being within 3-6 feet of someone who is infected and is coughing and sneezing.

Who is most at risk for getting meningococcal disease?

People who travel to certain parts of the world where the disease is very common, microbiologists, people with HIV infection, and those exposed to meningococcal disease during an outbreak are at risk for meningococcal disease. Children and adults with damaged or removed spleens or persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder) are at risk. Adolescents and people who live in certain settings, such as college freshmen living in dormitories and military recruits, are at greater risk of disease from some of the serotypes.

Are camp attendees at increased risk for meningococcal disease?

Children attending day or residential camps are **not** considered to be at an increased risk for meningococcal disease because of their participation.

Is there a vaccine against meningococcal disease?

Yes, there are 2 different meningococcal vaccines. Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra and Menveo) protects against 4 serotypes (A, C, W and Y) of meningococcal disease. Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) protects against serogroup B meningococcal disease, for age 10 and older.

Should my child or adolescent receive meningococcal vaccine?

That depends. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine is routinely recommended at age 11-12 years with a booster at age 16. In addition, these vaccines may be recommended for children with certain high-risk health conditions, such as those described above. Otherwise, meningococcal vaccine is **not** recommended for attendance at camps.

Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) is recommended for people with certain relatively rare high-risk health conditions (examples: persons with a damaged spleen or whose spleen has been removed, those with persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited disorder), and people who may have been exposed during an outbreak). Adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) who do not have high risk conditions **may** be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16 through 18 years of age, to provide short term protection for most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. Parents of adolescents and children who are at higher risk of infection, because of certain medical conditions or other circumstances, should discuss vaccination with their child’s healthcare provider.

How can I protect my child or adolescent from getting meningococcal disease?

The best protection against meningococcal disease and many other infectious diseases is thorough and frequent handwashing, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Individuals should:

- wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food (hands should be washed with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel or rub may be used if hands are not visibly dirty).
- cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard the tissue in a trash can; if they don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve.
- not share food, drinks or eating utensils with other people, especially if they are ill.
- contact their healthcare provider immediately if they have symptoms of meningococcal disease.

If your child is exposed to someone with meningococcal disease, antibiotics may be recommended to keep your child from getting sick.

You can obtain more information about meningococcal disease or vaccination from your healthcare provider, your local Board of Health (listed in the phone book under government), or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph.

