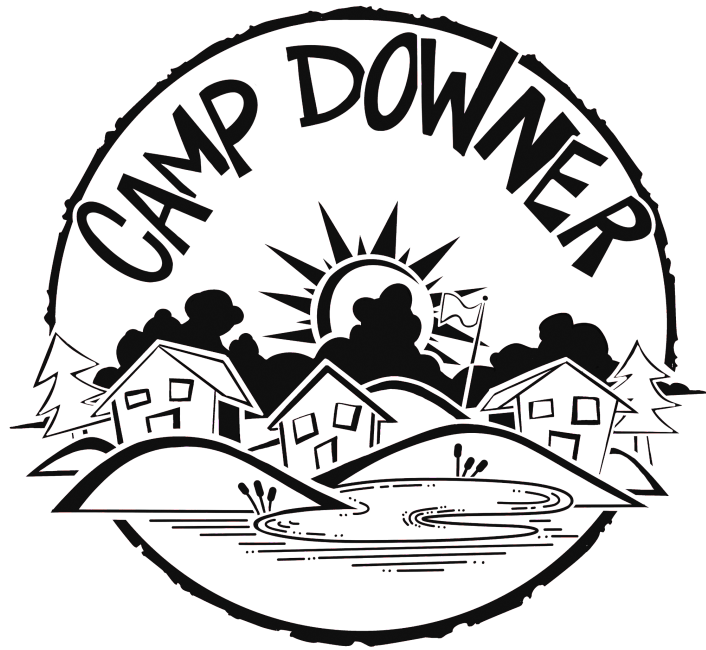


Camp Downer

Parent/Guardian Handbook



Camp Downer

Parent/Guardian Handbook

Welcome to Camp Downer! We hope this handbook will answer many of your questions about sending your child to camp. You can also learn more on our website at www.campdowner.com. Whether it is your camper's first or fifth time going to an overnight camp, [here are some ways to prepare](#)! If your camper *is* a first-timer, please refer to our [First Time Camper Page](#) for more recommendations. You may also want to read the [FAQ Section](#) on our website. If you have any additional questions or concerns. Please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help!

Email: director@campdowner.com · Summer Phone: 802-763-7007 · Off-Season Phone: 802-276-0222

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1. Camp Downer Basics

The Rich History of Camp Downer

Our tale begins with Charles Downer, a visionary who, in 1909, generously donated 400 acres to the state envisioning a forest preserve. He had a soft spot for forestry and even attempted to import Norwegian firs, although fate intervened, and they sank with the Titanic.

As the years rolled on, the 1930s saw the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) leave its mark on the land. They crafted a peaceful pond for boating and built many structures, setting the stage for a camp that would embody Charles Downer's educational aspirations.

The year 1945 heralded the birth of Camp Downer, initially introduced as Downer 4-H Camp. It aimed to provide an affordable summer haven for 4-H members from various Vermont counties. Though cabins were not part of the original setup, the campers were housed in dormitories left behind by a previous camp, Camp William James (CWJ).

As the narrative unfolded into the late 1950s and 1960s, 4-H clubs from different counties rallied together to construct cabins for the camp. A memorable event occurred between 1964 and 1968 when one of the original dormitories collapsed, paving the way for the creation of the nurse's and director's cabins, which are still in use today. By 1974, the camp fee had risen, but the camp carried on its tradition of hosting stay-over weekends, and in 1977, funds from the closure of another camp, Camp Ingalls, were utilized to build a Nature cabin at Camp Downer.

Fast forward to 2004, a significant year for Camp Downer as it approached its 60th anniversary. A decision by the University Extension Service to sever ties with 4-H camping brought about a new era. Rising to the occasion, Downer 4-H Camp, rebranded to Camp Downer, reaffirming its commitment to providing an affordable camping experience. This change signified a stride in continuing the legacy of fostering educational and recreational opportunities in a natural setting, staying true to the original vision of Charles Downer.

Mission Statement

Camp Downer's mission is to provide a positive and affordable camping experience for youth in a safe, constructive, and welcoming environment.

Camp Downer's Values

- **Inclusivity:** Camp Downer is dedicated to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all children, fostering a sense of belonging and community where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are embraced.
- **Individual Empowerment:** Camp Downer strives to recognize the uniqueness of each individual and promote a sense of achievement and autonomy by encouraging personal success, self-confidence, and the development of new skills and experiences.
- **Leadership Development:** Camp Downer places a strong emphasis on leadership, individual responsibility, and self-reliance, providing campers with opportunities to discover and hone their leadership styles and abilities.
- **Environmental Awareness and Stewardship:** Camp Downer is dedicated to promoting awareness of the natural world, instilling values of conservation, and encouraging campers to appreciate and coexist with nature through various eco-friendly activities and programs. Camp Downer actively involves campers in environmental practices such as recycling, composting, and waste reduction, contributing to a culture of environmental responsibility.

- **Community Engagement:** Camp Downer promotes a positive communal environment by providing opportunities for campers to actively participate in group activities and communal responsibilities, as well as encouraging awareness and care for others and shared spaces.
- **Relationship Building:** Camp Downer values the development of personal relationships, providing opportunities for campers to interact with diverse individuals, fostering new connections, and creating an environment where friendships can flourish.
- **Spirit of Service and Empathy:** Camp Downer encourages campers to embody the "Downer Spirit," emphasizing service, empathy, and a positive attitude that inspires the best in oneself and others.

2. Camp Downer Goals and Objectives

General Camp Goals

The goals and objectives of Camp Downer are derived from several sources: our core philosophies; the natural world; the actual experience of being, living, and interacting in the camping environment; as well as the age group of campers involved and certain practical considerations of our particular camp, they are:

1. To offer a quality, affordable camping experience to all kids.
2. To promote positive feelings toward community, friends, and self.
3. To recognize the uniqueness of individuals and encourage personal success and self-confidence.
4. To provide opportunity for leadership, individual responsibility, and self-reliance.
5. To promote awareness of the natural world; to value and conserve its resources.
6. To promote good health and safety habits.
7. To provide opportunity for development of new skills.

Camp Downer also has continued to be inspired by two 4-H mottos, "learning by doing" and "make the best better," both of which have broad implications for the Camp Downer camping program.

Programming Specific Objectives

Objective 1: Each camper participates in a minimum of four different programs and demonstrates a skill level that is higher than that which was present upon arrival at camp.

- Programs are administered under a unique set of goals and objectives that address and facilitate progressive learning.
- Leadership is selected for skills in teaching as well as proficiency in given program areas.

Objective 2: Each camper cooperates with camp policies in regard to health and safety procedures.

- The camp program provides a daily cabin clean-up, wash-up time before each meal, a system for cleaning soiled bedding, at least sixty minutes of rest each camping day, and specially trained supervision at possible hazard areas.
- Camp staff is trained to monitor the hygiene and eating habits of their campers and to seek support from healthcare staff if any difficulty is suspected. Supervisors of waterfront areas and the archery range are specially trained in the safety of their areas.

Objective 3: Each camper actively participates in cabin and dining hall clean-up.

- The camp program provides time to clean the cabin each day and a weekly opportunity for each cabin to clean the dining hall after a meal.
- Camp staff is advised and trained to encourage a cooperative effort among campers on cleaning detail.

Objective 4: Each camper participates in all camp activities such as evening activities, special programs, and free time.

- The camp program allows for the presentation of all-camp activities that are attractive and interesting to a wide age range; many are presented progressively, allowing the camper to participate at their level.
- Camp staff is trained on how to facilitate activities that will interest youth, and how to adapt an activity to the age or skill level of the camper.

Objective 5: Each camper appreciates and co-exists with other campers, counselors, and administration and shows regard for the environment.

- The camp program begins with introductions among all staff and campers. Each camper is a member of a new group in the cabin, animal group, and program activities. All programs have an increased environmental awareness.
- Camp staff is trained on how to supervise and interact with campers in a positive manner with a particular focus on how to encourage healthy group activity among campers. An appreciation for the environment is a prerequisite to leadership.

Camper Development Goals and Objectives

1. To provide opportunities that stimulate the development of each camper's self-esteem, independence, and concern for and service to others.

- Campers will participate in getting-to-know-you games and activities during cabin meetings, village meetings, animal group meetings, and various other times throughout the session.
- Staff will provide campers with encouragement and acknowledgment of positive behavior throughout their stay (e.g. meeting and/or exceeding expectations, demonstrating personal growth, maturely and effectively managing conflict, demonstrating care and attention to the environment and the well-being of others, etc).
- Camp has a firm expectation that all campers and staff respect the rights, physical space, and dignity of all individuals.
- The staff provides a safe, welcoming, and fun environment so that campers feel at ease to try new things, which encourages personal growth.
- Each day there will be a "Cabin of the Day" which is the cleanest cabin in each village. Campers strive to achieve this by each doing their part to make sure their personal space and the communal areas are kept clean and tidy.
- Before Campfire each week, all campers will have the opportunity to vote on who they think the "Honor Camper" in their animal group is. Honor Campers are individuals who have gone above and beyond in making camp a positive experience for everyone—embodying what we call the "Downer Spirit".
- All campers will have the opportunity to participate in a low-rope challenge course and engage in team building and "Challenge by Choice" activities.

2. To provide opportunities for campers to better appreciate their natural surroundings and take an active role in the stewardship of the environment.

- Each camper is encouraged to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Camp has both a recycling and composting program.
- During each meal, every camper will participate in "Waste Watch," wherein the total food waste from the meal will be measured and recorded. Campers will be instructed on strategies to minimize waste.
- Each camper will be required to take one "Nature" program while at camp.
- Each camper will have the opportunity to participate in some nature activity, in addition to their nature program, which could include hiking or other environmental activities.
- At the beginning of each session, the campers will be asked to help take care of camp in small ways, such as picking up litter, staying on trails, not picking flowers (unless in earth art or a specific flower pressing activity), respecting property (e.g. no graffiti, being gentle with equipment, etc.), and conserving water.
- Each camper will spend the majority of their time at camp outdoors.

3. To provide opportunities for each camper to set goals and challenge themselves while discovering their own skills and abilities.

- Each camper on Sunday will choose their programs for the week. Each camper will be required to take one program from each category (nature & aquatics, sports, arts) and is encouraged to try at least one new thing.
- Each day, campers will have two "free times" where they can choose a novel activity each time.
- Campers are encouraged to learn at least one new skill during the week.
- Camp is often the first time, and/or the most extended time children spend away from their parents/guardians. This alone can provide a challenge and opportunity for growth and independence.
- Each evening, there will be an Evening Activity (EAC) done primarily with their animal group.

4. To provide campers with the opportunity to demonstrate leadership, individual responsibility, and self-reliance.

- Once a week, each cabin will be responsible for: serving food at a meal, cleaning the dining hall, and helping clean the bathrooms in their village.
- Campers will be responsible for collecting, counting, and distributing camper store items amongst themselves.
- Campers will be encouraged to practice leadership in their cabin, animal group, and within programs.
- Campers are expected to clean up after programs and activities.
- Campers are expected to choose their own schedule.
- During the two-week session, older campers have the opportunity to participate in two different tiers of our leadership development program. The program invites them to think deeply about and practice leadership within the camp community. More specifically, the program begins to walk them through the responsibilities, challenges, and joys of being a camp counselor. Each level of the leadership development program will have the opportunity to plan and co-lead various activities around camp and then later reflect on that experience.

5. To provide opportunities for each camper to develop and foster new personal relationships.

- Each camper will interact with a variety of other campers and counselors in their cabin, animal group, and programs. This will grant them the chance to meet different people and build new connections.
- Given the wide range of ages and backgrounds at camp, campers will be able to meet and interact with a spectrum of role models and potential friends.
- Activities across all aspects of camp are designed to get campers up and moving while working, learning, and interacting with different people.

Camp Downer believes that much of what camp can give comes in the small moments, the connections made between individuals in one-on-one interactions where new friends are made, and a fuller understanding of oneself, each other, and the broader world is found. This comes from truly living within a community—sharing space and meals, working together to achieve a goal, no matter how small, and discovering and celebrating the ways in which we are both different and the same. Camp provides a diverse range of programs designed to meet the interests and needs of all campers, but beyond the goals of any specific program or activity, Camp Downer asks each individual to embody the “Downer Spirit”—an attitude of service and empathy that inspires the best in oneself and others. It is a kind of grace that young people can bring with them to the multitude of situations they will experience in life. Camp’s goal is to provide an affordable, safe, and fun environment from which that spirit can spring.

3. Daily Routines and Events

Daily Schedule (Monday through Thursday)

- 7:30 am – Reveille
- 7:45 am – Flag Raising
- 8:00 am – Breakfast
- 8:30 am – Cabin Clean-Up & Get Ready for the Day
- 9:00 am – First Period Program
- 10:00 am – Second Period Program
- 11:00 am – First Free Time
- 12:00 pm – Wash For Lunch & Village Time
- 12:30 pm – Lunch
- 1:15 pm – Rest Hour
- 1:45 pm – Camper Store
- 2:15 pm – Third Period Program
- 3:15 pm – Fourth Period Program
- 4:15 pm – Second Free Time
- 5:15 pm – Wash For Dinner & Village Time
- 5:35 pm – Dinner
- 6:45 pm – Flag Lowering
- 7:00 pm – Evening Activity (or as we call it, EAC!)
- 8:30 pm – Skits & Songs
- 8:45 pm – Friendship Circle
- 9:00 pm – Taps and Flashlight Time

Animal Groups

Camp Downer's animal groups are who campers eat most meals with and participate in most evening activities with. Animal groups are made up of around 18 campers of all ages and genders, two counselors, and sometimes a staff aide. There are eight animal groups: Bear, Bobcat, Catamount, Coyote, Deer, Eagle, Owl, and Wolf. During the Two-Week Session, the animal groups compete against each other in the Downer Olympics!

Meals & the Dining Hall

At Camp Downer, meals are a time for community and nourishment. Campers enjoy the majority of their meals with their animal group in the dining hall. Counselors supervise meal times closely, helping campers enjoy safe and efficient dining experiences. Monday and Wednesday dinners are cook-outs with their cabin-mates. Every camper has the opportunity to contribute to the meals in the dining hall by taking turns setting up, serving, and cleaning up after a meal, fostering responsibility and teamwork. For campers with dietary restrictions, alternative meals are provided in a separate serving window of the kitchen. We have a lot of experience with accommodating specific diets such as vegetarians, vegans, dairy-free, as well as those of picky eaters. Our dining service is part of an organization that works with public schools that provide meals to schools in the area. Our menu is akin to what you may find at a public school. For example, our dinner and lunch menus include meals such as pizza, pasta, Thanksgiving dinner, tacos, corn dogs, hot dogs, burgers, with the inclusion of fresh vegetables and/or salads at every meal. Our breakfast menu includes meals such as pancakes, waffles, eggs, bagels, etc. In addition, if the main meal does not appeal to a camper, they always have the option of having a peanut butter (or sunbutter) and jelly sandwich during lunches and dinners and they always have the option of cereal during breakfast. If your child has food allergies, the online health form has a section to list all camper allergies, which you will complete during the registration application process. This information will be shared with the food service and healthcare staff. Please note that Camp Downer is not a nut-free environment.

Programs

At Camp Downer, programs are an exciting part of the daily schedule, offering campers the chance to learn new skills, explore their interests, try something new, and have fun! Each day, campers participate in four hour-long programs led by trained counselors who facilitate safe and engaging activities. On the Sunday of their session, campers learn about all the available programs during the all-camp meeting. Campers sign up for their programs with their cabin counselors, selecting a first and second choice for each program period. Campers are encouraged to choose at least one program from each category—arts, nature & aquatics, and sports—for a well-rounded camp experience. [You can learn more about Camp Downer's Programs Here!](#)

Free Times

There are two free times daily. Campers begin free time in their animal groups on Animal Hill, where the activities are introduced to the campers. Free time allows campers a chance to choose activities that interest them separate from their four daily programs. Some of the activities are only available during free time and not offered as regular programs, giving campers the opportunity to experience something that they might not have signed up for at the beginning of the week. Campers can choose

one activity from a wide variety of options, from sports to arts and crafts to simply relaxing with friends, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Village Time

There are scheduled periods throughout the camp day when campers spend time in their cabins and villages to regroup and prepare for the next scheduled event. After breakfast, campers head back to their cabins to get ready for the day and tidy up their cabins to work towards winning the coveted "Cabin of the Day" award. When ready for the day and finished cleaning their cabin, campers have a little time to spend in their village playing with friends. Before lunch and dinner each day, campers have 15 to 30 minutes after their activities to spend time in their village and wash up before meals. This time is less structured and up to the camper how they would like to spend their time, whether it be playing a game with friends, reading a book, writing a letter home, or quietly resting in the cabin.

Rest Hour & Camper Store

Rest hour is just that, a time for campers to rest in their cabins. It is also a great time for campers to write a letter home, take a power nap, or play a quiet game with their cabinmates. During rest hour, camper store is delivered for campers to enjoy. Our camp "store" is something that all campers have access to. Each camper gets two items from our camp store each day. The items consist of things like snacks, candy, stickers, postcards, and drinks. Camper store funds are automatically built into every camper's tuition.

Evening Activities (EAC)

This is the favorite part of the day for many campers. Each night features a unique activity that brings the entire camp together for a fun event. Every Tuesday night is the Camp Dance—themes changing weekly! On the last night of camp, a large bonfire is constructed near the pond for a truly unforgettable evening where fond memories are formed that will last a lifetime.

Skits & Songs in the Recreation Hall

The recreation hall, or rec hall, is a lively gathering space where campers enjoy skits, songs, and special evening activities. After every EAC, everyone gathers in the rec hall to watch the staff perform hilarious skits and sing camp songs. Whether cheering on a performance or participating in group activities, the rec hall is a place for shared laughter and memorable camp moments.

Friendship Circle

Everyone gathers in main camp, crosses arms, and forms a circle as the last light of day gives way to night. It is a wonderful way for the whole camp to come together one last time before they go to sleep.

Taps & Flashlight Time

After Friendship Circle, campers head back to their villages, put on their pajamas, brush their teeth, and settle down for the evening. At 9:00 pm, Taps plays across camp signaling that it's time for lights out. After lights out, campers get 15 to 20 minutes of flashlight time before it's time to go to sleep.

The Downer Olympics

The Downer Olympics take place during the weekend of the Two-Week Session (Session 3). The eight animal groups compete against each other through various events, competitions, and meets in hopes of winning the Downer Cup! It is a competitive and fun-filled weekend for everyone involved!

Leadership Development Program

Camp Downer's Leadership Development Program helps teenagers build leadership skills in a supportive and engaging camp environment. The program has three levels that span up to three years, combining hands-on training, teamwork, and personal growth.

- **CIT I Program:** The CIT I Program is for campers who are 14 or 15 years old and takes place during the two-week session (Session 3). Participants meet once each day during free time for leadership activities and team building. Together, participants actively work together to plan and lead one evening activity (EAC) for the entire camp during the second week. The CIT I Program marks the beginning of the leadership journey, encouraging creativity, collaboration, and responsibility.
- **CIT II Program:** The following year, campers who are 15 or 16 years old during the two-week session are eligible to participate in the CIT II Program. This advanced level meets during both free times daily to further develop leadership and communication skills. CIT II participants plan activities that they will facilitate for the entire camp, as well as demonstrate their leadership skills as mock counselors during the second Wednesday of the session. This program is selective, and only participants who demonstrate strong engagement and leadership potential may be invited to participate in the next level.
- **Staff Aide Program:** 18 of the top-performing CIT IIs are invited to return the following year as staff aides. This volunteer role lasts two consecutive one-week sessions, going home between sessions, during which participants assist counselors and staff across camp. This immersive experience provides valuable, hands-on leadership experience and mentorship opportunities that prepares them for the challenges of the future. Staff aides who excel may be invited to apply for staff positions in future summers.

4. Setting Your Child Up for Success at Camp Downer: Essential Information and Eligibility Criteria

Please help us set your child(ren) up for success by reviewing the following information before submitting a camper registration application. Don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns about whether Camp Downer is the right experience for your child(ren) this summer. We are here to help!

Essential Eligibility Criteria for Participation in Camp Downer

Campers are expected to:

- Contribute to a safe camp environment, using respectful language and appropriate physical behavior.
- Function in a group setting in a positive and cooperative manner that displays tolerance and respect for self and others.

- Follow instructions from staff and refrain from behaviors that pose a risk to themselves or others.
- Strive towards maintaining a positive attitude.
- Navigate daily on foot over natural and uneven terrain.

Skills Required to be Successful at Camp Downer

Behavioral Skills: Campers should have the ability to:

- Independently function in a community where the staff-to-camper ratio generally fluctuates between 1:5 and 1:10.
- Practice independent personal health routines, including showering, brushing teeth, going to the bathroom, dietary management, etc.
- Self-regulate during and after an event that causes frustration, sadness, or anger.
- Communicate how they are feeling.
- Advocate for personal needs by talking to a staff member.
- Manage the sleep-away aspects of camp in an age-appropriate manner.
- Complete the duration of the camp session without in-person visits or outside phone calls.
- Participate in a group living environment.
- Sleep in a cabin with other campers and staff without sleep aids.
- Live in a rustic outdoor environment with no personal electronic devices.
- Follow verbal instructions and rules.
- Communicate conversationally in English.
- Remain in supervised areas as defined and communicated by staff.
- Resolve conflicts without physical contact or verbal abuse.
- Live successfully in an active social community that includes constant interaction with other children.
- Understand camp rules regarding safety and respect.
- Remain in their assigned cabin after lights out.
- Not possess or use alcohol, tobacco, nicotine-based products, illegal drugs, recreational drugs, or weapons.

Activity Skills: Campers should have the ability to:

- Participate in outdoor activities, including walking up and downhill on uneven ground and varied terrain; remain outside for extended periods at a time; learn to stay warm, dry, and safe from exposure to the sun and forest weather, manage levels of physical stress and challenge.
- Move independently from activity to activity.
- Follow safety instructions given verbally by staff.

Camper Considerations

We understand that some campers may require additional support. Camp Downer is committed to working proactively and comprehensively with parents/guardians to assess the fit of the program for campers who may have additional needs; our goal is to ensure that we can support the camper fully within the context and environment of our program. This is done on a case-by-case basis with the sole intent of ensuring a successful experience for all participants.

For Discussions Prior to Registration: Please contact the director at director@campdowner.com or 802-276-0222 if you have any questions or concerns about Camp Downer's fit for your child, prior to submitting your registration application. If your child receives any accommodations, supports, or services (private or in-school) during the school year, we are happy to talk with you about whether Camp Downer is the right fit for your child at this time. Anything shared will be treated confidentially, and shared only with healthcare staff or members of the Camp Downer leadership team, on a strictly need-to-know basis.

After Registration Application Submission: If your child may need additional support and you have already submitted a registration application, it is essential that you share any information that would help us ensure your camper's success at Camp Downer as soon as possible, and no later than a month after submission of the registration application. Such information may include a school IEP or 504 plan, reports from a psychologist, psychiatrist, and/or speech, occupational, physical, and behavioral therapists.

5. Camper Behavior Expectations

Camp Downer Camper Behavior Expectations Form

All families are required to review the following Camper Behavior Expectations with their child(ren) and ensure they understand the importance of these guidelines. Parents/guardians must then complete the Camper Behavior Expectations Form on CampBrain, confirming that they have discussed the expectations with their camper and that their camper has read and understands the expected behaviors. This process helps prepare every camper to contribute to a safe, respectful, and positive camp environment.

Failure to complete the Camper Behavior Expectations Form by the specified due date may result in the camper's registration being canceled without a refund.

Camp Downer Camper Behavior Expectations

- Be safe at all times.
- Be respectful of the rights, physical space, and dignity of all individuals at camp.
- Use only appropriate language and appropriate touch.
- Listen to your counselors at all times. Your counselor's top priority is to keep you safe!
- Always tell your counselors where you are going.
- Tell your counselors right away if you are upset about something or if you need help. They are here for you!
- Be patient, tolerant, and include others.
- Treat others with kindness, just as you would like to be treated.
- Leave all electronics at home. This includes cell phones and smartwatches.
- Be willing to try new things and give every activity your best effort.
- Always wear shoes when outside.
- Hands up, voices off.
- Have FUN!

6. Camp Rules

In addition to the Camp Downer Camper Behavior Expectations, all campers will be expected to follow the rules below. Staff will introduce and explain these rules on the first day of the session and enforce them throughout the session. Please go over these rules with your child(ren) to prepare them for their time at camp.

Cabin Rules

1. Consent! Always ask permission before touching someone else, going into someone else's space, or touching someone else's belongings.
2. One person in a bunk at a time when counselors are not in the cabin.
3. No shoes on the top bunk.
4. No hanging from rafters.
5. Stay quiet for the P.A. and Walkie Talkies.
6. No electronics.
7. Check for ticks regularly and often.
8. Counselors are ALWAYS here for you!
9. Have Fun!

Village Rules

1. Keep camp clean! Pick up trash and recycle.
- ★ Staff also explain Camp Downer Emergency Procedures to campers during the initial village meeting, including Fire Procedures, Active Threat Procedures, and Severe Storm Procedures.

Village Bathroom Rules

1. Everyone is encouraged to shower. Appropriate showering times are during rest hour and village time. If you need extra time, ask your cabin counselor.
2. One person in a bathroom stall or shower stall at a time.
3. During meals, programs, EAC, and other all-camp activities, campers should use the Woodside Village Bathroom.
4. Conserve water!

Boundary Rules

The following boundary rules are introduced to campers during cabin and village meetings on the first day of camp:

1. Campers who live in Lakeside Village or Cabins 7 and 8 are not allowed in Hillside Village and campers who live in Hillside Village or Cabins 6 and Old Nature are not allowed in Lakeside Village.
2. The following areas are always off-limits to campers due to the hazardous nature of the sites: the maintenance shed, the pump house reservoir, the electrical shed, the pool shed, the paint shed, the village bathroom cabinets, the photography shed chemical cabinet, the staff lounge, the kitchen, and the main office.
3. The following areas are off-limits to campers without a counselor: The road above Hillside Village, behind the arts and crafts cabin, behind the dining hall & recreation hall, the Nature

Trail, the Campfire Trail, the Pelton Pony Trail, the trail behind the ODL shed, the riflery range, the archery range, the pool, the pond, and all sheds.

Dining Hall Rules

1. Campers should only get up from their seat if they are the server, getting a meal from the dietary restrictions window, making an alternative meal (cereal or PB&J station), or using the bathroom.
2. Campers always need to tell their counselor where they are going.
3. Walk in the correct direction in the dining hall → keep your right arm towards the wall.
4. Keep noise to a minimum; it's a small building with lots of people.
5. Food is not to leave the dining hall, except for store items.

7. Camp Downer Behavior Management Plan

In the event of negative, unsafe, or other concerning behavior, we follow a progressive discipline approach, designed to provide learning opportunities and maintain safety. These steps include:

1. **Redirection and Reflection:**
Counselors will guide campers to reflect on their behavior and redirect them to safer, more positive actions. Counselors may ask campers to take a break or ask a supervisor to come speak to the camper.
2. **Removal and Intervention:**
If the behavior persists, the camper may be removed from the group to speak with Camp Downer Leadership either on the spot or in a more private setting. This allows the camper to reset before rejoining activities.
3. **Parent/Guardian Involvement:**
If additional support is needed, we will contact the camper's family to collaborate on strategies and provide input on the next steps. We will share the situation that took place and aim to work collaboratively to ensure the behavior is addressed.
4. **Next Steps:**
For repeated or serious infractions, Camp Downer Leadership may determine that it is time for a camper to be dismissed from camp. Serious infractions, include but are not limited to:
 - Harming or threatening themselves or others
 - Engaging in inappropriate or non-consensual physical contact with others
 - Bullying behavior, including intimidation, teasing, name-calling, or hate speech
 - The use or possession of any alcohol, tobacco, nicotine-based products, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances

8. General Policies & Procedures

Animals Policy

Campers are not permitted to bring animals with them to camp.

Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the policy of Camp Downer to maintain an environment free from bullying where all campers and staff respect the rights and dignity of all individuals. Bullying is expressly prohibited and will not be tolerated in any form. "Bullying" can be defined as any act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain, or discomfort to another person. It can take many forms: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion, or exclusion; it is an abuse of power; it may involve either individuals or groups. All reports of bullying will be promptly and thoroughly investigated.

Rights and responsibilities of campers:

- To enjoy the benefits of a safe and bully-free environment.
- To be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- To refrain from physical and verbal acts of aggression.
- To report any acts of bullying against themselves or another camper.

Rights and responsibilities of Staff:

- To be role models in words and actions.
- To be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- To report and record all instances of bullying.
- To handle all acts of bullying with compassion and objectivity.

Camper Caffeine Policy

Camp Downer prohibits campers from possessing or consuming caffeinated food or beverages while at camp. Exceptions for health-related needs require a signed note from a healthcare provider, and any approved caffeine must be dispensed by Camp Downer healthcare staff.

Camper Care Package and Mail Policy

To maintain an equitable, safe, and pest-free environment, Camp Downer does not allow care packages to be sent to campers.

- **Letters Only:** Families are encouraged to send postcards and letters, which will be delivered to campers daily.
- **No Packages:** Packages for campers, including those containing food, will not be accepted. Any packages received will be held in the camp office and can be picked up by families during check-out on Friday. If a package is not picked up by the family during check-out, Camp Downer will refuse the package with the delivery service it was mailed by.
- **No Outside Food in Cabins:** Due to allergies, campers are not allowed to bring outside food with them to camp. If a camper has dietary needs for outside food, you are welcome to bring the food item to the Healthcare Station during check-in and make a plan with our healthcare staff. Drinks such as bottled water and non-caffeinated sports drinks are allowed.
- **Exceptions:** Packages are only permitted under special circumstances, such as a forgotten essential item or a camper's birthday. Approved birthday packages are not permitted to include food items and are encouraged to include items that can be shared with all campers in the cabin. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the director. Any food items found in packages will be confiscated.
- **Pre-Drop-Off Surprises:** In lieu of a care package, families are encouraged to include notes or small gifts in their camper's luggage before arrival at camp.

- **Camp-Supplied Snacks:** Campers can receive two items from the camp store daily. Only one store item is allowed to be candy. Additionally, granola bars and other snacks are available if campers get hungry between meals.

This policy is designed to streamline operations, addressing the logistical challenges of managing packages in our rural location, preventing issues of inequity among campers, and helping to maintain a rodent-free camp. Thank you for your cooperation!

Camper Controlled Substance Policy

At Camp Downer, there is a zero tolerance policy regarding the use or possession of any alcohol, tobacco, nicotine-based products, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances is prohibited at all times during the camp season. Prescription medication and healthcare provider-approved over-the-counter medication are kept in the Nurse's Cabin and may only be dispensed by a member of the healthcare staff. If you have any questions about an item that may be an over-the-counter medication, please consult with the camp nurse during check-in. Campers in violation of this policy will be sent home immediately without a refund. A camper's personal effects (e.g., luggage, bunk, care package, etc.) may be searched whenever camp staff has reasonable suspicion to believe that the camper is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. Campers who are dismissed from camp for the inappropriate use or possession of controlled substances while at camp may not be invited to register in the future.

Camper Electronic Device Policy

At Camp Downer, camper use or possession of any electronic device, with the exception of standalone digital cameras, is prohibited at all times. This includes, and is not limited to, devices such as cell phones, smart watches, headphones, portable speakers, handheld gaming devices, walkie-talkies, Kindles, computers, etc. Prohibited electronic devices will be removed from the camper's possession and returned to the camper's family at check-out.

Dismissed Camper Policy

Campers dismissed from camp for any repeated or serious behavioral infractions will not receive a refund. Parents/guardians will be responsible for all transportation coordination. Campers who are dismissed from camp may not be invited to register in the future. It is up to the discretion of the director whether a camper who has been dismissed from camp will be invited to register for camp in the future.

Parent/Guardian Communication Policy

During the registration application process, parents/guardians are asked to provide their email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing addresses. Camp Downer staff will use the phone numbers provided in CampBrain to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of an individual camper if needed during a session. For medical emergencies involving a camper, staff will follow the [Emergency and Health Notification Procedures](#).

When Camp Downer needs to communicate with multiple families at once, such as for registration updates, severe weather alerts, or health concerns impacting the camp community, email will be the primary method of communication. Parents/guardians can also opt-in during the registration application process to receive text message alerts, which may be used for urgent updates and mass

communication purposes. Due to camp's limited resources, Camp Downer cannot make simultaneous phone calls to multiple families.

Parent/Guardian Pick-Up Policy

In the event of an emergency or a camper's dismissal from camp, the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s), emergency contact, or authorized check-out adult listed on their CampBrain account must be available to pick up the camper within three hours of being notified by camp staff.

Personal Property Policy

Camp Downer is not liable for the loss of, or damage to, personal property occurring on camp premises. Personal property includes, but is not limited to, clothing, sports equipment, and electronic devices. If a camper returns home and an item is discovered to be missing, families are welcome to contact Camp Downer to inquire whether it has been found. If the item is located, camp staff will work with the family to coordinate a time for it to be picked up. Camp Downer does not mail lost items. Any unclaimed items remaining at camp may be donated one week after each session.

Swim Test Policy and Procedures

Only campers who can prove they have the ability to swim safely in the deep end of the pool will be allowed to swim in the deep end. All other campers will be restricted to only swimming in the shallow end of the pool.

All campers who swim in the deep end of the pool will be required to take and pass a swim test at camp. The test consists of the camper's ability to complete all of the following requirements:

- Jump into the deep end of the pool
- Swim half the length of the pool
- Tread water for two full minutes

Camp Downer conducts swim tests during the following times:

- Campers assigned to Swimming Program: First activity on Monday
- Campers not assigned to Swimming Program: First free time on Monday or as early as camp schedule allows

Campers who pass the swim test will receive a bright wristband. Campers will need to wear this wristband all week, so when they are at the pool, lifeguards can readily identify them as able to safely swim in the deep end. Campers who do not pass or take the swim test do not receive a wristband and are only allowed to swim in the shallow end of the pool.

Vehicles Policy

Camp Downer is not liable for loss of, or damage, to personal vehicles occurring on camp premises. Campers who are of driving age are not permitted to drive themselves to camp and need an adult to drop them off at camp.

Weapons Policy

The use and possession of weapons are prohibited on Camp Downer premises, including in motor vehicles. Antique, imitation, and replicas of weapons are also prohibited. Discovery of a weapon carried by a person (openly or concealed) on camp premises shall result in confiscation of the weapon. Campers in violation of this policy will be sent home immediately without a refund. Exceptions to this

policy consist of ONLY Camp Downer-owned shooting sports equipment used for programming purposes.

9. Health & Safety

Camp Downer's Health Management Practices

Camp Downer has a healthcare team who are in camp and on-call throughout the summer. Our Nurse's Cabin is located in the center of main camp and we have access to local hospitals and health centers. The vast majority of our summer staff are certified in First Aid and CPR.

Health Form & Immunization Records

Your child's health form and immunization records are an integral part of the registration application process. When completing the health form, you will be required to input your child's medication information, health history, health insurance information, healthcare provider's information, and list any allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. You will also be provided with the opportunity to list any activity restrictions that your child may have or whether your camper will require assistance while at camp. This form must be completed anew every year and all campers must have had a physical exam within two years of the start of their camp session.

We require that all campers are up to date with the current schedule of regular childhood vaccination as per school guidelines set by the Vermont Department of Health. A list of required and recommended vaccines can be found [here](#). We require proof of your child's immunization records. Please have your child's pediatrician complete and sign the [Camp Downer Immunization Records Form](#) and upload a copy of it to your child's CampBrain account. Alternatively, the pediatrician may provide their own immunization records form, which they can fax directly to 1-802-794-3482, or you can upload a copy of it on CampBrain. All submissions must be completed through one of these methods to finalize your child's registration.

If your child has not been fully immunized, you must complete either the Vermont Department of Health [Medical Immunization Exemption Form](#) or [Religious Immunization Exemption Form](#). Religious Immunization Exemption forms are required annually.

Camper Health Exam Policy

We require that all campers have a physical exam by a licensed healthcare provider within 24 months of their camp session.

Camper Health Insurance Policy

Camp Downer campers are required to have health insurance.

Camper Medications

Camp Downer can only administer prescription medications in accordance with direction from a licensed prescribing provider. Camp Downer must have a provider's written direction on the original labeled bottle of medication. Over-the-counter medications must be given to camp healthcare staff in the medication's original packaging.

If your camper is bringing an inhaler or EpiPen to camp, we ask that an asthma or allergy action plan from your pediatrician be shared with our healthcare staff via email at nurse@campdowner.com or faxed to 1-802-794-3482.

Camper Medication Pick-Up Policy

Camper medications must be picked up during check-out on the Friday of the camper's session. If medications are forgotten, Camp Downer staff will notify the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s) within 24 hours of the session's end via phone and/or email. Forgotten medications must be retrieved by the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s) during camp's operating hours within one week of the camper's session. Camp Downer does not mail medications and cannot accommodate medication pick-ups on weekends. If forgotten medications are not retrieved within one week after the camper's session, they will be disposed of following state and federal regulations.

- ★ For medications forgotten during Session 7, parent(s)/guardian(s) must retrieve them on the Saturday following the session before noon.

Emergency and Health Notification Procedures

In the case of a medical emergency, Camp Downer will call 911. If the health matter is not an emergency but still urgent, such as illness or minor injury, Camp Downer staff will call the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s) to notify them of the situation and work with them to form the best plan of action. If the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s) are not available, Camp Downer staff will contact the camper's emergency contacts until an emergency contact person is reached. If camp staff are not able to get in touch with a parent/guardian or emergency contact and the situation gets worse or requires more serious medical attention, Camp Downer will call 911.

Head Lice Prevention and Treatment Policy and Procedures

The health and safety of our campers is our top priority. To prevent head lice outbreaks at Camp Downer, we have established the following prevention and treatment protocols:

Prevention Strategies:

1. Pre-Camp Screening: Families are kindly asked to conduct a thorough head lice check of their children before arriving at camp.
2. Check-In Screening: Every camper will undergo a head lice screening at check-in. Camp Downer healthcare staff will determine whether a camper is infected.
 - Bypassing Check-In Screening: Families may bypass the camp screening by having their child screened by a healthcare provider or lice screening center within one week prior to the session. The individual conducting the screening must complete and sign the [Camp Downer Head Lice Screening Form](#), which can be:
 - Emailed to nurse@campdowner.com
 - Uploaded to the Camper Paperwork section in CampBrain under "Additional Documents"
 - Brought to the Healthcare Station during check-in

Treatment Protocols:

1. At Check-In:

- If a camper is found to have head lice, parents/guardians may:
 - i. Choose to have their camper treated at camp with camp-supplied head lice treatment.
 - ii. Choose to take their camper home for treatment and return once treatment is complete.

2. During the Camp Session:

- If a camper is found to have head lice, parents/guardians will be notified and may:
 - i. Choose to have their camper treated at camp with camp-supplied head lice treatment. The bedding and recently worn clothing of the affected camper will be washed.
 - ii. Choose to pick their camper up from camp to treat them at home. The camper may return once their treatment is complete.

3. Notification and Follow-Up:

- Parents/guardians of all campers in the affected cabin will be notified.
- All campers in the cabin will be screened.
- Healthcare staff will work with parents/guardians of cabin campers to make case-by-case plans.

Additional Preventative Measures:

- Campers are instructed to arrange their bedding in “Head to Toe” sleeping positions to minimize head-to-head contact during sleep.
- Campers are discouraged from sharing personal items that touch the head, such as hats, towels, hairbrushes, and hair accessories.
 - Staff are trained to recognize the signs of head lice and will regularly check for signs and symptoms to quickly identify and address any potential cases of head lice.
 - Between sessions, all cabins and mattresses are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring a healthy and enjoyable camp experience for all!

Nut Policy

Camp Downer is not a nut-free camp. This policy includes both peanuts and tree nuts.

10. Registration Application Process Policies & Procedures

Camper Registration and Eligibility Policy

As part of the registration application process, parents/guardians are required to complete the Camp Downer Camper Profile Questionnaire Form to provide essential information about their child. This form is designed to collect information that helps us mutually ensure that camp is a good fit and a safe opportunity for all campers. Full and honest completion of this form is expected and appreciated, as Camp Downer staffs according to our established camper-to-staff ratio and admits campers based on the information families provide. The form will be reviewed and parents/guardians may be contacted for more information and/or discussion. If we determine that we are unable to place a child in a session, Camp Downer reserves the right to cancel the child’s registration and refund their deposit. In cases where information is omitted that would have materially affected an eligibility decision, we will work compassionately with parents/guardians to address the situation to the best of our ability. However, Camp Downer reserves the right to cancel the child’s registration, with or without a refund.

Failure to complete the Camper Profile Questionnaire Form by the specified deadline may result in the camper's registration being canceled without a refund.

Life Events and Changes After Form Submission: If your child experiences a major life event or severe behavioral changes arise after the Camper Profile Questionnaire Form's deadline, it is your responsibility to contact the director at director@campdowner.com or 802-276-0222 to share this information.

Camper Housing Procedures

Campers stay in cabins with typically nine other campers and two staff members. Cabin assignments are made before the camp session, based on the following grouping preferences:

- Girls+: Campers who identify as girls and campers who identify as non-binary.
- Boys+: Campers who identify as boys and campers who identify as non-binary.

Families are given the option to choose the grouping preference that best fits their camper during the registration application process. Cabin changes related to grouping preferences will only be made with the permission of the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s).

In keeping with our commitment to privacy, families will not be notified of the names, medical histories, or any other personal information about their child's cabin mates before, during, or after their session.

Cabin-Mate Request Policy

Camp Downer offers the opportunity during the registration application process to request up to two cabin-mates. Cabin-mate requests must be mutually requested from both parties. We discourage cabin-mate requests between campers who have more than a two-year age difference. We make every effort to honor these requests but they are not guaranteed.

Payments and Refund Policy

There is a deposit due at the time of the registration application process per camper/per session. This deposit must be paid online with a credit card when the registration application is submitted. Prior to May 1st, this deposit is fully refundable for any reason. After May 1st, this deposit is non-refundable. Registration deposits may be transferred to another session within the season with written approval via email from the registrar.

The remaining balance of the tuition is due two weeks prior to the check-in date of the camper's session. This balance should be paid via credit card online. Failure to pay the remaining balance by the due date may result in the camper's registration being canceled without a refund.

It may be necessary for a parent/guardian to cancel a camper's registration. After May 1st, Camp Downer will refund the paid tuition when a cancellation is made 14 or more days prior to the start of the session. However, the initial deposit will be non-refundable. Cancellation notifications and refund requests should be made via email to the registrar at registrar@campdowner.com.

If a camper has to leave camp during their session due to voluntary or involuntary withdrawal, no refunds will be given. Prorated refunds will be considered if a camper is sick/injured or if there is a death of an immediate family member. In the unlikely event that camp has to close with little notice, the director will also consider prorated refunds in this situation. The prorated schedule will be as follows: total tuition, minus non-refundable deposit, divided by the number of days the camper misses up to a maximum of four days during a one-week session and nine days during the two-week session. Prorated refund requests should be made no later than September 1st of the current camping season.

Required Registration Forms Policy

To complete the registration application process, the following forms must be submitted by their respective deadlines. While some forms are not required during the initial registration process, they must be completed on their respective deadlines to finalize registration. Please allow sufficient time to thoroughly complete all forms. Failure to complete the required forms by the specified deadlines may result in the camper's registration being canceled without a refund.

CampBrain Form Title	Deadlines for Families Whose Campers Are...			
	Registered by General Registration	Registered from a spot on the Waitlist		
		Before May 1st	Between May 1st and two weeks before the session	Less than two weeks before the session
Camp Downer Waiver	Upon submission of a registration application	Within one week of registration		Within 48 hours of registration
Camper Downer Parent/Guardian Handbook Agreement Form				
Camper Eligibility Criteria and Required Skills Form				
Complimentary Camp Downer T-Shirt Form				
CIT II Program Participation Agreement (CIT II Registration Only)				
Camper Profile Questionnaire	April 1st	May 15th	Within one week of registration	
Camp Downer Camper Behavior Expectations Form	May 1st			
Health Form				
Immunization Records Form				
Asthma or Allergy Action Plan (For campers with inhalers or Epipens)				
Photo Release Form	Two weeks before the camper's session			
Optional Forms				
Cabin Mate Request Form	Optional form, ideally completed two weeks before the camper's session			
COVID-19 Vaccination Card				

11. Check-In, Check-Out, Vehicles & Transportation

2026 Check-In and Check-Out Times and Procedures:

Our check-in times are between 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm on Sunday of each session and our check-out times are between 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm on Friday of each session. Check-in and check-out times are staggered by half-hour time slots organized by campers' last names. This summer, the check-in and check-out schedule is to be as follows:

Drop Off & Check-Out Times	Camper's First Letter of Last Name
1:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Q – Z
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	L – P
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	E – K
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	A – D

- ★ If a camper is checking in with another camper's family or if there are multiple last names within the same family, you are welcome to check the campers in together during the time slot that works best for you. The same flexibility applies during check-out. However, please ensure you review our Camper Release Verification and Authorized Check-Out Policy below to ensure a smooth process.

During camper check-in, all vehicles are greeted in main camp by designated staff members to check campers in. During this check-in process:

- Camp staff will conduct a health screening consisting of a questionnaire about recent health symptoms and confirmation that all information on the camper's health form is accurate and up-to-date.
- The staff member will then share the camper's cabin and animal group. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will then be directed to park in the main parking lot.
- Once parked, parent(s)/guardian(s) will walk with their camper to the T-shirt station, where the camper will get their Camp Downer Complimentary T-Shirt. Please keep in mind that campers will receive T-shirts in the sizes that were listed for them on the Complimentary Camp Downer T-Shirt Form during registration. All T-shirts are in adult sizes.
- Once the camper has their Camp Downer Complimentary T-Shirt, parent(s)/guardian(s) will walk with their camper to the head lice screening station to be screened for head lice.
- Once the camper has been screened for head lice, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be able to walk with their campers to their cabins.
- **Medication Collection Process:** Campers with any type of medication (prescription or over-the-counter) will make a stop at the Healthcare Station with their parent(s)/guardian(s) before heading to their cabin. Here our healthcare staff will take and organize camper medication and create a plan with the camper and their parent(s)/guardian(s) about a medication administration schedule. The healthcare staff will follow prescription directions, or over-the-counter administration guidelines during this process.

Camper Release Verification and Authorized Check-Out Policy

Campers must be picked up by their parent(s)/guardian(s) that are listed on their CampBrain account. If a camper needs to be released to an adult other than their parent(s)/guardian(s), the

parent(s)/guardian(s) must add the adult to the Authorized Check-Out Adult section of the Household Form on CampBrain or they may email the registrar using their email address listed on CampBrain. Camp staff will ID individuals during check-out to ensure that campers are released to parents/guardians or authorized adults.

Late Arrival and Absentee Campers Policy

If a camper is going to be late arriving to their session, their parent(s)/guardian(s) must communicate this with Camp Downer staff by either calling camp or emailing the director or registrar. Camp staff will work with families to establish a late arrival plan.

If a camper does not arrive during check-in hours and the parent(s)/guardian(s) did not notify camp staff of the tardiness, Camp Downer will assume by 5:00 pm on Sunday of the session that the camper is not attending the session and they will be unable to attend the session.

Camper Transportation Policy

Camp Downer does not provide transportation for campers between camp and home or pick-up/drop-off points. In the case of an emergency, Camp Downer will call 911. If the matter is not an emergency but still urgent, such as illness or minor injury, Camp Downer will call the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s) or emergency contacts to create a plan.

12. Child Abuse Prevention Plan

At Camp Downer safety is our number one priority. Camp Downer understands that child abuse is a problem in our country that must be managed proactively if we are to protect those in our care. Camp Downer's leadership and Board of Trustees have enacted the following plan to manage our camp and minimize the potential for an abuse incident to occur. If an allegation or incident does occur we will proactively work with the authorities and the family to respond in a prompt and empathetic manner.

Camp Downer believes the following policies are vital to the protection of youth in our care and will be shared with and applied to all staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians.

Hiring Practices and Screening:

- Applications: All prospective staff are required to complete an application that includes questions regarding their past work history, education, and references. All applications will be signed by the individual and maintained in their personnel file.
- Interviews: Prospective staff will be interviewed by the director.
- Reference Checks:
 - Reference checks for new staff are conducted by Camp Downer in the following ways:
 - If the prospective staff member participated in Camp Downer's Leadership Development Program, the director will review their performance evaluations completed by Camp Downer staff.
 - If the prospective staff member did not participate in Camp Downer's Leadership Development Program, the director will conduct at least two

reference checks and verify previous work history. The references' responses will be documented. Past employers will be asked if the person is eligible for rehire.

- **Background Checks:**
 - Camp Downer will conduct the following background checks on all staff:
 - National Sex Offender Registry Background Check
 - Vermont Adult Protective Services and Child Abuse Registry Check Background Checks
 - Criminal Convictions Record Check on adult staff members
 - Applicants who are returning staff will receive a new check if they have been away from Camp Downer for more than 90 days.
- **File Documentation:** All applications, reference checks, background checks, and interview notes will be kept in the individual's personnel file.

Training and Education:

- **Code of Conduct:** Staff and volunteers will sign and date a copy of Camp Downer's Code of Conduct prior to performing any work duties with campers. The Code of Conduct will be maintained in the individual's personnel file. All new staff will have the Code of Conduct reviewed with them at the time of signing; the signature line states "I have read and understand the above as explained to me; I agree to abide by all of its conditions."
- **Child Abuse Prevention Training:** All staff members, before working with children in any capacity, will participate in the child abuse prevention training that includes training on child abuse and neglect, peer-to-peer abuse prevention, and their responsibilities as mandated reporters. All staff members will undergo a review of the training on an annual basis. Camp Downer may perform additional training with staff on the identification and prevention of child abuse throughout the summer.
- **Online Communication Policy:** Camp Downer has adopted the "Online Camper Communication Policy" which is reviewed with all staff at the beginning of the summer. The purpose of this policy is to eliminate the potential for outside contact with campers via online/electronic means. Camp Downer understands that certain communication is needed as part of program operation; the policy addresses how and when it is permitted.

Staff Expectations:

- **Reporting of Red-Flag and Inappropriate Behavior and/or Violations of the Code of Conduct:** Camp Downer staff are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse to the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF). Camp Downer staff will report to their supervisor any indication of or warning signs concerning abuse involving a child and any instances of staff or volunteers violating the Code of Conduct. Camp Downer staff who identify suspicious behavior or a violation of policy by a fellow staff member or volunteer are expected to report the event to their supervisor immediately.
- **Being Alone with Children:** At no time should Camp Downer staff be in a situation where they are alone with a child and cannot be observed by others. Camp Downer makes every attempt to design and structure its programs to eliminate the potential for a staff member to be in a one-on-one situation. If a staff member becomes alone with a child, they are expected to promptly move to a location where they can be observed by another Camp Downer staff member.

- **Hugging and Touching of Children:** Appropriate physical contact is important in the emotional development of all youth in our care. Examples of appropriate physical touch include high-fives, fist bumps, and side hugs. Staff members are discouraged from picking campers up (to reduce the potential for both abuse allegations and physical injury) except in the case of an emergency, and should not allow campers to sit on their laps.
- **Supervision Standards:** All campers will be supervised by Camp Downer staff per our supervision policies. This includes programs, cabins, meals, and bathrooms. At no time should one staff member have direct care of a single child.

Supervision Ratios and Procedures:

Camp Downer campers will be supervised by the following staff in the following camp areas and activities:

- **Cabin and Village Time:** At least one staff member is stationed at a cabin to supervise the campers inside and outside of the cabin during transition and preparation times in the village. During village time when multiple campers are using the multi-stalled bathrooms, one staff member will stand close by so they can have auditory supervision of the campers. Staff members are trained to stand by the doorway of the bathroom so they can be easily seen by the campers and so they can immediately stop any inappropriate activity.
- **Meals:**
 - When grouped by animal groups: Generally two, but at least one staff member supervises the campers in an animal group during meals.
 - When grouped by cabins: At least one staff member supervises the campers in a cabin during meals.
- **Programs:** At least one staff member is assigned to instruct and supervise the campers in a program. Staff-to-Camper ratios vary greatly depending on the program, the size of the program, and the risk associated with the program.
- **Rest Hour:** Two staff members and one staff aide (counselor-in-training) supervise a village during rest hour. During rest hour, staff consistently circulate the cabins to check on the campers and make sure campers are behaving appropriately. Backup staff is always available and on call during rest hour to provide additional supervision.
- **Evening Activities (EAC):**
 - When EACs are grouped by animal groups: Generally two, but at least one staff member supervises the campers in an animal group during evening activities.
 - When EACs are grouped as a whole-camp activity: All staff supervise the campers. Staff are assigned specific supervision locations and assignments in order to create camp-wide supervision.
- **Nurse's Cabin:** At least two staff members will supervise campers who are visiting the Nurse's Cabin.
- **Flashlight Time and Nightwatch:** Two staff members and one staff aide (counselor-in-training) supervise a village during and after flashlight time. During this time, staff consistently circulate the cabins to check on the campers and make sure campers are behaving appropriately. Backup staff are always available and on call during this time to provide additional supervision.
- **Nighttime & Sleeping:** At least one staff member will sleep in the cabin at night with campers. Campers are informed during camper orientation that they can wake their counselor up if they need anything.

Camp Downer has established these ratios as minimums, not goals to achieve. Ratios alone do not equate to effective supervision, but if established ratios cannot be maintained the activity will be changed or additional staff members added.

Supervision Audits: Announced and unannounced audits will be conducted on all Camp Downer programs and activities. These audits will look directly at abuse prevention practices. The audits will be performed by Camp Downer leadership weekly.

Contact Information for Violation of Policies: In case of a concern, parents/guardians should contact one of the following:

- The Camp Downer Director, Alanna Gaylord, 802-763-7007 or director@campdowner.com
- The Chair of the Camp Downer Board, Philip Batalion, pbatalion@campdowner.com

Responding to an Allegation:

- **Reporting Suspicious Behavior to a Supervisor:** All staff members have received specific training concerning the requirement to report violations of Camp Downer's policies immediately to the director. If the director does not effectively respond, the staff members have been trained to notify the Camp Downer Board of Trustees. Camp Downer staff are expected to observe other staff members' behaviors, including that of supervisors, and to report any suspicions to that individual's supervisor.
- **Mandated Reporting:** All Camp Downer staff members are mandated reporters. Any evidence of potential child abuse or observation of inappropriate contact by a parent, guardian, staff member, volunteer, or other child will be reported to the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF).
- **Suspension of Staff or Youthful Offender:** Any Camp Downer staff member who is alleged to have abused a child will be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation by Camp Downer and appropriate authorities. If the allegation is substantiated, the staff member will be terminated. If the allegation is against another camper, they will be dismissed pending the outcome of the investigation. If the allegation is substantiated, the camper will not be invited to register for camp in the future.
- **Incident Investigation:** Camp Downer will perform an investigation following any allegation of child abuse by a staff member, volunteer, or camper. Camp Downer may utilize its insurance company or other agencies to interview staff, witnesses, and/or campers.

Insurance Company Contact: Immediately after an allegation of abuse Camp Downer will notify its insurance company. The insurance company will be asked to render assistance with the investigation.

13. Camp Downer LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Practices

At Camp Downer, we are committed to fostering an inclusive and affirming environment for all campers and staff, including those who identify as LGBTQIA+. We value diversity, encourage individuality, and strive to create lasting memories in a community where everyone is welcomed and respected.

Chosen Names and Pronouns

At Camp Downer, we honor and use the names and pronouns that campers provide, encouraging a culture of acceptance and respect. Parents/guardians are encouraged to add their camper's pronouns during the registration application process. If a camper chooses to use a different name or pronoun during their time at camp, our staff will affirm and use those updated preferences.

Gender Identity

We respect and affirm all gender identities. If a camper discloses their gender identity to staff members or their cabin mates during a session, staff members have no requirement to report this to the camper's parent(s)/guardian(s). We strongly believe that the choice must remain with the individual camper to disclose this important part of themselves at a time that feels appropriate and safe.

Respecting Privacy and Boundaries

Respecting others' privacy and boundaries is fundamental to our camp culture. During cabin orientation, campers receive guidance on creating a space where everyone feels valued and comfortable. By embracing the principles of respect and understanding, Camp Downer is dedicated to fostering a camp experience where everyone can thrive, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

Non-Disclosure of Cabin Mate's Identities

In keeping with our mission and values, we will honor each individual's right to privacy as it pertains to their gender identity and/or sexuality. Parents/guardians will not be notified regarding the gender specificity of their child's cabin-mates. We consider this Personal Health Information (PHI) and families will not be notified of the legal names, medical histories, or any other personal information about a child's cabin mates or staff before, during, or after the program session.