



# PARENT HANDBOOK

# What is the Parent Handbook?

We understand that sending your child to an overnight camp is a big decision. For over 40 years, we've been entrusted by parents to take care of their kids and foster their spiritual growth in a fun environment. This handbook is intended to help parents learn about and become comfortable with SpringHill Camps. We've compiled tons of camp procedure information into one convenient booklet. We've included stuff that many of you have asked for specifically, and info that maybe you've never even thought to ask for. It's all about you, your kids, and your comfort. Our goal is to make sure you are confident in SpringHill Camps' ability to care for and nurture your child.

If you'd like more information after reading this booklet, or you'd just like to talk to a real person at SpringHill, feel free to give us a call:

**Michigan Camp**  
231.734.2616

**Indiana Camp**  
812.497.0008

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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# Camp Philosophy

The SpringHill Experience draws kids away from the routine of daily life and puts them in an environment with totally unique experiences, tailored to their age and development, that offer growth and independence. We focus on building intentional, spiritual relationships between our counselors and campers that lead to spiritual growth. And we truly believe that it's through these encouraging and motivating relationships that we're able to meet our mission.

# History

SpringHill camps started in 1969 with only 256 campers. Unique programming, themed housing, and the great outdoors provided the perfect backdrop to a distinctive camping experience for kids and teens.

Through the years, there has been much development and growth. In 1999, SpringHill added an overnight location in southern Indiana. We've also expanded our reach with Day Camps, which brings the SpringHill experience directly into communities. SpringHill Camps now serves over 50,000 campers and guests annually.

## Mission

To glorify God by creating life-impacting experiences that enable young people to know Jesus Christ and to grow in their relationship with Him.

## Vision

God willing we will be a pioneering ministry and influential ally who will not rest until every young person has heard, seen, and experienced Jesus Christ in a life-transforming way.

## Accreditation

We engage multiple licensing and accreditation agencies, consultants, partners, and vendors in areas ranging from medical and emergency procedures to food service and staff training.

Both Michigan and Indiana Overnight Camps are accredited by the American Camp Association and licensed by their respective states. Visit the American Camp Association website at [acacamps.org](http://acacamps.org).

# Investment in Campers

Everything we do is for the kids. And everything we do is intentional. Overnight camp is really like three camps in one. We've purposefully designed every aspect of camp—our camp centers, our staff training, our buildings, our curriculum, etc.—to accommodate the varying needs of different aged campers. All of these considerations create a customized experience for each SpringHill camper.

## Staff

We hire counselors to work with particular age groups of children, which means they receive detailed and specific training to meet the behavioral, spiritual, and activity needs of each age group. A counselor hired to work with elementary ages will not work with high school students without additional training, and vice versa. Our counselors' sole purpose is to build relationships with campers and foster their spiritual growth. Counselors emphasize the importance of teamwork, safety, and respect, and build a strong culture of inclusion throughout the week. To accomplish these goals effectively, they are on duty and with their cabin groups the entire time they are on camp.

Our counselors are not activity staff. A separate activity staff are trained to facilitate activities for children—this allows for them to receive in-depth training on operating the activity, and allows counselors to participate in the activity with their campers, creating shared memories and stronger relationships.

Our counselor to camper ratios:

- One counselor for every six 1st–3rd graders
- One counselor for every eight 4th–12th graders
- One counselor for every camper with special needs

Including all other activity, support, and full-time staff, our overall staff to camper ratio is one staffer for every three campers. These ratios are constant throughout the day and night, and they exceed state requirements. In part because of our program design and our low ratios, our counselors get to know each child individually. You'll see these strong relationships in action when you pick up your child from their cabin groups on closing day.

## Structure

The key to our curriculum is small groups. Small group sessions allow counselors to zero in on campers' developmental needs and challenge them in their growth. At least three separate curriculums are written each year to meet the interests and developmental needs of each age group. We do not use one curriculum and try to adapt it to each age group. Everything on camp, especially camp centers, is tailored in five categories:

- Staff—trained for a specific age group
- Activity—more intense for older campers
- Program—design of experience, order of activities, and length of day
- Curriculum—length and subject of bible lessons
- Facilities—themed, age-appropriate housing

## Inclusion

We have a calling to welcome every child who would like to come to camp. While your child is at camp, we make sure every camper is given individual attention and is included in the experience. Our Inclusion Program is about meeting the needs of every camper that comes to camp, whether it's physical, behavioral, dietary, allergies, or medical.

If your child has special needs, please detail them when prompted during registration. We can provide a one-on-one counselor for your camper upon request, at no extra charge. Please call our registration department for more information or counselor availability.

**Michigan Camp**  
231.734.2616

**Indiana Camp**  
812.497.0008



# Safety

## Equipment and Activity Safety

Each activity area during the summer has a highly trained leadership staff member (or two) who is responsible for a specific activity area. This is almost always an experienced staff member whose primary responsibility is to, not run the activity, but oversee the staff and equipment in their area. They are directly observing staff in their interaction with campers, their proficiency in running their activities and conducting debriefs, keeping track of equipment use and pulling any worn equipment from service, and conducting in-services with their staff in all areas where they see more education would benefit. These leadership staff have assistant activity directors they can call on for support or questions, as well as the activity director.

In addition to our leadership staff, safety checks on camp include:

- High adventure activities are inspected annually by Experiential Systems Incorporated (ESI), an independent, certified, high adventure vendor member. Visit the ESI website at [experientialsystems.com](http://experientialsystems.com).
- The activity director personally conducts all the High Adventure training according to current ACCT standards. Visit the ACCT website at [acctinfo.org](http://acctinfo.org).
- Trained staff inspect all elements and equipment, including ropes, carabineers, rifles, paintball markers, waterslides, tubes, skate ramps, boards, etc., each time prior to use.
- All buildings are swept frequently for potential safety and security issues.

## Personal Safety

In order to protect children, our policy prohibits any staff person to be alone in a private location with a camper. If a camper needs to return to their cabin for a sweatshirt, for example, a staff will never do this alone with the camper—they will get another camper or staff person to go with them. If a one-on-one conversation is necessary between a staff member and a camper, it will always be in view of other people.

We come alongside parents and help educate them on how to keep their children safe when they're away from their care. The “No Touch Zone” Policy was created by the American Camp Association (ACA) and it has become part of our staff safety and training manuals. We believe that parents who introduce their children to the “No Touch Zone” are teaching a substantial, new system of self-protection. We hope you find it as vital as we do. Read more about this policy and other information from the ACA at <http://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/articles/child-sexual-abuse-prevention-critical-role-parents>, and click on “Child Protection Information”.

# Behavior Management

At SpringHill we promote positive interactions among campers and leaders. Our desire is for every child to feel loved, cared for and respected. With a focus on early intervention, our behavior management training centers on preventing negative behaviors from occurring and equipping leaders with skills to empower campers to manage their own behavior. All leaders learn how to address disruptive behavior early, safely and effectively, which increases the likelihood that campers will choose more positive behaviors in the future.

“If a disruptive behavior continues to occur, a camper is removed from the situation and met with a respectful conversation where grace is given. We partner with campers to come up with a solution to help them be successful by setting limits and communicating expectations and consequences. If a situation occurs that places a child at increased risk of injury to themselves or others, the use of nonviolent physical intervention may be warranted by SpringHill leaders who are certified to respond accordingly as a last resort. In the event of a disruptive or risk behavior, guardians of those involved will be communicated with. Based on the severity of a behavior, a camper may be sent home.

Our behavior management policy is always reasonable and least restrictive while maintaining the care, welfare, safety and security of all.”

# Grounds Security

At our Evert property, our security system includes cameras, security staff, and personnel name badge requirement to protect the campers, staff, and property. All roads onto camp are gated, we control the access at the main gate using video cameras and our 24/7 security staff.

Our Seymour property’s security includes gated roads, trained security staff, and personnel name badge requirement to protect everyone on camp.

# Camper Health

Counselors are trained to make sure your child is eating enough, staying hydrated, and applying sunscreen. We ask that you send sunscreen with your child, ensuring that they have enough to apply every morning and again after lunch. We also encourage campers to bring a water bottle to camp to stay properly hydrated. We provide water coolers at the outdoor activities.

Our kitchen is familiar with special diets and food allergies. If your child has specific food needs, please let us know and we will make proper arrangements for your child.

**Michigan**  
Dining Hall Manager  
231.836.1047

**Indiana Camp**  
Dining Hall Manager  
812.497.0008

## Lice Policy

We want you to be aware that your camper will have their head checked for lice on the day they arrive. These checks are done routinely to ensure that the SpringHill experience is kept lice-free! If lice or nits are found, it is our policy that the camper goes home for treatment. Affected campers may be re-admitted to the same camp week as soon as they are louse and nit free, or you may choose to transfer the camper to another camp session at no charge. We hope you understand our procedure and we're happy to answer any questions you might have!

# Medical Care

We depend upon volunteer physicians, nurses, and EMTs, as well as, employ Health Officers for Summer Camp sessions. The medical staff respond to emergencies, distribute medications, and provide basic first aid care for our resident campers.

If your child requires medications, they need to be turned in to health services in the original container during registration on opening day. Counselor's will be given a list of campers' medications and the time they need to take it. During the camp week, campers will go with their counselor to the infirmary to get their medication at the designated time. If medications are taken outside of a meal time, health services will go to the camper's housing or activity area to distribute the medication. Counselors will carry epi-pens and inhalers that are required to be with campers at all times.

## **We contact Parents with infirmiry issues when:**

- Any illness or injury requires an emergency room/hospital visit
- Any illness or injury requires a physician's attention
- A camper is in the infirmiry more than 2 hours or overnight
- A camper is in the infirmiry for same complaint more than twice
- Camper gets a major scrape, bruise, or other injury requiring additional attention
- Fever is greater than 101. F
- Continued "Home sickness" after Tuesday lunch
- Camper has had an exposure to a contagious disease, bug, or parasite

## **In Case of Emergency**

A siren system on camp allows instant communication to all campers and staff in the event of an emergency. Staff monitor weather radar constantly and we move staff and campers to severe weather shelters when there is an immediate threat of severe weather.

All staff is trained in our Emergency Action Plan, which covers scenarios like severe weather, fire, medical emergency, intruder on camp, and missing camper. The focus is on accounting for and protecting campers in these situations.

We have health officers trained to respond to emergencies on camp 24/7, along with nurses, EMTs, Paramedics, and/or a doctor. On average, local EMS respond when needed in less than 15 minutes.

Our lifeguards are CPR and Lifeguard certified by nationally recognized agencies

Several of our year-round staff are also trained as Incident Commanders. They have the tools and training to respond to emergencies and be in direct communication with outside emergency response services or authorities if necessary.

Emergency phone calls will be received at the camp office. After-hours emergency numbers are available on the after-hours recording, or by calling 231-580-8144.

### **Michigan Camp**

231.734.2616

### **Indiana Camp**

812.497.0008

### **After Hours Emergency**

231.580.8144

### **After Hours Emergency**

616.780.0116 Camp Director

812.497.0319 Infirmiry

# Staff Hiring and Screening

We have searched the country high and low for the most amazing and caring staff just for your child. We strive to find a staff that is spiritually, mentally and emotionally mature to ensure that not only is your child in good hands, but in good hearts. Each staff member has been personally interviewed, reference checked and background checked before they even set foot on the property. Once here, they receive from 132–268 hours of intensive job specific training.

## Staff Search

We recognize that our staff is the most important part of the equation when it comes to a safe, successful camp. The hiring of our summer staff is not left to part-time employees or volunteers—we have our best people, the summer camp directors, personally building their teams. They are seasoned, having done hundreds of full interviews with applicants; they know what to look for, the right questions to ask, and how to select top performers.

Our directors never stop staffing summer camp. It is always at the forefront of their mind, and staffing the next summer begins before summer is finished. They travel thousands of miles over the nine months, networking with colleges, ministries, and churches to find the highest quality young adults to work in the summer.

In addition to searching for the best new staff, we identify and invite back our top performers every summer. We choose those who align with the mission and core values of SpringHill, who effectively engage children and teens, and who did an outstanding job providing safe and fun summer camp experiences. After they have experienced a summer on staff, and how God uses them in ministry, they share stories with friends and family about their experience. We use these word of mouth referrals to also help us find new staff. In fact, our camp directors meet many friends of staff while on the road, giving away Toms shoes or Chacos, and making s'mores with students on their campus.

## Staff Compensation

**While many camps and organizations use volunteers to staff their events, we've found that paying our staff helps provide consistent, high quality experiences for campers regardless of which week they choose to come. The best staff is in high demand as competent workers, and the reality is they need to make money in the summer. We pay our staff to make sure we attract and retain the best Christian young adults in the workforce for summer positions.**

## Hiring Procedures and Processes

We have more than 2500 candidates begin our application process. About 1500 go on to have an in-depth interview with one of our trained recruiters or summer camp directors. These interviews cover where applicants are in their spiritual walk, maturity of faith, how to build relationships with kids, experience working with kids, and overall competencies for the job. Interviews also try to determine the best position for this person at camp.

All in all, we hire about 650 of those applicants. Those new staff, together with our 350 returning staff, makes up our yearly team.

Once hired, every staff will have several background checks—exceeding state requirements. We run checks including criminal history, sex offender registry, and suspected child abuse or neglect registry. We use an independent third-party company to perform these background checks on all staff. We also require a minimum of three positive, non-family member references.

For the returning staff, we recheck both criminal history and the sex offender registry.

# Staff Training

## Training Hours

- 132 for counselors
- 135 for activity staff
- 268 for leadership

## All Staff Training

All of our staff goes through the same base training, where they learn camper care, safety protocols, child protection, conflict management, customer service, and first aid awareness.

- **Camper Care** Focuses on camper behavior management: how to deal with bullying, how to help with homesickness, making sure that every camper gets individual attention. Staff is taught to recognize that every camper learns differently and has his or her own set of needs. Counselors are trained to identify where each child is spiritually and will meet them where they are at while challenging them to grow. To be successful, they are also trained in the developmental needs of specific age groups—how you interact with 1st–3rd graders versus 4th–6th graders.
- **Safety Protocols** Trains on our Emergency Action Plan, which covers scenarios like severe weather, fire, medical emergency, intruder on camp, and a lost camper.
- **Child Protections** Focuses on two aspects of child protection, prevention and how to report suspected abuse. Prevention of abuse on camp includes what is and is not appropriate: not okay to rub kids' back to help him or her go to sleep, must give privacy when campers are changing, can never withhold food, etc.
- **Conflict Management** Covers conflict management, both with fellow staff and to help campers work through.
- **Customer Service** Teaches staff how to address and greet kids and parents.
- **First Aid Awareness** Addresses typical camp ailments and how to deal with them, including things like bee stings, stomachaches, and how to respond to bed-wetting in a discreet way. Also teaches how to work with infirmary to get campers medications on time.

Additionally, all staff take classes about SpringHill culture, covering gospel and SpringHill doctrine: who we are, why we teach what we teach, what they're expected to cover in their small teachings, how to share their spiritual journeys in an appropriate way, and how to remain sensitive to many denominations, without compromising our statement of faith.

During their weeks of training, staff is given extended solo time, where they're encouraged to prepare themselves spiritually for the job.

## **Activity Staff Training**

Summer Activity Staff receive training specific to their activity area with an emphasis on safety, proper use of equipment, engaging all campers, and effective debriefs. In some high-risk areas, written tests are used to ensure accurate understanding of material. They also learn how to debrief at the end of activities—relating the activity to spiritual teachings.

Activity Staff meet daily with their Leadership Team who is able to convey any important information to them, review incidents, and conduct in-services as needed to provide more training in certain areas, to keep skills current, or to learn new techniques to engage campers and keep them safe.

## **Leadership Staff Training**

Summer leadership staff oversee cabin areas, activities, or have specialized functions at camp. Their main job is to oversee counselors, support, and activity staff, ensuring that those staff have all the resources they need to deliver an exceptional SpringHill experience for all their campers. Their additional responsibilities require additional training, which we call leadership staff training. During this time we cover topics like

- How to Lead the SpringHill Experience
- How to Effectively Implement Curriculum and Program
- How to coach and provide feedback for counselors
- Training in their specific roles

Leadership Staff include Area Directors, Special Needs Coordinators, Activity Leads, and other support leads. They will be available when you drop your camper off and are great resources if you need to get additional information about your camper to someone in leadership.



# Registration Info

## How to Request a Roommate

During the registration process you will have the opportunity to request a roommate for your child. If you choose to invite a friend or relative to be in the same cabin as your camper, you will need to include the camper's name and parent's email address. An invitation email will be sent to the parents and they can deny or accept the invitation.

This invitation will include a code that the parents will use to accept the roommate invitation. When you log into your account, you will be able to see if the invitation has been accepted or is still pending. In order for the campers to be connected to each other, the invitation **MUST** be accepted.

## Payment Options

You can pay by cash, electronic check or credit card. A \$150 deposit is required to register. During the first week of May, final payment will be withdrawn from your financial institution that you provided during registration process. If you register after the first week in May, you will need to pay for camp in full.

## Cancellation Policy

If cancellation is made after registration, it is forfeiture of your deposit. Cancellations within 21 days prior to camp start date will result in forfeiture of one half the cost of camp. No-shows for a scheduled camp will result in forfeiture of the full camp fee.

## Waitlist Procedure

When any of the camps reach their capacity, we will create a waitlist. This list is ordered by the date that each child was register. You will be contacted when a spot becomes available. If there are no remaining spots for that camp, we encourage you to look at the other camps that are offered.

## Sibling Discount

Overnight Families that register more than two campers from their immediate family (i.e. brothers, sisters) will receive a discount of \$100.00 per additional camper. This discount does not apply to campers attending more than one camp session.

## Transferring Programs

If a camper needs to transfer to a different week or program, we will be glad to move him or her as space allows.

## Scholarships

Please visit [spinghillcamps.com/info/financial-options](http://spinghillcamps.com/info/financial-options) for more information.

# Preparing for Camp

## Before the First Day

- complete your camper's health form
- If you request a friend to be with your child, that request will have to be confirmed one week prior to the start of camp.
- We require that any camper balance be paid in full.

## What to Pack

See the Essential Summer Camp Information document

- Linked here for Indiana  
[IN Packing List & Check-in/Check-out Times](#)
- Linked here for Michigan  
[MI Packing List & Check-in/Check-out Times](#)

## What Not to Bring

See the Essential Summer Camp Information document.

# Checking In and Out

## Check-In

The goal of registration on Sunday is to make sure all camper forms are collected and completed, medication is dropped off and any outstanding balance is paid. You will also get to meet your child's counselors. The entire process should only last about 60 minutes. After you drop off your camper with their counselor, you are free to leave.

## Check Out

You will need to bring a photo I.D. with you to the check-out process. Each cabin group will have a mini-rally, where you can hear about your camper's week at camp. We will also have closing ceremonies.

## 3 or 4-Day Check Out

Our 3 or 4-day program for Explorer and Camp Classic, check-in will be on Sunday or Wednesday. Check-out will be on Wednesday or Friday respectively.

## Early Check Out

We ask that you notify our registration department prior to checking in your camper if you will need to pick your camper up early. Please remember to bring your photo ID when you pick up your camper.

# Life at Camp

## Typical Day at Camp

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Activity #1
- 10:30 Morning Rap Session
- 11:00 Activity #2
- 12:30 Lunch/Lunch Skit
- 1:15 Camp Store
- 2:30 Activity #3
- 3:30 Afternoon RAP
- 5:00 Activity #4
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:30 Evening Event, Campfire, Lights Out

## Camp Store

The Trading Post is open during check-in and on closing day for parents and visitors. Each camper will visit the Trading Post daily. Snacks and drinks are available for your child to purchase, along with many low-cost souvenir items, as well as SpringHill attire. Typical spending is approximately \$20–\$40.

You can also visit our online store.

# Parent Testimonials

“Rachael has attended Spring Hill for 3 years. Each year she grows more in her Christian walk.”

“Christ-centered, tons of fun, great care for our kids, great organization.”

“SpringHill’s been part of my family for 20+ years.”

“The counselors are outgoing and friendly and seem to know and care about our kids.”

“Love SpringHill and everything it stands for.”

“Knew my kids’ names; that means a lot to kids - makes them feel special.”

“It’s been an awesome opportunity for my daughter to grow closer to Christ and have a blast at the same time.”

“The counselors were so happy and enthusiastic. You feel your child will be safe and happy.”

“Have always agreed with and appreciated the mission and outreach of SpringHill.”

**To register for camp or to download the Brochure, visit [springhillcamps.com](http://springhillcamps.com).**

**SpringHill Camps Michigan**

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