

Staff Handbook

Note that this 'handbook' is a brief guide to provide simple, easy-to-understand information about camp and is adapted from the very similar, 'Parent Handbook' version.

Maine Teen Camp
481 Brownfield Road
Porter, Maine 04068 USA
Tel: 207-625-8581 or 1-800-752-2267
Fax: 207-625-8738
Email: mtc@teencamp.com
Web: www.teencamp.com

Owners/Directors: Monique & Matthew Pines
Directors: Monique Rafuse-Pines, Matthew Pines, Kris Kamys

Communication with Camp

MAIL can be important to all of us, especially our campers! Mail is distributed to campers and staff each evening our our Evening Meeting time. Remember to encourage campers to write home – emailing is okay, but nothing replaces a good handwritten note to parents or friends!

Our address is: "**Name**"; Cabin Name (once you know it); Maine Teen Camp, 481 Brownfield Road, Porter, Maine 04068 USA.

FAXES: Dial 207-625-8738 to send a fax to camp. We will distribute faxes sent to staff/campers with the next-day mail. Campers/Staff may arrange outgoing faxes with our front desk.

E-MAIL/WEBSITE: Incoming and outgoing email is available to every camper. Each camper is given a special MTC email address to use while at camp. Campers can NOT access hotmail, yahoo, aol, etc. accounts online, as the Internet is not available. **Staff have no-cost access to the internet in our Staff Lounge. Please be courteous** to your fellow-staff and limit your time to 15 minutes. You will make each other happy! Please be aware that MTC is located in a **remote area of rural Maine. The Internet connection may not be as fast as you are used to.** Many staff find that when they are out of camp on free time, they often visit towns with Internet cafes that have faster speed access! Regardless, the service in camp is free and can be used when you have **DESIGNATED FREE TIME.**

CARE PACKAGES sent to campers by their family members may contain small food items, candy, puzzles, books, etc. We discourage gum chewing at camp. We do not sell gum in our store, as it does create a sticky mess on things. Parents are told not to send a camper any banned items (firearms, fireworks, lighters, sexually explicit materials, knives, illegal substances, energy drinks, tobacco, alcohol, gum, etc.) We do reserve the right to search incoming packages with the camper present. Staff may receive care packages from home too! We will not routinely search your package.

OUTGOING CALLS: With almost 350 people in residence here at any one time, we obviously need to limit phone use. Campers are limited to times when our Camp Store is open. These times are after breakfast (for International campers only), after lunch, during 6th period, and after dinner. Campers must use one of the four phones in our Camp Store. **Staff have their own phone to use located in the Staff Lounge. Be aware that you may only use the staff phone during designated FREE TIME.** In many cases, Internationals may find that your **FREE TIME** may not correspond with perfect overseas calling times. You may have to wait until you are on a day off to contact friends/family at a time that is more convenient. In plain terms, understand that you may not be able (nor wish to) call home each day! Be sure to tell your friends and family that it is not easy for you to call, but that you will keep them informed as much as you are able. It is quite normal for staff to call home no more than once each week.

PHONE CARDS: Staff should please purchase telephone calling cards OUTSIDE OF CAMP at local stores. Bring a USA telephone card with you.

INCOMING CALLS: Our campers' active schedules do not allow for them to be near the phone. Our families will often call and leave a message in our office. If a family has a particular concern about their child's progress or wants to "check in" with the Directors, they simply call the office. Families are told that if they have potentially upsetting news to discuss with their child, they are encouraged to tell a Director first so that we can provide support after the phone call. This approach is also helpful should upsetting news be included in a letter. Staff members should be aware that they too are unavailable to receive phone calls in our office, unless there is an emergency. You should be sure to provide the number of the staff lounge telephone (once you know it). If a phone call is made to you through the office, we will simply take a message and you may call at a convenient time from the staff telephone.

CELL PHONES: We understand that many teens will have their own cellular phone that they will take to camp. **MTC IS A CELL PHONE-FREE ZONE!** We do not allow cell phone usage within camp grounds. Campers will be asked to keep their phones in the office. Staff may not use their cell phones within camp. Staff are asked to keep their cell phones turned OFF and safely stowed in their cabin away from campers, or locked in our office. Staff may use their cell phones outside of camp grounds. Staff may take their cell phones when they leave camp on trips, but are reminded that they are on duty and supervising our campers.

CALLS DURING THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF CAMP SESSION: Generally, we allow campers to call home at any time. The majority of our teens are fine to call home upon their arrival. However, families are told that if their camper is having difficulty adjusting to camp and may be feeling homesick, we will encourage them NOT to call home. It takes a couple of days for campers to adjust to camp life. If a camper does call home and is upset, we tell parents to contact us. We want to work with families to ensure a child's success at camp. Families are our best ally! We tell families to allow our experienced staff help the child over this transition period. Of course, families are always welcome to contact us for an 'update' or to verify that their camper arrived safely at camp.

Packing for Camp

A suggested packing list is located on our web site for our campers. Staff are sent a copy in their pre-camp mailings. Remember to pack only the essentials!

We tell our campers to **avoid bringing** over-the counter medications, jewelry of high value, expensive music playing devices, televisions, personal computers, sparklers or fireworks, pets, plants, weapons, lighters, pocket knives, matches, etc. MTC is not responsible for what you may lose! Please be careful with your personal items!

APPAREL: Campers may wear what they wish at camp, so long as it is not offensive or revealing. We do reserve the right to ask campers to change their clothing. Female campers are permitted to wear a two-piece bathing suit on our waterfront. **Campers (and staff) are asked to please always wear a t-shirt or tank top when in camp, with the exception of waterfront activities. We provide each camper with a MTC logo t-shirt, but do not require them to wear it as a uniform.**

SHIPPING... Our campers sometimes pack and ship their personal items to us. While staff may do this also, it is not common.

STORAGE...Each camper has a two-shelf wooden “cubbie” that they use to keep their personal belongings in the cabins. Cabins have some additional hanging space for coats, towels, etc. **STAFF will also have access to a ‘cubbie’ of their own.**

LINENS...Each camper is given a good-quality sleeping bag, sheets and pillowcases, and pillow. Campers are asked to bring towels. Staff are encouraged to bring their linens with them to camp, unless travelling long distances. In the case of a staff member travelling from overseas, we will provide your linens (sleeping bag, sheets, pillow).

WEATHER...Maine weather is typically sunny and 80 degrees, with water temperature 65-70 degrees.

Camp is not responsible for lost items.

Items left unclaimed at the end of the camp season are donated to a local charitable organization.

Transportation Planning

Our families are responsible for transportation planning to/from camp. In general terms, families are told the following information about their camper’s travel:

PLANE TRAVEL: Please call to ask any questions about airline travel and please adhere to MTC’s required arrival/departure dates. Check with airlines regarding their policies about unaccompanied minors and overweight luggage. Our counselors will meet children at the gate at the airports. We ask campers to hand-in their return tickets to be locked in our office. The ideal time of arrival or departure is generally mid-late morning into Portland International Jetport, or Logan International Airport in Boston.

DRIVING CHILDREN TO CAMP: Directions are noted on our web site or can be mailed to you. You may plan to arrive any time on arrival day, but usually between 12 noon and 4pm is best. Good-byes may be difficult for all, so we suggest that you tour camp with a counselor and then allow your child to spend the afternoon getting acquainted and playing games with campers and staff while we await the arrival of camp buses.

Car pickup at the end of the session usually takes place in the morning hours. Most campers are gone from camp by 12 noon.

CAMPER BUS TRAVEL (Extra \$): Our MTC charter buses stop at various locations in MA, CT, NJ, and NY.

Our MTC Travel Coordinator will arrange camper pick-ups/drop-offs from the designated stops and airports. His/her job is to confirm the arrangements that families make. Contact the Travel Coordinator after early June when he/she begins work.

STAFF Travel

American staff will drive personal vehicles, ride the bus or train, or take an airplane to camp. Your responsibility is to get to Portland, Maine, and our Travel Coordinator will arrange for your pick-up drive to camp. Camp is about a 45 min. drive from Portland, Maine.

International staff (and Canadians) will have a sponsoring agency which usually arranges travel to/from camp. In some cases, the staff may elect to provide their own transportation. Canadian staff will often drive or fly and some will take a ferry.

All staff depart on the last day of their contract and we will provide transportation to Portland, Maine locations of buses, trains, airlines.

Spending Money and Supplies

MTC provides campers with standard items such as trip-day money, camp store money, laundry, email, and linens. Campers can obtain stamps, shampoo, stationery, souvenirs, etc. at our camp store, at no extra charge, with a **\$80 limit** (per 4 week session) that we track. **There are no refunds for money not spent in the store.**

Staff may purchase items in the store 'on account' that we track up to \$100 and deduct from your salary at the end of the summer.

Programming and Class Issues

Because MTC offers an elective program, our campers need to take a tour of camp program activities during their second day in camp, followed by the 'sign-up process'. The third day of camp is the first official day of regular activities. Although the majority of campers arrive at camp ready to try any activity, if ***a child has his or her heart set on an activity - or if parents have any preferences***, we encourage them to let us know.

Campers sign up for 5 activity periods per day and are in that schedule for a week of classes. If they go to a class that they don't care for in the first two days, they can drop/add. **We expect campers to attend the classes they choose.** We keep attendance records in our Program Office and the Program Director will follow-up with any camper who misses a class.

If a camper is unhappy with their classes, or has any issue with their schedule, encourage them to speak with our **Program Director**.

Staff are also 'programmed' into our class schedule to instruct in areas of expertise. They may also be programmed as a class assistant or someone to primarily supervise the kids in the activity. Don't be alarmed if you are asked to be a part of a class that you are not an experienced teacher – it's okay, as you are there to ensure that there is enough supervision. Our Program Director makes your schedule.

Cabin Assignments

MTC makes cabin assignments based on the grade each camper is entering in the Fall. If campers have a cabin request, they let us know and we will do our best to be flexible and meet requests. Once a cabin is established, we avoid making cabin changes whenever possible.

Staff members who are hired as 'cabin staff' live with and supervise our teenage campers. Staff are assigned (with co-counselors) to each cabin. Each cabin has electricity and plumbing, and some have their own showers, while others utilize a nearby 'shower house'. Remember, our cabins are mostly rustic – many hold 8-12 campers/staff, and some hold 20-25 campers/staff.

Daily Schedule

Each day, we begin with an 8am wake-up. Periodically, we will have a later wake-up scheduled if we know the weather is going to be inclement. Our breakfast is at 8.30am, followed by a morning meeting. At this meeting we announce birthdays, trips out of camp, sporting events, evening activities, and we often ring in the morning with some fun! Our first period of the day begins at 9.30am. Campers are scheduled to be in classes and must attend. We have three classes in the morning, followed by lunchtime. We have two more classes in the afternoon, followed by our sixth period of the day, which is the camper's free period. Their 'free' period is usually spent at the camp store, showering, emailing, recording music, on the waterfront, playing sports, in the theater, or completing an art project. **Classes are 1 hour long with 15 min. breaks in between classes.** Another meeting is held just before dinner, in which more announcements are made and the community 're-groups' after a long day. After dinner there is some time for campers to shower and 'hang-out' before our evening activity at 8pm. All campers must attend evening activities. Our evening ends at approximately 10pm and bedtime is at 11pm.

Staff follow a similar daily schedule, except the 'free' period for each staff member varies and some staff are off each staff does not work every evening of an activity week.

Trips Out of Camp

MTC arranges for campers to leave camp on trips. This will happen periodically throughout the schedule. Some staff will be asked to accompany campers on trips as a part of their job and you are not asked to pay for the trip, as you are a supervisor. Please do not expect to go on trips – it may or may not happen – either way, you are being asked to do a job.

Dietary Issues

Our kitchen staff puts much effort into providing appealing meals for us. The menu is full of variety, so if a camper is a “picky eater” encourage them to try new foods!

- We can reasonably accommodate some allergy sensitive diets for campers/staff, so we ask that we know ahead of time.
- Alternatives are available for those campers/staff who are vegetarians.

Overall, we monitor eating habits, and are experienced in serving well-balanced, delicious meals. We expect staff to be role model eaters for our campers.

Remember that our kitchen works VERY hard at meal preparation and it is important that you, as MTC staff, support our kitchen at all times. Never talk badly about our camp food to campers!

Health Issues

MEDICAL FORMS: American Camp Association regulations and common sense, require that families return the green health form completed by a physician during the calendar year, based on a recent exam (within 24 months of camps’ start) and signed by a parent... **This is absolutely critical.** Campers **MUST** have a current medical form on file in our office and with our nurses. **There are NO exceptions and if a camper arrives at camp without a medical form on file, we will contact parents to make arrangements to have this done locally at their expense.**

Similarly, **STAFF MUST have a current medical form on file with us.** This is for your own protection and safety, as well as ours. You **MUST** have this done prior to your employment contract. Please mail the original to our office and it is encouraged that you also keep a copy for your own records. Unlike the camper form, a **staff medical is valid for 2 seasons.**

ALL MEDICATIONS must be kept in our Infirmary. **This includes STAFF MEDS.**

Prescriptions/vitamins: Include copy of prescription labels, medicine names, dosages, and frequency of administering.

Over-the-counter: Do not pack as our Infirmary is fully stocked and we can provide this to you.

PREVENTION AT CAMP: To best care for campers and staff, we must have full information about your history of communicable diseases, inoculations, medical conditions, recent accidents, illnesses, etc. Please take time to inform us about all relevant situations right up until the first day of camp. If you have mailed us your medical form and have since had a recent illness/injury, please let us know. Please be up-to-date on your inoculations/vaccinations.

CAMPER MEDICAL PAYMENTS are the responsibility of the individual families, though we do cover most camper routine visits to the doctor. **STAFF members are strongly encouraged to arrive at camp with a medical insurance plan.** International staff **MUST** have valid medical insurance as a basic requirement to work at camp. **Staff are responsible for their own payments to doctors/hospitals.** Staff must complete their insurance information and file their own claim forms. MTC holds insurance for accidents that may occur at camp.

HEALTH CENTER: MTC has nurses on staff who are there to care for all camp community members. Please remember to follow the simple rules of the health center that our nurses will explain to you.

Leaving Camp with Other Families

For campers, written permission is necessary to leave camp with anyone other than a parent or legal guardian. Note that **friends of campers under the age of 21** are NOT permitted to visit campers unless accompanied by parents. Parents are asked to advise us if there is **anyone who may NOT visit or contact their camper.**

Staff may leave camp during any designated FREE TIME in their schedule.

Birthdays

If a camper is going to have a birthday while at camp, parents let us know if there is something 'special' they would like to provide to their camper in addition to our usual birthday celebration. We always sing to the camper in the morning, arrange a small gift, and a cake for the cabin. Staff, please remember your campers' birthdays and remember to pick up the cake from our kitchen!

The Camper Contract

Fortunately, most campers have few, if any, behavioral problems at camp. However, some teenagers "test limits" and from time to time, we regretfully find it necessary to send one or more campers home for serious infractions. At MTC, we believe in the pro-active approach of behavior management. We want to work with parents and counselors as to how best to make a camper's stay successful and we will make every effort to do so. If however, the safety or happiness of our community is affected adversely, we will send a camper home

without a tuition refund. Breaking the camper contract in any way is grounds to send a camper home, but we will work hard to keep this from happening. Parents can help their campers succeed by thoroughly discussing each point of the camper contract with their child before camp. Our campers also go over the contract with their counselors on the first night in their cabins. Our expectations are high, and we make our campers aware of our expectations early on. We have found that knowledge, understanding, and communication are key to helping “at risk” campers avoid putting their stay at camp in jeopardy. We want all campers to succeed at camp!

Staff members are a key part of explaining and reinforcing the Camper Contract. You will see a copy of the Camper Contract at camp.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Policies

This policy reminder is a word to the wise. Possession of alcohol or drugs at MTC will result in staff or campers involved in any incident leaving camp immediately.

MTC is a smoke-free camp for everyone, including visitors. Generally speaking, campers in possession of tobacco will be sent home. **Live-in staff are required to leave camp grounds in order to smoke on time-off only.**

Physical contact between campers

This topic is always discussed because we deal exclusively with teens. All campers sign the Camper Contract that indicates agreement with all our policies. One of these policies is refraining from inappropriate physical contact between campers. Male and female campers return to their respective sides of camp when their evening activities are over. Our camp is designed so that males and females live on opposite sides of camp. Our counselors are trained on how to identify and correctly deal with inappropriate physical contact. Many staff are on a shift rotation to walk the perimeter of camp and the cabin lines throughout the day and evening, and our Group Leaders/Head Counselors patrol the cabins late into the night to ensure each camper is accounted for prior to lights-out time. Please be assured that the safety of your children is paramount to us. We will send campers home who violate this policy without a refund.

Missing Home

Even though family may wish to call or contact a camper, our experience tells us that family should wait to make first contact by phone/email at least two days. During this time, some campers may experience homesickness and it is best to let us handle these issues at camp. If a homesick camper hears from mom or dad early in their stay, it may be difficult to conquer the homesick feelings. If a parent does speak to their child about missing home, we advise that they do not make promises or private ‘deals’ with their child, such as, “If you don’t like camp after one week, I will come and get you”. These comments tend to undermine a child’s ability to get through the transition from home to camp life. When parents are supportive of efforts to stay at camp, campers have the opportunity to gain independence and self-confidence while spending valuable time away from

home. Family is our best ally! We ask that parents let our experienced staff do the best we can to help your child over this difficult transition period. Of course, parents are always welcome to contact us for an 'update'.

Problems at Camp

If a situation develops that involves a camper, we have to speak with all parties involved and 'get to the bottom of the problem'. We do not judge early in the process of problem-solving. Not only is passing judgement early damaging to the child, but also to us, who have to be the fair voice of reason with teens. Our Group Leaders (head counselors) are pivotal in the process. They speak to counselors in cabins, instructors, campers, parents, and directors before making any decisions. Group Leaders have daily meetings with the directors to keep everyone abreast of any issues at camp. Generally, family is notified of any behavioral issues with their child. Working together, we can act quickly to solve most issues. We believe we do a good job of communication at MTC and we strive to make a child's stay at camp a great one. Likewise, we rely on parents to communicate with us – We tell parents that if their child tells them something that they feel that we should be aware of, to please contact us. We ask them to help us to help their camper!

Camper Progress

If parents have concerns about how their camper is adjusting and he/she does not call or email for days, we ask that they simply call or email us. We will get the message to a camper to call/email home right away. No news really is good news and likely they are having a wonderful time meeting new friends and learning new things. If parents want to hear from his/her counselor, we can arrange one of the counselors or a head counselor to speak with a parent. If a child is having a problem at camp, we will inform parents immediately. Parents know their child best and we will often turn to them for suggestions or assistance.

Addressing questions or concerns

Families are told that their questions can be emailed to mtc@teencamp.com or they may call our office and speak with our front desk and we will try to return the call within the day. We do have someone at the front desk into the evenings, but this is mostly to leave messages for the next day. Do not expect to reach administrators in the evenings, as this is our best time to enjoy the company of our campers and our staff.

We know that camp is a special experience for families and we will work very hard to do the best possible for each child. We ask that families inform us prior to the summer if they have any concerns about their child's adjustment to camp. Once their child has arrived, if they feel that there is a problem, we ask that they bring it to our attention immediately. We hope that families will feel comfortable speaking with us about any camp situation.

Collaboration

By working with campers and their parents, we at MTC can make a child's summer a success. *We thank parents for the opportunity and the immense support they give us. **Our staff** are a key part of the collaboration process and we expect staff to do their best to assist in this endeavor.*

Visiting

Generally, we are an 'open camp' to parents and do not have a special visiting day. If parents wish to visit, we ask that they notify us in advance of their plan. Note that the majority of camp families do not visit their campers, since many of our teens come from faraway locations.

Staff members may only have a visitor if the Directors give prior approval. Generally, we are a closed camp community to 'outsiders' and in many cases, even former staff and campers are not permitted during the camp season. Thanks for your understanding.

Visiting Maine

Maine is a beautiful State and when you are taking time off from camp duties, try to see as much as you can while you are employed with us. We hope that you will grow to love and appreciate all Maine (and Maine Teen Camp) has to offer!

Driving Directions from Points South (via Interstate 95 North/Maine Turnpike)

Driving Time is about 2.5 hours.

From Boston, take **Route 1 North** to **I-95 North**. After passing through Hampton, NH tolls, follow 95 North to exit 4, turn **LEFT** onto Ramp towards US-4/RT-16/N.H. Lakes/White Mts./Spaulding Tpke

Follow RT 16/Spaulding Turnpike north approximately 50 miles (note – only first 15 miles is toll road). Approximately 3 miles after passing through the town of Ossipee, NH, take exit ramp **right** for **Route 25 EAST**, towards Portland, Maine.

After crossing into Maine, **RT 160 North** joins RT 25 East. Follow into the town of Kezar Falls. **Turn left**, before bridge, staying on RT 160 North.

Follow RT 160 North (South Hiram Road) through Kezar Falls. After crossing a small bridge, follow RT 160 North as it turns **left onto Brownfield Road**. There is an ice cream store on this corner.

Follow Brownfield road for 2.3 miles. You will see Stanley Lake on the right. Look for our sign. The **camp entrance is on the right!**

Please drive slowly (5 mph) on the camp road. Parking is available as you come up the hill into camp.

Additional Information for International Families (Staff Please Read)

Language: MTC has International counselors on staff. Many of our International staff are helpful in your camper's adjustment to camp life. Families often register their camper for English as a Second Language lessons while at camp. These are mostly conversational lessons, but do practice some writing skills as well. We also attempt to place campers who speak the same foreign language in separate cabins, so that they may be immersed in American English as much as possible. However, if a family wants their child to be put in a cabin with a friend, this may be arranged. Also, the physical structure of camp allows limited flexibility with numbers of cabin mates. Due to the physical limitations of camp, we may not be able to meet all requests.

SIGHTS: During the summer, our campers have the chance to travel outside of camp on hikes, canoe trips, shopping trips, to amusement parks, and beach trips. There are optional trips that require an additional fee - White water rafting, ocean fishing, and whale watching are a few. All campers go to Freeport, Maine – a local outdoor shopping outlet area with discounted prices on famous brand names. Internationals often bring extra money to take to Freeport.

LINENS: All bedding is included in the tuition fee. Campers need to bring towels.

EQUIPMENT: MTC has all equipment that campers may need – sporting, music, waterfront, etc. We do encourage campers to bring their own tennis racquets if they are advanced players. We charge families a 50.00 lost or damaged racquet fee. Similarly, we charge 100.00 for lost or damaged guitars. Many camper musicians will bring their own guitars.

VALUABLES: Important personal items such as plane tickets, credit cards, passports, cell phones, expensive cameras, etc. are kept locked in the office. These items are NOT to be kept in the cabins. (This is advisable to staff as well).

Asking Questions (STAFF)

You can always ask questions! If you don't know something, we would love for you to ask! Here's an example of who you would see to ask, based on a specific question....

"I need to replace the lightbulb in my cabin! Who should I ask?" **Maintenance Dept.**

"I hurt my knee and I cannot teach my dance class today! Who should I see?" **Program Director**

"Can I teach an Art Appreciation class next week?" **Program Director**

"I have a great idea for an evening activity for the campers! Who should I see?" **Evening Program Coordinator**

"I love chocolate brownies for dessert! Who can I talk with?" **Head Chef/Food Service**

"Who can I see about this nagging cough that won't go away?" **Camp Nurse/Health Center**

"I saw two campers who looked like they were getting too close. Who should I inform?" **Group Leaders**

"I am having trouble at camp and I am not sure what to do. Can I get some help?" **Anyone you feel comfortable talking with!**

"I would like to buy stamps to send a postcard home, so who should I see?" **Camp Store**

"One of my campers wants to go on the whitewater rafting trip. Who should I tell her to see?" **Trips Coordinator**

"On the last day of camp, I am escorting campers to the Boston Airport. Who should I see about that?" **Travel Coordinator**

"My mom would like to visit me for the day and see what I do at camp. Who can I see if it's possible?" **Director**

"I would like to use the fax machine to send something home. Who do I see?" **Office Front Desk**

Final Thought

Remember, you are HERE for the KIDS. Our campers are our clients – their happiness and safety are our priority, and therefore, please make them **YOUR** priority. Our needs as staff must come second to the needs of our campers.