

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

# PARENT HANDBOOK FOR CAMPS AT LA FORET

Updated June 14, 2022

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The Outdoor Ministry program of the Rocky Mountain Conference offers a sanctuary – a place where it is safe to explore new ideas, develop the language of faith, dream, and take risks as persons harmonize their lives in community. At camps and retreats, we aim to create a world that is better, kinder, and spiritually and emotionally richer than the world outside so that kids can bring this vision forth into the everyday after camp is done. It is also vital to us that outdoor ministry programs are a SAFE space, and also a BRAVE space where kids can take good risks and grow more confident, independent, and driven. That is the magic of camp!

## Table of Contents

Click any of the items listed below to jump straight to that section.

1. [Theology and Philosophy of Outdoor Ministry](#)
  2. [About La Foret](#)
  3. [Benefits of Camp](#)
  4. [Parent Expectations](#)
  5. [Communicating with Your Camper](#)
  6. [Camper Rights and Responsibilities](#)
  7. [Disciplinary Policy](#)
  8. [Inclusion Policies](#)
  9. [Special Needs at Camp](#)
  10. [Scholarships](#)
  11. [Registration Deadlines and Payment Policies](#)
  12. [Forms and Legal Requirements](#)
  13. [Any and ALL Medications at Camp](#)
  14. [Evacuation Plan](#)
  15. [Credentials and Licenses](#)
  16. [First Time Camper FAQ](#)
- 

## Theology and Philosophy of Outdoor Ministry

Our understanding of Christianity emphasizes Jesus' radical welcome, God's enduring love for creation, humanity's spiritual longing for connection, and the power of Spirit to transform lives and communities. At camp, we encourage participants of all ages to consider important questions about God, faith, community, justice, the sacred, and the self. We invite questions over answers, process over product, and personal stories over normative statements. The result is a people-centered, faith-enriching, holistic (serving mind, body, and spirit) experience. Through friendships, laughter, story, prayer, campfires, hikes, games, crafts, stillness, worship, discussion, and God's ubiquitous presence at La Foret, our campers discover, rediscover, and deepen their faith.

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Outdoor Ministry radically connects faith and justice communities across the West. It is an integral part of the Rocky Mountain Conference's educational mission to local UCC parishes. It is also an open program welcoming campers from all walks on the spiritual journey and any spiritual tradition. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

### **Safe Space, Brave Space**

Safety is the number one priority at camp. Providing a physically, emotionally, spiritually safe environment opens up possibilities for campers to try new things and be transformed. When a space is safe, it can also be a brave space. We present safe challenges for campers so that they are empowered to trust themselves and build resilience.

### **We don't prepare kids for the real world. We prepare them for a better world.**

We believe in "being the change" you wish to see in the world. At camp, kids get to **imagine**, **create**, and **experience** a better world. They are essential partners in building the special camp community.

### **Covenant**

In the United Church of Christ, *covenant* is a critical value. It is a co-created document that lays out how a group of people promises to be in community together. At camp, rather than a list of rules, we have covenants. We do not judge and reject; we covenant to engage friendship and connection. We do not all agree, but we covenant to respect each other in our disagreements. We are not all the same and we covenant to value and celebrate our differences. Campers and counselors make expanded covenants together on the first night of camp, but there are a few elements of the covenant that we make sure are always present. This sample of some of the more serious "Dos and Don'ts" offers a window into how covenant guides the building of our camp community:

While at camp, we ask that campers DO:

- Participate
- Accept and welcome everyone
- Approach conversations with an open mind

- Attend programming on time
- Make new friends, especially seeking out first-time campers
- Listen to their counselors and directors
- Express their authentic selves
- “Unplug” from social media and technology (leave your cell phone at home)
- Respect the natural and human environment

While at camp, we ask that campers DO NOT:

- Engage in sexual activities
- Bring weapons of any kind
- Drink alcohol or use tobacco products of any kind (including vapor pens)
- Bring marijuana in any form to camp (edibles, joints, pipes, pens, etc.)
- Take drugs of any kind (other than prescriptions cleared by the camp nurse)
- Break covenantal agreements formed by the camp community

If these important covenantal guidelines are violated, directors and counselors will engage the camper who has damaged the community to contribute back to the community in a way that is meaningful and matches the type and severity of damage that has been done. This kind of relationship-mending in community is called “restorative practices” or “restorative justice.” Community is one of the most important components of our ministry, so when campers create divisions in that community by breaking camp rules, we take it very seriously. More importantly, these rules keep campers safe, which is our #1 priority.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## About La Foret

La Foret, is nestled in the heart of Black Forest, CO, and surrounded by 350+ acres of majestic Ponderosa Pines. Located just North of Colorado Springs and minutes from I-25, La Foret boasts an oasis of inspiring scenery in a peaceful, private setting. Imagine waking up to a stunning view of Pikes Peak and the rugged Rocky Mountains!

All of the buildings are located around the perimeter of a huge, open meadow that is perfect for games, concerts, and other outdoor group activities. Recreational facilities

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include an outdoor swimming pool (open Memorial Day through Labor Day), softball field, tennis and basketball courts, a horseshoe pit, archery.

The grounds also boast three fire circles, a walking labyrinth, wireless internet in buildings, a small camp store open by appointment, picnic grounds, audio/visual equipment, and a variety of sports equipment. La Foret is the proud home of a challenging ropes course and orienteering course, both designed with elements to encourage team building.

You can learn more about La Foret on our [website](#), or by calling 719-495-2743.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Benefits of Camp

The following list offers an overview of just some of the benefits of sending children to camps:

**Time Outdoors:** Studies show that being outdoors for even short periods of time every day can lower our heart rate and blood pressure and help us attain a more stable mood. In other words, it has huge benefits for our mind and body. Humans *need* to spend time in nature. Additionally, it benefits our spirit. When we spend more time in nature, we can see how everything is interconnected, and we can start to see ourselves as part of the whole web of life. Finally, it benefits our whole world. When we can wonder and be in awe of the natural world, we are more likely to care for it.

**Moral enrichment:** Camp facilitates intentional discussions around what it means to be a moral agent with free will, as well as conversations about living in a better, more just world. Moreover, children may (within safe spaces) become involved with moral conflict. We believe camp is an excellent venue for these types of conflict resolutions and bigger ideas.

**Self-empowerment:** Many children come to our camps unsure of who they are, and even more unsure of what's expected of them. As staff, it's our job to help them navigate tricky social situations, their self-identity, and ultimately reach a place where they know that they are loved and celebrated by God and by their communities.

**Resilience:** Safe challenges allow kids to really know that they can do hard things.

**Spirituality:** One of the largest questions at our camps is, “How does God/Jesus/the Bible fit into all of this?” And even more basically, “Who/what is God?” We try not to guide youth to any “right” theological answers, but instead, we do our best to help them to ask questions to reach answers on their own. We never proselytize or try to convert campers to any particular way of thinking or believing. We encourage them to trust themselves and their own experience and knowing.

**Leadership:** Our camps are staffed by trained and vetted directors and counselors. The developmental needs of the campers dictate the structural design of the program. In all our programs, we intentionally grow responsible, faithful leaders: campers, counselors, directors.

**Conflict resolution:** Conflict doesn’t happen often at camp, but when it does, we have tested procedures in place to make sure that resolution is reached and everyone feels fully heard and understood.

**Communication:** In times of declining person-to-person interactions, camp teaches critical skills in nonverbal communication, thought framing, eye contact, introductions, authentic self expression, and articulating one’s experience aloud.

**Radical acceptance:** We are radically and authentically inclusive; we accept everyone, no matter how their story/journey differs from ours; and we strongly encourage ALL campers and staff alike to embrace their authentic selves. Like any community of people, we will fall short sometimes. But as a community and as an organization, we are committed to always learning and growing so we can continue to be more truly inclusive and supportive of all campers and staff. (See our LGBTQ+ inclusion policy too)

**A wider worldview:** At camp, youth have had some pretty amazing “a-ha!” moments. Camp cultivates “real” conversations in which it is safe to hear and speak an alternate perspective. Rural and urban, Male/Female/Bi/Trans/Queer, affluent and poor will gather to hear and learn from one another.

**Something bigger than yourself:** While beliefs at camp run the gamut, the youth recognize that there are just as many opinions as people. Campers learn that despite our

differences, we can become a part of something--faith, friendships, and community-- bigger than ourselves.

**A sense of calling:** RMC outdoor ministry has been (and will continue to be) a huge factor in so many children's lives. We want each child to leave camp with a sense of duty, empowerment, and ideas on how they can reenter the outside world with their La Foret spirit in mind. This is why we say that we do not prepare kids for the real world, we prepare them for a better world. When kids come together in a community at camp, they can imagine, co-create, and experience a better world. That way, they know that a better world is possible, and that they can be the change they want to see.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Parent Expectations

Our camp staff works in covenant with you, the parents and guardians of those children and youth attending camp.

- Protocols and policies are developed to ensure compliance with all state and other pertinent guidelines.
- Late arrivals and early departures are strongly discouraged and in some cases not allowed. It is expected that you will bring your camper during the arrival window set by the particular camp's director, and that you will pick your camper up at the time set by that director. An hour or two late/early is allowed as long as you let the Director of Transformational Programs know (preferably by texting 719-822-7243), but a day or more late/early will no longer be allowed.
- Campers over the age of 16 with a drivers license may drive themselves with written permission of their parent/guardian so long as they are willing to surrender their keys to a counselor during camp.
- Send your love to your campers by a route other than snack foods. Snacks are provided and the La Foret dining hall serves three complete meals. Snack sharing can prove problematic within the cabins and yurts.

- Trust us that one or two letters / cards are sufficient to reassure your camper.
- Encourage your child to make new friends. Camp is a time of exploration and discovery. Moving out of comfort zones and challenging one's self are curtailed by cliques and exclusive friendships. Cabin assignment placement policies differ from camp to camp. If your registration permits your camper to request a cabinmate, please request just one. If it does not, reassure your camper that they will make new friends and have plenty of time with current ones. Know that we cannot accommodate these requests 100% of the time, but we do our best.
- In most cases, cabin / rooming assignments are made by individual Camp Directors. Camp Directors reserve the right to use their discretion when it comes to cabin assignments.
- State regulations grant parents access to their children upon request. Please consider the disruptive nature of your presence for the camp community before making the choice to call or visit. Campers find it disconcerting when a parent keeps stopping by and often become concerned. Also, your child gets a mixed message: "Have a good week away from home" followed by "You can't have a good week without home coming to you."
- La Foret has a stranger-on-site policy that we take extremely seriously, which includes parents and guardians who have not arranged to be present during the week. If you do not let us know you are coming, this could lead to us enacting emergency protocols and calling local law enforcement, unknowingly reporting a parent as a potential threat.
- If you would like to check on your child, call the La Foret office phone (719-495-2743) and the Director of Transformational Programs (719-822-7243). La Foret staff will return your call at the earliest appropriate time.
- When discussing camp with your camper and planning how to interact with your child, please remember that camp is an opportunity for your child to explore their independence in a safe, loving environment. Use common sense and consider how your parenting needs could overshadow your child's growth needs and affect the entire camp.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Communicating with Your Camper

Experts agree that the best thing you can do for your child while they are at summer camp is to give them a week without calls, texts or other types of check-in. When they have one foot at camp and another at home, kids consistently act less outgoing, less cooperative, less resilient and more anxious. It significantly increases the severity of homesickness when kids have a constant line to parents or friends who are not present.

You can help your camper by talking positively to them before camp begins. It is much better to say, "I'm looking forward to hearing your camp stories" than to say, "I'll miss you so much." It is more helpful to say, "I'll see you and your new friends on Saturday" than to say, "Call me if anything happens."

Non-emergency communication rarely relieves homesickness, anxiety or loneliness and more often exacerbates the issues, preventing the child from experiencing the fullness of camp. Kids with cell phones choose to turn to parents for their needs instead of communicating with counselors or working out problems with peers. When that happens, campers miss one of the most important and unique opportunities of camp: developing communication, coping, and interpersonal skills.

This being said, we will not ever deny campers talking to a parent if they need to, and counselors and directors take kids' requests seriously and act with empathy. We do not withhold communication when it is necessary. If a parent is concerned during the week, they can feel free to contact Logan by phone call or text at any time. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Letter writing, talking to counselors, and making new friends are the best antidote to homesickness. Consistently, the most positive growth outcomes occur when an involved staff member and camp friends love the homesick camper into community.

### Emergencies

If a parent needs to reach a child during camp in a bona fide emergency, they may call the Director of Transformational Programs' cell number. This number is answered 24 hours a day during camp.

## Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed to be used at camp, so we must stress, DO NOT send a camper with a backup or burner phone. Texting and calling home is not allowed for the week unless there is a serious need, because it is detrimental to the camp experience. We may collect cell phones to prevent campers from missing the chance to be present at La Foret. We request that families support this opportunity for their campers by cooperating with these policies and encouraging campers ahead of time that they will do great on their own.

## Homesickness

Homesickness is a common occurrence. Staff members work hard to help campers process through homesickness, encouraging campers to form friendships with other campers and to participate in activities and programs.

## Sending Mail

- There are often multiple groups onsite at La Foret at the same time. Please identify your child's specific camp name on the outside of the envelope below the camper's name. This will increase the likelihood that the envelope gets into the hands of your child's Camp Director more efficiently.
- Send mail early in the week or before camp begins. Mail sent later than Tuesday will often arrive after the campers have gone home. Camp mail does not get forwarded from La Foret.
- Please limit your mail to one or two letters / cards. Flooding campers with messages from home can increase camper stress and homesickness and adversely affect the growth and community we are trying to foster.
- Camp Directors reserve the right to hold onto mail and distribute later during the week to reduce jealousy or embarrassment.
- Care packages with food, snacks, and candy can complicate camp. Camper allergies, wildlife, and scheduled meal / sleep times can all be adversely affected by a well meaning care package. It is better to have these items in the car when you pick up your camper!

- The best scenario is for a camper to receive a letter or card on Wednesday or Thursday. This simple gesture reassures campers that they are on your mind.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## **Camper Rights and Responsibilities**

La Foret camps are a mixing and sharing of lives in authentic community. Our camps are more than just a week together at La Foret to have fun. They are human encounters where children, youth, and adults learn to live in community with each other, seeking the Spirit of God.

In order to allow this experience to be as positive as possible, we ask that campers come with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities for camp. Please cover this information with your camper as this is the baseline from which the staffs build.

### **Rights:**

- To receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support and supervision
- To wear your own clothing, keep and use your own allowed personal possessions, and keep and spend a reasonable sum of your own money
- To enjoy freedom of thought, inquiry, perspective, conscience, and beliefs, which are not harmful to others and respect UCC values.
- To receive adequate and appropriate medical care
- Access to all camp amenities regardless of race, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political affiliation
- To be free from physical and verbal harm from either adults or co-campers, and to be guided through restorative practices if relationships are damaged.
- To be protected from sexual exploitation; Our directors and camp staff are background checked with FBI, CBI and TRAILS clearance, and undergo orientation and training for proper boundaries and behavior as well as mandatory reporting.

### **Responsibilities:**

- To know and comply with camp covenant/rules
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- To respect the possessions of other campers and staff
- To follow the camp schedule including lights out
- To tell staff where you will be at all times and respect the rule to always have 3 people present
- To respect restrictions of where campers may and may not go
- To assist camp staff in upholding Child Care Licensing laws and standards
- To cooperate with staff requests that do not violate camper rights
- To keep your personal possessions in reasonable order
- To be fully clothed around others at all times
- To make efforts to get along with others
- To make camp “home” for the week
- To make a good effort to be with other campers in activities and the spirit of the camp
- To follow safety instructions and avoid endangering self or others
- To attend and participate in camp activities as able
- To report any harmful behavior of other campers, staff members, or other persons on site
- To avoid any violent actions or words that may harm another camper or staff
- To abstain from using or possessing ANY alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or non-medically prescribed drugs at camp
- To leave ALL weapons – guns, bullets, knives, etc., at home
- To leave at home or be willing to relinquish ALL cell phones at the beginning of camp

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## **Disciplinary Policy**

In some instances, campers need to be redirected toward better and more positive outcomes. When such a case arises, our staff is trained to use discipline that is constructive, educational, and non-violent. Intervention is guided by the principle that all campers have the right to participate fully in camp activities, as long as they are not interfering with another’s right to participate. Communication, trust, and understanding

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guide our disciplinary procedures. Staff are trained to listen, redirect, and refocus. Campers learn to articulate frustrations (rather than act out), to express themselves before they lose perspective, and to become active participants in the solution. We utilize restorative rather than punitive practices to ensure that campers are given the opportunity to repair any damage that might have occurred in a relevant and meaningful way.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## **Inclusion Policies**

La Foret seeks to be a place of sanctuary where all can feel welcome, seen, heard, and celebrated for who they are. We are working on additional inclusion policies that help us name exactly what this looks like for as many areas of the full spectrum of human experience as possible. For now, please see our [Inclusivity Statement](#) on our website, and our extensive [LGBTQ+ Inclusion Policy](#). If you have any comments, questions, concerns, or suggestions to help us become a more welcoming sanctuary for all, please let us know.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## **Special Needs at Camp**

- The theology and philosophy of our camps are grounded in the statement that “All are welcome.” Having said that, we know that all camps are not appropriate for all children.
- La Foret is a wilderness setting and not every building or location is ADA accessible. Participation decisions may need to be made on an activity-by-activity basis.
- Our camps are staffed by volunteers. Their commitment to camper safety coupled with potential limits in their knowledge and ability to address special emotional or physical needs may adversely affect your child’s experience.

- La Foret has an Accessible cabin (Tannenbaum) and an Accessible yurt complete with accessible bathrooms and reasonably flat access. Many reasonable accommodations can be made to ensure your special needs camper can attend and participate.
- Communicate early! If the camper is unlikely to be able to participate fully in the program, please inform us as early as possible so that we can understand and plan how to better integrate them into the camp routine. We want to help, and knowledge is key!
- Inform us of your camper's special needs: bathroom, dietary, managing clothing changes, etc. so we can assess our volunteer staff's ability to support your camper effectively.
- Think through your camper's participation. What challenges do you anticipate: keeping up with a full day schedule, transportation around the grounds, mealtime realities, etc.
- Make arrangements ahead of time. Very little can be adjusted at the beginning of camp. At least 6 weeks notice is best for us, so we know what needs to be done a full month before registration closes.
- Sometimes it is helpful or even necessary for special needs campers to bring a "companion" along who is able to provide the special attention and service that the camper needs to participate fully. Companions are suggested when it would be unreasonable to ask standard camp counseling staff to assume this role. Companions are required to complete all volunteer staff paperwork and training, partner with camp staff and directors, and be the primary caregiver to the camper with special needs. Companion camp fees are covered by La Foret and the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- We reserve the right to deny registration if we feel we cannot reasonably accommodate your child's needs and the needs of the entire camp at the same time. By communicating early and offering yourself as a resource for the staff and director, we are more likely to meet our goal of a good experience for the special needs camper.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Scholarships

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La Foret and the RMC are committed to providing transformational experiences to any and all campers who would like to attend our camps and retreats. **Our philosophy is that money should never be the reason someone does not come to camp.**

We carefully set prices for camps and retreats such that camp event expenses are covered by camper fees. La Foret is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and we only aim to cover our costs when we set our prices. We use a transparent process to set fees, and an explanation of fees is available right on the registration page next to the price. This includes La Foret staff time, the camp nurse, camper meals, facilities, supplies, programming and much more. To keep costs low for campers, camp counselors and directors are stipend volunteers and are not compensated hourly for their time. They receive only a small stipend as a thank you for all their hard work and time spent in training and preparation.

While it is important for us to ensure that our camp program is financially stable, we are also adamant that any child who wants to come should be able to attend camp. We are happy to work with parents who need financial assistance. Camper families are encouraged to consider creative ways to raise the funds they need, and then to reach out to their church and association for funds. Many churches set up a coupon code for their families to use during registration that allows for the church's funds to be immediately accessible to families when they register.

After church and/or association funds, whatever the remaining amount needs to be covered to get a child to camp, we are ready to cover.

If your child would like to attend camp and you are struggling with payment, please contact Logan Bennett, Director of Transformational Programs at [logan@lafort.org](mailto:logan@lafort.org)

### **Payment Options when a Church is offering Scholarship Funds**

As noted above, in some cases local UCC churches encourage campers to attend camp by offering matching scholarships or additional funds. If your church is doing this for you, they will normally provide a church-specific coupon code for you to use. For the remainder that you will owe, at registration you may either pay the \$25 deposit or a partial amount if you are not prepared to pay the full amount at once. We are also happy to set up a payment plan if that is preferable.

Regardless of which payment method you choose, please check your account periodically to ensure payments are up to date. Even if your church is helping you pay for camp, YOU are still responsible for ensuring payments are made on time.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## **Registration Deadlines and Payment Policies**

All registration takes place online. Families create an account and enter camper information through the registration website. Our online system collects household information, emergency contacts, medical and allergy data, most permission waivers, and payment. Prior to the start of camp, parents must also provide some additional forms (see next section).

After completing your online registration, you will receive a confirmation email. Please keep this email for your records. This email also has the additional forms attached and directions on how to obtain and submit the necessary information.

At any time you may log back into your account to make additional payments, review your current or past registrations, print household account statements and more, so please remember your login email address and password.

Registration is not complete until all fees have been received. We ask that all fees are paid no later than TWO WEEKS prior to the start of the event. You may choose to send a check, make an online payment, or call with credit card information.

### **Summer Camp Registration DEADLINES:**

May 15: Early Bird Registration Deadline. After this date, we reserve the right to increase camp fees.

The Last Chance Registration Deadline is always TWO WEEKS prior to the start of camp, so long as we have room and all forms and required paperwork are submitted at the deadline.

### **Fees and Cancellations:**

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To maintain the vitality of the outdoor ministry program, these are the requirements pertaining to fees and cancellations. The nonrefundable deposit is due at the time of your registration. The balance is due TWO WEEKS prior to the start of the event. If the full balance is not received two weeks prior to the event, the camper's spot may be given to another camper if there is a waitlist. If you need to cancel your registration, you may do so up to 30 days before the event. Between 30 and 14 days before the event, the cancellation fee is the deposit plus \$25. Within the final two weeks leading up to the event, we are unable to refund fees and will bill unpaid accounts accordingly, unless in the case of a medical emergency or medical situation such as a positive result on a Covid-19 test. In the case of a medical situation or other extenuating circumstance, please email [logan@laforet.org](mailto:logan@laforet.org) to request a refund. Thank you for your understanding and good stewardship of La Foret and Conference resources.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Forms and Legal Requirements

Prior to the start of camp, parents must also provide these additional forms which are required by state law:

1. The camper's Colorado immunization schedule
2. A Camper health form/physical (signed by the camper's doctor.)
3. A ropes course waiver, if applicable for the specific age group
4. Other special circumstance forms as necessary (Covid safety, etc)

After completing your online registration, you will receive a confirmation email. Please keep this email for your records. This email also has the additional forms attached and directions on how to obtain and submit the necessary information. The body of that email is pasted below for your convenience:

Hello.

Thank you for registering your child for a La Foret summer camp! Your camper's spot is reserved, and their registration requirements are **almost** complete.

**Due to state requirements, there are TWO additional medical forms that we have to collect.** While the form requirements can be as tedious as any other legal documents, we have tried to make it as simple as possible, and provide multiple options for how you may choose to meet these requirements.

**The first required form is a camper physical** that states the camper is fit to attend camp. As long as the form you send us says your camper is fit for participation AND is signed by a doctor, it meets the state's requirements. Here are the formats we can accept:

1. A camper health form is attached that you may print and have your camper's doctor sign.
2. If your camper's doctor has their own form with the same information that they use for camps and/or schools, we can accept that.
3. If you have a copy of the physical you provided to your child's school, and the physical was completed within 12 months of the dates of camp, we can accept that.
4. If you would like us to send you a fillable pdf that you can securely send to your doctor's email address, you may request that by emailing [camp@lafort.org](mailto:camp@lafort.org)

**The second form is an immunization record** that states the camper has all required immunizations to attend camp. There are a number of formats we can accept:

1. One version of this form is attached, and you may choose to have your camper's doctor fill it out and sign it.
2. If your camper's doctor has another format with the same information, that is also acceptable.
3. If your camper's doctor has an online portal from which you can directly download an immunization record, that is also acceptable.

4. Additionally, if you are a Colorado resident, you may visit [cdphe.colorado.gov](https://cdphe.colorado.gov) or copy and paste the link below to obtain vaccination records directly from the Colorado Immunization Information System.

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/prevention-and-wellness/disease-and-injury-prevention/immunization/for-the-public/get-a-copy-of>

Both forms must be received at least 2 weeks prior to the camp. You may mail them to La Foret, 6145 Shoup Rd. Colorado Springs, CO. You may also email them to [camp@laforet.org](mailto:camp@laforet.org) or fax them to 719-434-9903. If you choose to email the forms, please make sure the information is clear and the image or pdf quality is good. We have to be able to print and read the forms.

You will receive an email 2 weeks prior to the start of camp if any of these forms are not completed. **If your camper comes to camp without these two completed forms, by state law we will not be able to allow them to stay.** So it is essential that these forms be completed.

If you have any questions feel free to email the Director of Transformational Programs at [logan@laforet.org](mailto:logan@laforet.org)

Thank you, and we can't wait to see you at La Foret!

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## **Any and ALL Medications at Camp**

For the purposes of camp, “medications” refers to ANY prescription meds, over the counter meds, herbal and homeopathic supplements or treatments, allergy medications, and every “as needed” item such as Tylenol or sunscreen.

Please do NOT bring medications in a unit dose box or planner, plastic bag, or unmarked container. State regulations prohibit us from accepting medications which are in unmarked containers. If needed, a pharmacy can prepare a marked bottle with just enough medication for the week.

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All medication is turned into the camp nurse at registration, logged and stored per state licensing guidelines, and dispensed as needed at mealtimes and bedtimes. Campers are not permitted to have any medications in their cabins unless expressly requested on the health form by a medical professional.

Any camper requiring an Epi-Pen must know how to use it and must carry it with them at all times, as there are situations (such as a hike) when the nurse may not be readily available. Campers with Epi-Pens must also have the [required form](#) signed by a doctor. With the information on the medical form, and all medication dispensed by the nurse, a quicker and more helpful assessment can be made in the event of an emergency.

See [this visual](#) if you have further questions.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Evacuation Plan

In the event that an emergency evacuation from our site is necessary, we will meet at the **parking lot of Legacy Peak Elementary School, 8701 Wolf Valley Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80924**

If the planned location is unsafe because of related weather or natural disaster conditions, parents and guardians will be updated as soon as possible on the new plan via email and, when possible, text to the contact information provided in registration.

Guardians and parents will be notified as soon as possible in case of any evacuation. If we cannot reach a camper's primary contact, we will call the person listed as an emergency contact. Please ensure this is someone who could also pick your child up from our meeting location.

To get kids to the safe evacuation location, we collect information from counselors with valid drivers licenses before camp begins so that we know who brought their vehicle, and how many seats will be available to evacuate kids. During the day, we can also count on-site full time staff and their available vehicles in these numbers.

Parents sign a waiver in the online registration forms that indicates staff and counselors can take kids off premises if deemed necessary for safety reasons.

In the past, we have entered into an agreement with the District 20 Bus Barn to provide transportation in case of an emergency evacuation. Unfortunately they will no longer offer this for us because of new management and driver availability in the summer.

If you have questions about emergency evacuation, please contact [camp@laforet.org](mailto:camp@laforet.org) or 719-495-2743

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## Credentials and Licenses

La Foret is a licensed childcare program with the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a resident children's camp. You may ask to see a copy of the license at the La Foret office.

In the event you believe your child has suffered physical or sexual abuse at camp, please call Social Services at 1-800-CO-4-KIDS, the 24/7 Colorado reporting hotline for child abuse and neglect. If you have concerns about the La Foret facilities please call the Division of Child Care of the Colorado Department of Human Services: 303-866-5958. If you have concerns about camp staff, please contact Rev. Logan Bennett, Director of Transformational Programs: 719-822-7243

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*

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## First Time Camper FAQ

### **I'm nervous; is that normal?**

Yes; it is perfectly normal and very common for campers to get anxious or excited about camp! Even returning campers will experience butterflies in their stomach. However, as with most new experiences, your nerves will likely fade right away.

### **What if I'm not very good at sports/art/etc?**

Youth of all different backgrounds attend camp, and we don't judge others for who they are. We don't ask that anyone excel in any area; we only ask that campers participate, if they are able.

### **Will I make friends?**

Yes! All campers participate in activities and discussions specifically designed to help the campers get to know one another. We also place the utmost importance on creating a judgment-free, inclusive, and safe experience.

### **What should I bring/leave at home?**

Please note: this list is not exhaustive. Please refer to your Camp Director's letter before you and your child finalize packing for camp. However, this will give you a general idea of our expectations surrounding what campers need to bring to camp and what items have no place at camp.

Campers SHOULD bring:

- weather-appropriate clothes, lots of layers
- close-toed shoes
- bathing suit
- toiletries
- warm bedding
- sunscreen (must be labeled with a name!)
- towel
- refillable water bottle with camper's name on it
- small musical instruments
- Flashlight / headlamp
- any prescription medication (always labeled and in its ORIGINAL containers)

Campers SHOULD NOT bring:

- drugs of any kind
- alcohol
- tobacco or marijuana
- weapons

- cell phones

Parents of first time campers may also want to look at [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) to find tips and strategies to help campers and parents prepare for their first camp experience. As always, feel free to contact Logan (719-822-7243) with any questions or concerns.

*[back to [Table of Contents](#)]*