



# 2026 PARENT HANDBOOK



# Director's Welcome

Hello Echo Lake Parents... both those of you who are giving your camper the gift of camp for the first time and those of you who are veterans of the Camp Echo Lake Community,

We are thrilled to have your family as part of the CEL family as we celebrate our 81st summer at camp! Whether this is your child's first or fifth summer at Echo Lake, we look forward to sharing an impactful and fun-filled seven weeks. Each summer our campers enjoy making new friends, reuniting with old friends, building skills in activities, developing as people, and feeling a part of our special camp community! We hope that you are not only looking forward to going on this journey with us and your child, but also partnering with us to make the experience as successful and positive as possible.

Our updated 2026 CEL Parent Handbook is a valuable and necessary tool for ALL parents to give you information for the summer, to help prepare you and your camper(s) for camp, and to offer support as well. Each year we update the important details, for both new and returning families, about policies and procedures, summer logistics, communication over the summer, packing information, travel and baggage information, tips for a successful summer, and more!

The 2026 Parent Handbook is available on our [website](#), on your [Parent Dashboard](#), and as a [downloadable PDF](#). We suggest that you bookmark it, print it, or make sure you have it as an easy reference as we move through the winter, into the spring, and straight on to camp this summer!

As always, we are here to discuss any questions or concerns you may have as we partner with you to help your child have the best summer experience. We are counting down the days to another incredible summer at Camp Echo Lake! Please give your camper big hugs from us and enjoy our 2026 Camp Echo Lake Parent Handbook.

Warm regards,  
Laurie and Tony



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# 2026 Important Camp Dates

Please mark your calendar for the below Off-Season Events and Summer Dates for you and your camper(s). Look out for email communication leading up to the dates and events with more information. Click [here](#) to view the important dates on our website.

## 2026 Off-Season Dates:

- New Camper Virtual Event - Sunday, February 8 at times per age group on Zoom
- New Parent Night - Wednesday, April 15 from 7:00pm-8:45 pm EST on Zoom
- New Camper Spring Into Summer Event - Sunday, May 3 from 10:30am to 12:00 pm EST at Breezemont Day Camp in Armonk, NY

## 2026 Summer Dates:

- Camp Echo Lake 2026 Season Begins - Sunday, June 28
- Family Visiting Day - Saturday, July 18 from 9am to 3pm
- Alternate Visiting Day ONLY for Divorced/Separated Families - Sunday, July 19 from 9am to 3pm
- Camp Echo Lake 2026 Season Ends - Saturday, August 15



# Camp Echo Lake Contact Information



## Physical Address

Camp Echo Lake  
177 Hudson Street  
Warrensburg, NY 12885

## Mailing Address

Camp Echo Lake  
P.O. Box 188  
Warrensburg, NY 12885

**Camp Echo Lake Office Phone Number:**  
(518) 623 - 9635

**Camp Echo Lake Office Email Address:**  
[office@campecholake.com](mailto:office@campecholake.com)

# Transportation to and from Camp

Bus Location	Departure Time on June 28	Address
Long Island	10:30 am	Manhasset Park District 62 Manhasset Ave Manhasset, NY 11030
Manhattan	10:30 am	Riverside Church 480 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10027 (on Riverside Drive between 120th and 122nd Street)
Westchester/Connecticut/ Riverdale/Rockland	11:00 am	Manhattanville College 2900 Purchase St. Purchase, NY 10577 Spellman Lot
Montreal	11:00 am	Selwyn House School 95 Chem. de la Côte-Saint-Antoine Westmount, QC H3Y 2H8 Canada
New Jersey	10:30 am	Fashion Center 747 NJ-17 Paramus, NJ 07652 Parking Lot off E. Firehouse Lane

Campers are assigned to the most convenient bus location based on their home address.

Any family not covered by these transportation locations or any family making special transportation plans, please contact camp by May 1 to discuss transportation plans for your camper(s) transportation to and from camp.

All exact transportation locations and times will be confirmed via email as we get closer to the start of camp.

Buses will arrive back at these locations around 12:30 PM on August 15th. We will also confirm the locations and give you a more precise time the week before the last day of camp.

**\*These locations may change prior to the start of camp. We will email out any changes that may arise.**

# Packing Guidelines and Recommendations

At Camp Echo Lake we strive to focus on who campers are on the inside and not what they look like - or dress like - on the outside in order to reinforce healthy self-esteem and diminish the superficial pressures of the outside world. We also want campers to be dressed comfortably to participate and be active in all of our many activities, no matter what the activity or event is. Be you, be comfortable, and be active.

Although we support what parents buy and pack for their campers, we do ask that you keep in mind our previously stated goals and a few basic guidelines:

- Fancy, dressy, or expensive clothes or shoes are not needed at camp.
- Skirts/dresses are not allowed at camp.
- One-piece bathing suits, tankini style bathing suits, board shorts, and rash guards/board short outfits are all allowed at camp. We ask that you do not send your camper with bikinis, monokinis, bathing suits with cutouts, or speedos. These guidelines apply to on-camp swimming and off-camp trips (including the 4n4 and LIT trips off-camp).
- Sports bras, bikini tops, corset/bustier tops, bandeau tops, and tank tops with completely open sides that show skin and chest are not allowed at camp as shirts.
- Shirts must be worn at all times by all campers and staff (except when in a bathing suit, showering, or in your own bunk) at activity areas and around camp.
- Blow dryers, hair straighteners, and make-up (other than nail polish) are not allowed at camp.

As you pack for camp, we ask that you please follow a few simple guidelines:

- Carefully review the camp packing list and suggested quantities of items.
- Each camper is allowed to bring two large sports equipment bags or soft trunks, available from the Camp Spot for your convenience. If you are purchasing new camp baggage, we specifically recommend the DELUXE SOFT TRUNK (36" x 20" x 18") from [The Camp Spot](#) or another duffel of that size made from similar material. ALL CAMP BAGGAGE MUST HAVE THE CAMPER'S NAME PRINTED ON THEM.
- All campers must bring their own sheets, blankets, pillowcases, and pillows.
- Please make sure to send your camper with a backpack.
- Please make sure that every single item (including all clothing, bedding, sports equipment, games, toiletries, music players, shoes, etc...) your camper brings to camp is labeled with their first and last name.
- Lockboxes - or any items that lock - are not allowed at camp and will be held in the HQs if they are sent to camp.
- Drawers that go next to the bed may not be brought to camp.
- Drink powders (Gatorade, Crystal Light, electrolyte powders, etc.) or other drink additives may not be brought to camp.

**\*We strongly recommend - regardless of the age of your camper - that your camper is with you as you label their items and pack their duffels for camp.** It is extremely helpful for campers to see, and be aware, of what you are packing for them. If they take notice of the variety of clothes, toiletries, equipment, bedding, games, letter-writing materials, and more that you are sending with them to camp, they will be better prepared to work with their counselors to unpack, organize their items, and know what they have at camp - and what their items look like - when they need a raincoat or stamp or laundry bag, etc....

# Camp Echo Lake 2026 Packing List

Please visit [The Camp Spot](#) to access our camp store and view a PDF version of the CEL Packing List below.

## WHAT WILL I NEED FOR CAMP ECHO LAKE 2026?

### LABELING

*All clothing and equipment must be labeled with the camper's full name.*

- \_\_\_ 100-200 Sew-on or Iron-on Name Tapes
- \_\_\_ 1-3 sheets Equipment Stickers

### REQUIRED CAMP UNIFORM

- \_\_\_ 3 Green Ts with Logo
- \_\_\_ 3 Gold Ts with Logo

### ADDITIONAL APPAREL

- \_\_\_ 4 White Ts (Any Style)
- \_\_\_ 12 Additional Ts or Tank Tops
- \_\_\_ 3 Sweatshirts
- \_\_\_ 4 Long Pants (Jeans, Sweatpants, Leggings, etc.)
- \_\_\_ 7 Shorts
- \_\_\_ 2 Baseball Caps

### OUTERWEAR

- \_\_\_ 1 Lightweight Jacket or Fleece
- \_\_\_ 1 Rain Jacket

### SOCKS & SHOES

- \_\_\_ 18 Pairs of Socks
- \_\_\_ 2 Athletic Sneakers
- \_\_\_ 1 Field Cleats
- \_\_\_ 1 Shower Shoes
- \_\_\_ 1 Rain Boots or Shoes

### UNDERWEAR & SWIMWEAR

- \_\_\_ 15 Pairs of Underwear
- \_\_\_ 5 Swimsuits (swim trunks, one piece, or Tankini)
- \_\_\_ 1 Swim Goggles

### BUNKWEAR & BATH

- \_\_\_ 2 Sets of Warm Sleepwear
- \_\_\_ 2 Sets of Lightweight Sleepwear
- \_\_\_ 1 Shower Caddy
- \_\_\_ 1 Terry Bathrobe
- \_\_\_ 7 Bath / Beach Towels
- \_\_\_ 2 Washcloths

### BEDDING & LAUNDRY

- \_\_\_ 1 Comforter / Blanket
- \_\_\_ 2 Twin Size Sheets Sets
- \_\_\_ 1 Pillow
- \_\_\_ 1 Laundry Bag with Name

### CAMPING & OUTDOORS

- \_\_\_ 1 Sleeping Bag
- \_\_\_ 1 Insect Repellent
- \_\_\_ 1 Crazy Creek Chair (Optional)

### BAGS

- \_\_\_ 2 Soft Trunks with Name (No wider than 44")
- \_\_\_ 1 Backpack/Bookbag (REQUIRED)
- \_\_\_ 1 Set of Luggage Tags

### EQUIPMENT

- \_\_\_ 1 Pair of Shin Guards
- \_\_\_ 1 Tennis Racquet
- \_\_\_ 1 Baseball Glove
- \_\_\_ 1 Rollerblades (Optional)
- \_\_\_ 1 Helmet with face shield (Required for Roller Hockey)
- \_\_\_ 1 Knee/Shin Guard Unit (Required for Roller Hockey)
- \_\_\_ 1 Elbow Pads (Required for Blading/ Roller Hockey)
- \_\_\_ 1 Hockey Gloves (Required for Roller Hockey)
- \_\_\_ 1 Mesh Sport Bag with Name for Equipment (Required for Roller Hockey Equipment)

Roller Hockey equipment is not needed to participate in hockey group activities. It is required if your camper plans to play during free play.

### ESSENTIALS & FUN STUFF

- \_\_\_ 1 Flashlight with Extra Batteries
- \_\_\_ 2 Water Bottles
- \_\_\_ 1 Battery Operated Fan
- \_\_\_ 4 Sets Stationery and Stamps
- \_\_\_ 2 Disposable Cameras (Or Inexpensive Camera)
- \_\_\_ Books and Non-Electronic Games

### SUGGESTED PERSONAL ITEMS

- \_\_\_ Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
- \_\_\_ Hair Brush
- \_\_\_ Soap
- \_\_\_ Shampoo/Conditioner
- \_\_\_ Sunscreen
- \_\_\_ Pair of Extra Eyeglasses
- \_\_\_ 1 Bottle of Hand Sanitizer (Optional)



# Special Events and Costumes

Throughout the 7-week summer, there are many times for campers to show their spirit, wear costumes, or just add to the camp fun with Special Events. Look for an email in the spring with more details about what to bring to camp, but feel free to start collecting fun items now - especially anything GREEN and GOLD! Costumes and special attire can be DIYed at camp with items your camper already has, or packed and sent to camp.

**Neon Party & Silent Disco:** For these events, it's always fun to dress up in neon or glow-in-the-dark attire!

**Hoe-down:** For our annual hoe-down, many campers don flannel shirts, overalls, bandanas, or straw hats!

**4th of July:** CEL's 4th of July celebrations often include wearing red, white, and blue!

**Tribal:** Each summer our campers participate in Tribal, Camp Echo Lake's color war! We suggest bringing some green and gold clothing items, and maybe even some face paint. On Visiting Day, once campers know their teams, parents can bring up more clothing items to represent their team!

**Halloween:** Halloween in July is an opportunity for campers to dress in costume, whether store-bought or pieced together creatively from what they already have at camp! **Group costumes (worn by 2 or more campers) are NOT allowed unless the entire group (not just the bunk) is invited to participate.**

**Carnival:** Each summer we host a themed carnival! We will announce the theme for this summer as we get closer to camp. Themes in the past have included the 80s, wacky & tacky, and superheroes.

**Color Run:** Wear something white and prepare to run through the colors of the rainbow as we raise money for Project Morry!



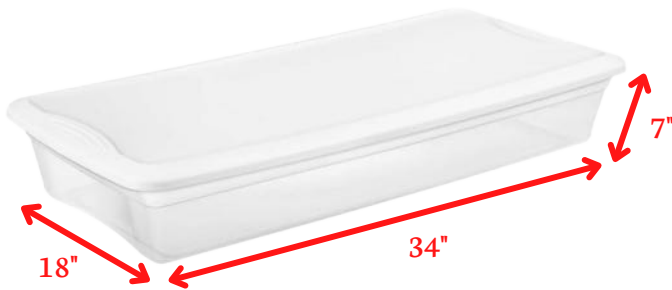


# Storage Space at Camp

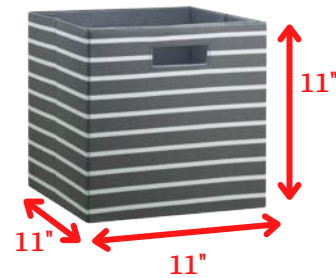
Main Village campers will be provided with approximately 6 cubby spaces for their clothes and 2 bedside cubbies. Senior Village campers will have approximately 9 cubby spaces in total. The exact size of each cubby varies by cabin.

All campers are also allowed to bring 1 storage box that can fit underneath a bed. The maximum size for an under-the-bed storage box is 34" in length, 18" in width, and 7" in height.

We also suggest using cubby cubes to help your camper's bedside cubbies remain organized.



This is an example of an average sized under-the-bed box.



This is an example of an average sized cubby cube that would fit in our bedside cubbies for Main Village Campers.

Each Main Village camper will have 1 vertical column of cubbies for their belongings (as shown in the picture below to the left) or approximately 6 cubby spaces total. Each Senior Village Camper will have 1 1/2 vertical rows of cubbies equaling approximately 9 cubby spaces total. The exact cubby size varies by cabin.

In addition, each Main Village Camper will have two cubby spaces in a bedside cubby (as shown in the picture below to the right.) Please feel free to send your camper with cubby cubes to organize their bedside cubbies.



# Showers at Camp

While at camp, camper shower once daily at their group's assigned time in their village's shower house. There are four shower houses on camp in their respective villages: Main Village Boys, Main Village Girls, Senior Village Boys, and Senior Village Girls.

Campers travel to and from the shower house with their group, wearing bathrobes and shower shoes and carrying their shower caddies. Each shower has hooks for robes and towels to stay dry. Campers change back at their cabins, not in the shower house. A staff member is always present, and campers are never left unsupervised in either the shower house or the cabin. Shower time at camp is efficient, safe, and fun.

Please see the photos below for an example of the interior of a Camp Echo Lake shower house.



## Towel Service at the Lake and Pool

Camp Echo Lake provides towel service for all in-camp swimming and boating activities at the lake and pools. Each time campers swim, fresh towels are available for them to use when they finish. Campers do not need to carry swim towels across camp or back to their cabins. After use, towels are placed in designated bins and laundered by our laundry team for the next day.

The packing list reflects the appropriate number of personal towels to send to camp. Campers will still need their own towels or robes for showers, off-camp swimming (such as waterskiing, Trek trips, or other off-camp activities), and for use in the cabin. Personal towels may be laundered during the cabin's weekly laundry day.



# Baggage Options to and from Camp

- **New York Tri-State families** can choose either of the three services listed below.
- **Montreal families** must use either Echo Lake's Baggage Service (bags on bus both ways) or Ship Camps.
- **All other families** must use either Camp Baggage or Ship Camps.

## CEL Baggage (Camp Echo Lake's Own Baggage Service)

CEL Baggage is Echo Lake's Baggage Service operated by us. If you choose CEL Baggage on the baggage form, you are considered registered and will be charged the fee listed below.

CEL Baggage allows you to bring your camper(s) duffels to a central location near your home where it is picked up by CEL Baggage trucks. CEL Baggage is staffed by Camp Echo Lake personnel, with the bags going directly to camp. The baggage drop-off date is Saturday, June 20th and the pick-up date is Monday, August 17th at each of our six convenient locations across the Tri-State Area.

CEL Baggage Fees:

- Round Trip: \$270
- One Way: \$135
- Bags on Bus Home: \$200 (subject to space availability, please call our office to sign-up for this service)

## Camp Baggage (Private Baggage Service)

Camp Baggage is a private, independent company that we contract with. You must register with them separately. Prices for Camp Baggage Range from \$195-\$425 for one way service and between \$300-\$655 for round trip service depending on geographic distance from camp. We encourage you to enroll early as prices will increase after May 1st for June service and July 1st for August service.

Approximately one month before camp begins you will receive baggage tags in the mail. Two weeks prior to pick-up you will receive final instructions via email, including your exact pick-up date. Families in the Northeast should expect bags to be picked up around 7-10 days before the start of camp. All other areas should expect bags to be picked up around 10-14 days before camp. Families in the Northeast can anticipate their baggage being delivered home around 2-5 days after camp ends. All other areas should expect baggage to be delivered home around 7-14 days after camp ends. Please keep this in mind when scheduling vacations or travel. You may need to provide us with alternate delivery instructions or send necessary items home with your camper. We will do our best to get the bags home as quickly as possible.

To learn more about Camp Baggage and register with them, please click [here](#). Please make sure to also select Camp Baggage at the bottom of this form and click submit.

## Ship Camps (Private Baggage Service)

Ship Camps is a private, independent company that we contract with. You must register with them separately. Their pricing is based on route, baggage size, and service level chosen.

To learn more about Ship Camps and register with them, please click [here](#).

# CEL Baggage Pick-Up and Drop-Off Info

<b>CEL Baggage Stop</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Saturday, June 20th Drop-Off Time</b>	<b>Monday, August 17 Pick-Up Time</b>
New York City, NY	Riverside Church 480 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10027 (On Riverside Drive between 120th and 122nd St.)	10:30-11:00 am	5:00-5:30 pm
Manhasset, NY	Manhasset Park District 62 Manhasset Ave Manhasset, NY 11030	11:00-11:30 am	4:30-5:00 pm
Purchase, NY	Manhattanville College 2900 Purchase St. Purchase, NY 10577 Spellman Lot	11:30-11:45 am	5:00-5:30 pm
Paramus, NJ	Fashion Center 747 NJ-17 Paramus, NJ 07652 Parking lot off E. Firehouse Lane	12:00-12:15 pm	5:00-5:30 pm
Livingston, NJ	Presbyterian Church of Livingston 271 W Northfield Rd, Livingston, NJ 07039	1:45-2:00 pm	7:30-8:00 pm



# Partnering with Parents

As you hopefully already know, camp is a bit of an educated “leap of faith” for parents. You have taken time and care to select the right camp for your child(ren) and your family. You will not know every detail of your child(ren)s day but you have chosen CEL so that we will care for every detail of your child(ren)s day as if they were our own children. Additionally, we pride ourselves in partnering with parents for the success of campers, families, and camp. We are the camp experts, you are the experts on your child(ren) and we will work together to ensure your child(ren) is supported, cared for, nurtured, and celebrated from home and camp and that we are all on the same page for the best interest of your happy camper. The pointers below are designed to help prepare your child for the enriching and growth-filled experiences that camp provides and offer a few strategies for you as their parent(s).

- You've signed your camper up for the full camp experience. Under no circumstances should you promise that you'll take your camper home mid-summer as that can undermine their confidence in themselves and their perception of your confidence in them and camp.
- If your camper is showing an initial struggle with adjustment to camp (as most campers do and are totally normal), won't it be a wonderful accomplishment and confidence builder when they do adjust! We are very good at supporting campers through this normal adjustment period quickly and as easily as possible. If your camper is having ongoing adjustment issues (beyond the first week of camp), we'll be in contact with you and partner with you to support your child.
- We have a very developed and well-practiced approach to helping campers deal with homesickness. A "try it out" approach does not work. You may think it's comforting to tell your child that if they're unhappy you'll come get them, but it gives them a sense of your insecurity that it may not work.
- Reassure your camper that everything at home will be the same as when they left. This means that pets will be cared for, possessions will be “protected” from siblings, and that their room will stay as it was left. If for any reason this cannot be promised (i.e. you'll be moving or redecorating), please let us know - we can be most helpful when we are informed. Please reassure your camper that you and any younger siblings will be going about the normal routine while they are away at camp.
- Please notify the office of any upsetting event that may have occurred before camp or that may occur during the summer... I.E. illness or death in the family, poor school grades, divorce, or moving to a new house or city, etc.. This will allow us to best support your camper while they are at camp.
- Please discuss with the camp directors if your camper has been under any psychological / Mental health / psychiatric care at any time before camp. Camp Echo Lake is more than adequately prepared to support most campers with developmental struggles and can offer options for your camper to stay connected to the support of any mental health professionals they are connected to already at home. Our knowledge of the experiences or struggles your camper may be working on will give your camper the support from us at camp and the full picture of how to help your camper have a successful summer.
- Please tell us if your camper has any special interests or talents that should be encouraged at camp. While the camp program is designed to provide basic skills in many activities, certain campers may have a more rewarding summer if encouraged in a specific area.

Please do partner with us with a full picture of who your camper is and what they may need to have the best summer possible. We can assure you that we will partner with you to achieve that same goal.

# Our Leadership Team and Contact Info

Our Year Round Leadership Team (listed below) and our Summer Leadership Team (who you will be introduced to in communication closer to the summer) are all available to assist you and your camper(s) with any questions or concerns you may have, before, during, and after camp. If you have any questions about this upcoming summer, you can always call our office at (518) 623-9635 or email us at [office@campecholake.com](mailto:office@campecholake.com), or reach out to our Year Round Leadership Team below:



Laurie Rinke Langworthy  
Owner/Director  
[laurie@campecholake.com](mailto:laurie@campecholake.com)



Tony Stein  
Owner/Director  
[tony@campecholake.com](mailto:tony@campecholake.com)



Kelly Wilkinson  
Assistant Director  
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Sam Wilkinson  
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Program Director  
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Amanda Saperstone  
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Conor Vandendries  
Main Village Boys' Camp  
Director  
[conor@campecholake.com](mailto:conor@campecholake.com)



Jakob "BCJ" Weisblum  
Senior Village Director  
[jakob@campecholake.com](mailto:jakob@campecholake.com)



# Calling Camp During the Summer

During the camp season, June 28 to August 15, our camp office is open from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM and you can reach us at our main number, **518-623-9635**.

During the hours of 8:00 PM and 8:00 AM, if you ever need to reach us in an after-hours emergency, call our main number, **518-623-9635** and our emergency voicemail system will direct you with instructions to reach us.

Part of the gift of camp for campers is that they learn to confidently exist outside of their parents in the child-friendly camp environment. That said, we know that parents are eager to have contact with both their campers and camp during the summer. All of our communication policies are created in the best interest of your campers and with the strong desire for camp to partner with parents in helping their campers have a happy and successful summer.

If you have basic questions about camp or summer logistics, please contact our friendly and helpful office staff between 8am - 8pm.

If you would like to speak with someone specifically about your camper - and who knows your camper well - you can call the main office number, 518-623-9635, and they will connect you with the appropriate director: Laurie, Tony, Kelly, Amanda, Conor, Jakob, or with your camper's Head Counselor. You are also always welcome to email Laurie, Tony, Kelly, Amanda, Conor, Jakob, or your camper's Head Counselor at any time. Please know that while camp is in full swing, they are often out of their offices interacting with campers and staff, so they may not be in front of their computer, but they will respond to your call or email as soon as possible. Additional contact information will be shared closer to the start of our camp season.

## Our No Package Policy



We do not accept packages at camp, including books and/or magazines, with the exception of birthday packages (which may not contain food items or bunk favors - for more information see page 17). Books and magazines must be sent up to camp with a camper's carry-on luggage on the first day of camp or brought to camp on Visiting Day.

If your camper has forgotten or needs an essential item (i.e. toiletries) and you need to send it to camp, please contact the Main Office for approval and you will be given a package authorization number to send such items to camp.

# Letter Writing & E-Letters Home

In addition to Visiting Day, Zoom calls, and daily camp photos posted on our CEL App, a great way to stay connected with your camper is through letter writing. The challenge? Letter writing is a bit of a lost art. When was the last time you, as an adult, wrote a letter to someone? Your camper may have never written and sent a letter in the mail. Here is some information about letter writing and staying connected while your camper is at camp.

## Methods of Writing to your Camper:

- Parents, family members, friends, etc.. can write or type a letter to your camper and mail it to them at:  
Camper's First and Last Name & Camper's Group Name (see page 35)  
Camp Echo Lake  
P.O. Box 188  
Warrensburg, NY 12885
- Mail is delivered from the USPS to camp every day except Sunday.
- Parents, family members, friends, etc. can send emails to your camper by following the instructions on your Parent Dashboard and in the communication emails we will send to you in June with additional information. Emails are printed at our main office between 8 am and 9 am each morning and printed.
- At rest hour, staff will collect their group's mail bag (containing letters and printed emails) and distribute the mail.

## Campers Methods of Writing to your Parent(s) (letters and one E-Letter):

- Campers can write letters, postcards, draw pictures, etc... and mail them to parents, family, friends, etc... as often as they would like. Campers must put the letter in an envelope with a stamp, correctly addressed to the recipient. All outgoing mail will be put in their group's mailbag and brought to the office to send out each evening.
- We ask that all campers - regardless of age - write to their parents or guardians once a week (typically on Fridays.)
- Please work with your camper to make sure they know how to address an envelope, where to put the stamp, and what to use as the address for the recipient. Many kids come to camp not knowing how to do this. If you practice with them before the summer, it will help their letters arrive successfully. Some parents choose to pre-address and pre-stamp envelopes for their campers so the camper can just insert their letter into the envelope, seal it, and it's ready to go.
- Campers will write an E-Letter that will be scanned and emailed to parents each Monday. Each camper will write their letter on a specific sheet of paper that we will provide with a unique QR code to ensure the right letters are sent to the right parents! Parents should expect to receive the PDF of the scanned E-letter via email on Monday evenings. Campers can only send scanned letters that arrive by email to their parent(s) and not additional family members or friends. More about this to come in our June communication information.

While letter writing is a bit of a lost art and most campers do not communicate through letters or emails, you can help get the information you want from your camper by:

- Talking to them about letter writing before camp.
- Helping them know how to address an envelope.
- Asking them open-ended questions in your letters for them to respond to (i.e. tell me about your favorite activity? What did you try for the first time this week? Who is the funniest person in your bunk? Etc..)
- Reminding them, and knowing for yourself, that their letters and emails are private between them and the recipient. No one at camp will read or see their letters or emails.
- While we will monitor that campers are sending a letter in the mail once a week and sending an E-letter to parent(s) once a week, we do not control the content or length of the letters.
- Letters to your camper should convey that "things at home are same as always" while trying to avoid making them think they are missing out (we are taking your younger brother to Disney World!) or that something is wrong at home (we are crying and miserable without you!) Rather, send a message that "we miss you, we love you, AND we're excited for you to have fun at camp!" That allows your camper to know that it is okay to feel two things at once. It's okay to miss family AND enjoy camp!

# Zoom Calls

Each of our campers has two fifteen-minute Zoom calls with their parents, one before Visiting Day and one after Visiting Day. The Zoom calls allow campers and parents to connect, not only verbally, but visually as well! Your camper's entire group does their Zoom calls at the same time. This allows everyone in the group to connect with their families on the same day and then the entire group can participate in some fun, uplifting, distracting group activities together to bring them back to the camp mindset after their calls. Because 4n4 campers can call home using public phones during their trip, and LITs have access to a phone at certain hours, we schedule only one Zoom for 4n4 and LIT campers at the start of the summer.

**It is very important that you mark your calendar now for your camper's two Zoom call dates below!**

After your camper has arrived at camp in June, you will receive an email containing your camper's Zoom call date (listed below), start time, and individual Zoom link for you to use to Zoom with your camper.

Division Name	First Zoom Call Date	Second Zoom Call Date
Main Village Campers (entering 3rd through 7th grade in Sept. 2026)	Sunday, July 12 (between 10 am and 6 pm)	Sunday, August 2 (between 10 am and 6 pm)
Senior Village Campers (entering 8th or 9th grade in Sept. 2026)	Saturday, July 11 (between 10 am and 12 pm)	Saturday, August 1 (between 10 am and 12 pm)
4n4 & LITs	Wednesday, July 8 (between 12 pm and 3 pm)	N/A



# Birthdays at Camp

We know that Birthdays are VERY important to your child and you and they're equally important to us! We want to make it as HUGE as possible for them, and celebrate their birthday all day long!



If your camper has a birthday at camp they will....

- Have their entire village sing to them!
- Get a birthday fuzzy!
- Receive a special CEL Birthday shirt!
- Get a birthday cake at dinner to share with their friends!
- Have a Zoom call with you - every child that has a birthday at camp will have a 5-minute Zoom call on their birthday.

Information about scheduling your camper's birthday Zoom call will be communicated closer to the start of the summer.

- Feel incredibly special and celebrated at camp on their special day!



They are allowed to receive a Birthday Package (please no food/candy or bunk gifts). Please write "Birthday Package" on it and we will hold it in the office until we deliver it on your camper's birthday!

**Please mail your camper's birthday package to:**

Camper Name - BIRTHDAY PACKAGE

Camp Echo Lake

177 Hudson Street

Warrensburg, NY 12885

## Camper Summer Birthday Communication

If you have a camper with a birthday between June 29 and August 14, we will schedule a five-minute Birthday Zoom, on your camper's birthday, between you and your camper. The Birthday Zooms will be on your camper's birthday after their breakfast time so you can see and hear each other early on their birthday and they do not miss out on all the celebrating we do of them at line ups and meals and more! There is nothing you need to do further; we will send you your camper's birthday Zoom time and Zoom link closer to camp that will be scheduled on their birthday.

Due to the volume of calls and zooms we conduct during the summer, we do not schedule phone calls or Zoom calls with grandparents, or additional calls with parents, even for family occasions like birthdays.

# Visiting Day

Our 2026 Family Visiting Day is on Saturday, July 18 from 9 am to 3 pm. We look forward to hosting you at camp and to your camper(s) sharing their summer home with you!

We will email all parents of our campers the week before Visiting Day with additional logistics and tips to help Visiting Day be as much fun as possible and help manage any emotions that may come up at the end of the day. We encourage you to book your hotel for a visiting day now as the Adirondacks are a popular and wonderful summer destination for visitors.

The only day that campers are allowed visitors is on Visiting Day. Visiting Day is Saturday, July 18 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Our alternate Visiting Day, ONLY for parents who are divorced or separated is Sunday, July 19 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Camp Echo Lake invites parents and siblings of current campers to visit their camper's summer home for the day, three weeks into the summer. While Visiting Day is a ton of fun, it is also an emotional day for everyone as the end of Visiting Day brings another goodbye.

Please do not bring any pets with you to camp. In terms of grandparents, or other family members, we encourage you to weigh the costs and benefits of having additional loved ones seeking your camper's attention and wanting goodbyes at the end of the day. Visiting camp is often on a hot summer day and our camp property is large enough that it requires the ability to walk quite a bit. We cannot provide golf carts on Visiting Day. You may want to consider any challenges that may cause for additional visitors as well.

We ask that you remain on campus for the duration of the day and enjoy all of our facilities with your children. We provide lunch for all families on Visiting Day. Please bear in mind that any food brought in by parents must be consumed by the end of the day. Visiting Day ends at 3:00 pm sharp. We start into our fun (and distracting) activities right away as the end of Visiting Day can be difficult for some campers. Getting right back into activities is the best way to alleviate those difficulties.

For additional information regarding visiting day, please visit [campecholake.com/blog/camp-echo-lake-visiting-day](https://campecholake.com/blog/camp-echo-lake-visiting-day).

**Camp Address for your GPS:** 177 Hudson St, Warrensburg, NY 12885

## **Where to Stay:**

Camp Echo Lake is in Warrensburg, NY. Towns such as Lake George, Bolton Landing, Glens Falls, Hudson Falls, North Creek, and Saratoga are all within 5-40 minutes from CEL. Albany, NY is 50-60 minutes from CEL. Most hotel and motel chains have properties within 5-40 minutes of CEL. There are also many VRBO, Air BnB, and Bed and Breakfast properties within 5-60 minutes from CEL. You can visit [campecholake.com/current-families/staying-local](https://campecholake.com/current-families/staying-local) for a list of local lodging options.

# CEL App and Summer Photos

Don't miss a moment! Get access to photos of your camper with facial recognition, photos, videos, curated daily news feed from camp, our camp calendar, reminders, special events, and more - all at your fingertips on our camp app! We make it easy to get in touch, share memories, and stay updated with the Camp Echo Lake app. The app and photo downloads are free.

The CEL app is the **only** way to access summer photos taken by our camp media staff. The app is convenient and user-friendly, and has accurate facial recognition capabilities. We will send you an email as we get closer to the summer with information about how to set up your camper's facial recognition - this **MUST** be done by parents at home prior to the start of camp. Photos will be updated in the evening between 8-9 pm each day during the summer.

**You should not expect to see a photo of your camper every day; you will likely see your camper in photos every 2-3 days.**

By default, only parents have access to the Camp Echo Lake App. If you would like to give an extended family member access including facial recognition and notifications, please fill out the "Additional Mobile App Users" form on your [Parent Dashboard](#). If you prefer not to, you can simply share photos from your mobile device to anyone.

You can also access the CEL App on your internet browser [here](#).

## How to Access the Camp Echo Lake App:

1. Visit the App Store or Google Play and search "Camp Echo Lake," or use the links or QR codes at the bottom of this page to locate and download the app to your device.
2. Tap "Create an account," use the email address we have on file at camp (also used for the Parent Dashboard), and set up a password. You will need to enter a registration code to access the app, which we will be sending via email a few days after this Parent Handbook and Camper Forms are sent out. If you cannot find the registration code, please contact the Camp Echo Lake Office by emailing [office@campecholake.com](mailto:office@campecholake.com) or calling 518-623-9635.
3. Login to the app and "allow" mobile push notifications to stay informed of important camp updates and reminders.



Scan this QR code to download the CEL app on iPhone, or click [here](#) to view in the Apple App Store.



Scan this QR code to download the CEL app on Android, or click [here](#) to view in the Google play Store.



# On Camp Health Facilities

Through healthy nutrition, hydration, rest, and more we work hard to keep campers and staff healthy throughout the summer. That said, in a communal living setting like summer camp, campers, and staff do occasionally get sick or injured. On camp, we have a Health Center that is available 24/7 to our campers and staff, similar to an urgent care center. Our Health Center is staffed 24/7 with nurses and we have a physician on camp and available 24/7. Our camp doctors typically work in pediatrics or emergency medicine.

Our health center is stocked with equipment and medication to triage and address basic camp medical concerns. We have a triage and waiting area, a private exam area, a medication distribution center (with external windows so campers taking medication can do so with a nurse at the window as opposed to being mixed with campers in our triage area), and an inpatient floor.

If your camper should become sick with a fever, vomiting, or other illness that requires them to stay overnight in the Health Center, parents will be contacted by a member of our Health Center staff. Should your camper become sick and require prescription medication from one of our camp doctors, parents will be contacted by a member of our Health Center staff. Our doctors and nurses will make every effort to ensure campers who are in the Health Center are comfortable, resting, and able to rejoin their groups and the fun of camp as quickly as possible.

## Off Camp Medical Resources

In addition to our on-camp Health Center and medical services, we are very lucky to be in a community and area with a tremendous amount of additional local and regional health and medical services if the need arises to use them.

- In Warrensburg, within two miles of camp are the [Warrensburg Emergency Medical Services](#), the [Warrensburg Hudson Headwaters Urgent Care](#), [Walgreens Pharmacy](#).
- Within 15 miles of camp is the [Glens Falls Hospital](#) and within 30 miles of camp is the [Saratoga Hospital](#).
- There are a number of local dentists, orthodontists, optometrists, physical therapists, and more within 2-30 miles of camp as well.
- Within 60 miles of camp is the [Albany Medical Center](#) which is a level one trauma center and teaching hospital with a wide range of medical facilities, specialists, and services.

# Communication with our Health Center

Just like our Leadership Team partners with parents, so does our well trained, professional, kind, and expert Health Center Staff. We have a doctor on-site twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week while camp is in session. The doctor is always in contact with the Health Center and oversees the medical needs of our community.

If you have any questions regarding your camper's health, medication or camper medical forms, please contact the Health Center at 518-623-9635 or by emailing [healthcenter@campechlake.com](mailto:healthcenter@campechlake.com). While your child is at camp, if you reach out to the Health Center, you will hear back from the Health Center as quickly as possible. Prior to the summer, when our Health Center is not yet staffed 24/7, if you reach out to our Health Center, you can expect to receive a response within one week.

While your camper is at camp, our Health Center staff will contact you if:

- Your camper needs to be seen by an outside practitioner, either in a scheduled appointment or in an emergent matter.
- Your camper needs to spend the night in the Health Center.
- Your camper is prescribed any prescription medication by our Camp Doctor.
- Your camper has lice.
- They have a general medical concern or question about your camper's health or medications.

If your camper gets their period for the first time during camp, Laurie or Kelly will call you. You will have an opportunity to speak with your camper as well.

# Lice Prevention and Management at Camp

Whether you are home or at camp, no one likes lice. That said, lice are not a health hazard and can be properly detected and treated. Lice do not fly or jump but they do crawl. Once they lay eggs (called nits), the nits are very difficult to adequately remove but must be treated and removed to prevent spread. Lice live on the cleanest scalps as they feed off of the host's scalp. Lice do not live on dirty scalps and therefore someone with lice is not "dirty" in terms of their hair. All Campers and staff will be professionally lice checked when they arrive at camp.

**When a camper is found to have lice that they brought with them to camp, their parents will be notified and charged \$500.**

The \$500 Lice Fee will cover:

- The initial detection of lice from a professional lice treatment company
- The initial treatment and comb out of nits by the professional lice treatment company
- Five days' worth of shampoo and oil to continue to kill nits and repel any live lice
- Five days' worth of one-on-one daily hair comb outs by Echo Lake staff in order to remove additional nits
- Additional laundering of bedding, towels, clothing, etc - two times during the five-day treatment
- A recheck from the professional lice treatment company with further treatment if/as needed.

**When a camper is found to have lice at the mid-summer or week before departure day checks, their parents will be notified and charged \$250, as they got lice while at camp.**

The \$250 Lice Fee will cover:

- The initial detection of lice from a professional lice treatment company
- The initial treatment and comb out of nits by the professional lice treatment company
- Five days' worth of shampoo and oil to continue to kill nits and repel any live lice
- Five days' worth of one-on-one daily hair comb outs by Echo Lake staff in order to remove additional nits
- Additional laundering of bedding, towels, clothing, etc - two times during the five-day treatment
- A recheck from the professional lice treatment company with further treatment if/as needed.

**We strongly encourage ALL parents to have their campers (both boys and girls) professionally lice checked (and treated if necessary) 5-7 days prior to camp departure so if they have lice, it can be treated at home and not brought to camp. In order to avoid being charged \$500 at the arrival day check or \$250 at the mid-summer and last week of camp checks, PLEASE have your campers professionally lice checked (and treated if necessary) 5-7 days prior to camp departure. It is also a good idea to check younger siblings (especially if they are day camp campers) and yourselves 5-7 days prior to Visiting day in order to avoid bringing lice to your camper when you visit. Thank you for your help in lice prevention.**



# Food Allergies

At Camp Echo Lake, we work closely with campers who have food allergies to ensure their safety around food, both on and off camp. For a camper with an anaphylactic allergy, direct or indirect exposure to these products could be life-threatening for them and we do everything in our power to keep them safe at camp. Any camper with an anaphylactic allergy is required to inform camp of this allergy and bring an Epi-Pen/Auvi-Q injector or Neffy device with them to camp.

Staff are informed of any campers in their group that have allergies, both anaphylactic and non-anaphylactic allergies, and help work with those campers to keep them safe at meals and snack times, both on and off camp.

We have a dedicated person in our Dining Room who oversees all food needs and concerns for campers with food allergies. Our Special Foods Manager has been part of camp for over 20 years and is excellent at reassuring campers about safe foods at camp and providing information and food options for anyone with food allergies.

We have Epi-Pens located in key areas around camp and all members of the Echo Lake staff go through Epi-Pen and Auvi-Q training prior to campers arriving. If campers leave camp on a trip, or for any other reason, any campers with food allergies always travel with their Epi-pen/Auvi-Q/Neffy and we send the trip with additional food allergy response tools (i.e. Benadryl, Epi-pens/Auvi-Q/Neffy).

Camp Echo Lake is NUT AWARE. At Echo Lake, we have campers and staff with a variety of food and non-food allergies. We take vital steps to ensure the safety of campers while at camp. At Echo Lake, we do not serve any food – in the Dining Room or in the canteen – that contains any peanuts or tree nuts. We do not cook with nuts, nut derivatives, or any nut oils.

We check all food labels prior to cooking and serving any foods but please note the following:

- We occasionally have items among our canteen snacks that do not contain peanuts or nuts but their packaging says the item is "packaged/processed at a facility that may also process peanuts and tree nuts."
- Our own research tells us that nearly all ice cream is processed in facilities that also process nuts – but due to the way the equipment is sanitized, ice cream suppliers are not required to label their packaging as such.

All parents of campers with peanut or tree-nut allergies will complete a “cross-contamination form” asking parents to respond to whether or not their camper may eat the items in the above two scenarios.

**PLEASE LET YOUR CAMPER KNOW WHAT INFORMATION YOU HAVE SHARED WITH CAMP ABOUT THE ITEMS THEY ARE OR ARE NOT APPROVED TO EAT AT CAMP DUE TO THEIR ALLERGIES.**

# Medications at Camp

Our Health Center stocks a variety of over the counter medication, and we have a Walgreens Pharmacy one mile from camp in case a camper needs a medication prescribed during the summer.

If your camper will take ANY medications or supplements regularly over the summer (including prescription medications, over the counter medications, vitamins or rescue medications such as inhalers or Epi-pen/Auvi-Q/Neffy) it is crucial you adhere to our protocols for both delivering those medications to camp and administering those medications to your camper.

Please see the following page for a step-by-step guide to registering your camper's medications for the summer.

**New York State regulations mandate a signed Physicians order for us to dispense any medication, including OTC medications and vitamins, to your camper.**

This summer, we have again partnered with [Stone's Pharmacy](#) in Lake Luzerne, NY to fill medications. Stone's Pharmacy is located about 20 minutes from camp. The fee for packaging is \$25 if the registration form linked below is received by **June 14th, 2026**. Registrations received after this date will incur an additional \$25 late fee.

All US-based families are required to use Stone's Pharmacy. The ONLY exceptions are insulin, growth hormone, allergy shots, Epi-pens/Auvi-Q/Neffy and inhalers. All Canadian and international families may send their child's medications to camp. Regardless of where you live or how your camper's medications are getting to camp, you MUST complete all required medication forms.

Once you have completed the online registration process, you will be emailed a Physician's order form. You must print, sign, and have your Physician sign this form. Once signed by all parties, please upload the signed copy to the Parent Dashboard. **In addition to this form, Stone's Pharmacy also needs a prescription for each medication on file.**

All medications must arrive at camp prior to arrival day. The only exceptions are for medications that are required to travel with your camper to camp (Epi-pens/Auvi-Q/Neffy, inhalers), medications for which our Health Center has provided an Arrival Day Medication Authorization Number, and for campers traveling to camp from outside the U.S.

**For any unauthorized medications sent to camp with the camper, there will be a \$150 medication administrative fee charged.**

# Medication Registration Process

The below process outlines the steps parents must follow to register their campers who will be taking prescription medication, over-the-counter (OTC) meds, vitamins, supplements, inhalers, or Epi-pens/Auvi-Q/Neffy devices this summer.

## Step 1:

Select “yes” to question 1 on the “Please Begin Here” form in your [Parent Dashboard](#).

## Step 2:

Shortly after you submit the “Please Begin Here” form, you will receive an email from CEL Health Center titled “Medication form for [Camper Name].” The email contains a link to an online form you will need to fill out with the information of all medications your camper will be taking over the summer. You will be asked to input credit card information if any of your camper’s medications are being filled through Stone’s Pharmacy. Once complete, submit the form.

## Step 3:

Once the online medication registration form is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from CEL Health Center titled “Medication form for [Camper Name] to be signed” with information about next steps, as well as a password-protected PDF of the medication form to be signed by your camper’s physician.

## Step 4:

Print out the PDF form and get it signed by your camper’s physician. Then, the signed medication form must be scanned and uploaded to your [Parent Dashboard](#).

## Step 5:

Be sure to submit your camper’s prescription(s) to Stone’s Pharmacy by **June 14, 2026**. Please note - if the prescription is for a controlled substance, do not submit the prescription until AFTER May 28, 2026. The email titled “Medication form for [Camper Name] to be signed” will contain additional information about submitting prescriptions. **If your child is taking a mix of prescriptions and OTCs (including vitamins) a prescription is also required for each OTC and vitamins due to New York State pharmacy regulations.**

If you need to make a change to your camper’s medications (adding a medication, removing a medication, or changing dosage, etc.), you will need to contact the Camp Echo Lake office at [office@campecholake.com](mailto:office@campecholake.com) or by calling 518-623-9635.



# Letters of Agreement for Campers/Parents

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our campers is our first priority. In addition to providing all of the necessary resources to ensure that your child has a wonderful time at camp, we also have established clearly defined standards and expectations to ensure that all program participants have a safe experience. Outlined in this section are our camp policies and rules.

These policies also appear in the Letter of Agreement form in the Parent Dashboard that parents and campers must both review, sign and return to us by May 1st. There are three specific Letters of Agreement - one for LITs, one for 4n4 and one for all other campers.

**DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY:** Destruction of property on or off camp is strictly prohibited and may result in the dismissal of a camper. Should you damage or destroy any camp property through vandalism or willful disregard of proper use, above the normal wear and tear, the camper and the Camper's family will become liable and will be asked to reimburse the camp for the costs of repairing or replacing any damaged property. This includes defacing cabins with graffiti (graffiti also includes signing your name) or causing damage/destruction in hotels, campgrounds and other public places. In such instances, campers will be required to participate in the repair or cleaning of the damaged or destroyed property.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Cell phones and other electronic methods of communication are not permitted in camp or off campus. Personal electronic devices that show movies and/or television and/or have internet access are also prohibited both in and out of camp as well. Any such device found will be held by camp and returned just prior to camper departure at the end of the camp season.

Other examples of prohibited devices: Laptops, iPads, iPod Touch, e-readers, Smartphones, Smartwatches, Apple Vision Pro or other VR headsets, etc. iPods models shuffle, nano and classic are allowed at camp. iPods with video playing capability must have all video deleted prior to arriving at camp. All iPods will be checked by staff on the first day of camp and any holding any videos will be confiscated.

iPhone, iPod touch, iPad, laptops, tablets or any other items that provide internet access via Wi-Fi or 3g/4g/LTE are not allowed. Kindles or other e-readers are not permitted at camp.

Cameras are permitted at camp, as long as there are no pictures taken inside of cabins, tents, hotel rooms or shower houses. Any cameras used in such places will be confiscated and returned at the end of the summer.

Should a camper have an electronic device at camp they should not - as outlined in the Letter of Agreement that camper will be sent home for three nights. Parents will be responsible for picking up their child, whether that camper is on camp, or out west on the 4n4, or on another camp trip.

**POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, VAPES, VAPE PRODUCTS, AND DRUG SUBSTANCES OR PARAPHERNALIA:** While in camp or out of camp, possession, distribution or use of alcohol, vapes or vape products (i.e. juuls, e-cigarettes, etc), tobacco (cigarettes, chewing tobacco, etc), marijuana/THC (including edibles, gummies, etc) and other drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, is prohibited and not part of our community. We have a "ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY" on this issue and visual observation need not be necessary for immediate dismissal if there is enough evidence to corroborate that these risk taking behaviors have occurred. Additionally, campers may not bring locked cases, lockboxes and/or locked containers to camp.

**PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (Romantic or sexual):** In regard to interpersonal relationships, on or off camp, we expect campers to refrain from inappropriate public displays of affection and/or sexual behavior. Additionally, campers are not allowed to visit the bunk, hotel room, tent or other living quarter of the opposite gender while in camp or out of camp. All campers must be in eye sight and ear shot of counselors at all times.

**SAFETY AND SUPERVISION:** When it comes to safety and supervision, our policy is that campers remain within eyesight or ear shot of a counselor and campers cannot choose to go off on their own. In the case where a camper has chosen to go or be somewhere without a counselors knowledge they will be given a consequence and parents will be called and notified.

**MENTAL HEALTH:** Prior to camp the camper and parent(s) agrees to discuss with camp any mental health challenges or social emotional concerns in the past or currently (i.e. anxiety, depression, disordered eating, self harm, identity questioning, self esteem issues, OCD, ADD, learning disabilities, etc...) the camper may have experienced in the past or currently. Prior to camp the camper and parent(s) agrees to discuss with camp what the camper did to address these issues (i.e. see a therapist, speak to someone at school, take medication, coping strategies, exercise, etc...). During camp, the camper and parent(s) agrees to share with a trusted adult at camp any new or returning mental health challenges or social emotional concerns (i.e. anxiety, depression, disordered eating, self harm, identity questioning, self esteem issues, OCD, ADD, learning disabilities, etc...).

I understand that if a camper is asked to leave for camp any period of time, there is no abatement of reduction in tuition.

\*\*\*We appreciate that some of our policies pertain more to campers as they get older, which is why we have three age-dependent versions of our Letter of Agreement. Please be sure to read the specific Letter of Agreement for your camper(s), on your dashboard, so you and your camper(s) are clear on the rules and policies. Thank you.

# Electronics Policy

One of the most important ways camp provides such positive experiences for our campers is by limiting electronics in our camp environment, thereby encouraging our campers to socialize through traditional camp activities. We thank you in advance for your cooperation with and support of these policies. To help you understand exactly which electronics are and are not allowed at camp, please take a look at the list below.

Examples of permitted and not permitted electronics:

## Permitted Electronics

- The Mighty music player
- The Campfire Player
- iPod Nano (original) or Shuffle
- Alternative mp3 player with music/picture files only that cannot connect to the internet or have the ability to play games
- Disposable camera (not to be used inside bunks or tents)
- Digital camera (not to be used inside bunks or tents)
- Go Pro (not to be used inside bunks or tents)
- Battery operated Fan
- Battery operated clocks
- Battery operated external speakers
- Chargers for approved devices

## Not Permitted Electronics

- Any cell phone (including old or disabled phones)
- Any version of an iPod Touch
- DVD player
- Laptop computer
- Handheld video gaming systems
- Tablets/E-readers (iPad, Kindle, Nook, etc.)
- Apple watch/any other kind of smart watch
- Voice activated devices (Alexa, Google home, etc.)
- Plug-in electric fan
- Plug-in electric clock
- Plug-in external speakers
- Apple Vision Pro/Meta Quest/any VR headset
- Smart glasses

Notes on electronics:

- Any item that makes phone calls, has the ability to text or message, or accesses the internet is not permitted at camp.
- iPods and/or MP3 players that have capacity to play videos MUST be cleared of videos before arrival to camp.
- We recommend campers bring an iPod Shuffle/Nano or similarly inexpensive device like The Mighty, the Campfire Player, or a simple MP3 player. Please make sure to label your camper's MP3 player with their first and last name.
- We recognize that many digital cameras have the ability to record videos. We ask campers and staff to not take any videos inside of the cabins or tents.
- Camp will not take responsibility for replacing electronic devices brought to camp, which may be damaged or lost. If any of the items not permitted are brought to camp, we will collect them and return them at the end of camp.

**\*In the instance of a camper being in possession of a non-permitted item that camper will have to go home for three nights. Parents will have to arrange to pick up and return the camper to camp. Should the camper be away from camp on a trip (4n4 or any other trip), parents will need to pick up their child from the trip location.\***

# Camp Echo Lake Behavior Philosophy

Every action and decision at Camp Echo Lake is made very thoughtfully and intentionally. Our approach to working with campers, staff, and parents is based on our 81 years of being Dedicated to Human Development and anchored by our foundations of safety, connection, empathy, effort, discovery, and resilience. Our approach to managing and coaching behavior at camp is no different. At the most basic level we ask our campers and staff to “Be Nice” and “Try Hard.” We encourage that behavior with our camp values, Fuzzies, and a variety of positive reinforcement techniques.

We also have a deep expertise in working with children and adults to know that sometimes an individual may say or do something that is not nice, possibly hurtful and goes against the values of Echo Lake. We are all human, after all, and believe that for us at Camp Echo Lake, encouraging individuals to be nice and working with individuals to coach, correct, and grow from mistakes is the real benefit of camp and helps in the building of life skills.

When it comes to behavior that goes against the values of our community, we do not use a “one size fits all” approach. The way we look at it is that sometimes individuals can do things that are rude (say or do something that is unintentionally hurtful), are mean (say or do something that is intentionally hurtful), or “bully” others (say or do things repeatedly that are intentionally hurtful). Neither rude, nor mean, nor “bullying” behavior is acceptable at Camp Echo Lake. Just like there are degrees of behavior that are not in line with our values, so are there degrees of our responses that are driven by the specific behavior.

When rude, or mean, or behavior deemed “bullying” happens at Echo Lake we address it immediately. We assess the context and dynamics of why it happened, and implement a variety of coaching, counseling, and/or consequences that are appropriate to the hurtful action that took place. Whether it is through a conflict resolution process between campers, consequences of being removed from social or programmatic opportunities at camp, involving parents, or any number of other response techniques, all behaviors that are seen or interpreted as negative, hurtful, disrespectful, mean, etc..., to others or to oneself, will be addressed and coached / corrected at Camp Echo Lake.

We work very hard with our campers, staff and parents when such situations arise. Our default position is always to help a camper find a solution or a better way through a situation. In the very rare case that an individual’s behavior is persistently and dramatically negatively impacting other campers or the group, or him or herself, and/or an individual’s behavior requires extensive and continual one-on-one management, beyond what is safe or responsible at camp, we may feel that the camper should no longer remain at camp.

Camp Echo Lake is a connected community that focuses on individual growth and development, starting with the importance of being nice and trying hard. Our philosophical approach to behavior management will always focus on the good of the individual as well as the good of the group, the assessment of the specific situation and the context, and the premise that through appropriate coaching, counseling, and consequences, growth and human development occurs.



# Off Camp Field Trips

With the many exciting activities on camp, it is hard to believe we also squeeze in time for off camp “field trips” too, but we do! When we say “field trip” we mean a handful of special off camp trips we take our campers on during the summer. (not to be confused with Trek trips, waterski trips, sailing trips, golf trips, and Inter-camp Tournaments.) As with all we do at camp, our field trips are developmentally progressive and grow with our campers. There are always fun things to look forward to! For information about spending money for field trips, please see page 31.

## 2026 Camper Off Camp “Field Trips”

**Frosh and Juniors (entering 5th grade and younger):**

- Evening trip to Movies
- Day trip at Great Escape Water park

**Lower Inters (entering 6th grade):**

- Evening trip to Movies
- Day trip at Great Escape Amusement Park

**Upper Inters (entering 7th grade):**

- Evening trip to Movies
- White Water Rafting & Martha’s Ice Cream
- Day trip at Great Escape Amusement Park

**Lower Village (entering 8th grade):**

- Weekly Thursday Off Camp Trip days (examples include, but are not limited to: Movies, Great Escape, Bowling, Trampoline Park, Great Escape Amusement Park, Whitewater rafting, Saratoga County Fair, etc...)
- Three night / Four day trip to New Hampshire and Vermont (week 5 of camp)

**Upper Village (entering 9th grade):**

- Weekly Thursday Off Camp Trip days (examples include, but are not limited to: Movies, Great Escape, Bowling, Trampoline Park, Great Escape Amusement Park, Whitewater rafting, Saratoga County Fair, etc...)
- Four night / Five day trip to Boston and Martha’s Vineyard (week 4 of camp)

**4n4 (entering 10th grade):**

- 2 Weekly Thursday Off Camp Trip days (examples include, but are not limited to: Movies, Great Escape, Bowling, Trampoline Park, Great Escape Amusement Park, Whitewater rafting, Saratoga County Fair, etc...)
- 29 day once-in-a-life-time Trip to Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Arizona

**LIT: (entering 11th grade)**

- Weekly “Day Off” Off Camp days (examples include, but are not limited to: Movies, Great Escape, Bowling, Trampoline Park, Great Escape Amusement Park, Whitewater rafting, Saratoga County Fair, etc...)
- Trips to Visit Skidmore and Saratoga, NY and University of Vermont and Burlington, VT
- And some additional off camp opportunities

# Camper Spending Money for Field Trips

When Campers go off camp for "field trips," the activity (movie ticket, entrance ticket to an amusement park, etc...) and any meal (typically a bag lunch from camp) is paid for and provided by camp for all campers. That said, many campers like to buy snacks or souvenirs when off camp on a trip.

To ensure a seamless experience for all of our Campers (and parents), we are excited to simplify "Trip Day" spending. All campers will receive a pre-loaded [Crowded](#) card to use for their purchases during their big trip day to The Great Escape Water Park (Juniors) and The Great Escape Theme Park (Inters), and any Trip Day Trips or Extended Trips (Senior Village, 4n4, or LITs). On this form you will determine how much you would like to be pre-loaded on your Camper(s) [Crowded](#) card and we will have the card ready for them with their name printed on it at camp. Parents do not need to purchase or mail a card to camp for spending money for you camper(s). All campers will have [Crowded](#) cards with parent-determined spending money amounts of them at camp.

While parents can determine what amount of spending money you provide your camper, based on the location(s) of their trip(s) and the costs of snacks, drinks, and souvenirs there, below are suggested amounts of spending money per age group. You can determine and add more or less spending money for your child's Crowded card, as you see fit on the Camper Spending Money form on the [Parent Dashboard](#). The amount of spending money you select for your camper(s) will be automatically added to your account on file to be paid as part of your balance that you owe for camp. At the end of the summer, the Crowded card will be returned to you along with any balance of money left on the card. Any unspent money is yours to spend.


## RECOMMENDED CAMPER SPENDING MONEY AMOUNTS


Division	Trips	Suggested
Juniors (entering 3rd-5th grade in Sept. '26)	The Great Escape Water Park (spending money suggested) 1 evening trip (no spending money needed)	Up to \$50
Inters (entering 6th or 7th grade in Sept. '26)	The Great Escape Amusement Park (spending money suggested) 1 evening trip (no spending money needed)	Up to \$75
Lower Village (entering 8th grade in Sept. '26)	Trip Days 1 four day trip to Vermont/New Hampshire	Up to \$200
Upper Village (entering 9th grade in Sept '26)	Trip Days 1 five day trip to Boston/Cape Cod	Up to \$250
4n4 (entering 10th grade in Sept '26)	1 or 2 Trip Days 28 days Out West	Up to \$500
LIT (entering 11 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Weekly "Day Off" Off Camp Days College Tours	Up to \$350

# Camper Forms Checklist











Each summer, we ask our families to fill out a number of forms for each camper. The completion of these forms help us ensure that we have all the information necessary to provide campers with a safe, healthy, and happy summer experience. **All forms are due by May 1.**

You may print out this checklist as a guide to ensure that you complete all required forms.






 This symbol indicates a form to be completed online.

 This symbol indicates a form to be printed and/or scanned and uploaded, and may require a signature.









## General Forms Required for All Campers

-  ☐ Please Begin Here Form
-  ☐ Baggage Form
-  ☐ Bunk Request Form
-  ☐ Camper Information Form
-  ☐ Camper Spending Money
-  ☐ Insurance Card Copy
-  ☐ Lice Protocol
-  ☐ Meningitis Form
-  ☐ Off-Site Swimming Permission Form
-  ☐ Zoom Camper Phone Calls

## Medical Forms Required for All Campers

-  ☐ Online Health Form Part 1
-  ☐ Online Health Form Part 2
-  ☐ Immunization Information
-  ☐ Doctor's Form
-  ☐ Permission to Treat Form (via email)

## Division-Specific Forms

-  ☐ Frosh-Upper Village (entering 9th grade and below): Camper and Parent Letter of Agreement
-  ☐ 4n4 only: Camper and Parent Letter of Agreement for 4n4
-  ☐ 4n4 only: 4n4 Handbook and Packing List
-  ☐ 4n4 only: 4n4 Waiver KMAC
-  ☐ 4n4 only: 4n4 Waiver Wilderness Aware
-  ☐ 4n4 & LIT Clothing Policy
-  ☐ LITs only: Camper and Parent Letter of Agreement for LITs
-  ☐ LITs only: Off Campus Permission Form

**Additional forms may appear on your Parent Dashboard based on your answers to the “Please Begin Here” form.**

# Information on Camper Forms

All forms are found online on the [Parent Dashboard](#). Forms must be completed every year as they help us provide the best care and experience for your camper. Through the [Parent Dashboard](#), parents are able to complete most forms online, as well as download/upload any paper forms that need a signature from you or your doctor.

Log in by visiting our website, [www.campechlake.com](http://www.campechlake.com). Click on “[Parent Login](#)” located in the lower right hand corner. Your login/username is your email address. To retrieve your password click on “What’s my password” and it will be sent to your email address. Once you login to your account, click on “Camper Forms” to complete and/or print forms. **ALL FORMS ARE DUE BY MAY 1.**

Each form contains information about the use of the forms and instructions in the header. Below you will find additional information on certain camper forms. For more information on Medication Forms, see pages 25-26.

## **Please Begin Here**

This form asks questions that may add additional health forms to your Parent Dashboard. You **MUST** begin with this form to be sure all of the correct forms are present on the dashboard for your camper.

## **Bunk Request Form**

This form is one of the many tools we use to put bunk groups together. We ask campers to provide a minimum of 5 and up to 6 requests. We spend a great deal of time and energy creating compatible bunk communities that meet as many camper requests as possible, create a healthy living situation, and support our value of mixing cabins from summer to summer in order to enhance healthy friendships and diminish cliques. See pages 36-37 for more details.

## **Permission to Treat Form**

Once you submit the “Please Begin Here” form, you will receive a “Permission to Treat” form to the email associated with your Parent Dashboard account. The Permission to Treat form is required to be filled out so your camper may be treated if they need care from a local Urgent Care or Hospital outside of our Health Center. In the event your child requires medical care off-site (doctor, urgent care, or ER), our local providers often require a photo ID from the parent/guardian who is financially responsible in order to check in and begin treatment.

## **Doctor's Form**

To be printed via the Parent Dashboard, completed and signed by licensed medical personnel. Campers need to have an annual physical with their pediatrician. Schedule your child's check-up as soon as possible. Physicians must sign and print or stamp their address and phone number on the form. Once completed, please upload the form to your Parent Dashboard.

Note: Some physicians have their own medical examination form. If this is the case, please attach their signed medical form to ours and make sure all requested information is included.

## **Immunizations**

We need to have up-to-date immunization information for each camper. Please type in the dates for each of your child's immunizations. This information will carry forward from year to year, so if you have a returning camper you will only have to add any new immunization your child has received in the past year. The CEL Office and Health Center are unable to enter this information for you - it must be entered manually by the parent.



# Supplemental Protein Snacks (Optional)

Our Supplemental Protein Program is designed to supplement our daily meals and snacks for only those campers who feel they need additional protein or calories in their daily diet. At camp, we serve three meals a day plus a morning snack, afternoon snack, and an evening canteen snack. Morning snacks tend to be “100 calorie pack” type snacks and/or fruit and afternoon snacks tend to be an ice pop/ice cream/cookie snack and/or fruit. Additionally, we have fruit available in the dining room throughout the day for anyone interested.

At meals we have our main meal and always additional options depending on the meal (cereals, yogurt, oatmeal at breakfast; salad bar with protein and sunbutter and jelly sandwiches at lunch; and pasta bar, salad bar with protein and sunbutter and jelly sandwiches at dinner), and fruit at every meal. We offer a large variety of options at every meal in order to ensure that everyone has plenty to eat, no matter what their food needs or preferences are.

## Supplemental Protein Options:

For campers signed up for the Supplemental Protein Program, we offer the shakes and bars options; campers can have one at each of morning snack (approx. 11:30 am), afternoon snack (approx. 3:45 pm), and/or evening canteen snack (between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm). We stock [No Nuts Protein Bars](#) (GF), [Boost Protein Shakes](#), and [Owyn Protein Shakes](#) (vegan).

Parents must complete the form on the [Parent Dashboard](#) and agree to pay \$450 for their child to take part in this program. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any additional questions regarding our Supplemental Protein Snack Program.

# Private Tennis Lessons

We are excited to offer your child an opportunity to participate in our Camp Echo Lake Tennis Academy program by signing up for private instruction. In addition to the group lessons offered to all of our campers, campers can take advantage of our private instruction as a way to further improve their game and develop their skills.

In order to participate in our Academy Program, you must pre-register your child for private tennis instruction prior to the start of camp. To do so, simply go to the [Parent Dashboard](#) and complete the [2026 Private Tennis Lessons](#) form. Please complete this form as soon as possible if you would like to sign up your child for Private Tennis Instruction.

Private Tennis Lessons typically happen during regular group activity periods (never during electives for Main Village campers) and each camper will receive:

- One-on-one instruction
- Mid-season and end-of-summer player assessment

Lessons are offered in packages of 6 (\$450), or 9 (\$675), for the 7 week summer. If your camper is on 4n4, please only choose 6 lessons.

# Group Names, Grades, and Abbreviations

Camp Echo Lake believes in the benefits of positive group experience, inclusion, and healthy social dynamics. We group campers by school grade, have smaller group sizes to increase staff-camper ratios, and mix our cabins from year to year within the group. Creating groups and cabins in this way builds the most positive cabin dynamics and overall group social success.

Group Name	Grade in September 2026	Abbreviation
Frosh Boys or Girls	Entering 3rd grade or younger	FB or FG
Lower Junior Boys or Girls	Entering 4th grade	LJB or LJG
Upper Junior Boys or Girls	Entering 5th grade	UJB or UJG
Lower Inter Boys or Girls	Entering 6th grade	LIB or LIG
Upper Inter Boys or Girls	Entering 7th grade	UIB or UIG
Lower Village Boys or Girls	Entering 8th grade	LVB or LVG
Upper Village Boys or Girls	Entering 9th grade	UVB or UVG
4n4	Entering 10th grade	4n4
Leaders in Training	Entering 11th grade	LITs

We divide each age group (so long as the age group numbers dictate) from Lower Junior up to Upper Inter into an East group and a West group. The theory and intention behind having East and West, particularly at our younger ages, is to have a smaller group (12-20 kids, instead of 25-40 kids) of campers so that they can more closely connect with other campers and their counselors. Having East and West, especially for younger campers, helps with adjustment to camp and creating bonds that will last a lifetime. During the day, however, when a group has elective activities, swim, and often evening activities, East and West are brought together. This allows for an expanded opportunity to connect with other campers of the same age and have a greater critical mass to play certain sports or enhance certain games or activities.

When campers enter Senior Village, their program, schedule, and experience grow with them. The program changes from predominantly group activities in Main Village (entering 7th grade and younger) to predominantly elective activities. In Senior Village there is just one group of Lower Village Girls or Boys and one group of Upper Village Girls or Boys, without the East and West divisions.

# CEL Approach to Group/Bunk Placement

Healthy child development requires children to be able to make strong, reciprocal friendships that grow in depth and meaning over time and that can navigate the normal ups and downs of friendship in a way that strengthens the connection. As every child grows and changes over time, their ability to connect with different children and have different social emotional needs from their friendships grow as well. At Camp Echo Lake we believe – and have experienced over many decades – that when you give children a wider range of potential friendships, help create moments that allow the entire group to feel united and bonded, and support children in the ebbs and flows of friendships, that is how they not only develop lifelong friendships but build their own social / life skills as well.

At Camp Echo Lake, each camper is part of a group that is who they identify with, connect with, and spend their days with at activities and in living situations. Within each group are typically two (sometimes three) bunks. The only thing that campers do as a bunk is sleep, rest hour, and clean up. They identify as a group, not by bunk. What that means is that the group they are part of becomes the people they connect with and grow with. In order to enhance that group connection and the social emotional development of friendships, at Camp Echo Lake, we mix the cabins within the group from summer to summer. Our goal is to help strengthen and deepen existing friendships and expose children to different friendships that develop as they grow up.

In order to help create bunks within the larger group, we rely on a number of factors. These factors help us put together bunks that allow campers to continue to develop friendships over time and allow them to build newer friendships as they grow and change. When considering bunk placement within the larger group, we factor in:

- Each Camper's Bunk Requests
- Information provided by parents regarding their camper and their campers experiences both in and out of camp.
- For returning campers, the experience that the camper had the previous summer in terms of friendships and bunk life
- The perspective and expertise of our Directors and Head Counselors from their interactions and understanding of each camper and the overall group and bunk dynamics

Each spring our Directors and Head Counselors take the time to really look at and analyze each camper's social needs and the overall health of the group and bunk dynamics. We want campers to be in bunks with the other campers they feel close and connected to and we use our perspective and expertise to set children up for success in their bunks as well.

# CEL Approach to Group/Bunk Placement Cont.

What we assure campers and parents is that each camper will be in a bunk with at least one (if not more) campers on their bunk request lists. What we cannot do is promise that campers will be in a bunk with all of their bunk requests as we have to meet the needs of each camper's requests and consider the overall social dynamic for everyone.

When completing your camper's bunk request form, please give us SIX names of campers that they would enjoy being in a bunk with. Giving us six names allows us to place each camper in bunks with as many kids they want to be with as possible. The order that the six names are listed says to us that while the camper is happy to be in a bunk with all six of the campers on their request list, we know that the camper listed at the top of the list and more important than the campers on the second half of the list. Please remember and remind your camper that we do mix bunks within their group every summer so they should expect to be in a different make up of campers in their bunk each summer. We are using all of our pieces of information to create positive social opportunities and the best possible combination for ALL campers in the entire group.





# Typical Daily Schedule

Camp Echo Lake provides a Developmentally Progressive program for campers, which grows and changes with the children as they continue through their summers at camp. Through a mix of age-appropriate group and elective activities and special events, campers at Echo Lake get to do the things they love, try new activities, develop skills through high-level instruction and always have fun.

Juniors are campers entering 5th grade and younger. Inters are campers entering 6th and 7th grade. Senior Village are campers entering 8th, 9th, and 10th grade. LITs are campers entering 11th grade and have their own day-to-day schedule.

	Juniors	Inters	Senior Village
7:45am-8:15am	Breakfast	Wake Up/Clean Up	Sleep
8:15am-8:45am	Clean Up	Breakfast	Wake Up/Clean Up
9:00am-9:20am	Morning Line Up	Morning Line Up	Breakfast
Period 1 9:30 am-10:15am	Group Activity	Group Activity	10:00 am SV Line Up
Period 2 10:30am-11:15am	Group Activity	Group Activity	Elective (T, W, F, Sat, Sun)
Period 3 11:30am-12:15pm	Group Activity	Elective (Tues-Sun)	Elective (T, W, F, Sat, Sun)
Period 4 12:30pm-1:15pm	Lunch 12:30pm Rest Hour	Lunch 12:45pm Rest Hour	Elective (T, W, F, Sat, Sun)
Period 5 1:30pm-2:00pm	Rest Hour	Rest Hour	Lunch
Period 6 2:00pm-2:45pm	Group Activity	Elective (T, W, F, Sat, Sun)	Rest Hour
Period 7 3:00pm-3:45pm	Elective (Tues-Sun)	Group Activity	Free Play
3:45pm-4:10pm	Snack	Snack	Snack
Period 8 4:15pm-5:00pm	General Swim	General Swim	Elective (T, W, F, Sat, Sun)
5:00pm-5:30pm	Free Play	Free Play	General Swim
5:30pm-5:45pm	Evening Line Up	Evening Line Up	
5:45pm-6:20pm	Dinner	Showers/Free Play	Showers
6:30pm-7:00pm	Free Play	Dinner	
7:00pm-7:45pm	Evening Activity	Showers/Free Play	Evening Line Up (7:10pm)
7:30pm-8:15pm	Canteen	Evening Activity	Dinner
8:15pm-9:00pm	Showers	Canteen	Evening Activity
9:00pm-9:30pm	Lights Out (Flashlight Time)	Back to Cabin	Canteen
9:30pm-10:00pm	Sleep	Lights Out (Flashlight Time)	Back to Cabins (Lights out at 11:00 pm)

# Tribal Competition

As you may know, for 81 summers, Camp Echo Lake's version of color war or Olympics is called Tribal. Through teamwork, spirit, effort, and fun, the Mohawk (Gold) and Iroquois (Green) teams compete once weekly in a variety of events from Tug of War, to swimming races, to Track and Field, to sports games, to Interarts (dance, singing, and acting), to the Amazing Race (a camp-wide relay race), to Sing. Siblings and cousins are always on the same team and you are on either the Mohawk team (gold) or the Iroquois team (green) all summer. With that, we suggest bringing some green and gold clothing items! On Visiting Day, once campers know their teams, parents can bring up more clothing items to represent their team!

Our team names honor the Mohawk and Iroquois people who have lived in the Adirondacks and throughout upstate New York for many centuries. Below is information about the Mohawk and Iroquois people. This information is shared with our campers and staff during the summer and is proudly hanging in our main office, in our dining hall, and in our LIT Lounge.

## Mohawk

The Mohawk, also known as "People of the Flint," were the easternmost tribe of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) Confederacy. Within the confederacy they were considered to be the "keepers of the eastern door." The Mohawk settlements populated the Mohawk Valley of New York State.

Through the centuries Mohawk influence extended far beyond their territory and was felt by the Dutch who settled on the Hudson River and in Manhattan. The Mohawk's location as the Iroquois nation closest to Albany and Montreal, and the fur traders there, gave them considerable influence among the other Tribes. This location has also contributed directly to a long and beautifully complicated history.

The Mohawk tribe lived in large fortified villages of Longhouses in the winter and in the summer, the men traveled on hunting expeditions while living in temporary wigwams. The people practiced hunting, fishing, and farming and traveled extensively in the territory along rivers in elm bark canoes for trading and war expeditions. Each Mohawk community also had a local council that guided the village chief or chiefs.

Members of the Mohawk tribe now live in settlements in northern New York State and southeastern Canada.

## Iroquois

The Iroquois Confederacy - or the Haudenosaunee "People of the Longhouse" - dates back several centuries, to when the Great Peacemaker founded it by uniting five nations: the Mohawks, the Onondaga, The Cayuga, the Oneida, and the Seneca. In around 1722, the Tuscarora nation joined the Iroquois, also known as the Haudenosaunee. Together, these six nations formed a multi-state government while maintaining their own individual governance.

The confederacy is often characterized as one of the world's oldest participatory democracies. In fact, in every deliberation in this very first "United Nations" in the world they always considered the impact of their decisions on the next seven generations.

The Peacemaker story of Iroquois tradition credits the formation of the confederacy, possible as early as the 12th century to Dekanawidah, "The Great Peacemaker," who is said to have persuaded Hiawatha, an Onondaga living among Mohawks, to advance "peace, civil authority, righteousness, and the great law" as sanctions for confederation. Cemented mainly by their desire to stand together against invasion, the tribes united in a common council composed of clan and village chiefs; each tribe had one vote, and unanimity was required for decisions. Under the Great Law of Peace (Gayanesshagowa), the joint jurisdiction of 50 peace chiefs, known as sachems, or hodiyahehsonh, embraced all civil affairs at the intertribal level.

# Setting Campers Up for Success at Camp

**Sending a child off to camp for the first time (or sometimes for the second or third time) can be overwhelming and filled with emotion for both the camper(s) and the parent(s).** As we have helped campers and parents with this preparation and adjustment to camp many times – and some of us have even experienced it ourselves as well – we wanted to offer some helpful perspective to ease some of the overwhelm and put some of the emotion in context. Remember, we are partners with you to help make the summer experience successful for your camper(s) and for you.

**Campers need to borrow their parents' confidence that they can be happy and successful at camp and that parents trust CEL to help them if there are bumps in the road.** If you are unsure of your camper's happiness and success at camp, please call us and we can support you, but it is detrimental to your camper's approach to camp, adjustment to camp, and overall summer experience if they sense your hesitancy about their success at camp. At CEL we are experts at what we do, we are partners with parents for the success of their campers, and your camper will experience the months leading up to camp, the adjustment to camp, and the entire summer in a much smoother and more successful way, if they borrow your confidence. That said, if your camper is nervous, anxious, or has questions, please reach out to us. We can share tools with you to help your camper, we can have our camp directors or leadership team zoom with / connect with your camper, and we can give you and them information about the camp experience that will help make the “unknown” or newness of camp feel a little more understood and manageable.

**All campers have an initial adjustment to camp and we are excellent at helping them connect with peers and staff, feel supported during moments of missing home, and help give them the tools to feel the feelings of missing you AND get comfortable at camp and begin to love and enjoy it.** Don't forget that our First Year Camper Events from February to May help with their connections even before they get to camp. Once they are at camp, we have lots of tools and strategies to help campers as well.

**If your camper is showing an initial struggle with adjustment to camp, as many do, it will be a wonderful accomplishment and confidence builder when they do adjust, and they will adjust.** If your camper is having ongoing adjustment issues, we'll be in contact with you. We have a very developed and well-practiced approach to helping campers deal with the real feelings of missing home. A “try it out” approach to camp does not work. You may think it's comforting to tell your child that if they're unhappy you'll come get them, but it gives them a sense of your own insecurity that it may not work.

**Reassure your camper that everything at home will be the same as when they left, and that they are not missing out on anything.** This means that pets will be cared for, possessions will be protected from siblings, and their room will stay as it was left. Parent(s) will be doing your “normal” boring parent work stuff, siblings will be going about the normal routine while they are away at camp, but THEY will get to be at camp doing amazing things every day! If for any reason there will be a life change (i.e. you'll be moving, redecorating, there is a sick relative or pet, etc...), please let us know as we can be most helpful to you and your camper(s) when we are informed. Please notify the camp directors or leadership team at camp of any potentially “stressful” events that may have occurred prior to camp or may occur during the summer. In this category would be an illness or death in the family, poor school grades, divorce, new baby, moving to a new house or city, etc...

# Setting Campers Up for Success at Camp cont.

**We at camp can be most helpful to your camper and their summer success if we are informed about any standout event, experience, or stressor that the camper experienced prior to camp or is experiencing at camp.** This includes changes or stressors to physical and/or mental health. Please discuss with the camp directors or leadership team if your camper has been under any mental health care at any time prior to camp. Camp Echo Lake is more than adequately prepared to support campers around typical developmental, adjustment, or camp related social and emotional issues. If there are additional concerns for campers, our knowledge of the issues will help us best be able to support your camper(s). We do often connect with parents and the at home mental professional before the summer, if that is helpful, and we do have campers that continue their at home mental health support meetings from camp, virtually, during the summer if that is helpful to them.

**Please tell us if your camper has any special interests or talents that should be encouraged at camp.** While the camp program is designed to provide basic skills in many activities, certain campers may have a more rewarding summer if encouraged in a specific area. One of the gifts of camp is that campers get to try new things and further develop in the activities or areas they love. We encourage campers to do both. There is so much fun to be had at camp and so many great experiences, campers don't struggle with what to do, but what to do first. Again, one of the gifts of camp are that campers – in a safe and supportive, child centered environment – get the opportunity to try on and try out new skills, activities, personalities, and experiences. Let them have ownership over their summer experience that you so expertly and lovingly chose for them. We will be there every step of the way, for them and for you.

**The Mistake of “Promising Your Child that you will take them home from camp if they are unhappy”:** You've signed your camper up for the full camp experience. Under no circumstances should you promise that you'll take your camper home mid-summer. We have found that this sets up (a) an unconscious feeling for the camper that you have some doubt that camp will work for them and (b) gives the camper an “out” if they are working through their adjustment to camp and say, “I'm going home because my parent said they will take me home if I want.”

**Finally, if you are the parent of a first-year camper, please do your best to attend our virtual New Parent Night as that event and the recourses we share are very helpful to parents of first year campers, even if you have other campers who are already at camp.** At our new parent night and in emails that we share over the next few months, we share tips, tools, and suggestions about things like packing for camp, bedtime routines, letter writing, and so much more.

Congratulations as you have chosen CEL and given your camper(s) the gift of an incredibly positive and wonderful summer experience at Camp Echo Lake! We are here for you and for your campers and your campers are in for an incredibly positive summer – and life-impacting – experience. We can't wait!



# Social and Emotional Health

**As we all know, the mental health and social and emotional experiences for developing campers is crucial to keep top of mind.** For children, teenagers, and young adults (yes, for parents too!) there are stresses to mental health and various positive and challenging social experiences. These are some of the many reasons why camp is a tremendous gift to the campers and staff in our camp community. There is a great need for campers and staff to build additional independence, socialize with peers, spend time outdoors, engage in active play, and build and practice social skills. In every decision we make about the protocols at camp, we always consider the mental health and social and emotional impacts of those decisions. We will continue to weigh and balance the importance of accounting for all factors when creating protocols for our campers, staff, our camp community, and parents.

**Separation from parents and family creates an adjustment for all campers (and parents) during the summer, and we know how challenging that can be, not only at the start of camp, but in the anticipation leading up to camp as well.** Learning to manage that anxiety, use tools to feel better, and know that you “can do hard things,” is part of the incredible benefit of camp. As always, we train our staff to understand and recognize these transitions for campers and work with our staff and Leadership Team to meet any additional social and emotional needs our campers and staff may have. If there was ever a time for campers to practice independence, build self-esteem, work on social skills, and engage in activities, this is it.

**Prior to camp, our leadership team and camp directors do a lot of training and setting of expectations for staff around working with campers in ways that are supportive and encouraging of their healthy social and emotional experiences.** During the summer our cabin staff, leadership team, and camp directors work closely with campers, and as a team of adults, to help campers navigate social experiences and the normal ebbs and flows of friendships, support campers with their own emotional experiences (positive, challenging, and everything in between), and feeling as confident and self-aware. We will absolutely reach out to you if we are seeing any social or emotional concerns for your camper. We do believe that one of the incredible gifts of camp is that campers learn to identify, manage, and navigate social experiences, a range of emotions, and daily life in our camp community in a safe, supportive, child centered environment. We work to help campers build social skills and emotional awareness, not only for success at camp but for use and success all year round. Not every day is perfect, but camp creates wonderful experiences for campers to navigate moments of “imperfection” and celebrate the moments that certainly feel very close to “perfection!”

**For parents too, we know that the anticipation of camp and the separation from your child(ren) can be very challenging, and we are here for you as well.** Please reach out to us if you or your child(ren) have any concerns leading up to the summer and know that we will partner with you while your child is with us at camp. There are tremendous social, emotional, and mental health benefits of the camp experience, especially for campers, but for staff and parents as well. We look forward to experiencing those benefits with you and your child(ren).

**Remember that at CEL we emphasize being nice and trying hard and are dedicated to the positive development of every camper and staff person in our camp community.** CEL is also incredibly spirited and fun and your camper(s) is in for a wonderful, self-esteem, friendship, and skill building experience with us this summer!

# For First Year Campers - Tips & Resources

We know that the start of a camp experience can be both exciting and anxiety provoking. We want to partner with parents to help make this start to camp as smooth and easy as possible. The best guidance we can offer is that your camper needs to borrow your confidence that you have chosen a wonderful camp. Remind them that we are there to help them in any way, and that you know that they will be successful at camp.

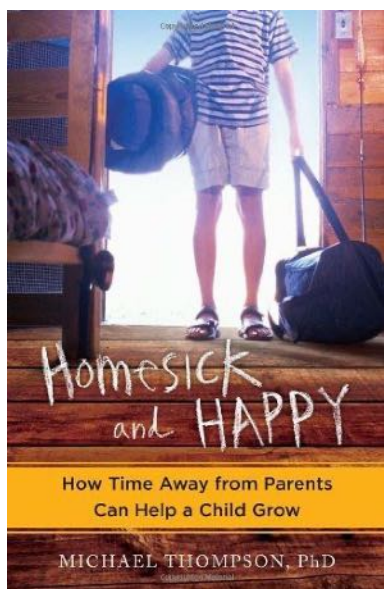
It is not only normal, but expected, that all new campers have moments of worry, concern, or anxiety before going to camp for the first time. These feelings DO NOT mean they are not ready for camp and DO NOT mean they should not go to camp. It DOES mean that they are looking for additional information about what they can expect when they go off to camp. They are looking for a positive connection and association with camp, and they are looking to feel your confidence in camp and in them to be successful at camp.

## **If your camper is expressing anxiety about camp, here are three things you can do:**

- Validate their feelings. You understand they may feel nervous about camp AND you hope they are excited for camp too!
- Help give them concrete and specific information about what to expect. This is where the new camper events, this Parent Handbook, and reaching out to us directly can be very helpful.
- Reach out to us for support for you and your camper!

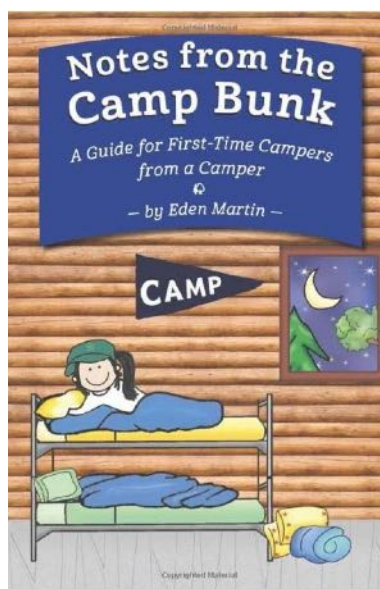
Additionally, try to attend all of the New Camper and New Parent events (both virtual and in-person) as they will go a long way in helping to ease anxiety and create positive connections with camp. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or concerns you may have as the summer approaches.

Here are two books we recommend as you prepare yourself and your camper for their first summer at camp! Families of new campers should have received their copies in the mail this past fall. If you did not receive your books, please contact our office at [office@campechlake.com](mailto:office@campechlake.com).



### **Homesick and Happy**

This is an excellent resource for parents of first-year campers! Michael Thompson will give parents tips and language to help prepare campers and themselves for the many emotions that come along with going to camp for the first time!



### **Notes from the Camp Bunk**

Current CEL camper Eden Martin wrote this fantastic guide to help new campers prepare for their first summer! It provides descriptions of common camp events and tips for making the most of every day at sleepaway camp!

# For First Year Campers - Events

We have created a series of events designed to create positive connections between your family and camp. These events also give you an opportunity to spend time with the Echo Lake leadership staff and let us get to know you and your camper.



## **New Camper Virtual Event**

Sunday, February 8

Your camper will have an opportunity to meet the other new campers in their age group and get to know our CEL leadership team!



## **Camp Big Brother/Big Sister Program**

In March, your camper will hear from a current CEL camper (one or two years older than them) who is excited to be a positive connection and a friendly face for them when they get to camp.



## **Virtual New Parent Night**

Wednesday, April 15 from 7-9 pm

There are a number of ways that we help to set new campers up for success once they get to camp, which we will review at our New Parent Night.



## **New Camper Spring Into Summer Event at Breezemont Day Camp**

Sunday, May 3 from 10:30am to 12:30pm

Your camper will have an in-person experience connecting with other new campers and CEL staff members. Campers will play games and get to know one another while getting excited for the summer!

For our full off-season and summer calendar, see page 4.



# Camp Echo Lake Foundations

When people ask us what the Camp Echo Lake values are or what Dedicated to Human Development means, we look to our Camp Echo Lake Foundations as the guidepost for who we are and the measuring stick for every decision we make. CEL's Foundations: Safety, Connection, Empathy, Discovery, Effort, and Resilience are at the heart of our Warm Inner Glow.

These six CEL Foundations are central to our Dedicated to Human Development goals. They are incorporated into our staff recruiting, training, and evaluation process. We believe that if a camper or staff person is going to have a complete and growth-filled experience at camp, he or she is experiencing Safety, Connection, Empathy, Discovery, Effort, and Resilience as a member of our community. We wanted to take the opportunity to introduce our campers, parents, and camp community to the CEL Foundations, a tangible representation of who we are and what we do at Camp Echo Lake.



## **Safety: "Protect it"**

As Echo Lakers we prioritize physical, emotional, social, and psychological safety in everything we do and in every interaction we have.



## **Connection: "Bridge it"**

As Echo Lakers we believe in creating meaningful relationships, valuing each person in the community, respecting the individual, and including everyone.



## **Empathy: "Care about it"**

As Echo Lakers we acknowledge and relate to, the feelings of others and operate under the understanding that our actions and words impact others.



## **Discovery: "Go for it"**

As Echo Lakers we try new things, build new friendships, and continue to learn new skills in order to grow and evolve.



## **Effort: "Be in it"**

As Echo Lakers we take initiative, participate, and work hard.



## **Resilience: "Stay in it"**

As Echo Lakers we learn from mistakes, setbacks, and failures and keep going even when things are tough.



# Glossary of CEL Terms

**4n4** - Campers going into 10th grade are a part of our 4n4 program! They spend 4 weeks of the summer on a trip out west to Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Wyoming.

**Activity Specialist** - A staff member whose job is teaching a specific activity during the day. Activity specialists live in cabins with campers and spend time with their groups when they aren't teaching!

**Camper Specialist** - A staff member whose job is to accompany the campers to each activity and ensure their safety and wellness throughout the day!

**Group Leader (GL)** - Team Leader whose job is to manage the campers and staff of a group! Like a Camper Specialist, the GL will accompany the campers to each activity and ensure their safety and wellbeing. One per group.

**H2O** - Instructional swim lessons held at the pool. Juniors and Inters have H2O twice each week.

**Jason's Jungle** - The Ropes Course located in the woods behind Fine Arts. Includes high challenge elements, and low team-building elements.

**Line Up** - Time of the day when whole divisions of camp come together to hear announcements, celebrate birthdays and lost teeth, and give fuzzies. Morning lineup is held by Girls' Camp, Boys' Camp, and Senior Village in their respective areas. Evening lineup is held by Main Village and Senior Village at their respective flag poles.

**LIT** - Leader in Training. CEL's oldest campers, who spend time with Main Village groups each week and lead Tribal.

**Main Village** - Campers entering 7th grade and below and LITs, who live on Boys' Camp and Girls' Camp.

**OD** - On Duty. The people whose job it is to watch the campers each night between 10 pm and 1 am. There is one OD for each cabin.

**Rest Hour** - The time after lunch each day designated for rest time in the cabins! A quiet time for campers to relax, read their mail, write letters, and recharge for the rest of the day!

**Senior Village** - Campers entering 8th through 10th grades.

**Sky Village** - The self-belayed ropes course located adjacent to the lake. Includes two courses of connecting obstacles and zip lines.

**Trek** - Our outdoors program at Echo Lake! They run activities on camp down at Trek, and run a number of off-camp adventure trips including hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, paddling, rock climbing, and caving!

**Tribal** - CEL's Color War. Summer long competition between Mohawk (gold/yellow) and Iroquois (green). Led by the LITs.

# Camp Echo Lake Map



- |                             |                               |                                |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Zipline                  | 21. Girls' Camp Bunkline      | 41. Senior Village Girls Bunks |
| 2. Boys' Camp Bunkline      | 22. Gymnastics                | 42. The Lodge                  |
| 3. Baseball Field           | 23. Lower Soccer Field        | 43. Senior Village Campfire    |
| 4. Upper Soccer Field       | 24. Softball Field            | 44. Sky Village                |
| 5. Admin                    | 25. The Quad                  | 45. Waterfront                 |
| 6. The Pool                 | 26. Rec Hall                  | 46. Main Village Campfire      |
| 7. Amphitheater             | 27. Girls' Camp Gaga          | 47. The Rox                    |
| 8. The LAB                  | 28. Field House               |                                |
| 9. Thunderdome              | 29. Rock Wall                 |                                |
| 10. Main Village Volleyball | 30. Trek                      |                                |
| 11. Main Village Basketball | 31. Archery                   |                                |
| 12. Boys' Camp Lineup       | 32. Golf                      |                                |
| 13. Boys' Camp Gaga         | 33. Main Village Tennis       |                                |
| 14. Jason's Jungle          | 34. Maintenance               |                                |
| 15. Fine Arts Center        | 35. Senior Village Tennis     |                                |
| 16. Main Village Flagpole   | 36. Road House                |                                |
| 17. Dining Hall             | 37. Senior Village Volleyball |                                |
| 18. The Grove               | 38. Senior Village Basketball |                                |
| 19. Health Center           | 39. Senior Village Pavilion   |                                |
| 20. Girls' Camp Lineup      | 40. Senior Village Boys Bunks |                                |





## Thank you for being a part of our community!

We are looking forward to partnering with you to give all campers and staff a safe, happy and healthy summer. Over the course of the spring, we look forward to being in touch with you to share reminders, tips and excitement for the summer ahead. Please keep this Parent Handbook easily accessible as a valuable resource as you prep for the summer and throughout your child's summer at camp. Thank you for being a valued part of the Camp Echo Lake Community.

