



ALDERSGATE

DAY CAMP HANDBOOK

A sacred space,,
empowering all,
in faith and friendship
since 1945.

HELLO CAMPERS & FAMILIES

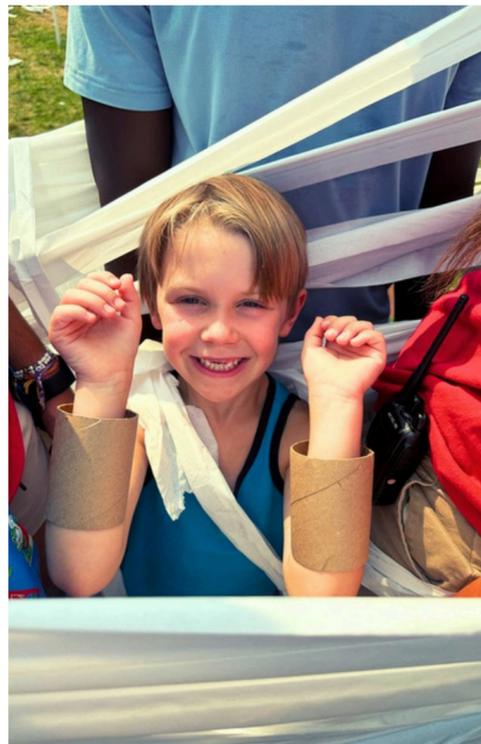
WELCOME TO ALDERSGATE!

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS HANDBOOK:

This handbook is designed to give you all the information you need to be ready for your summer at Aldersgate from schedules to health information and packing lists. There is a table of contents on the next page to help you find what you are looking for quickly and easily.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS???

Hopefully you'll find all the information you need to feel ready for camp but if you don't... ask! Email us at info@campaldersgate.com with ANY questions at all so you feel ready and excited for camp!



John Dyer

Executive Director



Megan Lynch

Day Camp Director



WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

PLEASE BRING EVERY DAY:

- BACKPACK** - Each day, we ask campers to arrive with a backpack they can EASILY carry around on their own. We have almost 300 acres of land at camp, and we enjoy using different parts of camp and exploring!
 - Please do not send "rolling backpacks" or any bags with wheels. It is difficult and frustrating to roll these on our dirt roads.
 - Campers need to be able to carry their own bags - staff will not carry campers' backpacks for them, except in emergency situations.
- BATHING SUIT**
- FLIP FLOPS, CROCS, OR WATER SHOES** - shoes must be worn when traveling from waterfront to change!
- BEACH TOWEL**
- WATER BOTTLE** Staying hydrated prevents headaches, stomachaches, and fatigue. Campers need to drink more water at camp because they are active and outdoors most of the day.
- SUNSCREEN**
- INSECT REPELLENT**

Please note sunscreen and bug spray should be applied **prior to the camper's arrival each day. Campers will be reminded to reapply sunscreen and bug spray as needed throughout the day but our staff will not physically assist them. Campers cannot share each others' sunscreen or bug spray, due to allergic and skin reactions.*

To prevent injury and allow full participation in camp sports, challenge course and nature activities, all campers must wear sneakers or other closed-toe footwear.

EXTRA BAG TO LEAVE AT CAMP:

Whether you are attending camp for one week or all nine, we ask all campers to bring an extra bag that we will store in the day camp pavilion. Please **label your bag and all its contents.**

- EXTRA TOWEL**
- CHANGE OF CLOTHES** including underwear and socks
- RAINCOAT**
- SWEATSHIRT OR LONG SLEEVED SHIRT**
- EXTRA INSECT REPELLENT**
- SUNSCREEN**

Please leave all valuables and toys or anything that cannot be replaced at home. Aldersgate assumes no responsibility for loss of damage to campers' personal property.

LEAVE AT HOME!!!

- Candy and other junk food
- Rolling backpacks
- Cell phones
- ALL electronics
- Pets or other live animals
- Fishing poles
- Bows & arrows
- Fireworks**
- Drugs, alcohol, or associated paraphernalia, including vapes**
- Weapons (including camp knives and look-alike weapons)**

*****Possession of these items will result in the camper being sent home immediately, and a meeting will occur to determine if return to camp is appropriate.***

ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN

Before Care: Drop-off available from 7:00-7:59 AM.
Regular Day: Standard drop-off from 8:00-9:00 AM.



1

Driving Into Camp

When you turn into camp, drive past the office to the first driveway on your right and pull up to the day camp office. A staff member will meet you each day.

2

Arriving at Camp

Your camper will exit the car and head directly to their pavilion. After drop-off, please turn right at the bottom of our driveway to return to Snake Hill Road.

3

Late Arrival (after 9:00)

Camp "officially" begins at 9:00 am with our morning meeting. If you arrive after 9 am, stop at the main office, on the right immediately after you drive into camp. Our office staff will contact the Assistant Director for Day Camp who will make sure your camper gets to their assigned group safely.

Due to the size of camp and the many programs running, this can take up to 30 minutes to come and pick your camper up from your car.

PICKUP & CHECK-OUT

Regular Day: Standard pickup from 4:00–4:30 PM.
After Care: Pickup available from 4:31–5:30 PM.

1

Have Photo ID or Mirror Tag Ready

Please have your mirror tag on display each day during pick-up. Anyone presenting the mirror tag is authorized to pick up the camper listed on it.

If a pick-up adult does not have the mirror tag, they must show a photo ID and be listed as an emergency contact or approved pick-up person in your camper's record.

For the safety of your camper, please make sure anyone on your approved pick-up or emergency contact list knows they must show photo identification if they are not carrying the mirror tag.

2

Picking Up Early (before 4:00)

Campers will return to the pavilion at 3:45 PM to get packed up and ready for pick-up.

If you need to pick up your camper before 4:00 PM, please stop by the main office, located immediately on the right after you drive into camp.

Please note:

- Early pick-ups do not require a reservation, but please note that we cannot accommodate pick-ups during lunch (11:00 AM–12:00 PM) or between 3:30–4:00 PM, as all campers are transitioning to the pavilion for dismissal during these times.
- We are unable to take call-ahead requests; the pick-up process will begin only when an approved adult arrives on site.
- Because campers explore our 280-acre campus throughout the day, please allow up to a 30-minute buffer for your camper to walk back to the main office for early pick-up.

PICKUP & CHECK-OUT

Regular Day: Standard pickup from 4:00–4:30 PM.
After Care: Pickup available from 4:31–5:30 PM.

3

Picking Up Late (after 4:30)

Camp Pick-Up Time (Without After Care):

- All campers who are not registered and paid for After Care must be picked up by 4:30 PM.

Late Pick-Up Policy:

- We offer one 5-minute grace period per week for families. After this single weekly grace period has been used, any pick-up that occurs at 4:31 PM or later will result in:
 - A \$30 late-pickup fee, and
 - Automatic enrollment in After Care for the remainder of that week if space is availableOR
 - A \$20-per-day late pick-up charge if After Care is full and we cannot safely add additional campers.
- This policy ensures we have the staffing necessary to keep all campers safe while maintaining smooth end-of-day operations.

Steps for Late Pick-Up:

- If you know you will be late, please contact the camp office as soon as possible.
- Upon arrival, staff will record the pick-up time and determine whether your weekly grace period has been used and whether After Care has available space.
- Applicable fees (late fee, After Care charges, or per-day late pick-up charges) will be added to your camp account and must be paid before your camper's next week of attendance.

Additional Information:

- Chronic Late Pick-Ups: Repeated late pick-ups may result in further action, including a meeting to discuss alternative arrangements or possible dismissal from the program.

AN EXAMPLE DAY AT ALDERSGATE

8:00AM

Drop Off

Staff supervise free play and catch up with campers before the structured morning activities begin.

9:00 AM

Morning Meeting

Campers start the day with announcements, reminders, and camp songs before heading to their morning activities.

9:15 AM

Games

Campers play various games with their age group. This is a great time for Gaga - a camper favorite! - or a new field game.

10:00 AM

Arts or STEM

Campers will have a new experience each day, whether it is making friendship bracelets, programming robots, or painting kindness rocks.

10:45 AM

Special Event

Our special event is something new every day! Whether it is a big game of Disco Bingo, Gold Rush, a carnival, or a camper talent show, the special event is always a highlight of the day!

11:30 PM

Lunch

12:15 PM

Free Swim

Swim is offered every day unless there is a thunderstorm in the area. Our private lake has swimming areas appropriate for all campers' age and ability level.

1:05 PM

Group Time

Campers have time to change out of their swimwear and grab a snack. Aldersgate provides a snack each day and on Wednesdays campers can purchase a special snack for \$1 if they choose to.

1:55 PM

Adventure or Nature

Campers will have a new experience each day, whether it is hiking to hammock village, fishing, or studying the tadpoles in our lake.

2:45 PM

Sports

Campers love to practice skills and play a game on our basketball court or use our great fields for sports like soccer or kickball.

3:30 PM

Afternoon Meeting

All staff and campers make their way back to the pavilions for afternoon meeting. We wrap up the day with more camp songs, recognition of campers, and any reminders for the next day.

4:00 PM

Camper Pickup

Campers return to their groups to play games and recap their day while waiting to be picked up.

4:30 PM

End of Camp Day!

See you tomorrow!



Please note this is an EXAMPLE schedule - while all campers experience the same basic structure of the day, the order of activities changes based on campers' age/group assignment.

THE 4 S's

With the help of their counselors, campers learn how to use the 4 S's to make decisions and solve problems. As a group, they create a **GROUP COVENANT** based on these 4 S's to provide guidelines for living in community all week.

Is it **SAFE**?

Examples

- Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Treat everyone with kindness and respect
- Listen and respond respectfully to all camp staff at all times
- Use personal items (water bottles, bags, jackets, etc.) appropriately and safely
- Make choices that keep yourself and others safe

Does it **SERVE** others?

Examples

- Including everyone in games, activities, and conversations
- Helping a friend who is struggling, sad, or needs directions
- Sharing supplies (markers, sports equipment, art materials, snacks when allowed)
- Taking turns and being patient while others get a chance
- Using kind words instead of teasing or putting someone down
- Following counselor directions so everyone stays safe and has fun

Is it good environmental **STEWARDSHIP**?

Examples

- Making sure to pick up trash
- Report anything that is broken to the counselor
- Care for equipment at camp - not damaging it on purpose
- Being kind to any wildlife on the camp property

Does it build **SELF-ESTEEM**?

Examples

- Using kind words, not just about friends but about oneself
- Making good choices
- Setting a goal and reach it
- Trying something new, be it food, an activity or game





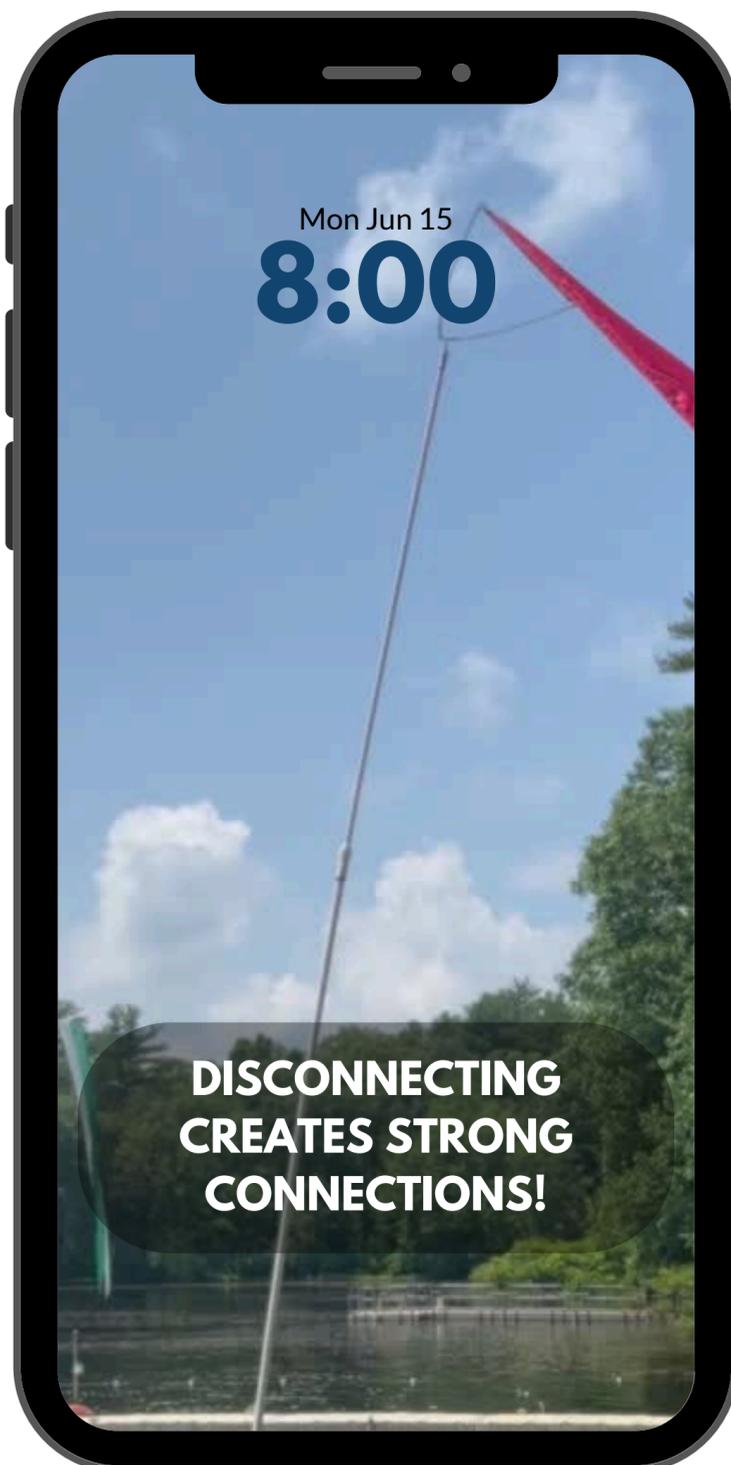
ALDRSGATE IS AN UNPLUGGED ENVIRONMENT

Unplugging allows our campers (and staff!) to reconnect with nature, God, and themselves. It also allows them to make new connections with others.

Technology is amazing but so is the ability to take chances and make mistakes. Many campers say they love Aldersgate because they can really "be themselves" here - something they are afraid to do in front of their "school friends" We see this more and more as young people document their lives online. So many young people are afraid to try something new and have it documented forever on social media. Camp gives them a space to be silly, play, try something new and maybe even fail and try again in a safe, supportive environment.

Though being unable to instantly contact your camper might be challenging, parent's confidence in their camper's ability to adapt to a new environment, connect with others, and advocate for their own needs is liberating for them. Of course, if you have any concerns, you can always call camp and we will let you know how your camper is doing!

Having a conversation about the reasons behind being unplugged at camp and making sure electronics are left at home are your contributions to their success!



BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

We have a few behavioral expectations for all campers that are requirements for attending Aldersgate.

Please review these with your camper before arriving so they know what is expected from them and others.



POSSESSION OR USE OF SUBSTANCES

Smoking of any substance (including vaping) and/or the possession of alcohol or drugs INCLUDING MEDICATION that has not been turned in to the nurse, is considered major misconduct. *

ASSAULT

No camper will physically or verbally abuse any other camper, CIT, volunteer, or staff member. This is considered major misconduct.*

STAYING WITH YOUR GROUP

Campers must stay with their group at all times and follow directions from staff about where they can and cannot go. Running away from the group or from staff members is considered major misconduct.*

BULLYING

Disagreements can happen when people are living in community and staff are trained to help campers work through conflict. However, bullying is a pattern of harmful words or actions and/or intimidation. If this occurs, especially after staff intervention, it is considered major misconduct.*

What if my camper sees or hears something going on?

It is very important for campers to speak up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable! All staff members are trained to listen and support campers who come forward with important information about what is going on at camp.

***These major misconduct incidents cannot and will not be tolerated by Aldersgate. Campers who make choices that threaten the safety of themselves or others will result in that camper going home immediately and a meeting will occur to determine if their return is appropriate.**

No refunds, reductions, or allowances will be provided for late arrivals, early departures, dismissals, or withdrawals, including cases of homesickness or behavior unsafe to themselves or others.

HEALTH HISTORY FORM

Our American Camp Association (ACA) Accreditation requires all campers to have a new health history form each year. **This form is online in your CampBrain account.** Please fill this form out as early as possible so that our camp nurse can become familiar with your camper's needs. On this form, it asks, but is not limited to:

- Your camper's height and weight
 - Any medicines that are not allowed while at camp
 - Any medical history that could impact their time at camp
 - And more...
-
- There will be an extra fee of \$25 charged to your account if this is not filled out two weeks prior to the start of camp.
 - An additional \$50 fee may be added to your account if you arrive to camp with these forms still not filled out.

The online form can be filled out by the parent/guardian and does not require a doctor's signature.

MEDICATION

- ALL medications, including ointments & vitamins, must be handed in to the camp nurse upon arrival at camp.
- ALL medications must be in the original pharmacy bottle. We cannot accept medications in pill boxes or envelopes.
- Prescription medications must have the original label that states the camper's name, dosage, and frequency.
- Emergency medications (inhalers and Epi-Pens) must remain with campers during the week but the camp nurse needs to see them at check in for documentation.
- Please do not send "as needed" over the counter medications with your camper. If you have allowed it on your camper's health form, our camp nurse will administer acetaminophen, ibuprofen, antihistamines, calamine lotion, and antacids if needed.



BASIC FIRST AID

All of our Counselors are First Aid, CPR, and AED certified. If your camper gets a bump or scrape, counselors will take care of it right away! They let the nurse know whenever they administer first aid so she can follow up with the campers later.

HEAD LICE

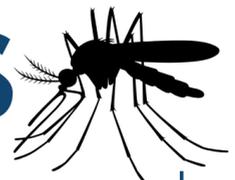
HEAD LICE

Our Aldersgate families are key partners in preventing the spread of head lice. We ask families to check their camper's hair regularly, especially before each session.

If head lice are identified, families will be contacted, and the camper may be asked to return home. Campers may return to camp after appropriate treatment, and they are lice-free.



TICKS & MOSQUITOS



Lyme disease and other insect-borne illnesses are a risk for anyone who ventures outside. Please follow these precautions:

- send your child with insect repellent that deters ticks
- teach your child about doing tick self-check (*NOTE: our staff cannot do tick checks due to child safety policies*)
- check for any bites or rashes that appear after camp and immediately consult your pediatrician if you have a concern

Our staff remind campers to put on bug spray, especially when in the woods and will model this behavior for their campers. Please be sure they put on bug spray (and sunscreen) prior to camp each day.

If we discover a camper is bitten by a tick while at camp, our camp nurse and/or the Assistant Director for Day Camp will speak to you at pick up.

ALLERGIES

Please be sure to indicate on the health form all allergies our staff should be aware of—especially food and bee-sting allergies. Submitting this information at least 2 weeks prior to your camper's session is critical, as it allows our staff to prepare effectively and ensure your camper's safety.

Campers with EpiPens or rescue inhalers must keep them accessible at all times. If this applies to your camper, please send a backpack or carrier for them to use.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT CAMP

Our camp nurse is available to campers throughout the day to administer medications and provide any care beyond basic first aid. The nurse will contact you if your camper:

- Has symptoms that require them to stay at the health lodge
- Shows signs of a stomach bug or other contagious illness
- Has an elevated temperature that accompanies other symptoms or does not go down after rest, hydration, and/or OTC medication
- Is injured
- Requires off-site medical care

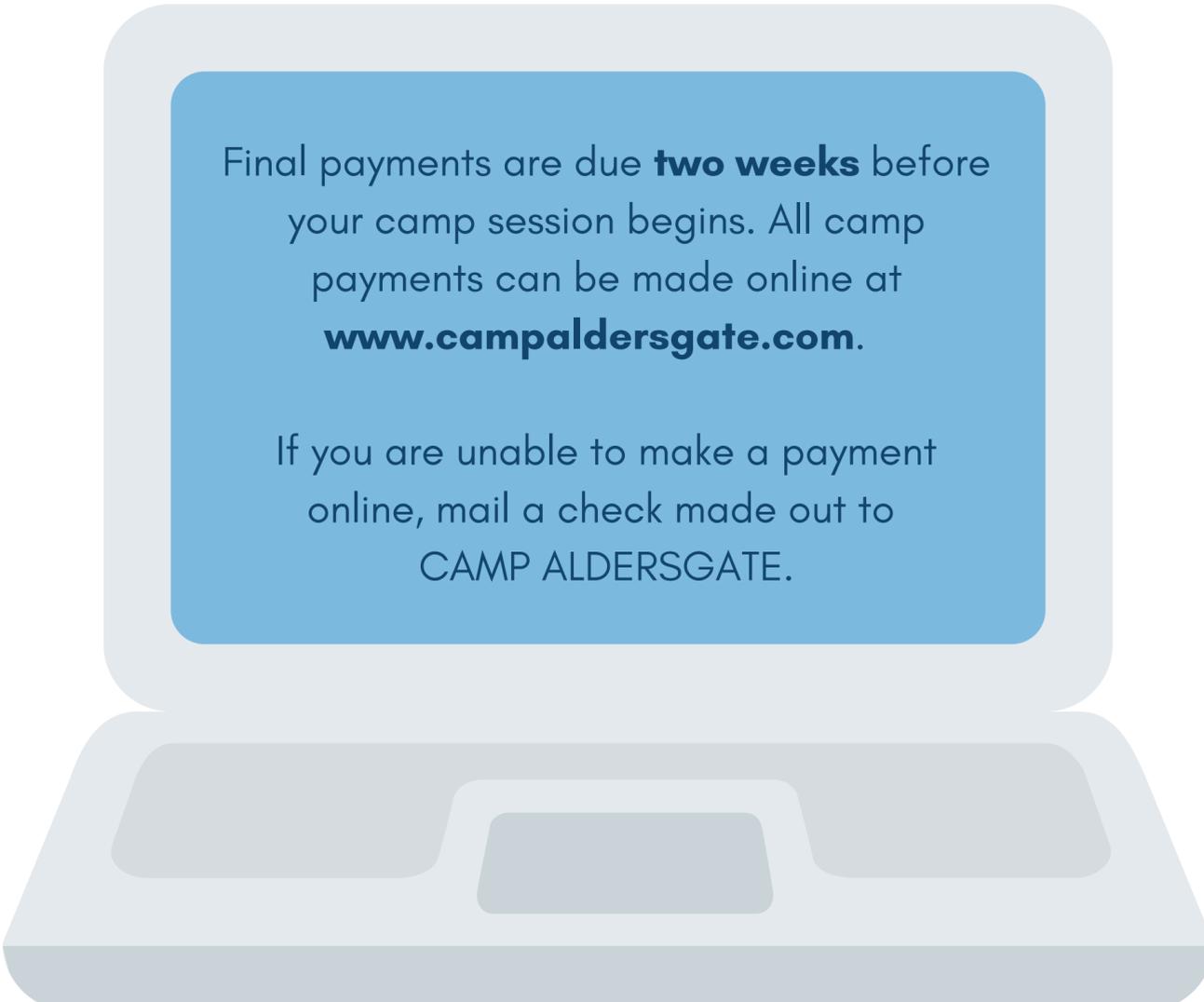
If your camper becomes too ill to participate in camp activities or may be contagious to others, you will be required to pick them up. We do not take campers to the doctor unless it is an emergency situation. Campers may return when they have been fever-free, vomit-free, diarrhea-free, and symptom-free for 24 hours. **Please note there are no refunds due to illness, even if the illness is communicated before the camper arrives.**

Our Aldersgate families are essential partners in keeping our community healthy. We ask families to keep campers home at the first sign of illness or request to switch to another session when possible. This helps prevent the spread of contagious conditions and protects all campers and staff.

Elevated Temperature Protocol

If a camper has an elevated temperature, the nurse will assess their overall condition, exposure to illness, and symptoms. The camper may be dismissed and may return once their temperature has returned to normal and they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

PAYMENT INFORMATION



Final payments are due **two weeks** before your camp session begins. All camp payments can be made online at **www.campaldersgate.com**.

If you are unable to make a payment online, mail a check made out to **CAMP ALDERSGATE**.

RETURNED CHECKS

There is a \$25 fee for checks returned by the bank.

CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations must be submitted by 10:00 AM, 14 days before the start of your camper's session. This deadline is firm.

Your deposit is non-refundable, as your camper's space has been held and program costs have already been incurred (registration, staffing, supplies, etc.). Any cancellation received after 10:00 AM, 14 days prior to the session start date, will not be refunded.

If a child attends any part of a camp week, the full weekly fee is charged, and no refunds or credits are provided for absences, missed days, or closures due to unforeseen circumstances, such as power outages, inclement weather, loss of amenities, or camper illness. If camp is unable to operate for safety reasons, families will be notified to pick up children as soon as possible, and no refunds or prorated fees will be issued.

No refunds, reductions, or allowances will be provided for late arrivals, early departures, dismissals, or withdrawals, including cases of homesickness or behavior unsafe to themselves or others.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When is the first day of camp? The first day of camp this year is Monday, June 15th, 2026

What are the hours of your program? Our program runs Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Extended Care can be added to bring your camper's day to 7am to 5:30pm.

What age are your campers? Our youngest campers must be five years old by the first day they attend camp. Our campers are in age-specific groups ranging from 5 to 13 years old. We also have a few alumni campers who are 14-15 years old who are in our leadership training (LIT) program.

Is Camp Aldersgate just for Methodists? No! Camp Aldersgate is open to all campers, regardless of their faith background. Campers from many faiths - and those without a faith background - have found Aldersgate to be an excellent place to explore and strengthen their spiritual life. Aldersgate has a progressive Methodist theology, which emphasizes that everyone is created in God's image and is loved and accepted for who they truly are. Therefore, we are called to love and accept each other for who God has made us to be.

Is the information in the online registration system secure? Camp Aldersgate has partnered with Camp Brain, a leader in the camp software industry, to offer online registration for camp. The information in the system is accessible only to the camper's family and appropriate Aldersgate staff.

What about lunch? What if my camper is a picky eater? We provide lunch for campers each day. Our professional chef plans kid-friendly menus like chicken nuggets, tacos, chicken sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs etc.

However, if your camper does not like the option provided, we also have salads, sunbutter & jelly, or a cheese sandwich. Campers can bring their own lunch if they are concerned about the options. Please note that campers cannot bring any food or snacks that contain peanuts or tree nuts due to camper allergies.



My camper is not a strong swimmer. Can they still go swimming in the lake? Every Monday, we have a waterfront orientation where all first-week campers learn the rules for the waterfront and the boating procedures. All campers can swim in the shallow end and use canoes with staff. Campers who are 11 or older can boat with friends even if they do not take a swim test. Campers who want to swim in the raft area must successfully pass a swim test on Monday. Our swim test consists of jumping into the deep end, swimming approximately 25 yards, exiting the water using the ladder, jumping in again, treading water for 60 seconds, and swimming back to the shallow end. Campers must be 8 years old to attempt the swim test.

What if my camper needs medication during the camp day?

Please indicate on your health form that your camper takes medication during the camp day and our nurse will contact you. If appropriate, many families change their medication time during the summer so campers can take their medication before or after camp. However, we understand this cannot be done for some medications! If your camper has an emergency medication (like an inhaler or Epi-Pen), our nurse will discuss with you whether your camper or their counselor should carry that medication with them during the day, depending on your camper's age and what they do at home/during the school year. All of our senior staff members are trained in Basic First Aid and have specific training on how and when to administer Epi-Pens to our campers who require them.

What is your policy on toys at camp?

To ensure the safety and enjoyment of all campers, we ask that personal toys and items from home not be brought to camp. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Action figures, dolls, stuffed animals
- Trading cards (e.g., Pokémon, sports cards)
- Electronic devices or handheld games
- Slime

Camp is an active place, and camp cannot be held responsible for personal items that may get lost or damaged.

I think my camper left something behind at camp. Do you have a lost-and-found?

Of course! If your item is labeled, we will call you to let you know that we have found it. If not, we keep everything that is left behind for 1 week after the camp's end date. Please call the camp or check out our Google Drive folder, and let us know what you are missing. If items are not collected, we donate all items from the lost and found.

Can my camper visit the camp store?

Yes! Every Friday, our campers have the chance to visit the Camp Store. Please send money with your camper in a labeled ziplock bag. Our store offers items ranging from \$1 to \$30.

We also have an online store - items purchased online can be sent home with your camper.



20 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CAMPER AFTER A DAY AT CAMP

Use these fun, open-ended questions to spark meaningful conversations and help your camper share about their day! Tip: You don't need to ask them all - pick a few and let the conversation flow.

- What was the best part of your day at camp?
- What made you laugh the most today?
- Did you try anything new today?
- Who did you spend the most time with today?
- What game or activity would you want to do again tomorrow?
- What was something surprising that happened today?
- Did you help someone today, or did someone help you?
- If you could relive one moment from today, what would it be?
- What was the hardest or trickiest part of your day?
- What did you feel really proud of today?
- What was your favorite thing you did?
- Did you learn something new about a friend - or about yourself?
- What was the silliest thing that happened today?
- What's one thing you're excited for tomorrow?
- If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?



AM I READY FOR CAMP?

- Completed all forms on Camp Brain
- Paid balance or set up payment plan with the camp office
- Read this Day Camp Handbook
- Taken a tour around Aldersgate
- Attended Rally Day

**Still have questions?
Email us or call the office!**
**We want to be sure that your family feels as prepared and
excited for camp as possible!**

