ALDERSGATE
DAY CAMP HANDBOOK

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



1043 SNAKE HILL RD.
NORTH SCITUATE, RI 02857

401.568.4350

ABBY@CAMPALDERSGATE.COM

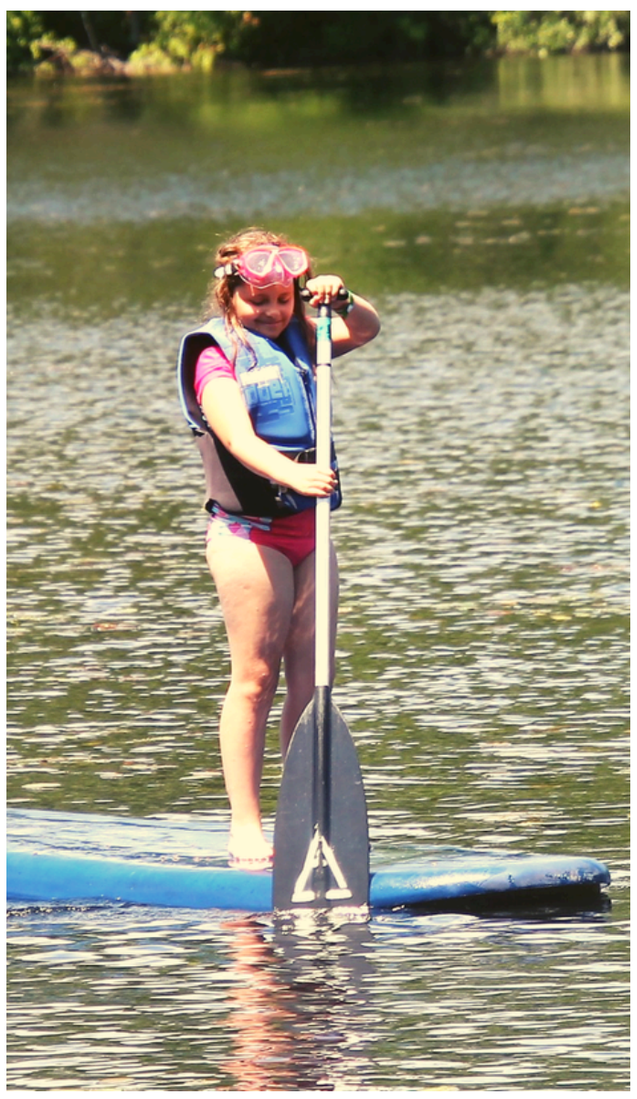
www.campaldersgate.com

HELLO CAMPERS & FAMILIES

WELCOME TO ALDERSGATE!



Aldersgate is a loving environment where everyone is empowered to grow in their faith and make new friends in this sacred space.



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@campaldersate.com** with ANY questions at all so you feel ready and excited for camp!



Scott James-Vickery
Executive Director





Abby James-Vickery
Assistant 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 enjoying 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**

Please note sunscreen and bug spray should be applied **prior to the camper's arrival each day. Campers will be reminded to reapply sunscreen 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 OF AT LEAST SPF25**
  - *Hats & swimshirts are a good option if your child is particularly sensitive to the sun!*

Please leave all valuables or anything that cannot be replaced at home. Aldersgate assumes no responsiblity 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 PoleBows & Arrows
- Money*
- Fireworks**
- Drugs, Alcohol, or Associated Paraphernalia including vapes**
- Weapons (including camp knives and look-alike weapons)**

*Campers can bring $1 or $2 on Wednesday to buy a special snack from the canteen. We strongly suggest that you add camp store money to your child's online account so they do not have to try to keep track of cash. Campers CANNOT buy snacks for friends - their parents may not want them to have snacks or they may have allergies!

***Possession of these items is considered "major misconduct" and the camper will need to be picked up immediately and a meeting will occur to determine if return to camp is appropriate.**

ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN

Drop off is between 8:00 - 9:00

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. If you wish to get out of the car, especially on the first day, please pull over to the right and walk to the day camp office.

2

Sign In

You must sign in your camper each day and include the name of the person who will be picking up your camper that day. This person must be on your emergency contacts and will be expected to show photo identification.

3

Late Arrival (after 9:00)

Camp "officially" begins at 9:00 am with our morning meeting. After this, please bring your camper to the main office, which is 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.

PICKUP & CHECK-OUT

Pickup is between 4:00 - 4:30

1

Have Photo ID Ready

Please have photo identification ready each day. If the same person picks up your camper every day, we will begin to recognize you and may not ask each day BUT... make sure you have it with you in case someone different is at pickup. This is for the safety of your camper!

Be sure that all people on your pickup list are aware they will need to present photo ID to pick up your camper.

2

Picking Up Early (before 3:45)

Campers return to the pavilion area for pickup at 3:45. If you need to pickup your camper before this time, please go to the main office, which is 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 you safely!

Please note that if you arrive unexpectedly, your camper may not be ready for immediate pickup as camper groups explore our 280+ acres during their daily programming!

3

Picking Up Late (after 4:30)

Aldersgate does NOT offer extended care. Please be on time to pick up your camper each day.

For every 15 minutes that you are late there will be a $15 charge.

AMERICAN CAMPING ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION

The American Camp Association Accreditation means Aldersgate cares about its campers, staff, and guests! Each year, Aldersgate undergoes a thorough review of its operations and ensures that industry standards and best practices are implemented in all areas from staff training and qualifications to emergency management and everything in between. This ensures everyone who comes to Aldersgate can have fun and grow in a safe environment.



All of our summer camp directors and administrative team have been directly involved in an accreditation visit and continue to engage in professional development from ACA throughout the year.

Two members of our team are Associate Visitors for ACA New England, which means they have been trained to evaluate other camps as part of their accreditation process and have evaluated numerous camps throughout New England.

Does it really matter?

- **YES! Accreditation keeps camps accountable and helps families select camps that are safe and meet industry and government standards, even those not required by law.**
- **There are no federal regulations for camps and some states (like Rhode Island!) don't have any process for regulating camps. This means that camps without ACA accreditation may not be meeting the standards you expect for your camper.**
- **Accreditation is voluntary, which means accredited camps are going above and beyond to provide the best experience possible for campers and staff.**



How does it affect camp?

- **ACA accreditation affects camp in LOTS of important ways that your camper may not specifically notice but that make their experience better.**
- **Accreditation establishes guidelines for many different areas of camp including:**
  - **CORE (camp mission & camper goals)**
  - **ADMINISTRATION (emergency procedures & human resources)**
  - **FACILITIES (site & food service safety)**
  - **HEALTH & WELLNESS (wellness policies & procedures)**
  - **STAFF & SUPERVISION (staff qualifications, training, & evaluation)**
  - **PROGRAM DESIGN & ACTIVITIES (program planning & procedures)**
  - **AQUATICS (swimming & watercraft policies)**
- **Accreditation helps Aldersgate to think about every aspect of your campers' day to make it as safe and fun as possible!**

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.

EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES



ADVENTURE & NATURE

- Hiking
- Outdoor Cooking (s'mores and hot dogs!)
- Fishing
- Fort Building
- Pond study
- Group Initiatives & Team Building
- Archery (ages 8+)
- Low Ropes Course (ages 8+)
- High Ropes Course (ages 12+)



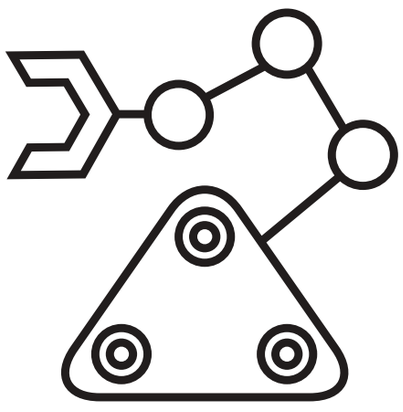
GAMES & SPORTS

- Basketball
- Flag Football
- Kickball
- Soccer
- Gaga
- Backyard Games
- Parachute
- Frisbee



CREATIVE ARTS

- Dance
- Acting Games
- Karaoke
- Collage
- Drawing
- Friendship Bracelets
- Tie Dye
- Camp Crafts
- Painting
- Cartooning/Comic Books



STEM ACTIVITIES

- Egg Drop
- Rocketry
- Robotics
- Ooblek
- Lego/block engineering challenges

Please note these are EXAMPLE activities - each group will participate in different activities based on campers' age and developmental needs, staff skills, and weather.

THE ALDERSGATE LEGACY



Whether this is your first summer or your tenth, you are now part of a special legacy. For generations, campers have been coming to Aldersgate and experiencing many of the same things you will this summer.

Aldersgate is owned and operated by the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church who purchased the land from Grace Episcopal Church in 1944. **The first summer of camping was 1945.**



Our mission is **a sacred space, empowering all in faith a friendship to change the world.** All of the decisions we make as an organization honor that mission and the history of Aldersgate.





The next few pages will give you more information on the current culture at Aldersgate so we can make sure that Aldersgate provides a safe, empowering place for at least the next 78 years!

THE 4 S's

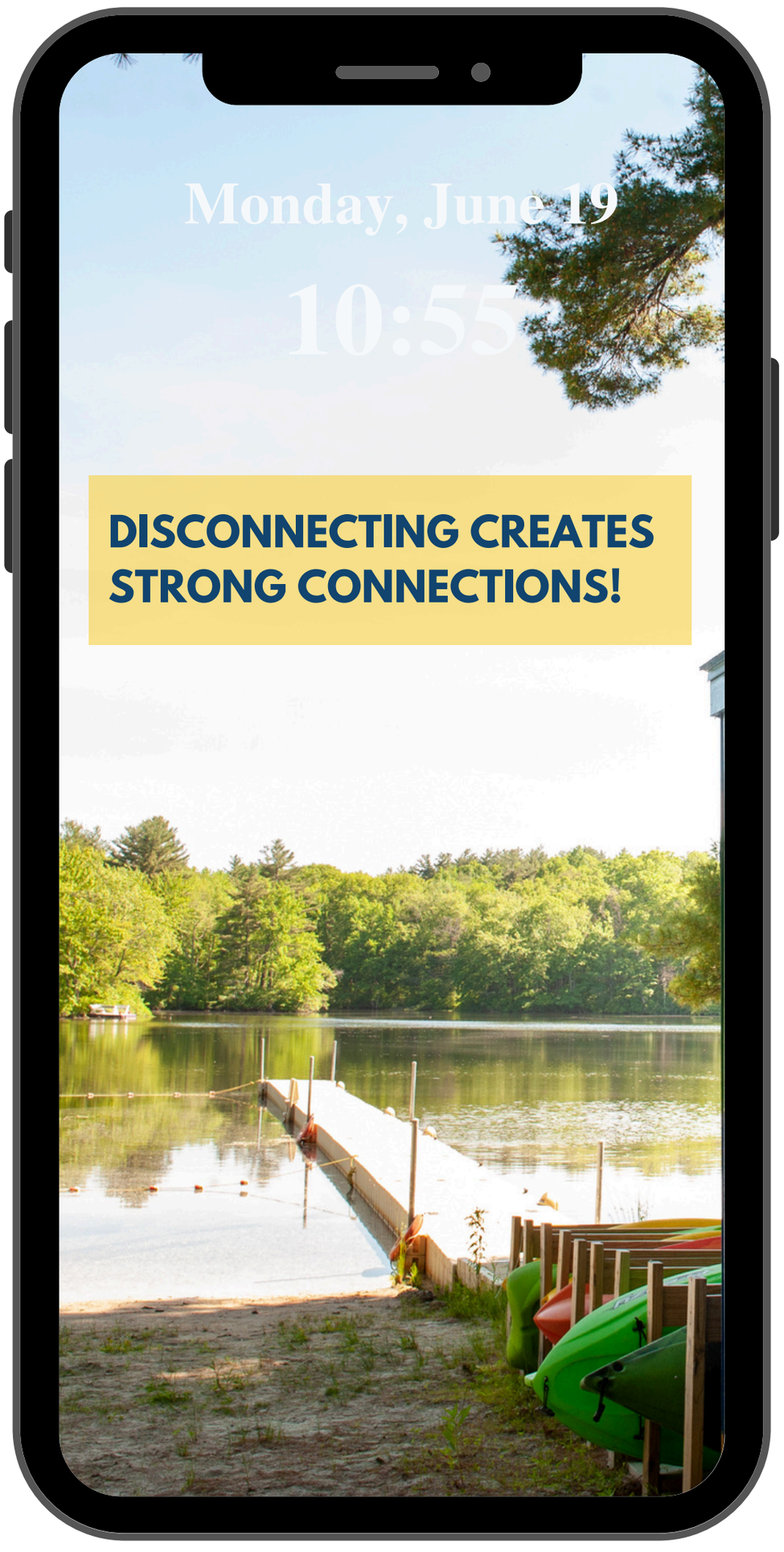
With the help of their counselors, campers learn how to use the 4 S's to make decisions and solve problems. As a group, they create a **GROUP COVENANT** based on these 4 S's to provide guidelines for living in community all week.

Is it SAFE?

Does it SERVE others?

Is it good environmental STEWARDSHIP?

Does it build SELF-ESTEEM?



ALDERSGATE 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. *



BOUNDARIES

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.*



ASSAULT

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

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.

- 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.

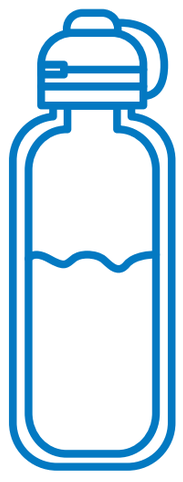
The online form can be filled out by the parent/guardian and does not require a doctor's signature. **All campers will need a signed physical and vaccination form from their doctor. We accept all state school phyical forms.**

MEDICATION

- ALL medications, including ointments & vitamins, must be handed in to the camp nurse upon arrival at camp.
- ALL medications must be in the 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.

WATER BOTTLES

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. **All campers are required to bring a reusable water bottle with them to camp.**





BASIC FIRST AID

All of our Senior 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 any time they administer first aid so she can follow up with campers later.

CONTAGIONS & HEAD LICE

When it comes to preventing contagious illness and head lice, our Aldersgate families have been our best partners. Our camp community has benefited from families keeping their camper home for one day at the start of camp or asking to switch to another session.

- **IF CAMPER HAS AN ELEVATED TEMPERATURE,**
  Our camp nurse will make a determination about camper's health based on actual temperature, exposure to illnesses, and current condition. Camper may be asked to return home. They make come back to camp when their temperature has returned to normal and they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

ALLERGIES

Be sure to indicate on the health form any allergies our staff should be aware of, especially food or bee sting allergies. Indicating this prior to check-in on Monday helps our staff prepare more effectively for the safety of your camper. Campers with Epi-Pens and rescue inhalers are required to have them at all times. Please send a backpack or carrier if this is applicable to your camper.

 ILLNESS AT CAMP

Our camp nurse is available to campers throughout their day at camp. She administers any medication and provides any care beyond basic first aid.

She will contact you if your camper:

- has any symptoms that require them to stay at the health lodge
- shows symptoms of 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 health care off-site

Please be aware that if your camper is too ill to participate in camp activities or may be contagious to others, you will need to come pick them up. We do not take campers to the doctor unless it is an emergency situation. Campers can return if there is no fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other symptoms for 24 hours.

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.

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 received two weeks prior to the beginning of your camp session. **Your deposit will not be returned** as your space was held from others and costs were incurred (registration, staffing, program supplies, etc.)

HEALTH CHECKLIST BEFORE CAMP BEGINS:

- ☐ **ASAP**: Complete health form online
- ☐ **Before camp**: Visit your camper's doctor to get the health history & vaccination form signed
- ☐ **Before camp:** Get refills for medication if necessary
    - Remember, all prescriptions must be in original bottles/boxes with camper's name, dosage, and frequency
- ☐ **Two weeks before**: Call Aldersgate if your camper has food allergies or other medical needs that may need a special plan
- ☐ **One week before**: check for head lice
- ☐ **One day before**: check again for head lice

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When is the first day of camp? The first day of camp this year is Monday, June 19, 2023.

What are the hours of your program? Our program runs Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

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 that 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 them 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 tenders, tacos, and macaroni & cheese. However, if your camper does not like the option provided, we also have a full salad bar and the opportunity to make a sunbutter & jelly or a cheese sandwich. Campers have the option of bringing their own lunch if they are worried about the options. Please not that campers cannot bring any food or snack item that contains 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 swimming to the end of the swimming area, treading water for a minute, and swimming back to the shallow end.

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.

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 until our fall festival in October so please call camp and let us know what you are missing! After the fall festival, we donate all items from the lost and found.

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!

ALDERSGATE
Camp & Retreat Center