



PARENT/CAMPER HANDBOOK



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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to our Metropolis of Detroit Greek Orthodox Summer Camp (MDSC)! We are very excited to have your child(ren) join us for the upcoming camp season this summer. This handbook is intended to provide you with an overview of MDSC, and contains some information that may be different or updated from past years. Therefore, please read it thoroughly. Our intent is to provide you with all of the information you will need prior to sending your child(ren) up to MDSC. The safety and well-being of your child(ren) is our top priority and we are constantly working to ensure that our blessed MDSC is operating in a manner that will best serve you and your children.

We look forward to another beautiful summer at MDSC!

In Christ,

The Board of Trustees of the Metropolis of Detroit Greek Orthodox Summer Camp

MDSC Mission Statement

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp (MDSC) provides faith, friendship and love to the youth and young adults of our Metropolis.

Resources for Parents

This handbook provides important information for both parents and campers. We have taken care to thoroughly explain what you can expect for your camper to experience during his or her stay at MDSC. We strongly encourage you to read this handbook and to share the contents with your camper. In addition to this handbook, we have many resources on our website: www.gomdsc.org. We also encourage you to reach out to the Board of Trustees with any questions you may have. The Board can be reached at gomdsc@gmail.com.

MDSC is licensed through the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) through the State of Michigan. Annually an inspector from LARA visits MDSC to confirm that the camp is operating in a safe manner in compliance with LARA requirements. MDSC proudly remains in good standing with LARA and the State of Michigan, providing a safe and fun environment for campers.

Why an Orthodox Summer Camp?

(Several years ago, the founder of MDSC, Fr. Nick Harbatis, was asked why he started our summer camp, and he shared this explanation.)

I was recently asked what it was that prompted me to initiate a Church summer camp program for our young people. To adequately respond to the query, I had to return to the late 1940's and early 50's which was an exciting period for the younger generation of Greek Orthodox immigrant parentage. It was also an era of new challenges both for the Church and for our young people as they were being assimilated into the American way of life as opposed to that of their traditional upbringing at home.

As a young seminarian, I was deeply impressed by the Exodus story in the Old Testament. I was somewhat in a quandary as to why it took the Hebrews 40 years to traverse the distance from Egypt to the Promised Land. After further study, I realized the challenge facing Moses at that time. The old timers were passing away and he had the heavy burden of teaching [the younger generation] God's commandments and preparing them for the challenges lying ahead.

As a newly ordained priest from the younger generation itself, I came to the conclusion that something similar to Moses' dilemma was facing us as a Church and that a summer camp program would greatly contribute to an understanding of Orthodoxy as a faith and the responsibilities our young people would have to face in the future. As plans proceeded, it became apparent that such items as exploring the Faith, practices, and rituals of Orthodoxy,

developing a prayer life, and learning to accept and share their future responsibilities as Church members and adults were of prime importance.

The program initially began with the premise that, despite regular Sunday School attendance, many areas of Faith, morality, and religious practices had to be explored in a relaxed atmosphere with opportunities to openly discuss and debate the various aspects of Christian living. Daily prayer was introduced concluding with a sermonette after evening prayers. An hour each day was set aside for religious instruction and discussion, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the close of the week preceded with the Sacrament of Confession the evening before.

An effort was made to also cultivate a sense of Church family and personal responsibility. Each camper was daily assigned a particular chore such as assisting in the kitchen ,washing dishes, table hopping, cleaning the lodge, bathrooms, cabins, and cleaning the grounds. By sharing these responsibilities, it was hoped each camper would come to the realization that any project, be it the Church or home, requires sharing and carrying out one's responsibilities.

It was also felt that a full, vigorous, and healthy life requires exercise and physical exertion. Daily swimming, canoeing, sports activities, hiking, roller skating, and horse-back riding added to the fun of each day which also underlined the adage, "A healthy mind in a healthy body." And to spur creativity, an arts and crafts program was introduced and a Friday night of comedy and skits created by both the campers and counselors was presented.

These are some of the reasons that the camp program was initiated and continues to this day. Many former campers meet and write to each other on occasion and fondly reminisce about the days they enjoyed at camp and how much they benefited from the camping program. There is no doubt that the experiences itself has left an indelible mark on their lives and has fostered a religious, family, cultural, and social identity never to be forgotten.



Father Nick Harbatis
1926-2016

Preparing your Camper for MDSC

Camper Groups and Daily Camp Activities

Campers are divided into three age groups: Juniors (grades 3-5); Intermediates (grades 6-8); and Seniors (grades 9-11). Each camper group rotates through three morning sessions together: Orthodox Life, Arts & Crafts, and Swimming Lessons. Afternoon sessions may combine two camper groups. In the afternoon, campers have field games and open swim. Following dinner, the entire camp will gather together for an evening activity. Examples of all-camp activities include: capture the flag, skit night, an all-camp dance, Greek dancing. The weekly program at camp from Monday through Friday usually follows the schedule listed below. This schedule may vary during the week to make room for special events such as the Divine Liturgy and sometimes the afternoon activities are replaced with larger all-camp activities such as Color Wars.

Daily Schedule

7:50 a.m. – Rise & Shine!

The “cowbell” makes it around to each cabin to make sure everyone wakes up! Counselors will make sure all campers are awake and getting dressed appropriate to the weather conditions. If Senior campers want to shower, they should be encouraged to get up earlier than 8:00 am because they only have until 8:30 a.m.

8:10 a.m. – Hopper Bell

The Lodge bell is rung for all campers and staff assigned to Hopper Duty (setting the tables for breakfast). Campers assigned to this group each day should know ahead of time that they must be at the Lodge at 8:10. Counselors will make sure these campers are awake and getting dressed at 8:00 a.m. so they make it to Hopper Duty on time.

8:20 a.m. – Flag Raising and Morning Prayers/Orthros

Campers gather at the flagpole for flag raising and the Pledge of Allegiance. Morning prayers are read before the flag-raising, and the clergy bless the meal. Our Program Directors usually lead the group in some of the favorite camp “morning songs” to start the day with some fun!

8:50 a.m. – Breakfast

Cabin groups sit at their assigned tables with their staff members.

9:00 a.m. - Morning Show!

A little fun before we start our day run by the Program Directors..

9:30 a.m. – Cabin Cleanup/Staff Meeting

Before Kapers, campers are dismissed to clean up their cabins (as cabin neatness is graded each day).

9:45 a.m. – Kapers

Campers are assigned to different groups and are responsible for keeping different parts of the Camp clean and organized. Staff are assigned to the group and make sure the appropriate duties are completed. The Kaper groups are:

- **Grounds:** pick up trash around grounds, take out trash bags near the kitchen door to the dumpster.
- **Suzie:** clean sinks and toilets. Sweep and wet-mop the bathroom and shower areas, including staff Suzies.
- **Lodge:** sweep the floors, empty all trash cans (including eating area), pick up games, straighten furniture.
- **Hoppers:** as mentioned previously, Hoppers help set up the lodge for the meal and tables for campers/staff to eat. They also clean up the eating area after each meal.
- **Beach:** rake sand, clean up rocks and any trash at the beach/firepit area. Organize toys/floats/lifejackets and ensure boats are ready to be used each morning.

10:10 a.m. – Transition

10:15 a.m. – Program 1

The first program schedule is

- Seniors to Swimming Lessons (Beach)
- Intermediates to Arts & Crafts
- Juniors to Orthodox Life (Lodge or Chapel)

The program ends at 11:00 a.m. and allows for a 15-minute transition for changing clothes, etc.

11:15 a.m. – Program 2

The second program schedule is

- Seniors to Orthodox Life (Lodge or Chapel)
- Intermediates to Swimming Lessons (Beach)
- Juniors to Arts & Crafts

The program ends at 12:00 p.m. and allows for a 15-minute transition for changing clothes, etc.

12:15 p.m. – Program 3

The third program schedule is

- Seniors to Arts & Crafts
- Intermediates to Orthodox Life (Lodge or Chapel)
- Juniors to Swimming Lessons (Beach)

The program ends at 1:00 p.m. and allows for a 15-minute transition for changing clothes, etc.

1:15 p.m. – Hopper Bell

The same Hoppers from Breakfast set the tables for Lunch.

1:30 p.m. – Lunch

Cabin groups sit at their assigned tables with their staff members, and a blessing is said prior to eating. Bunk notes and mail are distributed after campers are finished eating. Announcements regarding the afternoon program are usually done at the end of lunch.

2:15 p.m. – Siesta

Campers are excused from lunch to their cabins to have a 1-hour siesta period. Campers do not need to sleep, but should be quiet and stay in their bunks to rest.

3:15 p.m. – Snack Time

Campers go to the Lodge for a small snack.

3:30 p.m. – 1st Afternoon Activity

Generally, Intermediates go to the field for an activity while Seniors and Juniors have an Open Swimming/Boating period. This schedule may vary based on certain program activities.

4:30 p.m. – Transition Period

1st Afternoon Activity ends and campers can change clothes for the next activity.

4:45 p.m. – 2nd Afternoon Activity

Generally, Intermediates have an Open Swimming/Boating period while the Seniors and Juniors have field or other activities. This schedule may vary based on certain program activities.

5:45 p.m. – Transition Period

2nd Afternoon Activity ends and campers can change clothes for dinner.

6:00 p.m. – Hopper Bell

The same Hoppers from Breakfast and Lunch set the tables for Dinner.

6:15 p.m. – Flag Lowering and Evening Prayers/Vespers

Campers gather at the flagpole for flag lowering and evening prayers, and the clergy bless the meal.

6:30 p.m. – Dinner

Cabin groups sit at their assigned tables with their staff members. Announcements regarding the evening program are usually done at the end of the meal.

7:30 p.m. – Evening Activity

Generally involves an all-camp activity played at the field.

9:00 p.m. – Snack Time and Daily Wrap-Up

Snacks are distributed and a wrap-up of the day occurs.

9:15 p.m. – Evening Worship

Evening prayers are sung and the Bible reading for the day is read.

9:30 p.m. – Juniors to Bed

When Juniors are excused to bed, their counselors escort them to the cabins to supervise. Counselors will encourage campers to take showers and brush their teeth.

9:50 p.m. – Intermediates to Bed

When Intermediates are excused to bed, their counselors escort them to the cabins to supervise. Counselors will encourage campers to take showers and brush their teeth.

10:00 p.m. – Seniors to Bed

When Seniors are excused to bed, their counselors escort them to the cabins to supervise. Counselors will encourage campers to take showers and brush their teeth, although Seniors can also shower in the morning if they prefer.

Living Arrangements

Campers sleep in cabins with shared living spaces with their fellow campers and counselors. Campers are grouped by age and gender. For example, all Junior Girls (grades 3-5) stay together with their counselors. Campers sleep on twin bunk beds. Safety boards are available for top bunks. Bathrooms and showers are available in a separate building, affectionately known as the "Suzie." Campers are expected to ask their counselor for permission to leave the cabins to use the bathroom. The cabins do not have air conditioning, but windows and box fans provide circulation and keep the temperatures moderated during the summer

Meals

MDSC serves three meals per day, plus two snacks. MDSC also provides water and Gatorade throughout the day to keep campers hydrated. Examples of breakfast, lunch and dinner options typically include: eggs, pancakes, hot dogs/hamburgers, taco night, Greek chicken with potatoes. Meals are served buffet style. Camp meals are designed to appeal to a variety of tastes, and we strive to include typical kid favorites. However, there may be meals or portions of meals that may not appeal to every camper. Unfortunately, our kitchen staff cannot accommodate special requests. Please prepare your camper that trying new food is part of the camp experience.

Campers eat with their cabin and age group. For example, all Juniors (boys and girls) eat together. Campers sit together at tables with long benches. Each table has at least two staff members for supervision.

If your camper has special dietary restrictions due to a medical condition, you will need to provide MDSC with a note from your camper's healthcare provider detailing the dietary restrictions. This should be included with your camper's medical forms that accompany their camper application. Please be thorough with the special medical dietary restrictions because our MDSC nurse and kitchen staff can properly prepare for your child's needs. If your camper has food allergies and requires special preparation, please provide a doctor's note outlining the necessary dietary restrictions and accommodations. Our medical professional will be in touch to ensure that we can properly accommodate your child.

Fasting

As an Orthodox camp, the MDSC camping program must be run with the traditions, values and beliefs of the Orthodox Christian church always in the forefront of what we do. One of these traditions is fasting, a beautiful spiritual discipline of our faith which allows us to cleanse ourselves of impurities and protects us from temptation. Therefore, at Camp, we will follow the traditional fasting practice of refraining from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, and also by observing other fasting requirements as necessary. While we understand that you may have different practices in your own home, we believe that refraining from meat on Wednesday and Friday is a reasonable practice to institute camp-wide to further instill spiritual growth in our campers. We encourage you to have a conversation about fasting with your campers so that they are not surprised when up at camp.

Conduct

As we are an Orthodox Christian camp that focuses on our Christian love for each other, we expect our campers to exhibit behavior that keeps Christ at the forefront. We expect that our campers treat each other with love, kindness and respect at all times.

Furthermore, we have a **zero-tolerance policy** for certain behavior. At the discretion of the Camp Director, campers may be sent home for the following reasons:

- Possession of any controlled substance or related paraphernalia (including, but not limited, and for example only: marijuana, vaping, juuls, tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, Zyn pouches)
- Bullying cabin-mates or other campers
- Physical altercation with cabin-mates or other campers
- Pranking of fellow cabin-mates, other campers, or staff (see below)
- Raiding of the kitchen (see below)
- Possession of dangerous implements (e.g. fireworks, pop-its, pocket knives, etc.)
- Entering a cabin of the opposite gender
- Going to the beach other than designated/assigned times

Pranks/Raids: While cabin and kitchen raids/pranks have been part of camp life for many years, we believe that this is a practice that needs to end. Campers and staff should feel safe at all times, and expect that their clothes and other belongings are not potentially damaged or removed, even as a joke. Likewise, Camp property and food should not be damaged or taken. Pranks and kitchen raids are not permitted at Camp. Campers and staff are not permitted to prank other campers or staff within their cabins or other camper groups/individuals outside their cabins. Additionally, campers/staff are not permitted to "raid" the kitchen after hours. Campers/staff who participate in any pranks or raids will be in violation of our zero tolerance policy (see above) and may be sent home by the Camp Director.

Additionally, we have a **two-warning system** for certain behavior. The Camp Director has the discretion to issue **two warnings** before sending a camper home if the camper:

- swears or uses inappropriate language
- consuming outside food or drink, or keeping any food or drink in the cabins
- retain possession of a cell phone or other electronics
- not sleeping in designated bunks/cabins
- violation of dress code (see below)
- Entering kitchen or other staff-only areas without permission from staff member
- Exiting cabin at night without permission of counselor

While we will make every attempt to resolve disruptive behavior, we reserve the right for the Camp Director to use his or her discretion to dismiss a camper early from the program. Parents will be contacted with the expectation that the camper will be picked up within 24 hours. No tuition refund will be offered for missed time at MDSC.

MDSC Traditions

Since the camp started in 1952, many traditions have become part of our camp life. Some of the traditions have endured since the beginning, others have faded away, and newer ones have begun. It is these traditions that add to the wonderful experience of MDSC, and are often fondly remembered by campers and staff from the past. Below are some of our time-honored traditions:

Daily Prayers

Every morning before breakfast, and every evening before dinner, all campers and staff gather near the flagpole to pray together.

Evening Worship

At the end of the camp day, before the campers are dismissed for bed, everyone gathers in the lodge to sing the petitions known as “Come My Brothers”, hear the Gospel reading for the day and a short sermon from our clergy.

Divine Liturgy and Confession

Confession is offered along with Divine Liturgy each week when clergy are in attendance at the camp. Campers are encouraged, but not required, to go to confession. During each week of camp, the clergy will offer a Divine Liturgy which is attended by all campers and staff.

Favorite Activities

Classic all-camp activities that encourage fellowship among campers include: Capture the Flag, Color Wars, Dodgeball, Greek Night, Trust Walk, Staff vs Seniors Basketball Game, Themed Dances, and Skit Night.

Camp Skits

During an evening activity, each camper group and the staff create skits and perform them in front of the entire camp. Some of the best skits have never been forgotten over the years!

Farewell at the Beach

On the Friday night of each week, everyone gathers on the beach of Echo Lake to sing favorite camp songs including ones that take advantage of the “echo” on our beloved Echo Lake. The counselors then receive candles, light them and form two lines from the firepit to the edge of the water. While the staff sings the Farewell Song, the individual campers walk through the two lines of staff, lighting their candle and placing it in the water. Everyone then gathers in the Friendship Circle, and symbolically says “farewell” while holding hands and shaking the person’s hand next to them, until the handshake travels around the full circle.

What to Pack

We have put together the following suggested packing list. Please send an adequate number of underwear, socks, t-shirts, shorts, etc. to last the length of your child's stay, as laundry is not available to campers.

Please label every item of clothing and all personal belongings with the camper's name. The camp is not responsible for lost items or items left at the camp. Items left at camp are donated to local organizations at the end of each week as we do not have adequate storage space to keep items.

We recommend that you pack all items in a trunk or large plastic container, rather than a suitcase. Space is limited in the area under each set of bunk-beds, and must be shared with a bunk mate, so trunks or large plastic containers are often an easier solution to the limited space.

Packing List:

- Sleeping bag/blanket
- Twin fitted sheet for mattress
- Twin flat sheet
- Pillow with pillowcase
- 2 Beach Towels
- 2 Shower Towels
- Soap, Shampoo, Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Container for carrying toiletries
- 2 Swimsuits (see dress code below for bathing suit requirements) & Beach Sandals
- Underwear (7-9 per week)
- Shorts (5 pairs)
- T-shirts (8-10, including a long sleeve t-shirt)
- Jeans (2 pairs)
- Waterproof shower sandals
- Sweatshirts and Sweatpants (2)
- Rain Jacket with hood
- Athletic shoes and socks (at least 7 pair of socks)
- Pajamas (3-5, especially for younger campers)
- Hat
- Water bottle
- Laundry bag
- Clothes for Church:
 - Boys: khakis, button-down shirt/polo
 - Girls: casual dress, sandals/flats
- Flashlight (extra batteries)
- Stationary/Postage
- Books for leisure time

- 1-2 Milk Crates (optional)
- Insect Repellent and Sunscreen

Just as importantly, we have put together a list of what is prohibited to be brought to MDSC. Please do not bring any of the following:

- Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, juuls, Zyn pouches, or vaping devices, tobacco of any kind (e.g. chewing) **These items can lead to a camper's immediate dismissal from MDSC pursuant to our zero tolerance policy (see above).**
- Any inherently dangerous items, such as pocket knives, lighters, fireworks, and weapons of any sort. **These items can lead to a camper's immediate dismissal from MDSC pursuant to our zero tolerance policy (see above).**
- Money is not necessary to have at camp.
- Gum, candy, pop and other foods/beverages may not be brought to MDSC, and campers are not allowed any snacks in their luggages or bags. We have several campers each summer with varying severe allergies. Please do not mail packages to the camp containing food, beverages, candy or other items for the same reason. **All packages sent will be opened by the Camp Director and any food contents confiscated. This is a violation of our two-warning system (see above), and repeated violations could lead to a camper's dismissal.**
- Cell phones are not allowed at MDSC, so please do not bring them. All electronics (including video games and music players) are prohibited. **This is a violation of our two-warning system (see above), and repeated violations could lead to a camper's dismissal.**

Dress Code

The same dress code that applies to campers applies to staff. The dress code applies to all activities, both on camp property and off-site (e.g. the raft trip). We are an Orthodox Christian camp, and the guiding principle for clothing should always be "modesty." The Camp Director has the discretion to prohibit clothing that he or she deems inappropriate. General guidance and examples of inappropriate clothing that will not be permitted include:

- sports bras are not tops (even when layered under an open shirt);
- excessively short or tight shorts;
- midriff/crop tops are not permitted;
- excessively short or tight skirts;
- tank tops and shirts should not have large cut-outs exposing the chest, including under the arms
- pants should not sag to expose underwear
- pants/shorts should not have writing across the rear
- all clothing with words or graphics must be appropriate for an Orthodox Christian camp
- bathing suits: girls must have one-piece suits that provide full coverage
 - Two pieces are not permitted
- bathing suits: boys must have swim trunks that reach an appropriate length

- Speedos are not permitted
- Boys must wear shirts outside of the beach at all times.

Important Parent Information

Application and Fees

Camper applications open on February 15. Applications must be completed by May 1, otherwise the Board may release the camper's spot to those on the waitlist. An application is not complete until all medical forms have been completed and submitted, and also that all fees have been paid. If you select the 2-installment plan option for camper tuition, the 2nd installment must be paid by May 1st.

If your plans change and your camper is no longer able to attend MDSC, a refund will be issued if you cancel by June 15. If a family needs to cancel a registration for their camper, they may do so up to a week prior to the week registered. The camp will provide a full refund, minus a \$25 administrative fee per camper.

Camper Transportation

Families are expected to drop their children off at MDSC on the Sunday of their week - a drop-off schedule will be shared with you in an email prior to your camp week. Arrivals outside of this time must be approved by the Director. Once you arrive at MDSC you must first check in with ***both*** the Director, ***and*** the medical team. **Please do not proceed directly to your child's cabin.** Meeting with the medical team is a crucial and mandatory part of check in for all families. This will allow the medical team to review health history, collect medications, and ensure your camper knows who the nurse and/or medical director is in case he or she needs them during the week. After meeting with the medical team, you will be introduced to your camper's counselor, and will be escorted down to your camper's cabin where you can help set up your camper's bunk. Once your camper is settled, it is time for parents to leave so that programming can begin.

Camp sessions end on Saturday, and campers are expected to be picked up based on the pick-up schedule that will be provided to you in an email from the camp. Pickups outside of this time must be approved by the Director. When you arrive at MDSC to pick up your camper, you can expect that he/she will be packed up. However, please double check that all belongings have been packed. This includes checking the clothesline outside of the cabin for your camper's clothes. **Once you have packed up, please be sure to check out with the Director as well as the Health Director.** Campers will only be released to family members or individuals indicated in the enrollment information.

Campers who are staying for more than one week may not leave Camp property during the transition days between weeks unless you give express permission for the camper to do so, and even then, the camper will only be permitted to leave with an adult listed on the transportation form. Under no circumstances may the camper leave with another minor (even if the other minor is a staff member). The Camp Director must also give permission and approve anyone leaving Camp property during the transition days between weeks.

Camper Health Information - Before Camp

Your camper's health and safety is our top priority at MDSC. Therefore, all medical forms must be completed before the camp season is underway so that our medical staff can review and reach out with any questions. This will allow us to ensure that MDSC is prepared for your camper's arrival.

Camper Health Information - During Camp

Your camper's health and safety is our top priority at MDSC. The Camp Health Director and other medical staff will care for all minor injuries and illnesses. Should a more serious or emergency medical situation occur, parents will be notified immediately and the camper will be taken to West Branch Regional Medical Center in West Branch, MI. We will provide the medical information you have listed on your camper's medical forms. MDSC will pay up front costs that may be due for medical treatment (e.g. copays for treatment or prescription drugs), with the understanding that you will ultimately be responsible for reimbursing MDSC within 30 days of the end of the week your camper attended for any expenses paid on your camper's behalf.

During your arrival at MDSC, you and your camper will meet with our medical team. All prescription medication must be turned in to the medical staff, and must come in the original prescription container with the original pharmacy label. Please do not send any over-the-counter medications as we have a fully-stocked infirmary. No medication whatsoever is allowed in the cabins.

Camper Mail

You may mail your camper at camp, but please note that it takes longer for mail to arrive up north at camp. If you mail a letter to your camper, please send it very early in the week. Please be mindful and refrain from reporting any news from home to your camper that may be upsetting to read in a letter. We ask that you do not send packages to your camper containing food or candy. **All packages sent will be opened by the Camp Director and any food contents confiscated.** The camp address is:

Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp
802 Valley Road
Rose City, MI 48654

The best way to send "mail" to your camper is by using the BunkNotes function to send a one-way email. BunkNotes are distributed daily at MDSC. You will receive more information about BunkNotes in the acceptance email you receive, and in other communication prior to camp.

Phone Calls

One of the most valuable lessons MDSC teaches its campers is independence from parents. Campers will not have access to phones to call home. Parents and campers are welcomed and encouraged to send letters and postcards to each other during the camper's stay at MDSC.

The Camp Director will communicate with parents as needed. Parents should refrain from calling MDSC, except for emergencies. Please contact the Board of Directors first, as we can more easily relay messages to MDSC. The best contact number for the Board is: 248-909-MDSC.

Water Safety

MDSC has a private access beach on our beloved Echo Lake. There is a designated swimming area with a marked shallow area. Every Sunday on the first day of camp programming, all campers will be tested for swimming abilities by the waterfront staff. The Waterfront Director will inform each camper whether he or she is eligible to swim in the deep end without a lifejacket. All campers are eligible to be in the deep end if they wear lifejackets. Furthermore, we have kayaks, paddle boats, and canoes available for camper and staff use during open swim. All campers are required to wear life-jackets when boating. No campers are permitted to go to the beach outside of the designated times (e.g. swim lessons, free swim, or all-Camp activities).

Off-Camp Trips

Once a week, campers have a supervised off-camp activity. Senior campers are taken to a “raft trip” where campers and staff enjoy a leisurely raft ride down the Au Sable River in groups of 6-8. As a reminder, Orthodox Christian behavior and dress is expected no matter whether activities are taking place on or off camp property. The authorization for off-camp trips is found in the Camper Application must be signed by parents in order for a camper to be taken on one of these activities. All trips are planned and supervised by appropriate adult staff.

Visits

Visits to MDSC during programming are strongly discouraged. An important lesson that campers learn at MDSC is independence. Mid-week visits by family and/or friends are disruptive. Please contact the Camp Director if there is a specific or particular reason why you must visit the camp during an active session. The Camp Director must give approval, and the Camp Director has complete authority to approve or deny a request.

Photos/Media

We have a Media Director who will take photos daily of campers during activities. These photos will be available online at <https://gomdsc.smugmug.com/>. We aim to upload photos daily in the evenings, so that you can be informed on the daily activities and fun your camper is having. These photos may be used as promotional material or on the MDSC’s social media pages (Instagram and Facebook). Your child will likely appear in photos or videos, but will not be identified by name.

Fire Drills and Severe Weather

At the beginning of every week we perform a fire drill so that campers and staff know what to do in case of an emergency. Campers and staff are to report to the flagpole for a headcount and campers are to remain with their counselors and cabin mates. We also review with all campers and staff general forest safety. On occasion, severe weather rolls through Camp. We are in constant contact with the county sheriff, and in the event of severe weather, campers and staff

remain in the Arts & Crafts room until the weather passes. The Arts & Crafts room is the lowest point of camp and the most secure for severe weather.

Conclusion

We hope that this handbook has provided you with all the information you will need as you prepare yourself and your children for a successful session at MDSC. Should you have any questions, please contact the Board at gomdsc@gmail.com. Additional information may be found on our website, www.gomdsc.org. Thank you, and we look forward to another great year!