



2024 STAFF HANDBOOK

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

All staff must read the entire handbook because many parts have been updated or are new for 2024.

I.	The Camp Staff Member Opening Letter	3
II.	Camp Philosophy & Goals	4
III.	Our Orthodox Life at Camp	5-6
	<i>Morning & Evening Prayers, Orthodox Life Classes, Confession, Fasting, Evening Cabin Reflection/Prayers, Divine Liturgy</i>	
IV.	Basic Understandings	7-9
	<i>Responsibilities of a Staff Member/Counselor; Top Priorities at Camp; Camp is for the Campers; Five Important Parts of Camp</i>	
V.	Safety-Your Role as a Staff Member	10-17
	<i>Child Protection Laws; GOA Youth Protection Program; Camper Wellbeing; Fire Prevention & Emergencies; Weather Emergencies; Missing Camper Policy; Water Safety; Injuries & Bloodborne Pathogens; Final Thoughts on Safety</i>	
VI.	Understanding & Dealing With Boys & Girls	18-21
	<i>Camper Characteristics – There Really Is a Difference; Juniors: 3rd - 5th Grade; Intermediates - 6th - 8th Grade; Seniors - 9th - 11th Grade</i>	
VII.	Camper Behavior Management	22-24
	<i>“Mr” and “Miss”; The Four “F’s” of Working With Young People; Camper Behavior Management; Three Forms of Discipline Never to Use; Counselor Role in Behavior Management</i>	
VIII.	How to Be a Good Staff Member	25-30
	<i>A Good Camp Staff Member Will.....; Good Camp Staff Members Will Not.....; Making a Difference as a Counselor at MDSC; How to Handle Homesickness; Running Program Activities; Camper Health & Hygiene – Showers, Brushing Teeth, Changing Clothes & Dressing for the Weather; Staff Salaries</i>	
IX.	Program Schedule & Staff Responsibilities	31-38
	<i>Saturday & Sunday Transition Responsibilities; Weekly Schedule & Responsibilities; Schedule Variations; Staff Expectations During the Camp Week (Meal Times, Kapers, Morning Program, Dish Duty, Afternoon & Evening Activities, Cabin Duty, Staff Off-Duty Times, Cabin Clean-Up, Skit Nights, Divine Liturgy, Saturday/End of the Week)</i>	
X.	Camp Policies & Rules	39-41
	<i>Two-Person Rule; CITs & Counselors - General Rules About Supervising Campers; Kitchen Policies; Staff Food/Drinks; Staff Curfew; Controlled Substances and Weapons Policy; Staff Health Insurance; Alcohol, Drugs & Controlled Substances; Leaving Camp Premises; Camp Electronics Policy; Camp Telephone Usage; Cell Phones & Car Keys; Cabin Phones & Overhead Announcements; Dating & Relationships; Arrival At Camp & Leaving Camp; Camp Visits; Cabin Restrictions; Camp Office Use</i>	
XI.	Closing Comments	42
XII.	Appendix A - Staff Discipline Policy	43-45
	<i>Zero Tolerance; Two-Warning System; Dress Code; Prohibited Items at Camp</i>	
XIII.	Appendix B - Weekly Director Checklist - Daily Operations	46
XIV.	Appendix C - Weekly Director Checklist - Opening/Closing	47

SEE ALSO:

- **YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM: Policies/Procedures for Camp Staff**
- **YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM: Social Networking Policy**

I. THE CAMP STAFF MEMBER

Welcome to the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp Staff! Whether you have been accepted as a counselor, or will be handling other staff responsibilities, it is very important that you understand your role.

The quality of the camp staff is the determining factor in the camp's success or failure. Factors such as program activities, facilities, the camp setting and meals are also important. But, camps with similar activities, facilities, etc often vary considerably in their ratings of "quality". Such differences are largely explainable by variations in the abilities and attitudes of the camp staff.

A camp staff member is a person who helps and guides by words and deeds. Camp staff members must be sure that their words and actions cause campers to respect each other and the staff. The position of camp staff members is very important and carries a great deal of responsibility. You should always be mindful of what you say and do.

The counselor is the person who is closest to the campers and therefore has the greatest influence on the experiences of the individual camper. However, this responsibility also falls on the Directors, Lifeguards and other staff, since **everyone** is considered a "camp counselor". Increased confidence, enrichment of friendships, personality growth and a better understanding of our Orthodox faith can all be influenced by dedicated camp staff members.

For you, the camp staff member, offering your time to the camp will provide some unique opportunities. Working closely with campers and other staff members will foster lasting friendships. Personal growth will be increased as you develop leadership skills and by gaining insight into the needs of others. Being a camp staff member is an honor, and it should be both fun and rewarding, but requires your full dedication to the role. **Please understand – being accepted as a staff member at MDSC should be considered a privilege, not a "right".**

This handbook will help you better understand your role as a camp staff member, and provide you with valuable resources and suggestions. Please take the time to read this handbook in its entirety prior to the weeks you've been accepted at camp. Copies are available at camp should you need to re-read any section when situations arise at camp. Throughout this Handbook we refer to the "Departmental Directors." The Departmental Directors are formerly known as the "6-weekers", and the roles under this category are the Program Director, Orthodox Life Director, Waterfront Director, Arts and Craft Director, Health Director, and Media Director. **Please note - we have instituted new discipline policies which are discussed throughout this handbook and also attached at the end of this handbook. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with these policies.**

The Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp has always been known for having a dedicated group of staff over its now 70+ year history. You have been selected for this summer's staff because we know you will continue that legacy.

Thank you for your dedication to the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp and the youth of our Metropolis. May God bless you and keep you always in his care.

***MDSC Board of Trustees and the Department of Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit***

II. CAMP PHILOSOPHY and GOALS

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp is based on the belief that when campers and staff are gathered together for a week or more, in the beautiful and natural setting of the Huron National Forest, they will gain a greater appreciation for their Orthodox faith, for our culture, and for each other.

GOALS

The Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp, which originated as the St. Nicholas Church Camp was founded in 1951 and had its first summer in 1952. It was renamed the Diocese VII Greek Orthodox Summer Camp in 1963 when it fell under the auspices of the Diocese of Detroit. The camp was later renamed the Detroit Diocese Summer Camp in the mid-1980s, and then renamed again in 2004 based on the elevation of the Diocese to a Metropolis. The camp has continued to perpetuate the following goals:

1. To continue the Greek Orthodox faith through means of fellowship in a natural and unstructured setting.
2. To provide religious instruction in the teachings of the Greek Orthodox faith.
3. To present an opportunity for spiritual growth through an appreciation of God and the beautiful setting which He created.
4. To provide and encourage participation in the sacraments of the Greek Orthodox Church.
5. To educate and help campers better appreciate their Greek heritage.
6. To create opportunities for personal growth in the following areas: spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, emotional and creative.
7. To provide the varied experiences that are associated with residential camp living, and the skills and knowledge to make these experiences beneficial.
8. To engage in outdoor recreational and outdoor living activities, and make these experiences beneficial, educational and enjoyable for the campers.
9. To encourage the initiation and building of lifelong friendships between youth and young adults of the Greek Orthodox faith.
10. To show constructive concern for health, safety, and physical fitness.

III. OUR ORTHODOX LIFE AT CAMP

The Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp is, first and foremost, an Orthodox Christian camp. All counselors are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is befitting of an Orthodox Christian at all times. While it is not expected that you know or understand every aspect of the Orthodox faith, you should never discourage campers about their faith, speak negatively about Church and its teachings, or encourage behavior, language or discussions that run contrary to our Orthodox Christian beliefs. This includes using inappropriate language or allowing campers to do so, telling offensive jokes or stories, or condoning un-Christian behavior. Remember that you are a role-model!

All counselors are expected to support the overall Orthodox Life program and should encourage campers to actively participate in these aspects of the program. As an Orthodox Christian camp, you are expected to uphold the teachings of our faith, and to abide by our faith's community standards.

MORNING & EVENING PRAYERS

All staff, except kitchen staff, are required to be at morning and evening prayers, and should actively participate with the group. Directors may excuse individual staff at their discretion to assist with tasks, if needed. Campers watch what you do, and if you don't participate, then it is less likely they will. Flag-raising (morning) and flag lowering (evening) also occur during these times. Missing prayers or flagpole will result in a warning from the weekly director, which can ultimately result in your dismissal. Please see Appendix A, at the end of this handbook.

All staff members and campers, without exception, are expected to attend the evening worship before the campers are excused for bed. Staff should actively participate in singing the evening worship (again, lead by example!). The reading for the day is usually done immediately following the worship, and staff should encourage their campers to volunteer for the reading or can do so themselves. Staff missing evening prayers will result in a warning from the weekly director, which can ultimately result in your dismissal. Please see Appendix A, at the end of this handbook.

ORTHODOX LIFE CLASSES

Staff are required to be with their assigned groups during all Orthodox Life Sessions. The priest or Orthodox Life Director generally facilitates these sessions, and content is usually focused to be of interest to the particular age group, however, it is very important for the counselors and CIT's to sit with their campers and actively participate with their groups as well. No staff member should ever openly contradict the priest or Orthodox Life Director in regards to topics discussed. If you don't understand or agree with an issue, please take the time to discuss it with the priest or Orthodox Life Director after the session.

CONFESSION

Confession is offered along with Divine Liturgy each week when clergy are in attendance at the camp. Campers should be encouraged by their counselors to go to confession, but should not be forced to go. If a camper has questions about confession, and you are unable to answer them, please refer them to the priest or Orthodox Life Director. If a camper has gone to confession, they should never be asked what they spoke to the priest about, and all such discussion between campers should be discouraged.

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.

EVENING CABIN REFLECTION and PRAYERS

Cabin talks are only to be led by clergy or the Orthodox Life Director, and not by staff or counselors. The intent of these cabin talks is to close the day on a proper note, allowing the campers to understand and discuss the aspects of our faith. Even though you are not to hold cabin talks, when you are on cabin duty, you are responsible to ensure that campers are not discussing inappropriate topics but instead are resting quietly on their bunks. Counselors and staff may lead an evening prayer with their cabins and engage in general reflection on the day, however faith-based discussions should be reserved for the clergy or Orthodox Life Director.

DIVINE LITURGY

During each week of camp, the clergy will offer a Divine Liturgy. Campers and staff are encouraged to go to confession (see above) prior to the Liturgy, and everyone must attend the Divine Liturgy without exception. Communion will be offered to those who have properly prepared. We should be mindful, and remind campers, about proper behavior and focus prior to receiving Holy Communion. Campers and staff preparing to take Holy Communion should not eat or drink anything the morning of the Divine Liturgy (unless required for medical reasons).

All staff and campers should properly venerate the icons before entering the Divine Liturgy and participate in the responses during the Liturgy. Staff should sit with or near their camper groups during the Liturgy.

IV. BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS

As already mentioned, it is extremely important that you understand your role as a staff member. Regardless of your assigned position, EVERY staff member is expected to act as a counselor from time-to-time. You have just reviewed the camp philosophy, goals and how those lead to positive expected outcomes. We must now review how those relate to your responsibilities as a counselor, the priorities of the camp, and some basic understandings which all must support.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A STAFF MEMBER/COUNSELOR

There are six basic areas of responsibility for which all staff will be held accountable:

1. ***Orthodox Christian Behavior Responsibility***

In everything that you say and do while you're at camp, you have a responsibility to act in a manner that is befitting of an Orthodox Christian. You are a role model to the campers, and your behavior should never contradict the teachings of our faith. You are expected to abide by the community standards of our faith.

2. ***Cabin Counselor Responsibility***

You are responsible for your assigned camper group, making sure campers are safe, get enough sleep, make it to all their activities on time, wear appropriate clothing, keep their cabins clean, etc. You are also responsible for handling any personal problems that arise, and **most importantly**, ensuring that there is group acceptance of every camper.

3. ***Camper Group Responsibility***

Not only are you responsible for your own camper group, you must be cognizant of the camper age group to which you are assigned (Juniors, Intermediates, Seniors) and work with the other counselors (boys or girls) within that group. This means making sure all campers get acquainted, work together and accept each other. You then have a responsibility to ensure that this occurs between all age groups in the camp.

4. ***Program Activities Responsibility***

As a counselor, you will be involved with many different program activities, including morning class sessions, outdoor activities, skits, etc. You will be asked to lead many activities and will always be expected to be an active and enthusiastic participant.

5. ***Mutual Respect and Support Responsibility***

It takes a lot of teamwork among the staff to make sure the camp runs smoothly each week. You have a responsibility to help out wherever necessary. Please volunteer to assist before being asked, respect your fellow staff, and do your share!

6. ***Individual Counseling Responsibility***

You have a responsibility to encourage campers to try new things, make new friends and gain confidence. You should be fair and consistent in your dealings with all campers and staff. Help campers with problems, and encourage positive behavior so as to avoid disciplinary problems.

TOP PRIORITIES AT CAMP

Since we are clear on our basic responsibilities, we must also understand the top four priorities that must be kept in mind in everything that we do.

- ***Top Priority #1 - SAFETY***

What is the **worst** possible thing that you could think of that could happen at camp? How would you feel if one of your campers were seriously injured or died at camp? What would you say to the parents? Nothing could ruin our camp quicker than one of these tragedies. Therefore, in everything that we do and everything that we plan at the camp, the #1 Priority must be **SAFETY**, both physically and emotionally.

- ***Top Priority #2 - HEALTH***

What is the next worst thing that could happen to a camper? Imagine what a camper feels like when they become ill and can't participate in the program. Remember, campers come to camp and operate on a different schedule, eat different foods, sleep in different places, and don't have the comfort of their parents and family with them. We must take all precautions to make sure that campers eat enough, sleep enough, practice good hygiene and return home healthy. The 2nd Priority, therefore, is the **CAMPER'S HEALTH**.

- ***Top Priority #3 - CAMPER'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH***

Since we are not just a summer camp, but an Orthodox Christian summer camp, we must ensure that we set an example as an Orthodox Christian. Camper's should be encouraged to practice their faith, take part in the sacraments, and openly discuss their beliefs in order to better understand Orthodox Christian teachings. The 3rd Priority, therefore, is the **CAMPER'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH**.

- ***Top Priority #4 - FUN***

The camp has to be fun for all the participants, which will lead to campers and staff returning for future summers. Campers and staff should lead the camp with great memories, new friendships, and looking forward to many of the activities and programs the camp has to offer. Therefore, our 4th Priority is to have **FUN!!!**

CAMP IS FOR THE CAMPERS!!!

As you've probably already started figuring out, the focus of all staff members should be on the campers. The **only reason** you are at camp as a staff member is for the **Camper's Safety**, the **Camper's Health**, the **Camper's Spiritual Growth** and the **Camper's Fun**.

As a staff member you have to:

- Like kids! You have to care about helping others have a good experience!
- Make the significant role and attitude change from participant to responsible adult leader where "me" suddenly becomes secondary to the priority of helping others succeed.
- Get your "fun" out of seeing others have good experiences, try new things, make new friends, grow spiritually, gain confidence in themselves, etc.

If you are there only for your own enjoyment, to get a suntan, or catch up on your sleep, *you will not be successful at MDSC*. Your goals are different from the camp's goals and there will be a conflict.

The Camp Director **must** be able to count on you to accept the *Six Responsibilities of Counselor* and support the *Top Four Priorities at Camp*. Consider this:

- The Camp Director cannot be in 4 different cabins, the Lodge, Suzie, Beach, Field, Arts & Crafts Room or rafting on the Au Sable at the same time, checking to make sure you are doing your job. **WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DEPEND ON YOU!!**
- Not only does the Director need to depend on you, so do 50-75 campers, the parents of those campers, their extended family, 30+ other staff members, your church and the entire Metropolis!

If we cannot count on you to do your job... **YOU WILL BE SENT HOME** or not accepted back on staff in future summers. We have outlined our specific discipline policy at the end of this Handbook in Appendix A. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with it.

Being a staff member at the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp is one of the most responsible adult positions you will ever hold in your life. Is there anything more important than the safety and health of the campers? You are fully responsible for the health and welfare of the campers in your cabin, those within the camper age group, and all campers in the camp. Not just for a few hours – 24 hours a day for the entire week they are at camp!

This is a lot of responsibility to handle. But, it comes from the basic understanding that was explained above – ***CAMP IS FOR THE CAMPERS! Your needs will always be second to a camper's needs.***

FIVE IMPORTANT PARTS OF CAMP

There are five important facets that make up our camp:

- Our Faith
- The Camp
- The Campers
- The Staff
- The Program

Since our faith is a factor in everything we do, what is the next most important factor that makes a difference at camp? The answer is the staff! The counselors and staff plan the program, run the activities, provide cabin leadership and work with the individual campers. The success of the camp, which you've already read, is measured by camper safety, health, spiritual growth and fun. The staff makes all this happen, and you play a pivotal role in the success of the camp!

V. SAFETY - YOUR ROLE AS A STAFF MEMBER

We now have a basic understanding of the responsibilities you have as a staff member, as well as the top priorities of the camp. To help you be the great staff member we expect you to be, the rest of this handbook contains useful guidelines, suggestions, rules and policies for you to follow. If at any time you cannot find the answers to your questions in this handbook, please ask the Camp Director for clarification or additional guidance. This section in particular focuses on the **Priority #1 – Safety**. It is broken down in various sections, all which fall under the focus we must have on ensuring that all campers (and staff) are safe at our camp.

MICHIGAN CHILD PROTECTION LAWS

Our campers come to us from many different families, all who expect us to keep their children safe and well while at camp. But, sometimes, in camp situations, children come to us from homes where they may not be safe. Child abuse, as you know, occurs in homes, and our camp likely is not insulated from having campers arrive at camp that have to deal with abusive situations in their home. This is a very delicate situation to deal with when we find out at camp that it is occurring in the home. But, we have a responsibility to help that child once they are in our care, and ensure that we don't put the camp in any liability. Michigan's Child Protection Laws dictate how we handle situations like these should they arise while we're at camp.

First of all, we must make sure that no camper is ever punched, kicked, struck, hit or physically injured or abused in any way by a staff member or fellow camper. We must also ensure that no child is psychologically abused by being picked on, taunted or teased in any manner, either by a camper or a staff member. This limits one portion of our liability under Michigan's Child Protection Laws. But, before we discuss the other portion, we should first look at the basic definitions that are outlined in the law:

Child – means a person under 18 years of age. This includes CITs since they are under age 18, even though they are considered “staff.”

Child Abuse – means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare, which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or maltreatment.

Child Neglect – means harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for said health and welfare, which occurs through negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.

Our responsibility at camp is to make sure that campers who arrive at our camp have not been subject to abuse or neglect. Again, this is a very delicate situation to handle, and it must be done with discretion and maturity, and dealt with on a confidential basis. As a camp, we must:

- Screen the child for any visible bruises, cuts or markings on the child's body. This is often done by the Health Director during registration. But, staff should take notice of these possible signs of abuse when the campers are swimming or changing. NEVER confront the camper about your suspicions, but quietly report it to the Camp Director. A minor cut or bruise on the knee of a Junior is usually nothing to worry about. But, significant bruising on the legs, arms, back or chest is something that should be reported.

- Report any information that a camper may confide in you as their counselor if it relates to abusive situations. This should again be reported to the Camp Director, and you must not speak to any other staff member about what you were told. **Confidentiality is critical.**

If an abusive situation is reported to the Camp Director, we are required to make an oral report to the Department of Social Services within 8 hours. Within 72 hours, the Director must make a written report to the Department of Social Services. If the abuse occurred at the camp, the parents of the child must be notified and a report made to the Department of Social Services.

Why do we have to do these things? As we've said repeatedly, the safety of the campers is our top priority. They need to be safe at camp, and if we are aware that they are not safe in their homes, it is our duty to report so the situation can be remedied. We also need to report any home abuse that we suspect so we can reduce the liability against the camp. It would be very easy to allege that the abuse occurred at the camp, and if we did not protect ourselves and report the abuse that we discovered when the child came into our care, then it would be hard to disprove such an allegation.

This is obviously a very serious and disturbing subject. Hopefully we won't have to deal with abuse situations, but everyone needs to be aware of how to deal with this if it does come to our attention. **If you have ANY questions about this issue please ask a Camp Director.**

**** GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA YOUTH SAFETY PROGRAM ****

In addition to the Michigan Child Protection Laws, you are required to read, fully understand and follow the Youth Protection Program Supplemental Manual provisions. In addition, you will be required to fully complete an on-line staff training on the Youth Safety Program and sign the Code of Conduct. ***If you do not complete the online training prior to camp, you will not be allowed to work at MDSC. There is no opportunity to complete this training at Camp.*** No one should be completing this training in the car on their way to Camp.

CAMPER WELLBEING

You are responsible for the campers' wellbeing during your time at camp. This includes both their physical wellbeing and their emotional wellbeing. There are certain behaviors from staff that will lead to your immediate dismissal (see our Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A).

- Hazing/Training: There is absolutely no situation in which any sort of "hazing" or "training" is appropriate. You are expressly and unequivocally forbidden from initiating or participating in these activities. If you are aware of any of these activities taking place, it is your responsibility to speak up against these activities, and furthermore to report these activities to the Camp Director. Examples of hazing/training include but are not limited to:
 - physical abuse (e.g. pushing campers, hitting campers, forced exercise/activity of any kind)
 - emotional abuse (e.g. yelling at campers, swearing at campers)
 - deprivation (e.g. withholding food or sleep)
- Camper Relationships: As part of your responsibility to uphold the Youth Protection Policy, you are expressly and unequivocally forbidden from encouraging relationships or covert meetings in unsupervised environments between campers, often referred to as

“whammy-ing.” If you are aware of this taking place, it is your responsibility to speak up against it, and furthermore to report it to the Camp Director.

- **Pranking/Raids:** Pranks and raids are no longer allowed at camp. You are expressly and unequivocally forbidden from initiating or participating in any pranking or raiding of other cabins (e.g. the Kaka Fairy) or camp property (e.g. the kitchen). If you are aware of this taking place, it is your responsibility to speak up against it, and furthermore to report it to the Camp Director.

FIRE PREVENTION AND EMERGENCIES

The Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp is located within the Huron National Forest. It is very important that we take extreme care when using fire in the camp setting. In addition, we must always be aware of factors that could cause fires and ways to avoid those situations. Lastly, should a fire at camp or forest fire occur, we must understand our responsibilities.

Campfires

- Always clear an adequate area around any campfire prior to starting the fire, and create a fire “pit” so it is contained somewhat below the ground level.
- Make sure that the logs or other material is stable and will not collapse causing the fire to go beyond the “pit” area.
- Once the fire is started, it must be watched at all times. Never leave a fire unattended.
- Jugs or buckets of water should be kept near the fire in case of an emergency.
- Campers should never carry matches or attend to a fire without a staff member present.
- When extinguishing the fire, you must make sure that the entire “pit” area is fully saturated with water. Sand/dirt can also be used in addition to water. There should be no glowing embers or hot areas evident in the fire pit area if you have properly extinguished the fire.

Fire Alarms

The fire alarm system consists of a loud buzzer and also flashing strobe lights. In addition, a staff member will usually begin ringing the lodge bell continuously, an announcement made over the loudspeaker, and car horns may be sounded as well.

- Each camp building has a smoke detector unit installed. The unit is operated electrically but has a battery back-up in case of a power loss. In addition, each building also has alarm pull-switches. Campers are forbidden from playing with these pull-switches. **Falsely triggering a fire alarm will result in being immediately sent home.**
- If the fire alarm ever goes off, all campers and staff should move *quickly but orderly* to the designated gathering area, which is in front of the flagpole. Campers must be kept together and staff should take a continuous headcount. No camper or staff member will be allowed to return to their cabin to gather personal belongings.
- Campers who are swimming or in boats when the bells are sounded will return to the beach and be escorted as a group by staff members to the flagpole. They will not be allowed to stop and change from their bathing suits.
- Staff will take continuous headcounts and immediately report any missing camper to the Camp Director.
- Staff members will stay with their cabin groups and await instructions from the Camp Director.
- Specific staff members will check every cabin and building to make sure that no one is left behind.
- Specific staff members will also find out which building triggered the alarm, and will investigate the situation and attempt fire-fighting actions if possible.

Forest Fires and Evacuation Procedures

If a forest fire starts in the Huron National Forest, and it threatens the camp in any way, the local sheriff will notify us and advise us to evacuate the camp. Likewise, if an uncontrollable building fire also occurs at the camp, we may also have to leave the camp area because of the threat of it spreading to the forest. If a situation like this occurs, the following will happen:

- The fire alarm will be sounded, and/or the lodge bell will begin ringing continuously. In addition, car horns will be sounded and an announcement made over the loudspeakers. If the fire is within a building, the fire alarm should have already been sounded, and staff and campers should already be at the designated gathering area.
- Campers and staff will be evacuated from camp using all available vehicles and taken to a safe location designated by the sheriff. The Camp Director, and/or designees, will be required to notify parents of such evacuation once all campers and staff have been safely evacuated.

If You Discover a Fire

Remember that any fire, however small, can be extremely dangerous and jeopardize the safety of the campers and staff. If **any** fire occurs, campers and staff should always be evacuated first, and escorted to the flagpole. A staff member should not take the time to fight any fire at the expense of their own safety or that of others.

- Each staff member should familiarize themselves with the location and operation of fire fighting equipment in the cabins and other camp buildings.
- If a fire occurs and the alarm has not been sounded, a staff member should immediately trigger the fire alarm using the nearest pull-switch.
- The Camp Director should immediately be notified as to the location of the fire. So that appropriate actions can be taken.

- If the fire is sufficiently small, the staff member may elect to extinguish the fire him/herself. Remember that it is more important to ensure your safety and the safety of all other staff and campers before this is even considered.

Smoking

The Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp administers its smoking policy very strictly. It is very simple – there is NO SMOKING at any time by anyone. Smoking, in particular, poses an immediate forest fire threat given Camp’s location in the forest. Any camper or staff member found smoking anywhere, on or off camp property, **will be sent home immediately**. This is outlined in our **Zero Tolerance Policy** found in Appendix A at the end of this handbook. If you can’t make it at camp for a week without smoking, then this isn’t the place for you. A complete description of our policy against all controlled substances is found under Section X and in our Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Severe weather occasionally happens during the summer camp season, which can include violent thunderstorms, wind-storms and even tornadoes. These situations can be very dangerous because such storms often occur with little warning. The local sheriff generally notifies the Camp when such weather is imminent, and will make sure we know if the storm has been designated as a “Watch” or “Warning”. These situations are handled as follows:

- **Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado “Watch”** – is issued whenever conditions exist for such storms to develop. A “Watch” condition gives us time to prepare and plan should such a storm develop. If the Camp Director is notified of a Watch, an announcement will be made, requiring campers and staff to gather in the lodge until the Watch has been canceled. Designated staff members may also be sent to prepare the Arts and Crafts area should it need to be used as a shelter.
- **Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado “Warning”** – is issued whenever such a storm has been sighted or is strongly indicated by Weather Service radar. If a “Warning” is communicated to the camp, an announcement will be made and the Lodge Bell will be sounded continuously. Staff will gather their campers and will report immediately to the Lodge and will be directed to the Arts & Crafts area. Campers at the beach or in boats must return to the beach immediately and be escorted to the A&C area by staff members. Headcounts will be taken by staff and any missing campers will be reported to the Camp Director. All shutters will be closed in the A&C area and everyone will remain in that area until the Warning has passed.

Severe Weather Conditions and Off-Camp Activities

Should severe weather conditions develop while campers and staff are offsite (rafting, hiking), immediate action must be taken by the staff to protect the campers and fellow staff. If severe weather appears imminent while rafting, all boats must be directed to shore immediately. Campers and staff should exit the boats, move away from the water and find the lowest ground area possible, **away from trees**, to find shelter. If no shelter is available, campers and staff should crouch in a low area to avoid possible lightning strikes. Staff should make sure to account for all campers. No-one should leave this area until the storm has passed. Similarly when hiking or on other activities, when a severe storm arises, campers and staff should be directed to a low-lying shelter area. If not available, campers and staff should lay on the ground in a low area to avoid possible lightning strikes. Staff should make sure to account for all campers. Again, no-one should leave this area until the storm has passed.

MISSING CAMPER POLICY

With so many campers to supervise, one of the priorities of a counselor should always be keeping a head-count of your assigned camper group. Whatever activity you go to, you should “count heads” to make sure everyone is there. Counselors should always be the last to leave any activity, and should never leave any camper behind. If at any time a staff member determines that a camper is missing, the following procedures should be enacted immediately:

- The staff member will direct the remaining campers of the group to stay in a designated area. If available, assign another staff member to stay with the group.
- The staff member will notify the Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director or Health Director if the camper cannot be located in the immediate area.
- The administrative staff member contacted will delegate staff members accordingly, including notifying the Waterfront Director to enact a Buddy Check of the water, boats and beach. In addition, other camper groups will be required to take a head count and the Health Director and Cooks will be contacted to verify that the camper has gone to the infirmary or lodge.
- The administrative person in charge, once it has been determined that a camper is missing, will initiate the following actions.
 1. Assign a staff member to contact the local sheriff's office.
 2. Page the missing camper and ask him/her to report to the kitchen.
 3. Identify the last area where the missing camper was seen.
 4. Organize a search party and go to the area in question. The search party will spread out and remain within sight of each other. While remaining in sight and voice contact, move through the area. The search will continue until the camper is located or until notified to stop by the administrative person in charge.
- Once the camper is found, he/she should report to the Health Director for a complete evaluation of health status.
- If a camper cannot be found within a reasonable period of time, the Camp Director must notify the camper's parents and the Chairman of the MDSC Board of Trustees.
- Search attempts will be coordinated by the sheriff's office if the camper cannot be found.

WATER SAFETY

The Waterfront area, while being one of the most fun areas of the camp, is also the single biggest liability we have. The chances of an accident happening at the beach, which would jeopardize the health or life of a camper or staff, are statistically greater than any other area of the camp. For that reason, we must administer the rules most strictly in this area, and expect compliance from the staff and campers at all times. The following policies apply for the Waterfront area:

Swimming Rules

- Use of the waterfront is restricted to times when the Waterfront Director is present. This includes swimming and boating. However, if the Waterfront Director is attending the weekly raft trip, he/she must assign a senior waterfront staff member to direct the waterfront activities in his/her absence. All other access to the waterfront area must have the Waterfront Director's permission.
- All campers and staff will be required to take a swimming assessment test (“The Raft Test”), and will be classified according to their swimming abilities as determined by the Waterfront Director. Only those who have passed the Raft Test will be allowed to swim in the deep end of the swimming area without a lifejacket.

- All campers and staff will use the Buddy Board system whenever they use the waterfront, unless instructed otherwise by the Waterfront Director. **Buddy checks will be conducted at least every ten minutes during recreational swimming and as needed during instructional swimming.**
- Staff should always make sure to do a head count before leaving the beach area.
- All campers will be checked in and out of the waterfront area by the waterfront staff and the actual group counselors.
- Campers and staff must not swim under the dock or the raft at any time.
- Campers and staff should not hang on the marker lines or block the ladders.
- Diving is only allowed from the raft. No one will dive until the preceding diver has surfaced and cleared the area.
- There will be no shoving from the dock or raft, no “dunking” and no hazardous horseplay in the water.
- Staff members present at the beach may be asked to assist with instructional swimming, Buddy Checks or monitoring boat usage.
- There will be no swimming by visitors to the camp.
- Music is not allowed during free swim.
- All campers and staff must wear bathing suits that comply with the dress code.
- The boathouse is not allowed to contain anything other than beach or boating equipment (e.g. no hammocks, mattresses, or refrigerators)
- The Waterfront Director is responsible to evaluate all equipment annually (e.g. lifejackets, kickboards, boating equipment) prior to the start of Week 1
- The Waterfront Director must ensure that the waterfront certification is visible and current.
- If a decision is made to take campers on a swim to the log, the Waterfront Director must ensure a sufficient number of staff accompany the campers, including staff in boats to supervise swimmers. All swimmers must use a life-saving flotation device regardless of swimming ability, and no non-life saving flotation devices may be taken out to the log.
- Non life-saving flotation devices are to remain in the swimming area only.
- Check to ensure the first-aid/AED device is functioning.
- No chairs permitted on dock during lessons or free swim. All waterfront staff must be standing and placing full attention on the swimmers in the water or on boats.

Boating Rules

- Campers and staff who wish to use boats must ask permission from the staff member supervising the boat usage.
- Campers and staff must switch Buddy tags to the BOATS side and switch the tag accordingly.
- Lifejackets must be worn by all campers and staff at all times when boating.
- There will be no excessive splashing, horseplay or attempts to “tip” other boats.
- Boats should not be used for excessive time periods while others are waiting.

INJURIES & BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

If we focus on safety, then injuries and other health concerns should be minimized while at camp. But, we all know that occasional cuts, bruises and other injuries will occur. When dealing with any injury that results in the loss of blood, or other bodily fluids, it is very important to avoid contact with these fluids. Blood and bodily fluids may contain blood-borne pathogens (Hepatitis B, HIV, etc) that can be passed on to another person through contact. The risk of becoming infected with such viruses is very small statistically. You cannot contract these viruses simply by touching a person or coming into basic contact with them. Viruses generally are transmitted from bodily

fluids through open cuts or other invasive exposures. Based on the population from which we draw our campers, the chances are very small, but we should still take basic precautions.

If a camper or fellow staff member is injured, and the injury causes a loss of blood or other fluids, you should not directly touch the affected area with your bare hands. If the bleeding is severe, and must be stopped immediately, you should immediately contact or send someone to contact the Health Director, and then use a t-shirt, cloth or other method to add pressure to the area to stop the bleeding. If the bleeding is not severe, and you must touch the injured area, protective gloves can be found in all cabins, buildings, and waterfront area. The Health Director should be notified immediately, and the camper transported to the Infirmary immediately, if they are able to move. Minor cuts and scrapes should also be brought to the Health Director's attention to ensure they are properly cleaned so as to avoid infections. Any usage of the first aid kit in any cabin should be reported to the Health Director so that the kit can be restocked.

Serious injuries that do not include blood loss can also occur. Should an injury be sustained through a bad fall (ex. off a bunk, etc), the camper should not be moved in case there are neck or spinal injuries. The Health Director should be notified and brought to the injured camper for assessment. Other injuries, including sprains, should be brought to the Health Director's attention because the perceived sprain can also be a minor fracture or torn ligament.

Other types of health concerns that you may face include conjunctivitis (or "pink eye") and head lice. If a camper's eyes are excessively itchy, pinkish, swollen, or oozing, please take them to the Infirmary right away as this is very contagious. Head lice can be identified by an intense itching behind the ears and neck, and white spots attached to hair strands that are not easily removed. Overall, all instances of communicable diseases or any sicknesses you observe in the cabins should be reported to the Health Director.

Illness symptoms (fever, chills, severe stomach-ache, diarrhea, severe sore throat, vomiting) can be signs of the flu or another virus. The camper may have to be isolated in the Infirmary, be seen by the local doctor or sent home if symptoms are severe. The Health Director should see any campers complaining of such symptoms.

If you have any concerns regarding a camper's health, or aren't sure how to identify a possible health concern, please see the Health Director. You should not attempt to ever diagnose any symptoms that you see, but rather leave it to the professionals we have on staff for this purpose.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON SAFETY

Why do we have such a big section on safety? Over 9 million kids attend summer camps in the U.S. each year. Each summer, an average of 7 campers **die** at summer camps throughout the country because of accidents. Thousands more receive injuries serious enough to go to the hospital. Hundreds of camps have closed because of these incidents. We don't want this ever to occur at the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp. Remember – **safety is our top priority!**

VI. UNDERSTANDING & DEALING WITH BOYS and GIRLS

Now that we've covered the different responsibilities that we have in regards to safety, we need to understand another aspect of our roles as counselors. In order to be a successful staff member, you need to know how to deal with boys and girls effectively. But, in order to do this, you have to understand the age-group characteristics of our campers. Included in this section are ways to handle behavior problems, getting campers involved in activities and other general comments which should be valuable to you.

CAMPER CHARACTERISTICS - THERE REALLY IS A DIFFERENCE!

(Information for this section taken in part from the Role of A Camp Counselor: A Study Guide for 4-H Camp Staff – What is Your Role?)

There really is a difference, not only between the sexes of young people, but between the characteristics found in the different age categories. How do young people change as they grow? How do these changes affect you as a camp staff member, how you handle different age groups and the activities you have for your campers?

This section discusses the characteristics of children at various age levels. Although children differ in the speed at which they develop (each person is unique), the order of the stages does not vary much. Some needs and interests are common for all ages and all people. We all need:

- To experience a positive self-concept (self-esteem)
- To experience success in most of what we do
- To become increasingly independent
- To develop and accept ourselves
- To be able to give and receive attention appropriately
- To experience new challenges and adventures
- To be accepted by peers and those in authority

The remainder of this section will help you consider the age characteristics of your campers as you plan and direct their daily activities. The information can also assist when you analyze situations that are not going well in order to make the appropriate adjustments.

Juniors: 3rd-5th Grade

Children of this age are still mostly focused on themselves and their needs. They are willing to please adults, but often for self-fulfilling reasons.

At this stage, children may be more interested in the process of doing something than they are the finished product. Don't be surprised if they put a lot of effort into something like an art project for 25 minutes and then stop without completing it. Their interests change rapidly, jumping from one thing to another. It won't be unusual for children of this age to lose interest in a planned outdoor activity after a short period of time.

Thinking is very concrete for this age group. "Doing" is important at this age.

Feelings of success or failure are dependent on peer relationships for these children. As they learn more about friendships, there are often more fights. Children who fight in the morning, though, may be friends again by the afternoon. Children in this age have a fragile self-concept, and don't easily accept failure. Success, however small, should be emphasized and failures

minimized. Every child develops at their own pace, and all characteristics will not be observed in all children at the same age or same stage in development. Other common characteristics of Junior-age campers:

- Want to be helpful
- Begin to enjoy activities they can do alone
- Like physical activities and have lots of energy
- Are becoming less impulsive
- Worry about being liked
- Easily motivated
- Eager to try new things
- Have a shorter attention span for activities
- Like a wide variety of activities
- Need reinforcement of verbal direction with demonstrations
- Varied physical growth
- Need encouragement to stay on tasks and complete them
- Are becoming more self-confident
- May be critical of themselves
- Value peer friendships very highly
- Talk constantly
- Have a noticeable separation between boys and girls
- Like group activities
- May become frustrated when they don't like something
- Love to be chosen by peers and adults
- Admire and imitate older boys and girls
- Like activities with less competition so failure is minimized
- Won't always take responsibility for their actions

Intermediates: 6th-8th Grade

The period between 6th-8th grade is one of transition. Children become anxious to grow up but still want to enjoy the privileges of childhood. It is important for a child of this age to develop a sense that he or she is capable. Accomplishments are made in three areas: developing a sense of self, gaining acceptance and experiencing achievement.

Physical changes can occur quickly in this age group, with the ranges of shapes and sizes being wider than in almost any other age group. Children of this age are concerned with being "normal" as they work at developing a sense of self.

Self concept is extremely fragile and very dependent on recognition and acceptance by peers. Children in this age group often overlook their need for supportive relationships with adults because of their intense loyalty to peer groups.

During these years, children are developing the ability to reason and are moving toward abstract thinking. This means that the child can think about why things happen and can begin to think about what can happen in the future.

Research shows that at this point, most children prefer to be with peers of the same sex, but this preference begins to change at about age eleven. Every child develops at his or her own pace and all characteristics will not be observed in all children at the same stage of development. Other common characteristics of Intermediate age campers are:

- Have longer attention spans, but still need breaks
- Still enjoy a variety of experiences and activities
- Accept themselves and are able to admit mistakes
- May begin to be more modest when changing clothes or showering due to onset of puberty and physical changes
- Begin to think logically and symbolically
- Are great joiners and like organized games
- May be emotionally rocky and have difficulty controlling emotions
- Value friendships highly
- Like to meet and travel in groups
- Start taking responsibility for their actions
- Still need recognition of achievements and minimization of chances to fail
- Need encouragement
- Have very strong opinions and like to express thoughts and feelings on many issues
- Like to relate ideas and experiences they have had
- Prefer being with members of the same sex
- May start having an increased interest in the opposite gender

Seniors: 9th-11th Grade

Physical, emotional and social changes are occurring at a rapid pace for this age group.

Physical changes associated with puberty continue in this age group, and will usually include young people at various stages of physical development. Physical maturation for girls usually occurs between the ages of 11 and 14, while in boys it is between the ages of 13 and 16. The changes, though, occur at different times for different people, and it is not unusual to see a 14 year old who is more physically mature than his 15 year old cabin-mate.

The physical changes of adolescence have a direct effect on an adolescent's emotions. Self-concept is closely tied to the individual's feelings about his or her own body. Emotions can swing in very short periods of time from happiness to extreme moodiness.

By this age, many adolescents have developed the capacity for abstract thinking. An adolescent able to think in the abstract must think about rules and principles, and consider alternatives in order to adapt these rules for himself or herself. Many adolescents will begin to question the value system they have learned or the beliefs of others.

One of the obvious social changes is the interest in others of the opposite sex. Learning to handle the emotions that go along with this can be challenging for young people during this time.

Remember, every child develops at his or her own pace, and all characteristics will not be observed in all children at the same age or same stage of development. Other common characteristics of Senior age campers are:

- Are often ego-centric
- May spend long periods of time in self-criticism and/or self admiration
- Can be moody, and can often go from enthusiastic participation to withdrawn behavior
- Can be self reliant and often seek more independence
- Begins to test value systems or push boundaries
- Can be very emotional and have difficulty controlling emotions

- Tend to be very concerned with friends and have strong peer group loyalties
- Want to try new things
- Need to be part of something important
- Are often concerned with their place in their peer group
- Often vary greatly in stages of physical maturity
- Girls tend to mature physically and socially ahead of boys
- Often concerned with the physical changes still occurring in their bodies and may display modesty when changing clothes or showering
- Concerned with how they look, dress, etc as compared to their peers
- Can be reluctant to express opinions and feelings in groups due to apprehensiveness of how it will be perceived by peers
- Can vary greatly in levels of self-confidence

SUMMARY

Once you are assigned to an age group as a counselor and/or CIT, take time to re-read the characteristics of that specific group.. When you experience certain behaviors from your campers, and aren't sure how to handle the situation, you may want to refer back to the applicable list for the age group you are counseling to gain a better understanding of why the behavior is occurring.

VII. CAMPER BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

One of the biggest challenges of working as a staff member at camp is dealing with the diverse personalities, backgrounds, upbringing and other factors that affect the behavior of our campers. Some children will cause you no problems for the entire week. Others will have a situation or two where you need to intervene. A few may give you quite a challenge all week. Your overall goal is to maintain a harmonious camper group so everyone gets along, is respectful to each other and to the staff, and has a positive experience at camp. Below are some guidelines and policies to help you. If at any time you find yourself frustrated with resolving behavior issues with campers, please see one of the Directors.

“MR” AND “MISS”

Since our CITs and many of our Counselors are not much older than the oldest campers, and to make sure there is an expectation of respect for all staff, we have always required that staff be referred to as “Mister” or “Miss” (Ex. Mr. John, Miss Maria, etc) at camp. This is one of the basics in helping you establish your position of responsibility in the eyes of the campers. You are not their “buddy”, so they should not refer to you as they do other campers.

All campers are expected to refer to all staff in this manner, no matter how close in age they are to those staff members. Staff members should not allow campers to call them by their first name only. If this happens, please quietly remind that camper about this expectation. In order to model this expectation of respect, all staff members should also refer to each other in the same manner when around the campers (Ex. “Go ask Mr. John”, “Miss Maria is down at the lodge”, “Mr. Demetri, can you help this camper?”). Of course, when you are away from campers after hours, on the beach during siesta, etc, you are free to refer to fellow staff by their first name.

THE FOUR “F’s” OF WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

A good “rule of thumb” when working with young people, particularly when you aren’t much older than they are, is to remember the four “Fs”. As a staff member, you should be:

- **Firm** – be consistent with rules and expectations to maintain your credibility.
- **Fair** – treat everyone the same; don’t play favorites.
- **Friendly** – be good natured, approachable, patient, a good listener

But, never.....

- **Familiar** – if you become too “buddy-buddy” with campers, you will lose the credibility to be firm and fair, and you will not be fully successful in your role.

CAMPER BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

While the majority of our campers are respectful of their fellow campers and staff, and are well behaved throughout the week, you still may have to deal with problem situations. Using appropriate behavior management techniques can minimize problems, but occasional disciplinary measures may need to be taken.

One of the most important steps in establishing effective camper behavior management is to have campers and staff understand the positive nature of discipline. Too many people see discipline as negative or punitive – something that occurs when a person misbehaves. We need our staff and campers to see that discipline is a process by which we show respect for others and that rules bring protection and security.

The first step in behavior management is to carefully explain standards, rules, expectations, privileges and consequences to campers. The Camp Director covers much of this during Orientation on each camp Sunday, and staff members should consistently reinforce these expectations at all times. This gives campers the security of knowing what is expected. The range of consequences for violating rules or expectations should be logical – not punitive – and be connected to the behavior. Consequences should never include physical punishment, verbal/emotional abuse or withholding food, water or sleep. **This violates our Zero Tolerance policy for hazing/training and will result in your immediate dismissal from camp (see Appendix A).** A common consequence of misbehavior is sitting out the activity for a period of time under the supervision of a counselor. This is often called “time out” for younger campers and “separation” for older campers.

Probably the most important step to positive behavior is setting the proper example. All staff and especially counselors must be the role models to help campers see the Camp philosophies in action. The second most important step is to communicate the expectations and rules to the campers. We cannot expect them to perform if they don’t know what to do.

Catching campers “being good” is a positive behavior technique. The idea is to praise good behavior as often as possible. By praising specific good behavior the counselor sets the climate for a positive environment, and ensures that problem behavior will be minimized. Counselors should expect that good behavior will be the norm and reward good behavior.

Even with the skillful use of communicating expectations, setting the example and praising good behavior, sometimes campers will step over the line into inappropriate behavior. When this happens, the staff member(s) who witness it should react immediately. The situation may be solved using nonverbal methods such as making eye contact and shaking your head “no”. If this doesn’t work, the counselor should verbally **confront** the behavior. Explain why the behavior is not appropriate and why – then give an example of more acceptable behavior. The next step is to have a private conversation with the camper in an attempt to understand the problem and identify a plan to correct the behavior. If the problem continues, you may have to temporarily **separate** the camper from their group in order to think about the behavior and expectations. No camper should be left by themselves, but it is appropriate to ask the camper to sit out an activity to address the behavior problem (as long as they are still within the vicinity of the group). There may be times when the behavior patterns are so consistently inappropriate, that the staff member will need to bring the camper to the Camp Director. The Camp Director may choose to **isolate** the camper entirely away from their group to address the problem, but this can only be done if the camper is being watched during this time. Lastly, when it is in the best interest of the camp, it may be necessary to **remove** the camper from the program and send him/her home. When this decision is made, the Camp Director will contact the camper’s parents to discuss the situation and make arrangements for the camper to be picked up from camp.

While sending a camper home is the last resort, it may be necessary. Only in the most severe circumstances of inappropriate behavior can a camper be immediately sent home without prior

discipline. But, each staff member has a responsibility to use positive behavior management and handle initial behavior issues, to ensure that this last resort is rarely used.

THREE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE NEVER TO USE

Dealing with campers, and challenging behavior situations, can be very frustrating at times. But, to reiterate what was mentioned above, there are three forms of discipline which counselors are forbidden to use:

- **Physical Punishment** – which includes striking a camper (even if “joking around”) in any way or issuing corporal punishment (Ex. doing push-ups).
- **Verbal/Emotional Abuse** – which includes yelling, ridicule, shaming or any form of cruelty which is aimed at psychologically defeating a camper.
- **Deprivation** – which includes withholding food, water or sleep in any form.

STATE LAW: “A camper shall not be deprived of food or sleep; shall not be placed alone without staff supervision, observation, and interaction; or shall not be subjected to hazing, ridicule, threat, corporal punishment, excessive physical exercise, or excessive restraint.”

AGAIN, discipline in this manner violates our **Zero Tolerance Policy** and will result in your immediate dismissal (see Appendix A).

COUNSELOR ROLE IN BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Setting rules and expectations, acting as a role model, rewarding positive behavior and using behavior management techniques are all ways to ensure that campers behave as expected. But, one of the biggest reasons that campers misbehave is based on supervision, or rather *the lack of supervision*. This reason can also be the cause of physical and psychological injuries that occur at camp. Three basic reasons for this lack of supervision and the problems that result are:

1. The counselor was inattentive, and was not paying close enough attention to what campers are doing.
2. The counselor was absent or wasn’t where they were supposed to be.
3. The counselor was untrained or didn’t have enough experience to anticipate what occurred.

Many behavior problems never occur if a counselor is attentive and where they are supposed to be. Physical injuries that occur from shoves, punches, throwing stones, etc, never occur if the counselor is present. In addition, psychological injuries that result from teasing, bullying, being laughed at, or being made fun of can also be avoided by being attentive to campers’ interactions with each other.

SUMMARY

If you ever need any assistance resolving a camper behavior issue, please see the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director.

VIII. HOW TO BE A GOOD STAFF MEMBER

Much of this Handbook up to this point has contained a lot of theory, rules and expectations about your role as a staff member. While many of you have served on staff before or worked with children in the past, there are specific actions that you can take to ensure that you will be an effective and successful staff member.

A GOOD CAMP STAFF MEMBER WILL...

- Have their bunk and baggage organized as a good example for campers to follow when they arrive at camp.
- Be in or around their cabin or at the flagpole during registration to welcome campers as they arrive.
- Introduce themselves to the campers and parents and make sure they know you will be their counselor for the week. Remember – they are leaving their most prized possession in your care!
- Make sure that all prescriptions and non-prescription drugs (yours and the camper's) are turned in to the Camp Health Director for safekeeping and dispensation as needed.
- Help campers select a bunk. Encourage bottom bunks especially for Juniors or those who sleep-walk, roll in their sleep, etc.
- Help campers put their belongings away (under bed, in crates, etc).
- **HELP EACH CAMPER GET OFF TO A GOOD START!** Most homesickness problems are solved within the first 30 minutes of camp.
- Make sure at least one counselor is in the cabin at all times when campers are present. Campers should never be in cabins unsupervised.
- Know the name of **EVERY CAMPER** in the cabin before camper bedtime on Sunday.
- Make sure that all campers know the names of their cabin-mates on Sunday. Be sure to introduce each camper to others in their cabin as they arrive. Pair new campers up with returning campers.
- Watch for homesickness and see that campers participate in all activities.
- Go over the next day's Kaper schedule every night, reminding campers of their assignments for the next day.
- Lead a cabin prayer each night and assist Orthodox Life staff with cabin talks.
- Set an example in language, manners, dress and ethics for campers to follow.
- Discourage negative discussions about individuals or shortcomings of others. Keep discussions positive.
- Make safety priority #1 at all times. Be alert for unsafe activities and take action immediately.
- Encourage consideration for the privacy of others and their belongings.
- Be fair and impartial in dealing with all campers.
- Be responsible for all that happens in the cabin. Try to be a friend and a leader. Be firm in your authority and decisions, but try not to be "bossy". If you start out stricter, it is easier to loosen up later, rather than the opposite.
- Never attempt to manage the behavior of a camper by ridicule or physical punishment. Again, this violates our **Zero Tolerance Policy** (see Appendix A) and will result in your immediate dismissal.
- Stay with their campers at all activities and make sure to visually account for all campers at all times.

- Ensure that their campers change clothes every day, take showers regularly (every day for older campers, at least every other day for younger ones), brush their teeth, wear clothes appropriate to weather conditions, wash hands before meals, etc.
- Enforce quiet times during siesta and “lights out” times at night.
- Talk to the Camp Health Director if you become aware of any specific health conditions regarding their campers, and keep all such information strictly confidential.
- Report all camper injuries, illness and homesickness to the Camp Health Director.
- Never send a camper alone to see the Camp Health Director, but rather accompany them.
- Encourage campers to eat well-rounded meals, and report campers who are not eating well to the Camp Health Director.
- Report all “incidents” to the Camp Director. Any issue or event that might be reported to the Camp Director by way of a camper, other staff or parent is considered an “incident”.
- Set good examples by not using profanity or telling off-color jokes and stories. Discourage any such language by campers.
- Be a “good sport”.
- Be understanding and thoughtful.
- Be a good listener.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be patient and helpful.
- Be a willing and cooperative contributor to all aspects of the camp program.
- Help wherever necessary, even if it isn’t their direct responsibility.
- Be a servant leader.
- Act, at all times, in a manner that is befitting an Orthodox Christian.
- Actively participate, and encourage camper participation, in all Orthodox Life sessions, prayer sessions and Liturgy.
- Give 100% of themselves to the campers, and ensure that each camper leaves the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp excited to return the following summer!!

GOOD CAMP STAFF MEMBERS WILL NOT...

- Yell or scream at campers for any reason.
- Use inappropriate language or swear at or in front of campers.
- Embarrass anyone or single out any camper.
- Allow a camper to get picked on, bullied or treated poorly in any way.
- Plan or participate in any raid or prank whatsoever.
- Allow campers to destroy or deface property.
- Talk about other staff members, campers or camp policy in any negative way.
- Monopolize camp games, equipment or facilities at the expense of campers.
- Emphasize “winning” over participation and fun in any activities.
- Deprive a camper of food or sleep. This will lead to your immediate dismissal. See our **Zero Tolerance** policy in Appendix A.
- Place a camper alone without staff supervision, observation or interaction.
- Ridicule, threaten, use abusive language, or emotionally harm a camper.
- Threaten or use corporal punishment, excessive physical exercise or excessive physical restraint against a camper. This will lead to your immediate dismissal. See our **Zero Tolerance** policy in Appendix A.
- Strike, hit or physically harm a camper. This will lead to your immediate dismissal. See our **Zero Tolerance** policy in Appendix A.
- Smoke at camp, or bring/consume any alcoholic beverages or controlled substances (drugs). This will lead to your immediate dismissal. See our **Zero Tolerance** policy in Appendix A.

- Encourage relationships or covert meetings in unsupervised environments between campers, often referred to as "whammy-ing." See our **Zero Tolerance** policy in Appendix A.
- Eat or drink items not offered to campers in front of campers (with the exception of American coffee or tea).
- Stay up past staff curfew.
- Be a negative disruption to the camp program.

“Good” camp staff members can expect to have a wonderful and rewarding camp experience, make close and lasting friendships, earn the respect of campers, fellow staff members, grow personally and spiritually and be accepted back on staff for future summers.

“Not so good” camp staff members can expect to leave camp feeling empty and having made only a few acquaintances, fail to earn the respect of their campers or fellow staff, miss out on an opportunity for personal and spiritual growth, and possibly be asked to leave camp early or not return for future summers.

The choice is yours!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE AS A COUNSELOR AT MDSC

All of the lists above provide specific actions you should be doing, and avoiding, if you want to be successful as a counselor. But, there is another important factor that really makes a difference. You should be building positive relationships with each one of your campers so that you know them as people by the end of the week. If you only know their first name, and not much else, that’s a problem. While you should pay regular attention and connect with each one of your campers every day and all day, where you really make a difference is helping the shy, quiet camper have a great time. It’s very easy to get to know, and spend a lot of time talking to the outgoing, confident campers who will regularly seek your attention. But, when counselors make a conscious effort to notice the quiet camper, and take it upon themselves to make sure that particular camper has a great time and feels like they belong at MDSC, is when you’ve really done your job.

HOW TO HANDLE HOMESICKNESS

For as long as summer camps have existed, so has homesickness. As a counselor, there is a strong possibility that you will have to deal with this issue in at least one of your campers. Why does homesickness occur? Well, sometimes, it starts with the parents who mention to you in front of the camper that they may be homesick. As you can imagine, if they say this, it almost gives the camper a reason to be homesick.

Homesickness occurs because a family is a child’s most important emotional support. The emotional support is taken for granted until the child finds himself removed from it (Ex. going to camp). For many, camp is their first experience with being separated from their family. The child may wind up having a sudden sense of being stranded, since the people he/she is most used to are not available.

The feeling of homesickness is quite real. It usually manifests itself in stomach-aches or headaches, which are caused by the anxiety the child is experiencing. Other times, children will appear withdrawn and quiet. Crying, particularly at bedtimes, is also common (remember, Mommy and Daddy aren’t there to kiss goodnight).

The solution lies in solving the real problem, which is breaking away from the traditional emotional support. Camp, and particularly the counselor, should encourage a child to grow towards independence and establish new emotional support (fellow campers, counselor, etc).

The new support system starts when the camper first arrives at camp. Make him/her feel welcome, learn their name, where they're from, their favorite activities, sports, etc, and show them that you care about them.

When a camper starts exhibiting some of the homesickness examples stated above, it is time for you to step in and reassure the camper. Using tactics such as recapping what occurred during the day, explaining what events are happening the next day or telling a funny story of an event from the previous week can all help. If you hear a camper crying in bed after lights are out, you should get up and reassure them that you are there for them if they need you. Encourage them, and tell them that it is okay to wake you up if they need you. The best way to keep the camper focused away from being homesick is to keep them thinking about camp and the next event to look forward to, and not what they're missing at home.

Sometimes campers feel homesick because they don't fit in, or haven't found a "buddy" at camp. This may occur with first-year campers, but can be solved by finding them someone to pair up with in the cabin. Usually an older camper, or more experienced one, can be asked to make sure the camper is with them in all activities. You shouldn't mention to one camper that another camper is homesick.

If the homesickness doesn't go away, and the child continually exhibits some of the signs outlined above, then you should bring them to the Camp Director or Health Director (particularly if the symptoms appear more physical). Try the best you can, but if you can't, feel free to ask for help. The goal is to help that camper find his/her new support system right here at camp, and make sure they enjoy their experience.

RUNNING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The camp program consists of many activities for our campers to enjoy. The morning program is set, with each "class" being taught by a specialized Departmental Director. But, the afternoon and evening activities vary every day for each group. The Program Directors plan for each activity, but it is up to the counselors to ensure that it is successful and the campers have fun.

When you are asked to run an activity, you should remember the following ideas in order to make sure the campers enjoy it:

- Find out from the Program Directors the specifics of the activity and the equipment or supplies that are needed.
- Arrive at the activity period early if possible, and secure the needed equipment.
- Make sure you understand all details about the activity/game, using notes if need be.
- Use as little time as possible before starting the activity.
- Insist on the campers' attention (without screaming) while you explain the activity.
- Keep the rules of the activity simple, and explain them clearly. Do not change rules in the middle of the activity or game.
- Demonstrate, when possible, to clarify the rules.
- Encourage all campers to participate, but never embarrass those who do not grasp the concept of the game or those who make mistakes.

- Monitor the energy and attention levels during the activity. It is better for campers to want more of an activity than to have them lose interest.
- Make sure to enjoy the game yourself and PARTICIPATE actively. A counselor who is actively involved and having fun, will see that enthusiasm rub off on the campers.

CAMPER HEALTH & HYGIENE

It is the counselor's responsibility to make sure campers maintain good hygiene habits while they're at camp. Remember, younger campers often rely on their parents to remind them of these habits when they are at home. Counselors take the place of parents at camp, so it is your job to do the reminding!

Showers

Campers should be encouraged to take showers regularly while at camp. Juniors and Intermediates should shower at least every other day at camp, and more regularly if needed. It is not unusual for a Junior to avoid showering or "forget" unless the counselor reminds them. This can be remedied by having set "shower nights" for the younger campers. When dismissed from the lodge at night, on set nights (Ex. Monday, Wednesday, Friday), counselors should remind campers to get their towel, soap and shampoo when they go to the cabin. Remember, at home, children of this age group are still told by their parents "You need to take a shower tonight". This is the counselor's job at camp.

Older campers generally are responsible enough to take regular showers. But, as physical changes occur in early adolescence (older Intermediate and Senior ages), campers in these age groups can become very modest and avoid taking showers for this reason. Counselors should never embarrass campers if this occurs, but should quietly speak to the camper and encourage them to head to the showers before the rest of the group, or wait until last. Campers who avoid showering should not be embarrassed in any way. If a camper refuses to shower, or maintain their personal hygiene, please see the Camp Director.

Brushing Teeth

As explained above, many younger children still have to be reminded to brush their teeth each night at home. When campers are excused each night, counselors should require all campers to get their toothbrushes and make sure everyone brushes their teeth. It may sound ridiculous, but it is not unusual for a camper to go the entire week without brushing their teeth unless the counselor reminds them each night.

Changing Clothes & Dressing for the Weather

One of the biggest complaints heard from parents on the day they pick their campers up is that they packed a whole week of clothes, and most clothes are still untouched in the camper's luggage when they come home. Why does this occur? Because the counselor wasn't paying attention to their campers. As explained above, younger campers still rely on their parents to remind them to shower, brush their teeth and change clothes every day. It is not unusual to see a Junior wearing the same shirt and shorts for two or three days in a row (or more!). *Remember, parents can see this because we post daily pictures of activities at camp!*

Campers should change their clothes every day. Counselors must pay attention to see what their campers are wearing (just like their mothers would!). If you notice a camper wearing the same clothes for the second day, you should take them to their luggage and say something like "Lets see what else your mom packed for you to wear" and then encourage them to change their clothes.

Counselors should also monitor weather conditions. Campers should not be shivering at the flagpole in the morning, in a t-shirt and shorts, if it is a cold morning. Remind the camper to put on a sweat-shirt, sweat-pants or jeans if it is a cold morning.

STAFF SALARIES

MDSC pays a weekly salary to the following positions – Camp Director, Assistant Director, Program Director, Waterfront Director, Media Director, Orthodox Life Director, Arts & Crafts Director, Cook, Assistant Cook, Counselor, Lifeguard, Health Director and Assistant Health Director. CIT positions are volunteer positions, and receive no salary.

You should expect to receive your salary by check at the end of the week(s) you worked at camp, or by mail shortly after your week is completed. Staff who serve in multi-week positions may receive their checks on a more frequent basis as determined by the camp and the staff member. If a staff member who has been accepted for a position does not fulfill their obligation to serve at camp, or if they staff member is sent home for not fulfilling expectations, MDSC is under no obligation to issue a salary.

Please note that to ensure compliance with all regulatory and taxing authorities, MDSC will issue 1099's for all individuals meeting the minimum regulatory reporting requirements. By accepting a salaried staff position, you accept responsibility for properly reporting of all income(s) received and remitting payment for tax withholding(s) to the proper regulatory authorities (Federal - IRS, State, Etc.). MDSC has no responsibility or duty to determine the tax effect of any payment or to see to the application of any payment. In making payments, MDSC acknowledges that the Board of Directors is acting as a paying agent and you are responsible for reporting any and all tax information/withholding(s) to the proper regulatory and taxing authorities (Federal, State, Etc.).

If you are dismissed from camp early for any disciplinary reason whatsoever, you will automatically forfeit any salary you would have earned following the time of your dismissal.

IX. PROGRAM SCHEDULE & STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The weekly camp program is run using a set schedule from Sunday afternoon through Saturday morning of each program week. Transition days (Saturday and Sunday) have a more flexible schedule because of the campers leaving to go home and others arriving for the next week.

All staff need to know the schedule each day so the overall program runs smoothly. If you don't know the schedule, you should check the Bulletin Board in the Lodge or ask the Camp Director or Program Directors. Staff are required to attend all daily morning staff meetings, unless assigned to cabin cleanup or morning dish duty, so they understand the plans for each group that day. Remember, your campers rely on you for guidance and you should be able to answer questions about what they will be doing each day.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY TRANSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff are expected to arrive at camp by 3:00 p.m. the Saturday before the week(s) they will be at camp. You **must** check-in with the Camp Director regarding your camper group and cabin assignment immediately when you arrive. After getting your assignment, you should take your luggage to your cabin and set up your bunk arrangements. Saturdays tend to be busy days, and you will likely be asked to help with various tasks around camp, or setting up cabins to be ready for the new campers arriving on each Sunday. On transition days such as Saturday and Sunday, there are also campers that will be staying over from week to week. You should get to know the campers who will be in your group and make sure they are accounted for during these times. Staff Orientation/Training always occurs on Saturday night.

On Sundays after breakfast, the Camp Director will generally hold a staff meeting to assign staff different cleaning responsibilities to be ready for camper arrivals later that day. The Lodge, Suzies, Beach, and Grounds will all need to be cleaned so as to present a good appearance to the many families who will be bringing their children to camp. Cabins need to be swept, and all campers and staff who stayed over will need to make up their bunk and neatly arrange their luggage and clothes. Lunch will generally be served, and then campers will generally go back to their cabins for a siesta period.

New campers and their families generally arrive between 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. All new campers **must** check in at the registration table near the parking lot. Staff should assist with the registration process by staying near the registration table to meet their campers. If there are two counselors assigned to the group, one should stay in the cabin and the other can wait by the registration table. When a camper arrives who will be assigned to a cabin group, that counselor should introduce themselves to the campers and their parents, and assist with taking their luggage to the cabin. When the counselor arrives at the cabin with the new camper, the counselor in the cabin should go back to the registration table to await other new campers.

After all new campers arrive, a Camp Orientation period is held, where all staff are introduced, and camp policies and expectations are explained. After the Orientation, there are "ice-breakers" with each of the camper groups. Then, the campers change and go to the beach area for a swimming evaluation (the "raft test"). Campers should not go down to the beach until receiving permission from the waterfront Director. Following the swimming evaluation session, the flag lowering and evening prayers are completed, and then dinner is served. Following dinner, an all-camp activity is held, after which time the campers return to the Lodge for snacks. The Evening

Worship is held, and campers are then dismissed to bed. Counselors should take this time before “lights out” to make sure all campers know each other, and that all “cabin rules” are explained.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Applies to Weeks 1-5 only) *Rev. January 2024*

The weekly program at camp from Monday through Friday usually follows the schedule listed below, where you can find an explanation of each activity and your responsibilities as a staff member. This schedule or any variations will also be posted in each cabin for reference.

7:50 a.m. – Rise & Shine!

The “cowbell” makes it around to each cabin to make sure everyone wakes up! Counselors need to get out of bed and 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. Make sure these campers are awake and getting dressed at 8:00 a.m. so they make it to Hopper Duty on time. Staff assigned to supervise the Hoppers that day must be at the Lodge by 8:10 a.m. or earlier.

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. After going through the buffet line, hoppers should be the only ones allowed to move around in the eating area to clear the tables.

9:00 a.m. - Morning Show!

A little fun before we start our day. To facilitate an on time start to the day, Program directors should start this as the camp eats.

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

Before Kapers, campers are dismissed to clean up their cabins (as cabin cleanliness is graded each day). A staff member is usually assigned to walk the paths between cabins while campers are cleaning. Seniors should be reminded to put their bathing suits on during cabin cleanup since they have the first swimming session. During this time, a mandatory staff meeting is held to explain the program for the day and deal with any other pertinent issues.

9:45 a.m. – Kapers

Campers are assigned to different groups and are responsible for cleaning different parts of the camp. Staff are assigned to the group and are expected to make sure the appropriate cleaning 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

Counselors make sure all campers arrive at each activity, and are required to stay with their group unless released by the program coordinator. 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

Counselors make sure all campers arrive at each activity, and are required to stay with their group unless released by the program coordinator. The first 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

Counselors make sure all campers arrive at each activity, and are required to stay with their group unless released by the program coordinator. The first 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 and serve the food.

1:30 p.m. – Lunch

Cabin groups sit at their assigned tables with their staff members, and a blessing is done prior to eating. After going through the buffet, Hoppers should be the only ones allowed to move around in the eating area to clear the tables. 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. Afternoon activities are usually set up by the Program Directors during this time. Staff not on cabin duty have free time if they choose not to take siesta.

3:15 p.m. – Snack Time

Campers go to the Lodge for a small snack. Campers should have their bathing suits on if they have Open Swimming during 1st Activity, or have proper shoes on if they have a field activity.

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 Intermediates 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 and serve the food.

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

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

6:30 p.m. – Dinner

Cabin groups sit at their assigned tables with their staff members. After going through the buffet, Hoppers should be the only ones allowed to move around in the eating area to clear the tables. 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 should encourage campers to take showers and brush their teeth. Junior campers should be in bed with lights out by no later than 10:30 p.m. Once the campers are in bed, only the counselors on Cabin Duty need to stay in the cabin.

9:50 p.m. – Intermediates to Bed

When Intermediates are excused to bed, their counselors escort them to the cabins to supervise. Counselors should encourage campers to take showers and brush their teeth. Intermediate campers should be in bed with lights out by no later than 10:45 p.m. Once the campers are in bed, only the counselors on Cabin Duty need to stay in the cabin.

10:00 p.m. – Seniors to Bed

When Seniors are excused to bed, their counselors escort them to the cabins to supervise. Counselors should encourage campers to take showers and brush their teeth, although Seniors can also shower in the morning if they prefer. Seniors campers should be in bed with lights out by no later than 11:00 p.m. Once the campers are in bed, only the counselors on Cabin Duty need to stay in the cabin.

SCHEDULE VARIATIONS

The program schedule may vary during the weekdays to make room for special events such as the Divine Liturgy. Generally, the 1st and 2nd Afternoon activities are replaced with larger program activities (Color Wars, Water Relays, raft trip). The Program Directors must consult the Camp Director regarding any proposed schedule changes, and if the Camp Director approves, the Program Director will make all staff aware of changes. ***If you are a Week Zero staff member, there is a different schedule followed that week.***

STAFF EXPECTATIONS DURING THE CAMP WEEK

As explained in the schedule, there are many responsibilities for staff throughout the week. Some of the responsibilities were touched on above, but additional clarification can be found in this section. In addition, other expectations are explained below:

Meal Times

Staff are asked to sit with their camper groups, other staff are assigned to tables as space allows. During meals, staff should make sure all campers are served first before serving themselves. Staff will go through the buffet line with their assigned campers. Horseplay, throwing food, eating contests, etc is not allowed. Campers should be encouraged to try everything, but should not be forced to eat. If a camper does not eat well for consecutive meals during a day, the Camp Health Director should be notified. All staff are required to be at every meal unless they are excused by the Camp Director. All staff must sit at a table to eat, and are not permitted to eat on the couches in the lodge.

Kapers

Staff are expected to check the Kaper Schedule every night to make sure of the next day's assignment. Staff should arrive for their Kaper **early** to make sure all supplies are ready for the campers to use. Staff should actively supervise all clean-up activities of their Kaper group, and make sure everything is completed before the bell is rung for the first morning activity. Hoppers are also considered a Kaper, and it is very important that staff arrive early to make sure campers set up tables properly. Staff must also actively supervise distribution of food from the kitchen serving window. In addition, staff must work with their Hopper group to clean up all tables, return food and serving plates to the tables, throw away all disposable trash, sweep the floors and empty full trash cans.

Morning Program

All counselors are expected to escort their camper groups to the three morning activities (Swimming Lessons, Orthodox Life and Arts & Crafts), and stay with their groups throughout the activity. Only if the activity Director gives permission for counselors to leave is it acceptable to do so (except for Orthodox Life – you must be present in this class). In these cases, only one counselor/CIT from each gender will be allowed to leave at a time.

Dish Duty

Generally, most staff are assigned to dish duty in the kitchen following meals. Staff are usually assigned no more than 3 separate meals during the week, but this may change based on the size of the staff. The CIT group generally takes on more of this responsibility because counselors (age 18 & over) are required for supervision of camper groups during the week. Staff assigned to dish duty are responsible for washing all serving plates, pans, utensils and other kitchen equipment used to prepare and serve each meal. If a staff member does not know the proper washing and sterilization techniques, please ask the kitchen staff. After all dishes are washed, the sinks must be cleaned and the area around the sinks must be mopped.

Afternoon and Evening Activities

All counselors are required to be with their camp groups during these activity times unless they are excused by the Camp Director only.

Cabin Duty

All staff should check the Cabin Duty schedule each morning to find out when they are assigned to Siesta Cabin Duty and Night Cabin Duty. If you are assigned to cabin duty, you are required to **stay in the cabin** with the camper groups during Siesta or after lights out at night. During

Siesta, you must be awake if you are the only staff member on duty. Campers should stay in their bunks and talk quietly during this time. Horseplay, jumping from bunks, etc is not allowed. If you are assigned to night cabin duty, you must stay in the cabin with the campers after the campers have gone to bed and lights are out. Generally, two staff members are assigned to each cabin during this time. Campers should be encouraged to settle down and go to sleep. If a camper needs to use the Suzie after lights out, then one of the staff members assigned to cabin duty should escort them. **At no time** should you leave the cabin if you are the only staff member on duty. If you need a short break, use the phone and call down to the Lodge to ask for someone to relieve you. During evening cabin duty, you should stay awake until the campers have fallen asleep. While on cabin duty, you are not permitted to congregate on the porches. You must be inside the cabin at all times. You can leave your cabin duty assignment only if one of the counselors for your cabin has returned and plans to stay in the cabin for the remainder of the night.

Staff Off-Duty Times

The only time a staff member is “off-duty” is if they are not on cabin duty, when it is after 10:00 p.m. each night and all campers in their group are in bed. Staff are expected to take their camper groups to their cabins, settle them down and assist with getting them to bed. Once this is done, off-duty staff should return to the Lodge. Staff can stay in the Lodge, have snacks from left-over food if the kitchen staff permits, play games or just relax. Staff who are not on cabin duty should stay away from the cabins. Off-duty staff are not permitted to sit on cabin steps or remain in the counselor sections of the cabin during these times – campers need to get to sleep, and not be distracted by staff socializing. Off-duty staff may congregate in the Lodge, in the kitchen, or at the picnic tables outside the lodge. Staff activities will be planned during certain nights, and may include campfires, evening hikes or other events.

The weekly staff (CITs, counselors, lifeguards) have a curfew of 12:00am and the Departmental Directors have a curfew of 12:30am. Camp has quiet hours of 1:00am - 7:00am and staff are expected to be in their bed or bunk during these hours (unless they are visiting the suzie or infirmary). Program Directors should be cognizant of these curfews when planning night activities. If there is a specific reason why a night activity is projected to extend beyond the curfew, the Camp Director may extend the curfew to 1:00am for all staff. However, it is not to be extended for all night activities. For example, a staff bonfire can still implement the 12:00am/12:30am curfew, but a trust walk may need to implement an extended curfew of 1:00am given the number of participants. This potential extension is solely up to the Camp Director (and not the Program Director), and the Camp Director can deny the extension for any or no reason. These curfews are set to ensure that staff get enough rest so they can maintain their energy levels for the week. Staff are expected to be in their cabins and in bed at this curfew time. Staff who violate the curfew can be issued a warning from the Camp Director, and ultimately can be sent home. This is outlined in Appendix A.

Cabin Clean-up

After breakfast each morning, campers are excused to their cabins to clean and straighten them up. Most staff will be in the morning staff meeting at this time, but it is the counselor's responsibility to set the expectation of a clean cabin. During your cabin meeting the first night (which should occur), campers should be reminded to make up their bunks, fold and put away all clothes in luggage or crates, straighten towels and bathing suits on the cabin rails and clothes lines and sweep the cabin floors. Cabins are graded each morning during the morning programs, so campers should be told to make sure the cabin stays neat even when they are changing clothes because of swimming lessons. Camper groups who maintain a high score throughout the week are rewarded with the sundaes on the last day of camp.

Just because the campers are graded, and the counselor sections in the cabins are not, does not give license for staff to allow their areas to become certified disaster zones! Remember, counselors are expected to lead by example. While it is understandable that you often don't have time to do a full cabin clean-up (like the campers), **the counselor section should remain relatively neat.** You are required to clean and straighten up the counselor section on transition days, because parents will be in the cabins. Any food found in the cabins, whether in the counselor or camper areas will be removed and thrown away.

Skit Nights

Sometime during the week, a skit night may be held where each camper group gets to perform a skit that they created. Assigned staff members should work with their groups to create skits. Younger campers often need suggestions for skits and assistance in designing the actual parts of the skit. All campers should be encouraged to participate in their group's skit, but no-one should be forced. It is the counselor's responsibility to know the content of their group's skit. Inappropriate language, innuendo, destruction of camp property or harshly degrading a fellow camper or staff member is strictly prohibited. Poking fun at someone during a skit is one thing, but counselors should make sure that no part of the skit would be considered hurtful.

Divine Liturgy

Most weeks, one morning will begin with the Divine Liturgy performed by the priest who is at camp that week. After Liturgy, the campers and staff will eat breakfast, camper group and staff pictures will be taken, and campers are dismissed for cabin clean-up/packing to go home (if Liturgy is on Saturday). The order of these activities will vary depending on the day of Liturgy, and the Program Directors will be announcing activities. Remember, EVERYONE (including ALL STAFF) is expected to attend Divine Liturgy. The Camp Director may excuse individuals from attending the Divine Liturgy if there is a valid reason for that individual being unable to attend (e.g. the individual must remain in the infirmary).

Saturday/End of the Week

If the Liturgy is performed during one of the weekdays, then the Saturday morning schedule is more flexible. After breakfast, there are some clean-up responsibilities for staff to ensure that the camp is presentable for parents arriving that day to pick up their children. Campers go back to their cabins and begin packing. Based on camp policies, campers should be picked up by their parents between 12:00 noon and 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Staff who are staying over are responsible for those campers who are also staying for the next session.

Regardless of the Saturday schedule, it is your responsibility as a staff member to assist the campers in packing their belongings to go home that day. This applies regardless of what group you have. You should make sure that:

- Campers pack all of their clothes, shoes, towels, sheets, blankets, pillows, toiletries,
- Campers check the clothes-lines for bathing suits, towels, etc so they are not forgotten.
- Campers check under the beds and on the porches for shoes and other items.
- Campers go to the Arts & Crafts room and collect all projects completed during their week(s) at camp.

As a counselor or CIT, you may need to help the younger campers pack their belongings because they may not have the ability to do it by themselves. Campers staying an additional week should also repack or straighten their clothes, line up their shoes and other items under their bunks, make

sure that their bathing suits and towels hanging outside don't get mixed up and accidentally packed by departing campers, etc.

Departing campers should assemble their belongings on their bunks and leave them there until their parents arrive. Parents are required to help collect their children's belongings **FROM THE CABINS** to ensure nothing is left behind. **Staff must remind campers and parents throughout the day that they are required to check-out with the Camp Health Director as well as the Camp Director or Assistant Camp Director before leaving the camp property.**

Staff members are required to remain at camp until at least 2:00 pm unless otherwise requested by the weekly director. Staff may not leave until excused by the Camp Director, who must ensure that there are sufficient staff members available for campers who are on property.

X. CAMP RULES & POLICIES

Throughout this handbook, there are many expectations of staff members at camp. In addition to these expectations, there are certain rules that must be followed by staff at camp.

“TWO PERSON” RULE

For your own protection, and the protection of the campers and the camp, you should *never* be alone with a camper in any situation. You should not be alone with a camper in a cabin, in the Suzies or in any secluded area of the camp. Should there be a reason to be alone with a camper (Ex. discussing a behavior issue with a camper so others don't overhear) have another staff member join you or remain in sight of others.

CITs & COUNSELORS – GENERAL RULE ABOUT SUPERVISING CAMPERS

Counselors (ages 18 & over) are “adults” and fully responsible for campers. CITs are “minors” and must never be left alone to supervise campers without an adult staff member present.

KITCHEN POLICIES

Unless a staff member has dish duty, is asked to assist with meal preparation, or needs to answer the phone, they should not be in the kitchen until after 10:00 p.m. each day. The cooks need space to prepare meals, and need to ensure that food is not contaminated in any way by excess traffic in the kitchen. Staff are not permitted to bring outside food or drinks, so there is no staff refrigerator available for use. In addition, the cooks will place left-over food that can be eaten after 10:00 p.m. in a designated area of the kitchen or shelf of the refrigerator. The rest of the refrigerators, freezers and food storage cabinets are off limits.

STAFF FOOD/DRINKS

Staff may not bring any personal food or drinks to camp whatsoever. Personal food may only be eaten during meals if it is required based on medical reasons and approved by the Camp Health Director.

STAFF CURFEW

The weekly staff (CITs, counselors, lifeguards) have a curfew of 12:00am and the Departmental Directors have a curfew of 12:30am. Camp has quiet hours of 1:00am - 7:00am and staff are expected to be in their bed or bunk during these hours (unless they are visiting the suzie or infirmary). Program Directors should be cognizant of these curfews when planning night activities. If there is a specific reason why a night activity is projected to extend beyond the curfew, the Camp Director may extend the curfew to 1:00am for all staff. However, it is not to be extended for all night activities. For example, a staff bonfire can still implement the 12:00am/12:30am curfew, but a trust walk may need to implement an extended curfew of 1:00am given the number of participants. This potential extension is solely up to the Camp Director (and not the Program Director), and the Camp Director can deny the extension for any or no reason. These curfews are set to ensure that staff get enough rest so they can maintain their energy levels for the week. Staff are expected to be in their cabins and in bed at this curfew time. Staff who violate the curfew can be issued a warning from the Camp Director, and ultimately can be sent home.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AND WEAPONS POLICY

No one can possess and/or use any weapons, tobacco or any controlled substances on camp property (grounds, buildings, forest, parking lot, field, beach, etc), off camp property (trails, end of the road, etc) or at any off-camp supervised activity (i.e, raft trip, Loon Lake). This policy includes (but is not limited to) cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, vapes and gummies. Staff are also forbidden from bringing any related paraphernalia to camp. Smoking any substance on Camp property is particularly dangerous given that Camp is located in a forest, and smoking could easily start a fire. If it is suspected that these substances, paraphernalia or weapons are present on camp property or at any camp supervised activity, the Camp Director has the right to search any staff member's or camper's possessions in the presence of the owner. This includes

asking staff members to open their vehicles for a search. Campers or staff who violate this policy in any form will be **immediately** sent home (see our **Zero Tolerance Policy** in Appendix A).

STAFF HEALTH INSURANCE

All staff members are required to have health insurance or be able to cover the cost of their own medical care while at camp.

LEAVING CAMP PREMISES

A staff member over the age of 18 may only leave Camp property if the Camp Director gives express and explicit permission. The Camp Director has the authority to deny permission based on Camp needs. For example, the Camp Director must ensure that there are sufficient staff on Camp property for the campers.

A staff member or camper under the age of 18 may only leave Camp property with an adult (over the age of 18) that their parent or legal guardian has listed on the transportation form. The Camp Director must also give express and explicit permission. The Camp Director has the authority to deny permission based on Camp needs.

A staff member or camper under the age of 18 may not leave Camp property alone, unless he or she is leaving at the end of their camping weeks, and only then with the Camp Director's express and explicit permission.

CAMP ELECTRONICS POLICY

Based on approval by the Board of Trustees, beginning in 2010, all electronics are banned at MDSC. This includes cell phones (see below), iPods/MP3 players (and docking stations), personal CD players, video games (Nintendo, Gameboys, etc), pagers, laptops and laser-pointers. You may bring a watch, or individual alarm clock, but no other electronics are allowed. Intentional violation of this policy will not be tolerated, and may result in the staff member being sent home. All staff cell phones, including departmental directors, will be collected by the Camp Director at the beginning of the week and kept by the Camp Director until the staff member is dismissed at the end of his/her week(s).

CAMP TELEPHONE USAGE

The camp phone should only be used for camp business and emergency purposes, and *is not available to staff or campers for regular use*. Only the Camp Director can give permission to use the camp phone for purposes other than those listed above. Do not ask family and friends to call you at camp unless it is a true emergency. You must ask permission prior to using the camp phone. In addition, messages will be taken for any calls received during the day for a staff member. Staff members will not be removed from duties to take phone calls.

CELL PHONES AND CAR KEYS

Cell phones are prohibited (see above) and will be collected by the Camp Director at the beginning of the week. You may not keep your cell phone with you in your cabin **at any time** at camp. The **only** exception is that the Camp Director and **one** licensed medical professional (from the Health Team) may keep his/her cell phone for emergency use only, and is not permitted to use it for any other purposes. Additionally, all car keys of staff members must be turned in to the Camp Director at the beginning of the week. The Camp Director will keep all keys and cell phones until the staff member is dismissed at the end of his/her week(s). Violations of this policy or refusal to turn in keys or cell phones may result in you being sent home.

CABIN PHONES AND OVERHEAD ANNOUNCEMENTS

Phones that are found in the cabins and the overhead announcement system are only to be used for legitimate camp business and necessary communications. Announcements should only be made by the Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director, Program Director, or a staff member who has been designated by one of these people.

DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Staff may *never* enter into a romantic relationship with any camper or CIT under any circumstances. Romantic relationships between adult staff are discouraged at camp. Again, a successful staff member makes the camp experience ***all about the camper***. Any relationships of any nature should always be conducted with a full respect for Christian behavior and Orthodox Church teachings . Any sexual activity during camp is grounds for immediate termination pursuant to our **Zero Tolerance Policy** (see Appendix A).

ARRIVAL AT CAMP & LEAVING CAMP

Staff may not arrive at camp until the Saturday afternoon before the week(s) they will be at camp. All staff are expected to leave on the Saturday of their last week at camp, and may not stay overnight through Sunday unless they have specific permission from the Camp Director.

CAMP VISITS

Visitors to camp are limited to weekends and only with permission of the Camp Director. Visits during the week are at the sole discretion of the Camp Director, who can deny permission for any reason or no reason. Those on staff during a previous week of the year, or those who will be serving on staff later in the summer, are forbidden to visit any other week. There will be no overnight visits during the camp week.

CABIN RESTRICTIONS

Staff may not enter the cabin of the opposite gender at any time during camp. The only exceptions are if there is a medical or safety emergency requiring immediate attention. Directors conducting Cabin Score checks, or checking cabins during siesta or after bedtime, may enter cabins as needed, but should use discretion when entering opposite gender cabins.

Staff should only enter the cabin to which they are assigned during the week. There is no reason to enter any other cabins.

CAMP OFFICE USE

Departmental Directors may periodically use the Camp Office when not on duty to check their emails. If the Camp Director determines that a Departmental Director is abusing this privilege, he or she may limit the Camp Office to official use only. Usage of the Camp Office by non Departmental Directors subject to explicit permission by the Camp Director.

XI. CLOSING COMMENTS

The Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp was founded in 1951 by the St. Nicholas (Detroit, MI) parish, and has provided camping experiences for literally thousands of young people from across our Metropolis since our very first summer in 1952.

Throughout these 70+ years, the camp has had an excellent reputation across our Metropolis community. Those who attended the camp in the 1950's sent their children to camp, and now see their grandchildren as current campers. This would not occur if these parents and grandparents did not trust the camp to ensure that their children would be safe and have fun.

One of the main reasons the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp has been so successful over the years is due to the quality and dedication of the staff. Much pride has been taken in making sure our campers leave camp each year looking forward to the following summer. It is not unusual to see campers spend every summer from age 8 through 16 at camp, return as CIT's for two years, and then spend many years as counselors or other staff.

Every staff member who has ever worked at this camp, and you as a current staff member, are part of this legacy. In order for the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp to continue for another 70 years and beyond, you must understand your role as a staff member and the sacred trust that is being placed in you by the camper's parents and family, the Camp Board of Trustees, your parish and the Metropolis of Detroit.

You must always remember that ***camp is for the campers!*** As a staff member, you must put the camper's needs above yours at all times and in everything you do. As you look at each one of your campers, remember that they are the single most important thing in the world to their parents (just as you are to your parents). A camper's safety, enjoyment, personal and spiritual growth are your priority while they are in your care.

In order to ensure that this occurs, please take the time to read and understand this handbook in its entirety. Re-read it if necessary. Nothing in here is hard to understand, or difficult to do, if you really want to be a great staff member. If you have questions, or aren't sure how to handle situations that occur at camp, make sure to ask the Camp Director for advice. No one can be expected to have all the answers, but much can be learned from more experienced staff.

While the job of a staff member can be tiring and frustrating at times, it can also be one of the most rewarding things you will ever do in life. Giving of yourself so that others benefit is much more satisfying than making sure you are the one reaping all the rewards. If your campers learn something at camp, make new friends, have a lot of fun and grow both personally and spiritually, then you will certainly reap the rewards of knowing you had something to do with it! If you do it right, your campers will never forget you and you will never forget them or your experience at MDSC.

Thank you for the time, dedication, energy and love you offer to the youth of our Metropolis through your role on the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp staff. May God bless you and keep you always in his care.

APPENDIX A - STAFF DISCIPLINE POLICY

New this year is a formal discipline policy for all staff members. This discipline policy applies to counselors, CITs, departmental directors (e.g. Program Director, Waterfront Director, Arts & Crafts Director, Media Director, Health Director) and all departmental staff (e.g. waterfront staff, adult volunteers, medical staff).

Zero Tolerance

The weekly Camp Director has the discretion to **immediately** send a staff member home if the staff member:

- violates the Youth Protection Policy
- engages in any sexual activity at camp
- participates in or encourages camper relationships (e.g. matchmaking or whammy-ing)
- participates in or encourages any hazing/training of campers
- possess any controlled substances or related paraphernalia (including, but not limited to: cigarettes, alcohol, vaping, tobacco in any form, marijuana, gummies, etc.)
- enters into the cabin of the opposite sex
- enters into the cabin that the staff member is not assigned to without express permission from the weekly director
- initiates, participates, or encourages any pranks or raids (including the Kaka Fairy)

Two-Warning System

The weekly director has the discretion to issue **two warnings** before sending a staff member home if the staff member:

- swears or uses inappropriate language at or in front of campers
- absent/tardy from flagpole or prayers
- consuming outside food or drink in front of campers
- retain possession of a cell phone or car keys
- sleeping during working hours without express permission from the weekly director
 - “working hours” are the hours during which camp programming is ongoing, with the exception of siesta, during which sleeping/rest is encouraged
- not sleeping in designated bunks/cabins (e.g. no one is permitted to sleep outside, in the lodge, or on the beach)
- cabin duty violations
 - staff must remain inside the cabin during assigned cabin duty and may not congregate outside on porches
 - non-cabin duty staff cannot congregate on porches, and may only congregate in the lodge, picnic tables by the lodge, the kitchen, or participate in an organized staff activity
- violation of dress code (see below)
- violation of curfew:
 - 12:00am: weekly staff
 - 12:30am: departmental directors
 - all staff are expected to be in cabins by the hours above, and there are “quiet hours” on camp from 1:00am - 7:00am
 - please note: curfew may only be extended as outlined in this Staff Handbook

If a staff member is sent home for violating the Zero Tolerance Policy or the Two-Warning System, the staff member will automatically forfeit the salary he/she would have earned following the time of 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.” We are a Christian camp, and modesty should guide your clothing choices. 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). The Camp Director has the discretion to prohibit clothing that he or she deems inappropriate. Examples of inappropriate clothing that will not be permitted include: sports bras as tops (even when layered under an open shirt); excessively short or tight shorts; midriff/crop tops; excessively short or tight skirts. When selecting bathing suits, please know that girls must have one-piece suits that provide full coverage. Boys must have swim trunks that reach an appropriate length. Speedos for boys and two pieces for girls are not permitted. Boys must wear shirts outside of the beach at all times.

Prohibited Items at Camp

The following items are not allowed on camp property, and should not be packed or brought:

- controlled substances or any related paraphernalia (this also falls under our Zero Tolerance policy, above, and is grounds for immediate dismissal)
- hammocks
- outside food and drinks of any kind for any staff member

APPENDIX B - WEEKLY DIRECTOR CHECKLIST - DAILY OPERATIONS

To be added in Spring 2024

**APPENDIX C - WEEKLY DIRECTOR CHECKLIST -
OPENING/CLOSING**

To be added in Spring 2024