



Basic Camp Information

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We're so glad you're planning to send your child to camp at Merck Forest. In order to be prepared, please read through this informational packet. It is designed to help answer any questions you may have about our camps.

This packet includes:

- ✓ Cancellation and Refund policy
- ✓ Camp Contact Information
- ✓ Drop off and Pick-up procedures
- ✓ Camp Packing list
- ✓ Health and Emergency Care
- ✓ Camp Behavior Code
- ✓ Camp Bathroom Facilities
- ✓ Camp Closing
- ✓ Sample Daily Camp Schedule

We encourage you to talk to your child about any of this information that will be important for them to hear and be familiar with before the start of camp. Please let us know of any questions you or your child(ren) may have about any of the information in this packet.

Once you have paid for your child's camp, we'll need to ask you some questions too! You'll be receiving a link to our camp forms, which must be filled out in order for your registration to be considered valid and complete.

We look forward to welcoming you and your camper to Merck Forest for a wonderful camp experience.

All the best,

Merck Forest Camp Staff

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Refunds and changes in registration may be subject to a \$50 non-refundable processing fee according to these policies:

- ✓ Registration is not considered complete until all forms have been submitted. Failure to submit completed registration forms will result in a loss of space in the camp and any tuition paid.
- ✓ Cancellation requests received at least 28 days before the first day of camp will receive a refund, less the \$50 processing fee.
- ✓ Cancellation requests received within 28 days of the first day of camp will not be refunded, unless we are able to fill your reservation with a child from the waiting list. In such a case the \$50 administrative fee will be levied.
- ✓ We will not refund registration fees if a child misses one or more days of camp due to illness, unexpected family obligations, dismissal, or any other foreseen event. Other children may not be substituted into your child's vacant spot.
- ✓ We reserve the right to cancel a camp program due to low enrollment; in this situation we will work to place campers into another camp or we will issue a full refund.
- ✓ We reserve the right to cancel a camp program due to unforeseen circumstances, in which case full refunds will be issued.

Camp Contact Information

Before camp week: If you have any questions regarding registration or need to get in touch with the camp staff **prior to the week of camp**, please use any of the following contact options:

Email: learn@merckforest.org

Phone: (Education Director) 802- 394-2578

During camp week: For any communications, emergencies, or questions during camp hours (**9am - 3pm**) or throughout the camp week, please use the following contact options:

Email: john@merckforest.org Phone: (Visitor Center) 802-394-7836

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Camp drop-off and pick-up is at the stump circle just past the entrance pavilion between the Visitor Center and the parking lot. We ask that parents park in the parking lot and walk with campers to meet camp staff at the circle for drop-off each day. For pick-up, parents and guardians are asked to park in the parking lot and meet campers and staff at the stump circle. At the end of each camp day authorized parents/guardians are required to sign off with camp staff before departing in order to ensure camper safety and check in for any necessary communications.

Drop off: between 8:50am – 9:00am every day.

Please be prompt. We will be departing from the stump circle no later than 9:10 to head to your child's basecamp.

Pick-up: 3:00pm. We will meet you at the kiosk just up the path from the parking lot. **Each day at pick-up, the authorized adult must sign out the camper they are responsible for with the camp staff leader.**

If a camper is not picked up within 15 minutes beyond the designated pick-up time of 3pm, you will be charged a late fee of \$10. For every 10 minutes beyond 3:15, you will be charged an additional \$10 late fee. A staff member will remain with your child until a parent/guardian or alternate contact person arrives.

If you know your child will be arriving late or leaving early from camp, please notify us at least a day in advance so staff can plan accordingly, as it is not always possible for staff to leave the group in order to meet late campers or escort them to early pick-up. Please refer to and use the above contact info to communicate any such changes.

*****Important*****

In the online registration forms, please designate **ALL** adults who are authorized to pick up your child **INCLUDING** yourself. Persons designated to pick up your child may be asked to present a valid ID.

General Camp Packing List

Campers should be dressed for the weather and be prepared to spend most of the day outdoors. Please be mindful that temperatures on the mountain can be colder and windier than down in the valley. Your camper should bring the following each day:

- ✓ Day pack to carry belongings
- ✓ Please label all of your child's belongings.
- ✓ Lunch box or container (No paper bags, please!) We practice pack-in, pack out, which means that any uneaten food, packaging or trash from lunch goes back in the lunch box and comes back home. Pack an extra ziploc or other bag for garbage if necessary!
- ✓ Non-perishable, healthy lunch (refrigeration is not available) and one to two snacks. Don't forget to pack any utensils and napkins that food items may require.
- ✓ Water bottles filled with water (Send enough for your child for the day- we recommend at least one liter total)
- ✓ Complete change of clothes and socks (These can be left at camp for the week, if you choose.)
- ✓ Sturdy walking shoes (sneakers or closed-toe sandals, please, no flip flops or Crocs!)
- ✓ Sweatshirt, fleece, or lightweight jacket (in case of cool weather)
- ✓ Waterproof shoes, if walking shoes are inadequate for wet areas like the pond or rainy weather (aqua socks, water sandals with Velcro closure, or old sneakers)
- ✓ Baseball cap or sunhat
- ✓ Raincoat or poncho
- ✓ Empty plastic bag for bringing home wet clothes
- ✓ Insect repellent and sunscreen
- ✓ Any medications in original packaging (medication form must be filled out.)

What NOT to Bring

- ✓ Video games, iPods, cell phones or any other electronic toys or devices.
- ✓ Personal items or toys unless otherwise requested by an instructor for a sharing time.
- ✓ Food that easily spoils.
- ✓ Drinks in glass containers.
- ✓ Knives, firearms, or any sharp tools

Health Care and Emergency Care

Medication:

Camp staff must be notified of any medications that your child will be taking during the day (see Camp Registration Form – Camper Medication Information, Permission, and Waiver). Camp staff is not permitted to administer medications, however they will remind and/or assist your camper in taking his or her medicine according to your directions.

Illness and Minor Injury:

Please do not send your child to camp if they are ill. If your child becomes ill during camp, you will be called to pick them up. If your child is injured or becomes upset during the day, a camp staff member will contact you to determine whether or not they should remain at camp for the rest of the day.

Emergencies:

All MFFC Camp staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR, and are trained to respond in medical emergencies. In the event of a health emergency, you will be contacted immediately. If necessary, your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest appropriate medical facility. Camp participants will never be transported in a MFFC staff vehicle.

Camp Behavior Code

The MFFC Camp staff is committed to providing each and every child with a productive and enjoyable camp experience. Our goal is to create a fun and nurturing environment that accommodates individual needs and learning styles. To ensure the safety and comfort of every camp participant, Merck Forest expects that everyone understands and adheres to the Merck Forest Camp Behavior Code.

This code consists of the “Five Finger Contract” and our behavior reinforcement policy the “3 Rs”. Both are described in greater detail below.

Campers will be introduced to our camp rules and to the Five Finger Contract and 3 Rs on the first day of camp. It is highly recommended that you and your camper review them ahead of time.

Please refer to the Contact Information to reach us with any questions or concerns about the Camp Behavior Code.

Five Finger Contract

The **Pinky Finger** is the smallest and easiest to hurt, which is why it represents **Safety** in our behavior code. When we look at our pinky, it reminds us to look out for the emotional and physical safety of others and ourselves, by following safety rules, using kind language, and keeping our hands to ourselves.

People wear wedding bands on their **ring finger** to represent their **Commitment** to each other. We expect participants to commit themselves to the camp experience by participating in the activities of the day, being willing to try new things, and being open to facing challenges. This allows campers to get the most out of their camp experience.

Our **Middle Finger** represents **Respect** for ourselves, each other, and the world around us. Camp participants practice working with others, are encouraged to get in the habit of giving compliments and praise for jobs well done and in recognizing the capacity for good in everyone, including ourselves, and to think about ways to respect our camp environment.

The **Pointer Finger** points: people often use it to point at others, but it’s important to point it at ourselves first. This finger reminds everyone about his or her **Responsibility** as a part of a group. Everyone gets to choose how he or she behaves.

“**Thumbs Up**” is a universal sign of approval. At MFFC Camp, “Thumbs Up” reminds us to keep a positive attitude, encourage others, and **HAVE FUN!** MFFC Camp is designed so campers will have fun while exploring the various ecosystems around Merck Forest.



Throughout the week we will work with campers to resolve any issues with their conduct or departures from the camp rules and principles, using what we call the **3 Rs**.

The **3 Rs** is our three part system for managing camp behavior:

Reminder: Camp staff will issue a verbal reminder to a camper who is breaking a rule or departing from the five finger contract.

Reflection: Camp staff will ask a camper who has already received one or two reminders to take a few minutes apart from the group to reflect on their behavior and how they can improve and/or keep themselves on track in the future.

Removal: If a camper's behavior continues to be problematic even after reminders and reflections, parents or guardians will be contacted to pick up and remove the camper from camp until the following day, when they will have the opportunity to start fresh.

Certain behaviors are deemed unacceptable at MFFC Camp and may result in a removal without reminders or reflections leading up to it; including, but not limited to: intentionally harming others, using abusive or foul language, disobeying safety-related camp rules established at the start of the camp week, and behaviors that create an unsafe environment for others.

Other Important Camp Information

Bathroom Facilities at Camp

While your child is at camp, we will be using Merck Forest's outhouse facilities. There are several outhouses on site; one is located down at the Yurt, one is at the farm across from the Saphouse, and one is located outside of the Visitor Center. We require campers to use these facilities rather than going to the bathroom in the woods whenever possible, except in cases of emergency when we are at a substantial distance from the nearest outhouse. These outhouses are very rustic and simple, and we use basic camp-style handwashing stations and hand sanitizer for cleaning up after using the outhouses. We recommend a pre-camp visit to one of the Merck Forest outhouses (and the farm and yurt while you're at it!) before the first day of camp for campers who may be uncomfortable or experience challenges with using the outhouses. Campers are expected to be able to use the outhouse on their own; we cannot allow camp staff to assist campers inside the outhouse.

Camp Closing

Camp Closing is an opportunity at the end of camp on Friday for campers to showcase their week and share their experience in a variety of ways with their families and guardians. It includes a short ceremony, interactive activities, and some show and tell. **Camp Closing will take place either at the Sap House or Yurt, depending on which base camp your child is attending.** We highly encourage parents and guardians to attend Camp Closing if they are able; for those who cannot attend, regular camper pickup will still take place at the usual time and location, 3pm at the kiosk by the parking lot. If you bring a dog to Camp Closing, we require that it stay leashed throughout the Camp Closing as well as on the trip to and from either the Yurt or the Saphouse. Due to space restrictions, we ask that you limit the group attending Camp Closing to 4 people or fewer per camper. **Camp Closing begins on Friday at 2:30pm;** be sure to give yourself plenty of time to walk to either the Yurt or the Saphouse, both of which are about a 10-15 minute walk from the parking lot. Campers will be dismissed from the Yurt or Saphouse after Camp Closing, with the exception of campers whose parents/guardians are unable to attend and are being picked up at the kiosk at 3pm.

Sample Daily Camp Schedule

Time	Activity
8:50 - 9:00, 9:10	Campers arrive, check in, depart for base camp
9:10 – 9:30	Welcome and Circle Activities
9:30 – 10:00	Activities / Exploration
10:00 – 10:15	Snack
10:15 – 12:00	Activities / Exploration
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 2:15	Activities / Exploration / Games
2:15 – 2:30	Reflection with journal and Sit Spot
2:30 – 2:45	Ending circle, sharing time
2:45 – 3:00	Back to VC, circle activities as parents arrive.
3:00	Campers depart.