

As we approach camper's arrival day we want to continue to communicate about policies and expectations. We have worked through our new state guidelines and listened to our parent's questions and concerns.

We realize that each family has different needs and circumstances and as the state has opened up it has taken time for those making decisions to finalize things (the state). Things have been changing on a daily basis for many weeks. This has made it difficult to post much of our policies as they were still evolving as the state wrote and rewrote the camp opening policies. We did not want to take a guess at what we might have to do and then have it change again later.

The staff cares a lot about the safety of our campers as well as the opportunity to have some normal activities this summer. We also wanted camp to feel like 'camp' and not completely different. When the guidelines finally came on June 13 we read through them and could see how our potential changes would definitely fit their recommendations. We also listened as families contacted the camp and shared where they were at with the potential of having camp. Many were very concerned about their kids not coming to camp as well as the mandated masks. Once camps were opened on June 15 we worked hard to move toward opening up. This included our entire college age staff waiting until the last minute to know if they had a position here. It's been very challenging but we know our sovereign God reigns and this situation is in His hands. Our summer staff began 3 weeks of training on June 12.

The following info is important for you to work through and be aware of as you drop your campers off in the next few weeks. Again, we realize things can change but this is what we are working with at this current time. (June 29, with the week of July 5 as our first week of camp)

We posted guidelines and emailed those to families who are already registered as well as posted them online. We waited to create a more specific and practical response until after Dan met with our local health department. (June 29). We appreciate your patience as we have continued to plan programs and train staff with very little solid information to pass on to you.

The following is a list of things we thought might be helpful for you to know.

-If your child is immune compromised we suggest that you consult with their Doctor to advise whether summer camp is an option this summer.

-We have record of who is in each cabin and with which counselor as well as in each age group. If there is any concern about the camper's health after they return home, please contact the camp.

-We ask that your family take caution as to how much exposure you have to a large amount of people the week or two prior to camp. This will help assure that we are doing the best we can to limit exposure.

-Our summer staff will be limited as to trips off camp on the weekends, as well as limiting the amount of visitors and volunteers coming in each week.

-We will have less in a cabin than usual. Keeping our cabin groups under 10, which develops a smaller group within each age group. (Somewhere around 50)

-We won't be having all age groups gather for chapel or skit night. Typically these are the only times everyone on camp is together, first and last chapel and Tuesday night skits. These will be done separately this year.

-More things done outside was a recommendation so more meals will be eaten outside with their own cabin.

-Our groups already eat as a cabin in our dining hall so we felt that fit within what the state was recommending. When there is a need to eat inside the dining hall the flow of traffic will be one way and they will continue on to their cabin's table. The cabin's table will be set apart from the others in the dining hall. There will be no buffets or open salad bar.

-Masks are at each person/families discretion. We do however ask that each camper bring a mask. With more activities/meals/and less mingling between cabin groups this fit what the state was recommending as well. However, there might be a time when a camper would need a mask.

-Campers temperatures will be taken on arrival day only and staff will be taken every day.

-If someone has a fever, according to our current health policy we are to call home and to isolate. So that is what we will be doing (same as every year).

-We are intentionally adding more sanitizing to our schedule and will work to encourage more handwashing and hand sanitizing. (Counselors have always had hand sanitizer in their first aid kit). It would be helpful if each camper brought along their own bottle of hand sanitizer.

-If your child has concerns about being at camp and away from home due to the extended stay at home, please let us know. We realize this may be a factor that we have never dealt with before. We have trained the counselors to watch for signs of these stressors. A discussion from you as a parent or guardian might help as they transition to this overnight experience.

- Many have asked how we have stayed open while other camps in Michigan have closed. This has been a difficult time for camps to plan for a summer when there honestly were no concrete answers. This became very discouraging and left the staff wondering day to day what the summer might look like. As Dan prayed and waited, we realized that the state's decision may come at a late date and for some, it seemed too late to make plans. Our entire staff began to realize that we must move ahead with the planning that we could do, knowing that much of our work would have to be done once the state made a final decision. We had communicated with our state licensing consultant, but again, received no concrete answers. Our health department was closed during much of this time so we again could not get clear direction. So an honest answer to why we are still open and other camps are closed is, we simply waited, and waited some more. We worked, we planned and at times it felt like it was wasted effort and we may eventually have to close anyway, but we just waited for more information. Dan would consistently encourage our full time staff and then our summer staff, that we are going to wait, until we are given clear direction, either way. So we waited.

The following is a list of activities that families have asked about:

Camp store: The camp store WILL be open, but it will be managed a bit differently. We are finalizing details, but let your campers know that they can still buy candy, pop, popcorn and ice cream! We are encouraging parents to use our online CarePackages option for purchasing items for their campers. This will limit the number of packages that the USPS drops off here.

Mail/email: Again, we ask that as a parent you use the email option over sending letter through the USPS.

Activities: Our campers are placed in a cabin group and will, as always, stay with their group all day long. This creates a 'family' or 'cohort' which will go from activity to activity all week long. They will sit together for meals, (as is normally done) as well as in chapel (either outside or inside). There will be group activities within each age group and activity sessions where their counselor will take their cabin to things like, target sports, mini golf, carpet ball, parachute games, high adventure, etc. As much as possible, there will be sanitizing done as a cabin group leaves the activity. So let your campers know they can look forward to most all of the activities they have done in the past. Please mention that because of the flooding in Midland and Gladwin counties, there is not the same type of river. The Dams have been taken down for inspection which left the camp with barely any water in the river.

Skit night: There WILL BE SKIT Night! Yay! It will be done within their own age group and not with the entire camp.

Seeing other campers: They are able to still say "Hi" and see other campers. We will just do less mingling between cabins and other age groups.

Sharing things: We will discourage sharing common items while at camp or in the cabin. We always discourage sharing drinks, water bottles, etc. Bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized more often. But teaching your camper to use caution when leaving their items, such as a tooth brush, laying on counters is important. Counselors will spray down the sink area when their cabin group leaves the bathroom.

Hand washing/sneezing/coughing: Remind your campers and reteach if necessary how to correctly do these three things.

Social Distancing: Once a camper is placed into their cabin group we realize that they will be together all week and sharing the space of the cabin. We encourage campers to sleep in a 'head to foot' direction with the other people in their cabin. They will be in their age group which is less than 50 people, so again this is their cohort/family.

Camp schedule: We have made some adjustments in the daily schedule to more time between activities and meals for sanitizing as well as hand washing. Campers always have a daily rest time which can help with their overall health throughout the week. Remind your campers of the importance of rest, even in the middle of the day.

Arrival and departure: This will feel very different. Please be patient as we work to make this process quick but thorough. We ask that you arrive knowing that you will be sitting in your car for an extended amount of time. The public bathrooms will be open in the Retreat Center only. We ask that you help us as we try our best to help campers connect with their cabin counselor as well as our health officers take the time needed with each family to make sure we have all the information we need. Parents can exit the car when you register your camper at their designated group's location. You will meet the counselor, unload the camper's luggage and speak with a registration person and a health officer. If you can place their medication in a zip lock bag, with the campers name on it as well as include any additional info that will make the process faster would be ideal. Remember that all medication must be in the original container and with the correct dosage. You can specify on your information when your camper takes their medication, using, breakfast, lunch, dinner, bedtime or a specific time of day such as 3pm. This will keep the line moving much quicker. And if the health officers have any questions or concerns, they will call you that night or in the morning to confirm details.

Health Office: We will be monitoring our staff on a daily basis, for fevers and any type of symptoms that would cause concern. Campers will have their temperature checked upon arrival but only as needed throughout the week. (Higher than 100.4 is our gage) Our health office is staffed with volunteer Health Officers and nurses, trained through Red Cross to work at camp. We will be more proactive in encouraging hand washing and the use of sanitizer, when appropriate. We will monitor the sanitizing of common areas as well. We will quarantine sick campers and call home as soon as possible. It is very important that the phone numbers are correct for each camper's emergency contact. Our guidelines have always been to call home when a camper comes into the health office and we do any type of continuous care. This summer we will call home with any questions and we want parents to feel free to call the camp at any time as well.

Water Bottles: Every camper should bring their own water bottle and feel free to send a case of water if that works better for you. Cabins are kept cool so it is great for them to have their own supply. Also, water is available in the camp store.

Again, we are preparing for and praying for your child's week of camp! We realized these are difficult days for everyone and we pray that this summer will be a great time for your family and campers. Please pray for our staff as we serve the campers. If you have any questions please contact the office at 989-426-7604 or contact Martha Kohns at 616-894-0493.