



CAMP DARK WATERS
A CHILD'S TREASURE, A QUAKER TRADITION
SINCE 1928

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Mission Statement

Camp Dark Waters serves its community of campers and staff by running recreational activities which are fun and serve to nurture the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional life of young Friends and others. Based on the Quaker testimonies of Peace, Education, Simplicity, Stewardship, Equality, and Integrity, our diverse community builds new friendships in a “family” atmosphere. We live and play together and learn to appreciate one another in our outdoor camp setting.

WELCOME!

Thank you for choosing Camp Dark Waters for your child this summer. We're sure it's going to be a wonderful experience your child will never forget. This handbook is designed to help you prepare your child for his/her stay here this summer. Whether this is your child's first experience at Camp Dark Waters, or his/her seventh, this handbook has information that will be useful to you. Please take a few moments to read through it. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call at (609)654-8846.

ABOUT THE CAMP

Since 1928, Camp Dark Waters has been providing a safe and fun environment for children. Here, we believe that the days of children's summer vacation should be a time to play, to venture forth in learning new skills and to grow. A friendly emphasis on physical, emotional and spiritual growth is sought through simplicity of living, encouraging independence, social responsibility and self-esteem.

The camp lies within 15 wooded acres adjoining the meandering Rancocas Creek. Our facilities include the creek for canoeing and tubing, archery range, low and high ropes course, 35 ft. rock climbing tower, large playing field for games, two basketball courts, arts and crafts areas, outdoor stage, ping pong tables, tetherball courts, and a pool for our American Red Cross swim program administered by certified and experienced staff. Our infirmary is centrally located and staffed by qualified personnel 24 hours a day. Our newly remodeled kitchen and experienced cooks provide well balanced, nutritious meals served family style in our dining hall.

Cabins

Campers stay in rustic cabins staffed by two qualified counselors. Our camper-to-counselor ratio is approximately 4:1 and our overall camper-to-staff ratio is about 3:1. Campers are assigned cabins on a basis of age. While we will make every effort to accommodate your cabin requests, we cannot guarantee them.

Camp Dark Waters strives to be a safe and fun place for children. In keeping with our belief that every child deserves to be treated fairly, we have adopted the following camper rights from the November 2000 issue of the *NJEA Review*. Please take some time and discuss them with your child to ensure the best possible experience for all campers.

- **I have the right to be happy and to be treated with kindness.** This means that no one will laugh at me, ignore me or hurt my feelings
- **I have the right to be myself.** This means that no one will treat me unfairly because I am fat or thin, fast or slow, strong or weak, boy or girl. I am different because I am myself.
- **I have the right to be safe.** This means that no one will hit me, kick me, push me or pinch me. I will be free from physical threats.
- **I have the right to hear and be heard.** This means that no one will yell, scream, or shout, and my opinions and desires will be considered in any plans we make.
- **I have the right to learn about myself.** This means that I will be free to express my feelings and opinions without being interrupted or punished.

Crews

We believe that in a group living situation, all are responsible for working cooperatively in the daily task of living together. To facilitate this belief, each child is assigned to a crew consisting of approximately 12 campers and two or three staff. Each crew is arranged co-ed with campers from all age ranges. Crews sit together at meals and complete crew duties together. Crews rotate different duties each day including meal set-up, clean-up, dishes, pots, kitchen patrol, general utilities (picking up trash and lost and found in the main area) and nurse check. Crews have one free day each week. In an effort to keep competition to a minimum and emphasize group interaction and fun, we also conduct many evening programs using the crew assignments.

PROGRAM

We often hear campers remark how hectic their lives are away from camp. Because of stress from school work, sports practice, music lessons and other responsibilities, campers look forward to a more relaxed time at camp. Our daily schedule allows for plenty of organized activities, while still allowing abundant free time to relax and enjoy just playing with friends.

Campers select their daily events in a free-choice format. At each assembly, counselors explain the programs offered for that period. Campers then choose an activity that interests them. We strive to include a wide variety of choices at each assembly. Some of the activities your child may choose from include:

Archery / Arts & Crafts / Cookouts / Swimming / Canoeing
Drama / Fishing / Climbing Wall / Hiking / Campfires / Softball
Music / Nature / Basketball / Roller Coasters / Ropes Course /

Wood Working / Touch Football / Ultimate Frisbee / Volleyball / Camouflage / Bug Hunt / Hill Marbling / Pottery / New Games / Drum Circle / Water Ball / Cooking / Pioneering / Ice Cream Making / Kick Ball / Sand Castles / Juggling / Hacky Sack / Board Games / Camp Crafts / Mud Stomp / Poetry / Frisbee Golf And Much More!

Special events and theme days, such as carnivals and backward days, are also scheduled each session. Regular off-site trips are an important aspect of camp life. Day and overnight events are planned to serve a wide variety of interests including berry picking, river tubing, county fairs, hiking, visits to local state parks, and canoe trips.

Horseback Riding Lessons

We are proud to offer optional Horseback Riding Lessons at a nearby farm. The lessons do require an additional fee however; we continuously strive to keep the costs reasonable. When riding, participants are required to wear long pants, helmet and boots with a straight heel. Helmets are provided at the horse farm. While a few pairs of loaner boots are also available, we ask that your child bring a pair of boots for riding.

Typical Daily Schedule

7:30 Wake-up
7:45 Meal set-up crew
8:00 Breakfast
8:30 Crew duties
9:00 Cabin clean-up
9:50 Assembly, morning horseback
10:00 1st activity period

11:00 Assembly
11:10 2nd activity period
12:00 Free time
12:15 Meal set-up crew
12:30 Lunch
1:00 Crew duties, games, canoeing
2:00 Rest hour
2:50 Assembly, afternoon horseback
3:00 3rd activity period
4:00 Assembly
4:10 4th activity period
5:00 Free time
5:15 Meal set-up crew
5:30 Dinner
6:15 Crew duties, games, canoeing
7:00 Evening program
8:30 Prepare for bed
9:00 Taps, lights out, Counselors
read to campers

Camp Policies

We ask for your help in upholding, and respecting the following Camp Dark Waters policies.

Refunds:

In the event that you need to cancel your child's reservations, a cancellation fee of \$50 will be charged with notice of at least eight weeks from the start of the session. If less than eight weeks notice is given, the full deposit will be forfeited. If space permits, we will gladly switch sessions at no fee.

Though we always strive to help children learn from their

mistakes and work through problems, it is not always in the best interest of the camper or those around him/her to stay at camp. Camp Dark Waters reserves the right to dismiss any camper for serious, repeated infraction of the camp policies, or if he/she poses a threat to self or others. In the event of such dismissal, no refund shall be granted.

Emergency Procedures:

Minor injuries and illnesses will be handled on site by our qualified medical staff. In the event that your child requires outside care, we will attempt to contact you first to update you on the situation and obtain permission. If we cannot contact you, we will attempt to contact the emergency contact person listed on your child's health form. If we still cannot make contact, your signature on the health form will act as permission to seek appropriate medical care. Our two, primary outside care facilities are Medford Pediatrics and Virtua Memorial Hospital. You will be responsible for any doctor bills, payable when you check-out at the end of the session.

Phone Policy:

As a general rule, we do not allow campers to make or receive phone calls. **Please do not promise your child that he/she may call you at any time.** This is unfair to the other campers. It is also our experience that such promises increase the likelihood your child will be homesick. Special arrangements may be made for birthdays and emergencies with the camp office.

Mail:

Mail call is done daily at rest hour. Mail may be sent to P.O. Box 263, Medford, NJ 08055. Mail should be addressed to Camp Dark Waters, c/o your child. Please list your child's cabin on the bottom left corner of the envelope. If you are sending a package

via UPS or FedEx, you should send it to our street address: 26 New Freedom Rd, Medford, NJ 08055. When sending a package, please remain mindful of our policies regarding items we do not allow at camp. Please refer to the packing section of this handbook for a complete list. **Sending gifts not allowed in our policies sends a message to a camper that it is okay to break rules.** Packages are opened in the camp office under adult supervision. Any items your child receives that are not allowed by our policies will be kept in the camp office.

Each Sunday, your child will be required to write and send a letter home. Therefore, you should receive at least one letter each week. If your child is young or inexperienced in addressing letters, you may wish to send pre-addressed and stamped envelopes or postcards with your child.

Visiting Days:

If your child is staying for more than one session, we encourage you to visit on a “change day.” You may choose to visit here with your child, or you may sign your child out of camp for the day. **The hours for visiting days are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.** If you are unable to attend visiting day and wish your child to leave camp with another adult or parent of another camper, we ask that you provide the office with written permission to release your child to that person. To assure the continuity of the camping experience and to avoid homesick feelings in other campers, **we ask that you do not visit on days other than the designated visiting days** unless special arrangements have been made with the camp office.

What to Bring to Camp

The following is our suggested list for a two-week stay. You may wish to tailor this list for the length of your child’s stay.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 sets of sheets | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 heavy blankets | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawstring laundry bag |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pillow | <input type="checkbox"/> Hairbrush |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleepwear | <input type="checkbox"/> Soap, toothpaste & brush |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 pr. underwear | <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 prs. socks | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight w/ extra batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 t-shirts | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing paper/ envelopes and stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 shorts | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils/pens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 sweatshirts or sweaters (no sprays please) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cream or stick bug repellent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 long-sleeve shirt | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pr. jeans | |
| games | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jacket | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raincoat | |
| trips) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sneakers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pr. old sneaker / water shoes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 towels | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 bathing suits | |

Optional

- Playing cards or small board
- Book/ magazines
- Sleeping bag (for overnight
- Camera/ film
- Ball glove
- Musical instrument
- Fishing equipment

All possessions (including shoes) must be clearly labeled with camper’s name. You may choose to order name tapes from the form we’ve included, or using a laundry marking pen will work fine. Please do not use a permanent marker as the writing often smears after being washed.

homeopathic or over-the-counter) will be allowed in the sleeping cabins. Because it is unlawful for any health care professional to distribute any medication without the original packaging, **all medication must be in the original packaging with the child's name on it and listed on the health form.**

As required by the Department of Health, your child will receive a head check for lice. You'll also have the opportunity to explain any pertinent information about your child's health history to the Health Professional. While it is always your choice in deciding how much information to disclose, the more information we have, the better we will be able to care for your child. All information received will be kept confidential and used only to care for your child.

Cabin move-in:

After visiting the infirmary, it's time to move your child into the cabin. Here, you'll get a chance to meet your child's counselors. Feel free to ask questions and get to know the counselors a little better. We want you to feel secure in knowing with whom you've left your most priceless possession. Information such as any bedwetting habits, if your child takes medication, anxieties your child may be having, recent traumatic experiences, and general social adjustment of your child should be given to the counselors. This is most helpful and allows us to give the best possible camping experience to your child.

At this point, the check-in process is complete and you are free to leave. Leaving can be a traumatic time, especially for a camper who is experiencing camp for the first time. We suggest that you discuss your plans with your child before arriving at camp. Designate a short amount of time you intend to stay after settling your child into a cabin and stick to it. Lingering longer can often make a child nervous and more apt to start off feeling homesick.

We recommend you allocate between 2 and 2 1/2 hours total to check-in your child.

Procedures for Departing Campers

Check-out:

Check-out will normally occur on the office porch. This is where you should start. During their stay, campers normally accrue a small charge for items in the necessity store such as batteries, toothbrushes, writing utensils, and laundry. **Payment for these charges are expected at check-out.** If your child participated in horseback riding, the charge for the lessons will also be due. Payment of any doctor's fees your child incurred during the camp session will also be expected at this time. Items in our Camp Store such as T-shirts, photos and souvenirs may also be available for purchase.

Infirmary visit:

Your next stop is at the infirmary. The camp nurse will return any unused medications. If your child required outside treatment for any illness or injury, the nurse will inform you of any continuing treatment required.

Head to the cabin:

Once you've checked out and completed the infirmary visit, you may head to your child's cabin. Please take a few moments to speak with your child's cabin counselor to learn more of your child's experience at camp. Our counselors will be happy to fully answer questions about any facet of your child's stay. When you arrive, your child should be packed, but items are often misplaced or forgotten. Please take a moment to search through, around, and under the cabin, for any belongings your child may not have

packed. Lost and found clothing will be placed in a public area for you to go through as well. After a few teary good-byes, you'll be ready to leave.

Completing the check-out procedure normally requires at least 1 hour.

Homesickness

Homesickness is often a large concern for parents sending their child off on his/her first overnight camping experience. Don't worry. Children missing home is a normal reaction when they go away to camp. You might be surprised to hear that our experience shows almost all children miss something about home while they are at camp. Missing home isn't necessarily a bad thing. If your child misses you, it's a sure sign that they love you as well. In fact, wouldn't you be a little offended if your child didn't miss something about home just a little bit? The good news is that most kids are able to work easily through their feelings with the help of our well-trained staff.

How We Deal With Homesickness at Camp:

Every child is different. There is no set method for how we cure homesickness. We treat each child uniquely. In general, we always try to talk with the child and reaffirm that missing home is okay. We talk about things your child likes about camp. What activities your child wants to participate in. We strive to make sure they get the opportunity to do those. We know from experience that meal times, bed times, and free times are the toughest for campers missing home so we try to keep your child occupied during those times. Sometimes giving extra responsibilities such as walking the camp dog helps a lot. Writing home also often helps. We have a big bag of tricks and

we'll try them all.

If your child continues to struggle, a member of the administrative staff will become involved. Normally, homesickness goes away within a couple of days as your child becomes immersed in the camp routine. If he/she does not, the director or assistant director may contact you for your ideas. We will discuss our options and plan of actions with you to attempt to make the camp experience a positive one for your child. In the rare event that the decision is made that camp is not going to be a positive experience for your child, we expect that decision to be made together.

How You Can Help Your Child Avoid Homesickness:

There are many things you can do before camp begins to help prepare your child for the camping experience. Here are a few examples:

Involve your child

The single most thing you can do to avoid major homesickness is to involve your child in the planning for camp. If you haven't already talked to your child about his/her feelings about going off to camp and the length of stay, do it now. If a child feels forced to go to camp or abandoned while at camp, it's a sure bet he/she will have very homesick feelings. Allowing your child to feel as though he/she had a voice in the decision to go to camp, goes a long way in avoiding those such feelings.

Provide some practice time away from home

Going away for two whole weeks is a really long time for a child who has never been away from home before. Giving your child time away from home provides the opportunity to learn to deal with those feelings. Plan some sleepovers at a friend's house, or

with other relatives. If your child is involved in a youth group or scouts, let him/her go on a weekend group trip without you. The more times your child experiences time away from you, the easier it becomes. Remember, practice makes perfect.

Talk with your child about homesickness

Don't just assume that your child will be able to deal with issues of homesickness alone. Talking with your child about these issues in the months before camp starts will help. Devise ways to help your child deal with those feelings. Suggestions such as staying busy, writing letters, talking with the counselors and directors are great.

Watch how you phrase things

Keep your conversations in a positive light. Don't say things like you know they are going to miss home. Instead, frame it in ways that keep your child thinking positively.

If you tell your child, "I sure hope you're ready for this," "I'm going to miss you so much I might die," or "Gee, I hope you don't get so homesick you have to come home early," you'll be putting those negative ideas in your child's head. You have to be careful what you say. Instead say things like, "I know you might miss home a little, but I know you can handle it," "Sure, I'm going to miss you, but you'll have a great time and I'll be here when the session's over," or "If you start to feel like you're missing home a lot, remember the ways to deal with it we've talked about and don't forget your counselor is there to help you out".

Have a positive, reaffirming letter on the first day of camp

You can either send the letter in advance, or give it to your child's counselor when you arrive to give out later. Load the letter with positive messages about how excited you are that your child is

getting to experience camp. Remind your child of all of the fun activities that are going to happen. Reframing the time away into something else positive is also a great idea. Writing things such as "Two weeks is just about as long as winter break was and remember how fast that flew by," helps children think of their stay as a short vacation from their normal routine.

Don't make deals for early pick-ups or phone calls!

This is a common mistake well-meaning parents make all of the time. You may think that you're comforting your child, but it almost guarantees your child will be homesick. Instead of focusing on adjusting and having fun at camp, your child will focus on your promise. Our staff are professionals at helping children work through their feelings and making camp a positive experience for your child. Promising an early pick-up or phone call ties our hands and puts you on the spot. Increasing your child's self-esteem and independence probably played a large part in your decision to send your child to summer camp. Please don't undermine your own goals by making such a promise.

Letters From Your Child:

Nothing is harder for parents to see than a letter from their child saying that he/she is miserable. Often a parent's first instinct is to hop in the car and drive to camp. Don't. If you receive a homesick letter, don't despair. Remember, mail takes time to get to you. The letter will be three or four days old by the time you receive it. Chances are, your child will over it by the time you get the news. Of course, you are welcome to call camp for an update. Speaking with a member of the administrative staff or your child's counselor should set your mind at ease. We'll give you an update on how your child is doing and what we've done to help. You may also want to write a return letter to your child. The following is a good sample response:

Dear Bobby,

I've just gotten your letter telling me how homesick you've been. Those feelings must have been really strong when you wrote it. I know we talked about it being o.k. to miss home some, but I guess we didn't expect them to be so strong. Thanks for writing me the letter to tell me how you've been feeling. That really took a lot of courage. We talked a lot this spring about you wanting to go to camp. Remember how we talked about how long you should go for and we agreed together that two weeks seemed about right? I bet that seems like a really long time right now, but as you're reading this letter, there's only one week left. Imagine that! You're already half way through! That's a lot. I'm really proud of you.

It's been a few days since you wrote me. You may not even be homesick anymore. I'll know for sure when I get your next letter. If you're still having some problems, think about all the things you can do to help you feel better. Your counselors can help you a lot. Keep doing all those fun things at camp. Remember how much you were looking forward to doing archery this summer? Keep writing a lot of letters, and keep smiling. Before you know it, it'll be Saturday. Seven more days is not that much. I know you can do it!

Snoop says "hi". We'll take him out to the park when you get home to play fetch. He'll really like that.

I can't wait to see all the neat things you've made in arts and crafts. Daddy and I miss and love you. We'll be there at 10:00 on Saturday morning to pick you up, just like we planned. I can't wait to get your next letter.

love, mom

P.S. here's last Sunday's comics from the paper. Read Dilbert @. Kind of reminds you of daddy doesn't it?

This kind of letter really helps. It acknowledges that your child is homesick and offers ways to help. Don't dwell on the negatives; instead focus on the positives of being at camp. The same is true even when writing a letter to a child who isn't homesick. Don't mention sad events that your child has no control over. Telling your child that the family hamster has died should wait until the

end of camp. Also, saying things like how bored you are without your child and how much you really miss him/her only adds guilty feelings to your child. Keep your letters newsy and upbeat. Provide lots of questions for your child to answer in the next letter. Pictures from home or comics from the paper are always big hits with the campers. Your child doesn't need to get a letter every day, but three or four letters a week really will help.

Don't forget, it takes a few days for the mail to get to camp, so if you wait a few days into the session to send a letter, your child will go a whole week without hearing from you.

HOW TO GET TO CAMP DARK WATERS

By Philadelphia:

Take the Ben Franklin Bridge to Route 70 East. Take Route 70 East to Route 541 N (Medford-Mount Holly Rd./ Main St.) Turn left onto Route 541 N. Turn right onto Wilkins Station Rd. (Citgo gas Station on right). At the next stop sign, tke the hard right onto New Freedom Road. Camp entrance is on the right, immediately after the bridge 4/10 of a mile after you turn onto New Freedom Road.

From Points North:

Take the NJ Turnpike to Exit 5. Turn right onto Route 541 S. Take the Mt. Holly By-Pass (right at Burger King). Turn right onto Main St., Lumberton (still Rt. 541). At Church Street (WaWa on corner) turn left. Go 4/10 mile to where Church Rd. curves to the left. Go straight onto New Freedom Rd. The camp entrance is on the right, immediately after the bridge 4/10 of a mile after you turn onto New Freedom Road..

From Points South:

Take Route 295 North to Route 70 East. Follow the directions from Philadelphia.

From Points West:

PA Turnpike to NJ Turnpike connection. Go south on NJ Turnpike to Exit 5. Follow directions for Points North.

For Map Quest:

Use our street address: 26 New Freedom Rd., Medford, NJ 08055

