

2023

Camp Handbook





EDITOR'S NOTE

We hope you enjoy going through this handbook as a family. We've filled these pages with important information, tips, and beauty to stir both courage and excitement for the summer ahead! We are honored that you have chosen to spend part of your summer with us at Mountain Meadow Ranch.

ON THE COVER

The entire camp family hiking to the Rock Pile, a beloved sunset-viewing and bonding activity.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Pre-Camp Checklist
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- Fire + Evacuation Protocols
- Packing List
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- Behavioral Standards
- Parent Invitation
- Recommended Further Resources

CONTACT US

fun@mountainmeadow.com OR
annamarie@mountainmeadow.com

Office

(530) 310-9281

This number is available in-session as a Parent Line that connects you directly to our on-site "Camp Mom".

Mail (Amazon/Letters)

Mountain Meadow Ranch
Camper Name
P.O. Box 610
Susanville, CA 96130


Shipping (FedEx/UPS)

Mountain Meadow Ranch
Camper Name
704-950 Wingfield Rd.
Susanville, CA 96130

PRE-CAMP



Pre-Camp Checklist

- ☐ Pay tuition by **MAY 1, 2023**. All remaining tuition will be charged automatically on this date. *Please ensure your credit card information is up-to-date.*
 - ☐ Review and submit all forms by **MAY 1, 2023**, these can be found in your [Parent Account](#) under "Forms & Documents"
 - ☐ **NEW IN 2023:** Campers are required to read and understand, and parents to sign on their behalf, a Behavioral Standards Agreement to attend MMR.
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- ☐ All parents are **strongly encouraged** to read this Handbook and the Terms & Conditions of enrollment and refund policy prior to paying tuition in full.
 - ☐ Pack with your camper so they know where all of their items are. Consider playing fun music and eating camp-y food (s'mores!) that night to share in the excitement together!
 - ☐ **Plan your camper's travel to and from camp EARLY.** We can only guarantee a seat on our airport transportation for those that submit their travel forms by the deadline.
 - ☐ *COVID-19 protocols have not yet been set for 2023. See [here](#) for 2022's.*

WHAT TO EXPECT

Energy and anticipation grow as camp approaches. We want you to know what to expect from your time with us.

OPENING DAY

The big day has finally arrived! If you are dropping off at camp, follow the signs to the check-in station. **Please stay in your vehicle until you reach check-in.** After you have checked-in with our Directors, the day for your camper will include:

- **Cabin Assignment:** A counselor will accompany you (camper) to your cabin, show you around, and help you choose your bunk!
- **Orientation:** A meeting with the Camp Nurse, water safety at the pool, and a tour of camp (which includes meeting the wranglers down at the arena!)
- **All Camp Meeting:** Once all campers have arrived in the afternoon we gather as a camp family to go over the rules and how we “do camp” at MMR.
- **Capture the Flag:** An MMR Opening Day tradition! Our first evening activity together is meadow capture the flag. This low-competition version is all about getting comfortable, goofy, and making those first vital connections. Fun dance music is played, and campers and staff are encouraged to dress in silly clothes.
- **Cabin Time:** We end our first evening together with a cabin “party”. Each cabin gathers to get to know each other with fun name games and collaboratively establish the boundaries of their shared living space. This helps set the tone of the cabin as a safe and comfortable environment.



ACTIVITIES

Let the fun begin! Serendipity & flexibility are essential to our program.

Weekdays

There is no pre-registration before camp for any of our activities. Campers choose an activity 2-4x each weekday. We encourage everyone to try as many new and different activities as possible, but in the end, it is their choice. The length of a two-week session does not allow enough time for us to guarantee that every camper will get to do every activity. In the event that they don't get their first choice, campers are encouraged to have second and third choices. If they are not chosen for their first choice, they are given the opportunity to self-advocate at the next activity period.

Out Trips

We run a variety of specialty trips away from camp: Lassen Volcanic National Park Tourist Trip, Lake (water sports and tubing), Desert Exploration Trip, and a two day, one night Backpacking trip for camper's 12+. **Given the current hiring climate, all out trips are contingent on staff coverage.** For this reason, we cannot guarantee that every camper will get to go on an out trip. Camper's sign up for the out trip of their choice during the first two days of camp. Staff create rosters based on this.

Weekends

On the weekend we divide camp into four teams: Red, Blue, Yellow, and Green for all-camp competitions like Relays, Scavenger Hunts, Capture the Flag, Random Talents, and many other fun activities. Sunday morning is a time for each cabin to bond, work on skits for the campfire, or do something special as a group.

Evenings

Evenings are spent in all-camp activities: dances, meadow capture the flag, movie night, sunset hikes, pool parties, and so much more. These often end up the highlight of the camp experience because it is when we are all together.



A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP

A typical day consists of three meals a day, activities chosen by campers, and plenty of time to relax. Our program allows campers the most flexibility to choose how they want to have fun!

Times below are approximate and vary day to day.

7:30	Optional early morning activities including round up, swimming, jogging
8:00	Breakfast
8:45	Cabin Clean-up
9:15	Activity Time! Campers gather to choose their first activity.
10:45	Snack time*, aquatic areas open, free time for court and field games.
12:00	Activities close, campers and staff line up for lunch.
12:30	Lunch
1:15	Rest period - down time in cabins to write letters, read, and recoup.
2:30	Activity Time! Campers gather to choose their second activity.
4:00	Snack time*, aquatic areas open, free time for court and field games.
5:30	Activities close, campers and staff line up for dinner.
6:00	Dinner
6:45	Story Time - the camp family gathers to share stories from the day.
7:30	Evening Activity - all camp group games
8:30	Gather at the campfire for evening words of encouragement
*9:00	Cabin Time - get ready for bed, relax, work on skits, etc.
*10:00	Lights Out.

* Not all activities, like horses and high ropes, break for snack time.
** Cabin Time and Lights Out vary based on the camp's need for sleep.
*** Early morning activities are offered on weekdays and depend on interest.



TECHNOLOGY FREE

MMR is a wonderful place to enjoy the great outdoors and reconnect. We know that cell phones are needed for travel, so campers may turn them in when they arrive at camp. They are returned at the end of the session for the trip home. All tech devices are not allowed for the duration of your camper's session. Including, but not limited to, smart watches, phones, tablets, gaming devices, etc. Any tech devices found during a session will be held until the end of camp.

LOST & FOUND

Help us reduce the amount of lost & found by labeling all your camper's belongings. Personal belongings are most often lost when left behind at an activity, not at laundry as many would suspect. We are not responsible for items lost, however we will do our best to locate & return items that are called for. Anything not called for will be donated one week after each session.

TRAVEL

Getting to camp is the beginning of the adventure - enjoy the journey!
There are a few ways to get to camp:

#1 DRIVE

This affords you the chance to see camp, meet a Director, and meet one of your camper's cabin staff at check-in. Follow the signs to the designated drop-off location where a Director will greet you. Each family/carpool pod will be assigned an hour window for drop-off. Please be prompt and keep to your allotted window as it assists with lines and wait times at Check-In. **We ask that you keep the visit to 1 hour to ensure your camper can transition to camp time.**

We schedule drop-off between 10am-12pm with a later window after lunch from 1-2pm. *Please specify if you have a preferred time on your Transportation form.* We will send out confirmation of your time and more detailed drop-off instructions **2 weeks** before your camper's arrival day.

Important details for Drop-Off at Camp:

- Lunch is only available for our campers and staff.
 - We will have refreshments available at check-in, but we recommend planning to grab a bite before or after drop-off.
- Check-in is closed from 12-1pm for lunch. Please do not arrive during this time. If you find yourself in the area early, here are local coffee shops and lunch spots we recommend:
 - Artisan Coffee - local baked goods and artwork for sale
 - Joe's Coffee - local baked goods, bagels, smoothies
 - Stonehouse - sandwiches, burgers, burritos
 - Courthouse Cafe - classic diner and street tacos

RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCOMMODATION

Comfort Inn & Suites

Susanville, CA

(530) 257-3450

SureStay Plus by Best Western

Susanville, CA

(530) 257-4123

- PLEASE LEAVE YOUR PETS AT HOME -

We cannot accommodate dogs with all of the excitement of camp.

We appreciate your understanding.

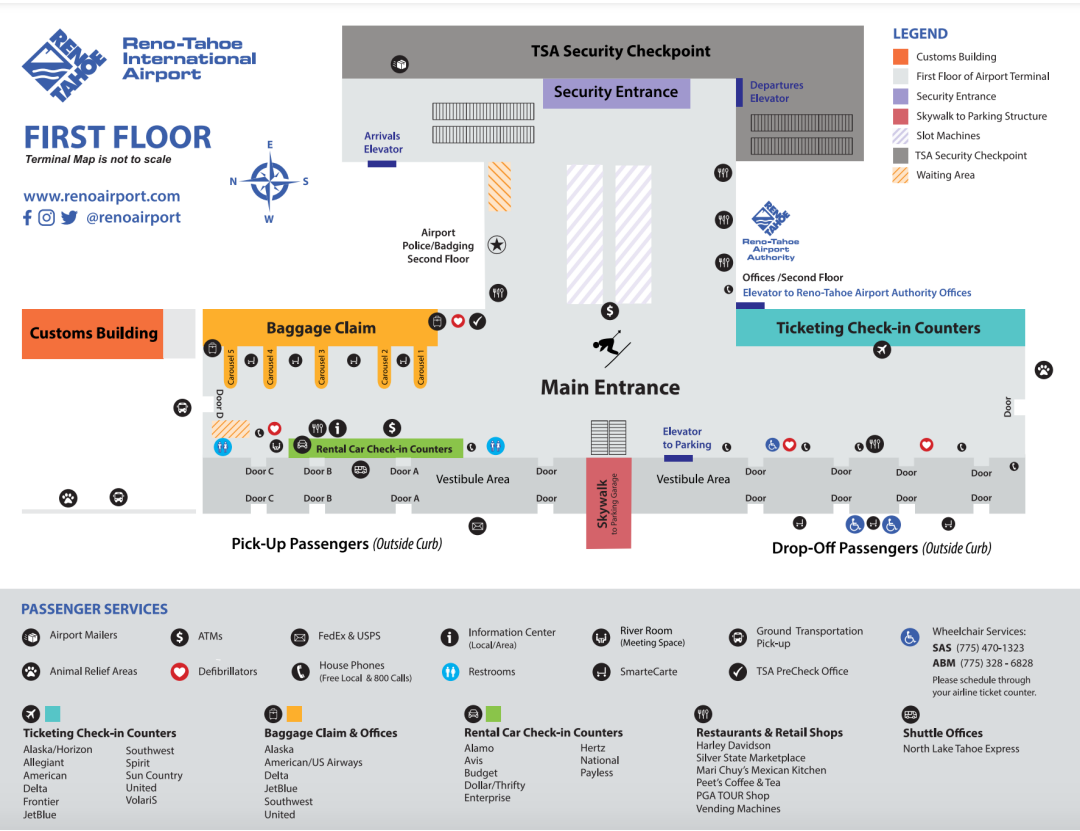
#2 Airport Drop-Off

We will meet you at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, and your camper can join the camp van/bus! We will contact you **two weeks ahead** of the travel day to confirm the exact meeting time, likely between 9-10am.

You will meet our staff at the Skier Statue located on the ground floor, just inside from the main entrance (circled in red below).

The Reno-Tahoe Airport is undergoing major construction to their ticketing check-in area. Reduced Speeds and Lane Closures on Airport Loop Road. The lanes closest to the Ticketing Hall are closed and only the outside three lanes closest to the parking garage are open. *Please plan to arrive early for pick-up and drop-off.

Map of Reno-Tahoe International Airport Ground Floor:



#3 Solo Flight



A staff member wearing an MMR shirt will greet your camper at their arrival gate in Reno, assist them in retrieving their luggage, and walk with them to the camp vans/bus for the drive to camp. **Please arrange to arrive/depart the Reno-Tahoe International Airport BEFORE 1:00pm.**

See below for recommended flights and times from LAX and SFO. *If there is a time conflict please email or call to notify us as it could mean your camper may need a special pick-up time, which incurs a \$75 fee.*

We can only guarantee seats on our airport transportation for those that submit their travel information by the deadlines listed in the next section. Those that submit information after this deadline may need to plan drop-off at camp directly.

Emailed travel information will not be accepted.

Flight Recommendations *



To Camp

SFO > RNO **UNITED 5394**
8:45am-9:53am
LAX > RNO **ALASKA 3340**
10:10am-11:36am
LAX > RNO **UNITED 5696**
11:15am-12:35pm
LGB > RNO **SW 704**
10:20am-11:45am
LAS > RNO **SW 2961**
7:45am-9:10am



From Camp

RNO > SFO **UNITED 5899**
10:53am-12:02pm
RNO > LAX **ALASKA 3340**
12:20pm-1:55pm
RNO > LAX **UNITED 5548**
10:22am-12:00pm
RNO > LGB **SW 1202**
10:15am-11:40am
RNO > LAS **SW 2309**
11:10am-12:25pm

* Flight times, numbers, etc. are all subject to change at short notice. MMR is not responsible for changes made by an airline. We will do our best to keep our [travel page](#) up-to-date, but we recommend confirming flight options prior to planning and booking.

*** Southwest and Alaska have the lowest UM fees, but limited flight options to and from Reno.

**** **The above flights are recommendations only. If the listed flight is not available, use the times as a guide in booking a different flight.**

More Travel Tips

CAMP VANS TO/FROM AIRPORT

Our camp vans transport campers to and from the Reno Airport on Opening and Closing Day, **free of charge within our time windows**. There will be a \$75 fee for transportation from the airport outside of our time windows and on non-travel days.

Seats on Camp Transport are only guaranteed for those that submit their travel information by their session's deadline.

NOTE: All passengers must wear seat belts at all times while traveling in MMR vehicles. No wrestling, yelling, moving about, rocking back and forth, or bouncing. All passengers must remain seated, face forward at all times, and campers who feel sick or need to use the restroom must tell the driver.

AIRLINE FEES

Many airlines require UM and luggage fees to be paid at the departing airport on the day of travel. **Please send your child with a prepaid credit card** (minimum balance of \$200) to cover any airline fees that were not paid ahead of time.. Reno-Tahoe Airport does not accept cash, and our airport staff cannot cover these expenses. If any additional expenses are incurred on departure day, these will be charged to the credit card in your Parent Account.

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR

Airline companies require a designated person be identified in order to book for an unaccompanied minor. Staff are assigned this position at a later date. In order to book, please use the following contact as a **placeholder** :

Brandon Whitestone - (530)310-4762 - fun@mountainmeadow.com

* We will send the updated contact information of your camper's designated pick-up person the week before their travel day. **You will need to update this information prior to your camper's flight.**

WHY SHOULDN'T I MAKE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE RECOMMENDED TIMES?

Opening day at camp is an exciting time when connections start and campers are able to familiarize themselves with the camp environment. Arriving at camp before 3pm is vital to ensure your camper has the most successful start to their camp experience. Closing day is a travel day and we do not have program on this day.

Please call us to verify any travel plans that deviate from our recommendations. If your alternate arrangements require an airport pick-up outside of our recommended window or on a non-travel day, you will be charged a \$75 fee. **If you do not communicate your alternate travel plans prior to May 1, 2023, we cannot guarantee transportation.**

FORMS

You will find all required Forms online in the **Forms & Documents** section of your [Parent Account](#). Including:

- ❑ **Confidential Information Form**
 - Share any information about your camper that may be helpful to us or their cabin counselors in providing the best possible summer camp experience. *Only our directors and your camper's cabin staff read this form. Please provide full information, **single word answers** will be marked as incomplete.*
- ❑ **Health Form**
 - Tell us about your camper's health history, considerations, and provide alternate emergency contacts.
- ❑ **Immunization Form**
 - Please provide your camper's complete Immunization record.
- ❑ **Parent Authorization Form**
 - Attach your insurance provider information
 - SIGN AND DATE the bottom. *This is a crucial (and oft-forgotten) step that authorizes MMR to provide care to your camper in the event of an emergency.*
- ❑ **Physician's Form**
 - To be completed by your camper's primary care physician. They can fax it directly to us following the number on the bottom. Alternatively, you can scan and upload within your Parent Account.
- ❑ **Transportation Form**
 - Tell us how your camper(s) will be getting to camp! Review our travel options above.
 - ***NEW*** SUBMISSION POLICY: Travel information must be submitted on your Transportation [Form](#) by the following deadlines. *If we do not receive your information by these dates, we cannot guarantee a seat on our camp vans.*
 - Sessions A and B: **May 1, 2023**
 - Sessions C and D: **June 1, 2023**

New Form in 2023

- ❑ **Camper Behavioral Standards Agreement**
 - This form details our standards of behavior and must be read and signed by you, on behalf of your camper, prior to attending camp.
 - This is a digital form and is read and signed online. **It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to ensure their camper(s) read and understand the information.**
 - The information will be reviewed during Opening Day Orientation.

FORMS DUE MAY 1, 2023!

HEALTH

Once at MMR, all campers will meet the Camp Health Care staff to get acquainted, review their health forms, and turn in any medications.

HEALTH SCREENING

Should your camper arrive at camp with obvious signs of illness or lice, we will ask that your child be kept in your care until the illness resolves and/or lice treatment has been administered. Should your camper arrive at camp with medical conditions not disclosed beforehand that may impact their ability to participate, they may be returned to your care.

The health of the camp family is very important to us, and we can only be as healthy as each member. For this reason, we strongly ask that campers **not** join MMR if they are sick or were recently exposed to a sickness. *Even the common cold can put a big damper on the fun and play of camp!*

ILLNESS & INJURY

You will be contacted (at the primary number given on the enrollment form) if your child:

- Stays overnight in the infirmary.
- Leaves camp for treatment (x-rays, testing, etc.).
- New medicine is prescribed.
- Is contact traced or tests positive for COVID-19.

If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called.

If your contact information changes during camp, it is your responsibility to update your forms in a timely manner. Emailing new contact information may be missed.

INFIRMARY & STAFF

Our Camp Health Staff residence & the infirmary are located in the center of camp, within close proximity to all of our onsite activities. There is a camp healthcare professional on staff 24/7, and a fully staffed hospital is only 12 miles away. All of our staff members hold CPR & First Aid certification.

DIETARY NEEDS

In the MMR kitchen, we are committed to nutritious, wholesome meals. We can accommodate a variety of dietary needs and there is always a vegetarian option available, but be sure to notify us of any food allergies / preferences before arrival at camp. *Please use the allergy section of the Health Form.*



MEDICATIONS

All medications are turned-in to our Health Care staff on Opening Day*. Medications are then given at each meal or before bedtime, as required by the physician. The camp Health Care staff keeps a daily written record, in order to make sure your camper receives his or her medication as prescribed.

If your camper takes OTC regularly, such as allergy or pain relief, please send them with the preferred product. If they do not take an OTC regularly, we have a fully stocked Health Center available to them via our Camp Nurse.

We will not accept dosed medicines in unlabelled pill dividers, they MUST be allocated and packaged by a pharmacy. **We cannot legally administer prescription medicines without the prescribing physician's written direction** (i.e. the prescription instructions on the original bottle).

****ALL medication**, including prescription and over the counter drugs like ibuprofen, allergy medicine, vitamins, etc. anything orally administered **MUST BE** turned into the Camp Nurse. Campers may keep topical solutions, bandaids, etc. (if prescription strength topical ointment, please discuss this with the Camp Nurse on opening day).*

Mental Health

While camp can be *therapeutic* it is NOT therapy. Our staff are trained to supervise, engage with, and build relationships with campers so they have the best summer camp experience possible. They are additionally trained to understand the signs of potentially serious mental health conditions and alert our Camp Nurse or a Director immediately. As we do not have a state licensed mental health care provider on-staff, we are obligated to dismiss campers that show signs of serious mental health. *See Terms & Conditions of enrollment for an exhaustive description of serious mental health.*

While we do our best to offer low-key activity options for campers that are easily stimulated, camp is generally a fast-paced, high-energy, socially-intense environment. We have observed that this can exacerbate existing, or bring about new, mental health symptoms in some campers. While it may come as a distressing surprise to receive a call from camp that your camper exhibited signs of or communicated a concerning mental health state, *we hope you will view MMR and our staff as team members in desiring each camper has a safe and positive camp experience.* Sometimes, that may mean going home early to receive the care needed at that time.

FIRE & AIR QUALITY

Extensive information on our fire, evacuation, and air quality protocols can be found [here](#).

2020 and 2021 were record drought years resulting in multiple years without adequate precipitation through the year.

2022 we were fortunate to have NO fires or smoke impact our summer and were able to run the full summer without fire or smoke concerns.

In 2023, we have seen an almost complete return to pre-drought precipitation levels. We are hopeful that last year's trend will continue and we will maintain the snowpack in the mountains that ensures our forests stay healthy and hydrated all summer long.

At the same time, we recognize the risk and danger of wildfires in California as a result of climate change and unpredictable weather patterns. In response, we have developed protocols to ensure the safety of our camp family. If a fire were to threaten MMR so as to require an evacuation, we would initiate our [Evacuation Protocol](#) early and with ample time to ensure the safe and calm evacuation of the camp family. Should air quality in our area worsen, we initiate our [Air Quality Protocol](#).



PACKING

Please have your child participate in packing for camp so they know where to find what they need.

LUGGAGE

We recommend campers pack in two pieces of luggage: one large piece to be used for clothing and a duffle bag for sleeping bag, pillow, etc. A daypack, small like used for school, is also required. Laundry is done once per 2-week session and cabin storage is limited, so please try not to over-pack.

CLIMATE

Summers are simply lovely at the ranch. Our daily temperatures average a dry 85°F, while the nights average 50°F. We hope for a few good, rain-dumping thunderstorms each summer! Earlier sessions may experience cooler temperatures, while later sessions may experience hotter temperatures. Please ensure you check the weather for Janesville, CA the week prior to attendance to adjust packing as necessary.

BEDDING

All campers have a single bunk and we provide one pillow and pillow case. What you choose to send with your camper for sleeping is totally up to their comfort needs. Every camper is required to bring at least a sleeping bag (international

campers are exempt and may use our loaner items). Optional: sheets, comforter, extra pillow, comfort item, etc.

DRESS CODE

We want the clothes worn at camp to be functional, so we have developed the dress code policy included in the *Standards* section. If campers choose to dress inappropriately they will be asked to change, or wear camp-issued shirts/shorts.

LABEL

Items that are not labeled are less likely to be returned to your camper if they get lost in the cabin, on laundry day, or around camp.

SHOES

Our main camp grounds are even and grassy, but many activities have rough and uneven ground, so appropriate footwear is a safety requirement. *Running shoes work best at camp.* Hiking or any other specialty shoe is only *optional*, and keep in mind new shoes can cause more harm than good (blisters-yikes!). We recommend a pair of slip-on sandals, hiking sandals, and running shoes.

LAUNDRY DAY

Each cabin is assigned one laundry day per 2-week session, beginning the first Thursday. Therefore, your campers laundry may not be until the end of the session. Please pack enough clothes (especially underwear and socks) for the whole session.

BOOKS

As we are a tech-free camp, we recommend sending your camper with a book or two. This will help them unwind before bed and is a great rest period activity to decompress during the heat of the day. *We do not allow Kindles at this time.*

LETTER MATERIALS

We recommend that you pack your camper with the necessary materials to write and send letters: envelopes, paper, stamps, and the addresses for anyone they may wish to write to while at camp.

PRO TIP:







Send your camper with a few pre-addressed envelopes as a template. Even better, teach them how to address envelopes before they get to camp. *Every session we get letters "returned to sender" for improper addressing or lack of postage.*



Mountain Meadow Ranch

PACKING LIST







CLOTHING

- 2 Pants
- 2 Shorts
- 6 T-shirts 
- 1 Sweatshirt 
- 1 Long-sleeve shirt 
- 1 Jacket
- 6 Underwear
- 6 Socks
- 2 PJs
- Sandals
- Swimsuit
- 1-2 Athletic shoes
- 1 Hat 
- 1 Beach towel 
- 1 Bath towel 

TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Hair brush
- Sunscreen
- Lotion
- Insect repellent
- Chapstick
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Body Soap

EQUIPMENT

- Sleeping bag 
- Extra blanket 
- Pillow case 
- Laundry bag
- Backpack (daypack like for school)
- Disposable camera 
- Water bottle 
- Sunglasses 
- Flashlight/headlamp 

OPTIONAL

- Books
- Bedding (single bed) 
- Comfort item (blanket/stuffed animal)
- Letter writing supplies 
- Outdoor sleeping pad
- Sun/rash guard
- Costumes/props (for events)
- Sanitizer/wipes (CDC approved)

DO NOT PACK

- Technology (phones, tablets, etc.)
- Expensive/valuable items
- Food/snack/candy
- Weapons
- Personal sports equipment
- Animals



Items available to International Campers



Items available to purchase in Camp Store

*Laundry is done by support staff once/session

HOMESICKNESS

Not a sickness, but an emotion that most campers feel to some degree during their time at camp. A successful camp experience starts at home. Here are a couple tips to help prepare your camper!

3 WAYS TO PREPARE



1. TALK ABOUT IT.

Acknowledging with your camper the potential for homesickness can be a great first step in preparing for it. Like other feelings, once we acknowledge their existence they can become a lot less scary and more manageable.

2. STAY POSITIVE.

Keep the focus on how much FUN camp will be! Let them know how proud you are of them for practicing their independence. Your child needs to know that you think they will be a great camper. Encourage them to write letters, journal, and take pictures of the experience.

3. DON'T DOUBT.

Expressing a lack of confidence in your campers ability to be away from home, either directly to them or in front of others, undermines your child's budding confidence. **Don't make any "deals" with your camper about coming to get them.** For a homesick camper, these promises become the focus, instead of learning to cope with their feelings.

HOW WE CARE FOR HOMESICKNESS

Staff members are trained to care for homesickness. Our staff will do the following to help guide your camper through the normal adjustment period of being away from home:

1. Give your child time and attention. Empathize with their feelings and let them know they are totally normal.
2. Do things that make camp more “homey”, such as reading a bedtime story, tucking them into their sleeping bag, etc.
3. Encourage your child to use the coping strategies below that have worked for other campers

4 COPING STRATEGIES FOR CAMP

Talk with your camper about these & other tools they can take to camp:

1. **PLAY.** Keep busy and hold on to a positive attitude.

Practice gratitude when feeling sad and focus on fully participating in the moment. Enjoy all that camp has to offer. Remember, it's not forever!

2. **TALK.** Acknowledge your feelings and reach out

to a counselor for a listening ear or a hug (if they're your cabin counselor), but be ready to jump back into the fun!

3. **WRITE.** Keep a journal about what you're

doing at camp and your feelings. Better yet! Write a letter home to a friend or family member.

4. **SERVE.** Focus on making sure those around you are having a good time!

WHAT IF I RECEIVE A SAD LETTER OR MY CAMPER LOOKS SAD IN A PICTURE?

1. **Zoom out.** Tell yourself, "This moment doesn't represent their entire camp experience."
2. **See your child's capability.** Remind yourself, "Two things are true: my child can feel sad and cope with hard things."
3. **Limit rumination.** Give yourself permission to disconnect. Put that phone down, infuse fun into your day.
4. **Trust the process.** Remind yourself that your camper is in the care of camp professionals, and that you will be contacted if anything concerning or out of the ordinary occurs with your child.

* Adapted from [Summer 365](#).

WHEN WILL WE CALL?

If your child is visibly upset (crying frequently, not participating, having trouble eating, or sleeping) and not adjusting after **two** full camp days, we will call you to let you know what is happening and discuss a plan for helping your child adjust. As the old saying goes: **no news is good news**.



KIDSICKNESS

"Kidsickness", again not a sickness, but a variety of emotions you might experience while away from your child. When your child goes to camp for the first time, their experience with homesickness is usually the focus, while it is increasingly found that [the separation anxiety of camp is harder on parents than kids](#). For this reason, we offer a few tips.

3 WAYS TO PREPARE

1. LEAN IN... TO YOU.

There is so much information now to help parents prepare themselves for the camp experience. We encourage you to spend some time in education and reflection, learning from the tips and findings of research and blogs. We have included a "recommended further reading" section at the end of this handbook to jump start this process. We are also here to help. Give us a call before your camper's session and we are happy to talk through your concerns and provide you encouragement and further information on any area.

2. FINE-TUNE YOUR CIRCLE.

Do you have a circle of friends and family that you typically go to for support? If so, that's amazing. If not, or if you're not satisfied with the give and take of your existing relationships, we invite you to consider ways to "fine-tune your circle". Do you have other friends/family that send their kids to camp over the summer? Having relationships with other people making similar family choices can help build our confidence and excitement about something that might be new and unknown.

3. PLAN AHEAD.

We encourage parents to book a trip, event, or something else during their camper's stay at camp so they have something to 1) look forward to, and 2) help the time pass with enjoyment. This can be a full two-week adventure, a short weekend getaway, a staycation, a spa day, a new class, even a dinner date with friends you don't often get to see. Planning ahead can also look like having the tools to employ when the panic and worry strikes while your child is at camp.

Consider making this a fun project and build an "emergency kit":

- Start with a basket or box
- Fill it with whatever might be helpful to you:
 - Flashcards with affirmational statements.
 - "My child is capable of doing hard things. I am capable of doing hard things." "Camp will grow our independence from each other and build a stronger relationship in the long-term."
 - A letter you wrote to yourself with reminders about why you chose the camp experience.
 - Pictures of your child in other settings when they had fun and adventure.
 - Maybe a hike, a prior camp experience, a weekend trip to their grandparents. This can help you visualize the positive benefits of the camp experience.
 - A gift card to your favorite coffee/smoothie/book shop. Take this as a nudge to get out and do something fun *for you*.

3 WAYS TO COPE

1. KEEP IN TOUCH

One of the unique things about camp is that it's one of the only opportunities for children and parents to exchange hand-written letters. Writing and sending letters can be a great exercise in staying connected and helping the separation anxiety. However, be mindful of letting your anxiety come through the letters to your camper. Letters should be up-beat and positive, with encouragement for the experience and news from home. Let friends and relatives know the camp address, so they can send mail too! The letters your child writes and receives may be some of the best written memories from their childhood - what treasures!

2. BE MINDFUL OF THE BENEFITS

Why did you decide to send your child to camp? Remember that you are giving your child a gift that will follow them throughout their life:

CONNECTION: At camp, children practice communication, collaboration, social and cross-cultural skills. Campers get to meet people from all over!

EXPLORATION: Two weeks to just be a kid in the great outdoors, enjoying a much-needed break from the stresses of school, competitive sports, and busy schedules.

UNPLUGGED: The opportunity to live technology-free and focus on building face-to-face social skills, in a community of people all doing it together, is rare!

GROWTH: Overcoming challenges independently allows them to build confidence, adaptability, resiliency, critical thinking, and leadership skills. Among a host of other valuable character traits!

3. TAKE CARE OF YOU

While your camper is at MMR, we encourage you to take time to have some quality experiences yourself. It's a great time to do projects and trips that are not kid-focused or perhaps not so kid-friendly. Take the time to treat yourself to some fun, friends, and growth while your camper is doing the same here! You will *both* gain from this enriching experience and have stories to share when you reconnect. This is where your preparation comes in handy. Hopefully you took our advice and have something fun or self-care oriented scheduled to look forward to. Perhaps you built an emergency kit and now is the time to look through it.

Ultimately, camp is one of the stepping stones and "training grounds" for developing healthy boundaries with your child(ren), as they grow into independent adults who will someday move out, go away to college, get married, or go on an entirely unique adventure of their own.

There is so much good advice out there, follow us on social media as we share our favorite articles on all things camp preparation!



CONNECT WITH YOUR CAMPER

We think staying in touch with your camper is important!

4 WAYS TO CONNECT

1. SNAIL MAIL

Campers love to get mail. We're talking about the real thing: pen on paper, maybe some doodles or stickers, in envelopes, with stamps. **Family should send campers mail 3-4 times over the session.** What wonderful keepsakes! Campers are encouraged and given time to write letters daily, but as you can imagine it is nearly impossible to make this happen. Mail goes out from the camp mailbox daily.

Any letters received after the session are returned to sender.

Camp Address:

Camper Name
P.O. Box 610
Susanville, CA
96130

NO CARE PACKAGES. If you need to send something that is not available in the Camp Store, we will gladly accept your package! Please contact us with info on contents of the package so we can let you know when it arrives and give you the shipping address.

2. EMAIL

Send an email to **camper@mountainmeadow.com** with your camper's full name in the subject field. These notes are printed out daily and given to the cabin counselor to hand out. **We receive a tremendous number of emails each session, to help keep this number realistic, please follow these guidelines:**

- Limit your emails to **one** every few days.
- Emails with pictures or attachments will not be delivered.
- Only email from family will be delivered.
- Campers are not able to reply.

3. CAMP PARENT LINE

Direct phone calls with your camper are not available, so our Camp “Mom” is here to serve you. Please leave a message or text and our Camp Mom will check in with your camper, speak with their counselors, and return your call within 24 hours. You may receive a text or call. We invite you to wait 48 hours before calling to check-in. We send an email on Opening Day, confirming that all campers have arrived safely and are settling in. See above for **when we will call you**.

PARENT LINE: (530) 310-9281

4. VIEW SUMMER PHOTOS

We are an unplugged camp, in the backcountry, with occasionally unreliable internet. We do our best to upload new photos a couple times each week. Directions for viewing summer photos will be included in the Welcome email you receive on your campers first day of camp. We aim to capture 1-2 photos of each camper over the course of the session. *Please note, this is a courtesy that we offer and not a guarantee that you will see your camper every day. If you find yourself suffering from Kidsickness, please see the above section for tips on coping.* For more info on our photo policy, see [HERE](#).



FAQ ON CONNECTING

We hear the following questions every summer, and hope that the information provided below will help any new or returning families better understand and support our “why”.

WHY CAN'T I TALK TO MY CAMPER DIRECTLY?

Direct contact home can negatively impact the camp experience in a number of ways:

- 1) It takes your camper out of the moment.
- 2) It inhibits the mental and emotional growth of camp.
- 3) It can exacerbate, and even cause, homesickness.

When you send your camper to MMR, you are sending them to a safe and fun environment full of opportunities to grow. However, this mental and emotional growth can't happen if parents and adults at home are maintaining a tight grip of concern and control. At camp, kids learn that sometimes things don't go as expected, and other times they do. No matter what happens, they are on a learning adventure to trust themselves, find their footing, and build resilience.

WHY CAN'T I SEND CARE PACKAGES?

We have found packages to create unnecessary stress for parents and campers. Whether it be the feelings of obligation to send the “best package ever” so their camper doesn't feel left out, or to provide something for the *whole* cabin, the items rarely end up being used and often end up in the trash. Camp life is busy and fun, and we provide all necessary supplies for the experience. Please plan ahead and pack any fun costumes, letter writing materials, stickers, magazines, sundry items, etc. Further, MMR is located in the beautiful Sierra Nevada wilderness. For this reason, **we do not allow food, candy, or gum in our cabins or out in camp**. Homemade goodies have never been allowed at MMR.

If we receive a care package:

We will return to sender and bill the postage fees to the primary credit card on your Parent Account. If there is no return address, we donate the items to our local Goodwill.

INTERNATIONAL

Our campers come from all around the world, each bringing their own culture. For many, English is their second language. Rest assured we work hard to make each camper feel included and informed. However, we are not equipped to teach English and recommend all campers have a basic understanding of English to get the most out of their experience with us.

INSURANCE

We recommend travelers insurance for any campers traveling from outside of the continental U.S. The combination of being in a location that is both rural and foreign makes travelers insurance a good, inexpensive option to insure the *complete* coverage of any medical costs incurred while at camp.

EQUIPMENT PROVIDED

We have the following items available to our international campers to use while at camp, at no extra cost:

- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Sleeping Bags
- ☐ Bedding (sheets, pillows, pillow cases, blankets)

COVID-19 TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Parents are ***strongly encouraged*** to be aware of all requirements and protocols for travel to and from their home country to the U.S. This may include pre-travel and arrival testing, vaccinations, quarantines before and/or after travel, etc. * **Make note: MMR is not equipped to accommodate quarantine for travel purposes.**

STANDARDS

*Our mission is to create a safe environment for all campers. We have developed the following behavior and appearance standards to aid this mission. The below standards are now a **REQUIRED** form that every camper must sign in order to attend MMR.*

BEHAVIOR

Campers are expected to treat other campers and staff with respect at all times, and value each other's right to have a positive experience. *MMR is not equipped and cannot accommodate campers requiring repetitive 1-on-1 attention from a staff member, and or repetitive calls for director support.*

The following behaviors are not permitted at Mountain Meadow Ranch and will result in dismissal from camp, without refund, and at the Director's sole discretion:

1. Violence of any kind; any verbal communication or discussion of harm to oneself or others, real or imagined.
2. Threatening, harassment, taunting, teasing, discriminating comments, hazing, or bullying of any kind.
3. Use of foul language, discussion of inappropriate topics, or possession of inappropriate media (magazines, books, etc.) as determined by the Camp Directors.
4. Possession or use of tobacco (including vapes), alcohol, drugs, or weapons. (All prescription and over the counter medications must be stored in the Infirmary and administered under the supervision of our camp Health Care Supervisor.)
5. Sexual or intimate behavior, relationships, or conversation.
6. Unauthorized absence from cabin or activity.
7. Abusive or disrespectful behavior towards any member of the camp community.
8. Inappropriate appearance or attire (Standards section of Camp Handbook).
9. Unsafe use of camp equipment or flagrant violation of camp guidelines and rules.
10. Destruction, vandalism (including graffiti), or theft of any property belonging to camp or another community member.

If a camper engages in any of these behaviors, the staff will immediately separate the camper from the group and seek Director Support to phone home. The severity of the situation and the degree to which your child's behavior negatively affects the camp family determines if they will need to be sent home, at the Director's sole discretion.

We do not label or stigmatize camper's for any of the above behavior. However, our main priority is to ensure MMR remains a safe and healthy environment for the whole community. As a result, the above behaviors will result in a dismissal from camp, with the hope that the camper is able to receive the further "leaning in" presence and care they need at home.

In the event a camper is dismissed from camp, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to A) retrieve their camper within 24 hours, or B) appoint an authorized adult to retrieve their camper within 24 hours.

I understand that MMR reserves the right to dismiss a camper whose conduct is dangerous, illegal, or at the discretion of the camp director, detrimental to the camp and/or to other campers, otherwise unsatisfactory, or does not meet MMR's Behavioral Standards.

APPEARANCE

Campers should pack clothing that is appropriate for a kid-friendly, outdoor, and active camp life. Use of make-up and/or wearing of expensive clothing are *discouraged* while at camp.



The following are **not** allowed at camp:

1. Clothing with any logos or graphics depicting violence, bands that play violent music, drugs, alcohol, or inappropriate language or topics.
2. Jewelry that includes collars, chains, and excessive face or body piercings (*Ear and nose piercings are okay*) as these may be unsafe for certain activities.
3. Clothing that does not cover underwear (Clothing should *fully* cover stomach, lower back, chest, and bottom).
4. Any extra tight or extra loose clothing - *unsafe for certain activities*. In the case of swimsuits – two pieces are allowed. If it breaks number 3 from above, they may be asked to change.

* Pictured: What TO wear 😊

CALL HOME POLICY

At MMR, we believe in Restorative Justice, which reframes discipline and personal responsibility allowing the opportunity to express remorse, repair any damaged relationship, and experience emotional and social growth. *Should a camper's behavior not align with our standards, our staff is trained to handle the situation according to this process:*

1. **Remove/Redirect:** A staff member will encourage positive behavior by asking your camper to engage in the appropriate task at hand. If your camper is unresponsive, or ignores the counselor's request the first time, they will move to step two.
2. **Choices:** Your camper will be given the choice to a) engage in appropriate behavior or b) have a time-out away from the group (but still in view of the counselor). If your camper continues to display negative behavior, the counselor will move to step three.
3. **Director support:** A Director will come to meet your camper to discuss their misbehavior. When a Director is called to assist with a behavioral issue, this is when you will receive a first phone call to assist us in preparing a plan for reparation.
4. **A second phone call home.** If you receive a second phone call, this will be to share that your camper has continued in their misbehavior and has been told this is their last opportunity to express remorse, repair any damaged relationships and experience emotional and social growth past said incident. Your camper will be informed if a third phone call has to be made, it is to go home.
5. **A Third phone call home.** If a third phone call home needs to be made, this is the point you will need to make arrangements for pick up/travel home.

Some behavior, particularly any behavior that breaches the standards above and on our Behavioral Standards Agreement Form, **may bypass this process of Restorative Justice.** In the event, you may not receive warning phone calls and only receive one phone call informing of the camper's dismissal from camp.

In the event a camper is dismissed from camp, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to retrieve their camper within 24 hours. If the parent/guardian is unavailable, it is their responsibility to appoint an authorized adult to retrieve their camper within 24 hours.

UNABLE TO CONTACT POLICY

If under any circumstances under the director's discretion, we are unable to reach you, MMR will abide by the following policy:

- If contact is necessary for any behavioral, medical, or emergency reason, a MMR director or representative will first attempt contact with the primary contact given on camper's application.
- If unable to contact after attempts of all resources i.e. phone, text, e-mail, etc. emergency contact listed in camper application will be contacted.
- If unable to reach emergency contact, we will have no other option but to contact the appropriate authorities.



CANCEL FOR ANY REASON INSURANCE

One of the greatest concerns we hear from parents when it comes to dismissals, an early retrieval from camp, or a late cancellation, is that of recouping the financial costs incurred.

We recommend that parents consider a "cancel for any reason" insurance package via their preferred insurance provider. The American Camp Association (ACA) provides a great overview of what this means, and some resources on agencies that provide packages tailored specifically for the summer camp experience and it's associated (and often nonrefundable) costs. Read more here: [Cancel for Any Reason and Interrupt for Any Reason Insurance: Protect Your Nonrefundable Camp Costs | American Camp Association](#)

WE INVITE YOU TO... BE ON THE SAME-TEAM.

Here at MMR, we believe in partnering with parents and the adults at home to ensure that your camper has the absolute BEST camp experience possible. To do that, we invite you to review and reflect on the following:

WHAT MOUNTAIN MEADOW RANCH AGREES TO:

- Treating all campers with respect, empathy, and curiosity.
- Having their comfort, well-being, safety, health, and needs in mind. *Sometimes, like in instances of mental health or behavioral issues, that means going home early.*
- Communicating our standards, expectations, and policies early and clearly with both you and your camper; and upholding our standards, expectations, and policies at all times.
- Communicating with you following our above communication policies, meaning that should *anything* concerning happen with your camper you will hear from us.

WHAT WE INVITE YOU, THE PARENTS AND ADULTS AT HOME, TO:

- Trust the camp experts (that's us!) to do what we do best.
- Understand and comprehend fully our standards, expectations, policies, and consequences of breaking them (*including the terms & conditions of enrollment and our cancellation & refund policy!*)
- Treat **all** MMR staff with respect and kindness, in-person and digitally (over the phone/email).
- Ensure your child is ready for the camp experience and communicate any considerations (mental health, physical health, etc.) to MMR as requested on our required forms.

2023 Session Dates

STANDARD SESSIONS

Session A Sunday, June 18 – Friday, June 30

Session B Sunday, July 02 – Friday, July 14

Session C Sunday, July 16 – Friday, July 28

Session D Sunday, July 30 – Friday, August 11

PREMIUM SESSIONS

Session 1 Sunday, June 18 – Friday, July 14

Session 2 Sunday, July 02 – Friday, July 28

Session 3 Sunday, July 16 – Friday, August 11

We are so excited to meet (and reconnect with) each and every one of you! We truly believe in the power of camp and look forward to sharing that with each of you this summer season!





RECOMMENDED FURTHER RESOURCES

There is so much information out there now to educate and support campers and parents ahead of the summer camp journey. There is also a lot of research that we heed in developing our policies. We have included a few selected items for further reading for those interested.

BLOGS/TED TALKS

- [Sunshine Parenting](#) - Blog by Audrey Monke
 - Audrey is a fellow camp professional with a passion for researching well-being in kids.
- [Ted Talk: How to raise successful kids, without overparenting](#)
- Harvard Research Stories: [Lessons From Camp](#)
- [Top Things Every Parent Should Know About Sleepaway Camp](#)
- [What Your Child **Really** Learned At Camp](#)
- [The Magic Tricks of Summer Camp](#)

BOOKS

- [The Whole Brain Child](#) - Daniel J. Siegel & Tina Payne Bryson
- [Rewilding Childhood Raising Resilient Children Who Are Adventurous, Imaginative, and Free](#) - Mike Fairclough
- [Happy Campers: 9 Summer Camp Secrets for Raising Kids Who Become Thriving Adults](#) - Audrey Monke
- [Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life](#) - Peter Gray