



RETREAT HANDBOOK

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR GROUP BOOKINGS

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Camp: 8324 Glendale Drive
Lambton Shores, ON N0N 1J7
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CONTACT INFORMATION

Year-round office: 254 Adelaide Street South
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info@forestcliff.ca

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ACCREDITATION

We engage multiple licensing and accreditation agencies, consultants, partners and vendors in areas ranging from medical and emergency procedures to food service and staff training. We are accredited by the Ontario Camps Association.

INVESTMENT IN CAMPER

Everything we do is for the kids. And everything we do is intentional. We've purposefully designed every aspect of camp to accommodate the varying needs of different aged campers. All of these considerations create a customized experience for each Forest Cliff camper.

Staff

Our counselors receive detailed and specific training to meet the diverse behavioural, spiritual and activity needs of our campers. Our counselors' sole purpose is to build relationships with campers and foster their spiritual growth. Counselors emphasize the importance of teamwork, safety and respect, and build a strong culture of inclusion throughout the week. To accomplish these goals effectively, they are on duty and with their cabin groups the entire time they are at camp.

Our counselors are not activity staff. A separate activity staff are trained to facilitate activities for children. This allows for the staff to receive in-depth training on operating the activity, and allows counselors to participate in the activity with their campers, creating shared memories and stronger relationships.

Our counselor to camper ratios is 1:5, 1:1 for every camper with special needs (arranged through Reach for the Rainbow).

Including all other activity, support, and full-time staff, our overall staff-to-camper ratio is one staffer for every three campers. These ratios are constant throughout the day and night, and

they exceed accreditation requirements. In part because of our program design and our low ratios, our counselors get to know each child individually. You'll see these strong relationships in action when you pick up your child from their cabin group on closing day.

Structure

The key to our curriculum is small groups. Small group sessions allow counselors to identify campers' developmental needs and challenge them in their growth.

Inclusion

We have a calling to welcome every child who would like to come to camp. While your child is at camp, we make sure every camper is given individual attention and is included in the experience. Our inclusive program is about meeting the needs of every camper that comes to camp, whether it's physical, behavioral, dietary or medical.

If your child has special needs, please detail them when prompted during registration. Through Reach for the Rainbow, we can provide a one-on-one counselor for your camper upon request, at no extra charge. Reach for the Rainbow develops integrated opportunities that enrich the lives of children and young adults with disabilities, their families, and the community in which they belong. Reach for the Rainbow works with existing programs in the community and selected summer camps across Ontario to provide integrated recreational activities. Please contact our office for more information.

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SAFETY

Equipment and Activity Safety

Each activity area during the summer has a highly trained leadership staff member (or two) who is responsible for a specific activity area. This is almost always an experienced staff member whose primary responsibility is to, not run the activity, but oversee the staff and equipment in their area. They are directly observing staff in their interaction with campers, their proficiency in running their activities and conducting debriefs, keeping track of equipment use and pulling any worn equipment from service, and conducting in-services with their staff in areas where they see more education would benefit. These leadership staff have assistant activity directors they can call on for support or questions, as well as the activity director.

In addition to our leadership staff, safety checks on camp include:

High adventure activities are inspected annually by AdventureWorks, and independent, certified, high adventure vendor member. See the AdventureWorks website at <http://www.adventureworks.org>.

Trained staff inspect all elements and equipment, including ropes, carabiners, boats and rifles each time prior to use.

All buildings are swept frequently for potential safety and security issues.

Personal Safety

In order to protect children, our policy prohibits any staff person to be alone in a private location with a camper. If a camper needs to return to their cabin for a sweatshirt, for example, a staff will never do this alone with the camper—they will get another camper or staff person to go with them. If a one-on-one conversation is necessary between a staff member and a camper, it will always be in view of other people.

Behaviour Management

All counselors are trained in our behavior management and anti-bullying policy. If a behavior does arise that causes a disturbance, the child is removed from the situation and there is a very caring conversation about a change in behavior. We partner with the camper to come up with a solution that works for everyone, grace is given, and consequences are enforced, if necessary. At no point will corporal punishment be allowed. If there is no change in the camper's behavior, the Camp Director will call the child's parent/guardian and discuss the options.

GROUND SECURITY

Our property security includes security staff and personnel name badge requirement to protect the campers, staff and property. All roads onto the camp are gated.

GUEST HEALTH

Counselors are trained to make sure your child is eating enough, staying hydrated, and applying sunscreen. We ask that you send sunscreen with your child, ensuring that they have enough to apply every morning and again after lunch. We also encourage campers to bring a water bottle to camp to stay properly hydrated. We provide water coolers at the outdoor activities.

Our kitchen is familiar with special diets and food allergies. If your child has specific food needs, please let us know and we will make proper arrangements for your child.

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MEDICAL CARE

We depend upon volunteer physicians, nurses, and paramedics, as well as employ a health care team for summer camp sessions. The medical staff respond to emergencies, distribute medications, and provide basic first aid care for our resident campers. If your child requires medications, they need to be turned in to the health centre staff in the original container during registration on opening day. Counselors will be given a list of camper medications and the time they need to take it. During the camp week, campers will go with their counselor to the health centre to get their medication at the designated time. If medications are taken outside of a mealtime, a member of our health care team will go to the camper's housing or activity area to distribute the medication. Counselors will carry epi-pens and inhalers that are required to be with campers at all times. Distribution of medication is supervised by a registered nurse.

We contact parents when:

- A camper has significant bumps, bruises or cuts with the potential for scarring (especially in the facial area)
- Any time there is something out of the ordinary (i.e. seizure)
- When a camper is involved in a vehicle or work-related accident.
- When a camper has had an exposure to a contagious disease, bug, or parasite.
- Any time a camper is sent off-site for professional medical treatment.
- When a physician prescribes a prescription medication or at the discretion of a physician.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

A signal system on camp allows instant communication to all campers and staff in the event of an emergency. Staff monitor weather radar constantly and we move staff and campers to severe weather shelters when there is an immediate threat of severe weather.

All staff is trained in our Emergency Action Plan, which covers scenarios like severe weather, fire, medical emergency, and missing camper. The focus is on accounting for and protecting campers in these situations.

Our health care team is trained to respond to emergencies on camp 24/7. Police, fire and ambulance services are located in Forest—a 3-minute drive away.

Our lifeguards are certified by the National Lifeguard Service (NLS) and also have CPR certification.

Emergency phone calls will be received at the camp office.

Camp office: 519-786-5996

STAFF TRAINING

Training Hours

Our staff receive over 100 hours of in-depth training. Our leadership staff receive over 250 hours of training, along with the experience they already possess.

All Staff Training

All of our staff goes through the same base training, where they learn camper care, safety protocols, child protection, conflict management, customer service and first aid awareness.

- *Camper Care*—Focuses on camper behavior management: how to deal with bullying, how to help with homesickness, making sure that every camper gets individual attention. Staff is taught to recognize that every camper learns differently and has his/her own set of needs. Counselors are trained to identify where each child is spiritually and will meet them where they are at while challenging them to grow.
- *Safety Protocols*—Training covers scenarios like severe weather, fire, medical emergency, intruder on camp, and a lost camper.
- *Child Protection*—Focuses on two aspects of child protection: prevention and how to report suspected abuse. Prevention of abuse on camp includes what is and is not appropriate (i.e. not okay to rub a child's back to help him or her go to sleep, must give privacy when campers are changing, can never withhold food, etc.)
- *Conflict Management*—Covers conflict management with fellow staff and to help campers work through with each other
- *Customer Service*—Teaches staff how to address and greet kids and parents.
- *First Aid Awareness*—Addresses typical camp ailments and how to deal with them, including bee stings, stomach aches, and how to respond to bed-wetting in a discreet way. Also teaches how to work with health centre to get campers medications on time.

Additionally, all staff take classes about Forest Cliff culture, covering gospel and Forest Cliff doctrine: who we are, why we teach what we teach, what they're expected to cover in their small group time, how to share their spiritual journeys in an appropriate way, and how to remain sensitive to many denominations, without compromising our statement of faith. During their weeks of training, staff is given extended solo time, where they're encouraged to prepare themselves spiritually for the job.

Activity Staff Training

Summer activity staff receive training specific to their activity area with an emphasis on safety, proper use of equipment, engaging all campers, and effective debriefs. This training is conducted by leading industry experts. In some high-risk areas, certification by national or provincial industry associations is required.

Activity staff meets daily with their Leadership Team who is able to convey any important information to them, review incidents, and conduct in-services as needed to provide more training in certain areas, to keep skills current, or to learn new techniques to engage campers and keep them safe.

Leadership Staff Training

Summer leadership staff oversees cabin areas, activities, or have specialized functions at camp. Their main job is to oversee counselors, support, and activity staff, ensuring that staff have all the resources they need to deliver an exceptional Forest Cliff experience for all their campers. Their additional responsibilities require additional training, which we call leadership staff training, involving over 250 hours. Leadership staff will be available when you drop your camper off and are great resources if you need to get additional information about your camper to someone in leadership.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

Prior to arriving at camp, your health form should be submitted and your balance should be paid in full.

Packing Guidelines for Camp

- We recommend two bags only—a suitcase for clothing and a large duffel bag for your camper’s sleeping bag and pillow. No loose items please. A “stuff” bag of duffel bag for your camper’s sleeping bag and pillow is a must. A rolled sleeping bag always comes unraveled when walking through camp. Your camper’s pillow also needs to be stored in a duffel bag.
- When getting bedding and sleeping bags out of storage, it is a good idea to put them in a clothes dryer on high heat for 30 minutes.
- Place toiletries in a plastic bag or kit that makes it easy to travel to the showers. This also reduces the chance of spilling.
- Make sure your camper’s name is on all items.
- Pack together with your camper. This allows your camper to know where everything is and to develop a sense of responsibility.
- We recommend packing some plastic bags for dirty/wet laundry.
- Please bring any medications in their original packaging with you to registration and check them in with a health team member on opening day. Please do not pack medications in your camper’s luggage.
- Make your bags visually distinctive. Add something brightly coloured to your bags. This not only makes it easier for you to spot them when you pick up your camper, it also prevents other people from taking your bags by mistake. Distinctively marked suitcases and duffel bags are also easier to find if they are misplaced.
- Identification tags on your bags (and inside, too) is helpful.

What to Pack

- Pajamas, underwear and extra socks
- Warm jacket or sweatshirt, hat and raincoat/poncho
- Modest swimsuit, beach towel and sunscreen
- Two pairs of shoes (one pair that can get wet)
- Towel, washcloth, toiletries, comb or brush
- Sleeping bag and pillow
- Flashlight
- Water bottle
- Shorts, t-shirts, long pants and long-sleeved shirts
- Insect repellent
- Disposable camera (optional)

What Not to Pack

- Food
- Valuables
- Non-prescription or over-the-counter medications
- Spending money
- Gaming devices, iPods or other MP3 players, radios, CD players, etc.
- Cell phone or pager

Camp Store

The camp store will be open at some point during your visit. We have Forest Cliff items available for sale ranging in price from \$2.00 to \$50.00. You can outfit yourself in fantastic Forest Cliff merchandise – hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, headbands, bracelets, etc. If you miss the camp store, you can access the same merchandise on our website: www.forestcliff.ca.