

# CAMP EXPLORER

FIND YOUR SUMMER ADVENTURES



# 2025 PARENT HANDBOOK

MICHIGAN DNR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER  
1801 ATWATER STREET, DETROIT, MI, 48207

# WELCOME TO CAMP EXPLORE AT THE MICHIGAN DNR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER!

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for registering your camper for Camp Explore at the DNR Outdoor Adventure Center! We can't wait to welcome them to our facility this summer. This handbook will help you and your camper prepare for a fun, safe, and exciting experience. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Please pay close attention to the following:

- Campers must be signed in and out each day by a responsible adult (18+), using the individual camper code. Campers cannot come and go from our program without an adult.
- Lunch is not provided, except for Leaders in Training on travelling days. Pack a lunch, water bottle and snacks each day. See page 3 for more meal policies.
- Close-toed shoes are required for the safety of your camper. If your camper wears inappropriate footwear, they will be excluded from activities until the appropriate shoes are provided.
- Campers must follow all rules listed in the Parent Handbook, as well as those introduced during the daily Camp Orientation. Any behavior issues will be handled following the procedures described in the Behavior Policy and Camper Code of Conduct.

Sincerely,



Emily Grant  
Camp Explore Director



Patrick Endres  
Camp Explore Assistant Director

## CORE VALUES

Curiosity: We seek to learn more about the world around us. We approach every day with an open mind and open eyes so we are always ready for new opportunities.

Kindness: We recognize that one kind act can create another. We are intentional in creating a positive community, so all feel welcome in this space.

Stewardship: We strive to be responsible stewards of Michigan's natural resources. Through service learning and projects, we can protect and strengthen our communities.

Positive Mental Attitude: We approach each camp day with a positive attitude, ready for new challenges and adventures. We use our PMA to help uplift those around us, building a positive community for all.

Personal Growth: We embrace the challenges that pull us from our comfort zones, and try again even when we don't initially succeed. By stepping into unfamiliar activities and new groups of people, we know we can expand our horizons and achieve our goals.

## CAMP GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The Outdoor Adventure Center's mission is to connect visitors to Michigan's natural resources. At Camp Explore, we put that mission into action. Campers will gain outdoor skills, discover new friendships and develop as leaders, all against the backdrop of our beautiful Michigan state parks. Our camp values – kindness, curiosity, stewardship, PMA and personal growth – direct all that we do. Through a Camp Explore experience, campers will:

- Practice outdoor skills like archery, fishing and bike riding, which will help them become lifelong users of the outdoors.
- Meet peers and develop communication skills through traditional and informal teambuilding exercises.
- Experience the beauty of the Detroit Riverfront and learn stewardship ethics so they can actively care for their river and surrounding areas.
- Grow in resiliency, through time in the outdoors and exposure to age-appropriate challenges.

Above all, Camp Explore makes space for every kid and staff member, so they can come to know the benefits of time in the outdoors.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE INFORMATION

- Location: Drop off and pick up for all campers will be inside the Outdoor Adventure Center main entrance, 1801 Atwater Street. Please do not go to the Customer Service Center entrance off Orleans St.
- Parking: Park in the black gated lot, located on the opposite side of the street from Milliken State Park Harbor. Take the pathway to the OAC main entrance.
- Check-in: 8:30 to 9:00 A.M. If an emergency makes later drop-off necessary, call the Camp Office at 313-396-6891.
- Check-out: 4:00 to 5:00 P.M. If an emergency makes later pick-up necessary, call the Camp Office at 313-396-6891. If your camper is picked up after 5:00 P.M., you will be charged \$1.00 for every minute after 5:00 P.M.
- Late drop-off or early pick-up: If you need to drop-off late or pick-up early, please inform us ASAP. Our activities will take us away from the OAC Building throughout the day, so every effort should be made to arrange a drop-off/pick-up at lunchtime when campers will be at the facility.
- Safety: Never leave your child unattended in the parking lot or grounds.
- Unregistered Days/Walk Ins: We do not accept walk-in registration.

**Camper Release:** Your camper will be assigned a unique alpha numeric code on their first day of camp (siblings will *not* share a code). This private code must be shown to camp staff at check-out for your camper to be released. Your camper will only be released to an adult (18+) with the proper code.

- Please only share this code with adults that you trust to pick up your child! You may text them the code or send them a picture.
- If the adult responsible for pick-up cannot provide the appropriate code for the camper, the Camp Director will release only to the Parent/Guardian(s) listed on the camper's health history form. Valid ID matching information on the health form must be provided.

## POLICIES

**Medicine:** Medication must be turned in to the Health Team at check-in, and will be returned daily at check-out. Emergency rescue medication must be carried by camp staff. All prescription medication must be in the **original prescription bottles** with the camper's name on the label, and by state law, dispensed according to the directions on the label. If the doctor has changed the dosage or directions for administration, submit a signed letter from your physician with the new directions. This letter must include the camper's full name, dosage amount and delivery time(s). Campers are not permitted to carry their own medication. *We recommend only sending as much medication as is needed for the camp session, rather than your full supply from home.*

## POLICIES, CONTINUED

- Refund/Cancellation Policy: Cancellations will be accepted only in writing via email or personal delivery to the OAC Front Desk. Cancellation notification must be received ONE WEEK prior to the registered week to be eligible for a refund (a \$50 deposit will be forfeited). No shows will not receive a refund. Day camp operates rain or shine, and we will offer activities as the weather allows. There will be no refunds for changes in the schedule necessitated by weather issues or unforeseen circumstances.
- Phones/Electronics: Campers are not permitted to have cell phones, iPods, tablets, Apple Watches, digital cameras or any other electronic devices at camp. If for any reason you need to contact your camper, you may call the Camp Office at 313-396-6891. Prohibited items will be collected and locked in the Camp Office until end of day, when it will be returned to the camper's parent/guardian.
- Personal Equipment: Program equipment such as bows, fishing rods, etc., are provided by OAC and must be used during our facilitated programs. Personal equipment and possessions such as backpacks, books, and other belongings are the responsibility of the participant. OAC is not responsible for any lost/stolen items.
- Weapons/Controlled Substances: All weapons, including knives, are not allowed at camp. Prohibited items will be held in the Camp Office and parents will be contacted. Controlled substances are strictly prohibited. Possession or use of prohibited items can lead to your camper's immediate dismissal from camp for the season.
- Appropriate Dress: Campers should arrive each day of camp wearing clothing that is adventure-ready. We suggest packing layers, and only clothing/shoes suitable for the outdoors. Camp Explore t-shirts (provided day one of your camper's session) are required on field trip days. Closed-toe shoes with a backstrap are required for the camp day. If your camper arrives in inappropriate footwear, we will call home for suitable shoes. Your camper will be excluded from activities until they have appropriate footwear. Remember, this is for the safety of your child!
- Lost and Found: Please call us right away and we will do our best to locate your camper's item(s). Check the lost and found table at the end of each day for your belongings. Any items left behind at the end of the camp session will be donated two weeks after the session.
- Camper Safety: Your camper's safety is our top priority, and we work to make all our activities as safe as possible. The camp staff undergo extensive training to avoid accidents and injuries. We will have a Camp Health Team on site at all times.
- Food Service: Camp Explore at the Outdoor Adventure Center does not provide food for staff or campers, with the exceptions of: morning and afternoon snack at the OAC, and meals while travelling for the Leaders in Training campers. Pack a lunch and any necessary snacks for the day in a lunch bag labeled with your camper's first and last name. Note that there is not a refrigerator or microwave available to campers.
  - Please clearly communicate any dietary restrictions to the Camp Office. If there is a change in your camper's diet before camp begins, contact the Camp Office at 313-396-6891.

# CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

Are you ready to have fun this summer? We are! For you to have a fun, exciting and safe summer, everyone needs to follow the same guidelines. Below is a list of the basic rules you will need to follow while at camp. Keep in mind that more specific rules will be explained when you get here. Please read the guidelines and make sure that you understand them. You will be expected to follow the guidelines as soon as you arrive at camp.

While at Camp Explore at the Outdoor Adventure Center our main rule is RESPECT. We believe that everybody should enjoy our camp equally and feel safe, secure and accepted regardless of color, race, gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, religion and nationality.

I will RESPECT NATURE: I will walk on trails, enjoy the surroundings but not take souvenirs, dispose of garbage properly, leave wildlife alone, and clean up when I leave. Traveling through wilderness, humans are the visitors. We are passing through the homes and habitat of wild animals and our behavior should be much like what is expected when visiting another human's home.

I will RESPECT OTHERS: I will use kind words, listen, be fair, and keep my hands and feet to myself. I will respect their property.

I will RESPECT the FACILITIES: I will keep the grounds clean, and respect equipment, waterfront, buildings and restrooms. If something is broken, I will tell a counselor.

I will RESPECT MYSELF: I will think and act in a positive way, make safe decisions, drink plenty of water, and wear sunscreen and bug spray. I will respect my belongings.

## What is Bullying?

When a person or a group repeatedly and intentionally uses or abuses their power to intimidate, hurt, oppress or damage someone else, they engage in bullying behavior. While bullying is typically repetitive, a severe enough incident can also constitute bullying. It can be secret or cyber-based (happening online through social networks or even through mobile phones). Bullying can be physical or emotional. According to the National Center Against Bullying, there are five different kinds of bullying behavior. They are:

1. Physical bullying: when physical actions such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing, are used to hurt and intimidate. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.
2. Verbal bullying: involves the use of negative words, like name calling, insults, homophobic or racist slurs, or words used to intentionally upset someone.
3. Psychological bullying: involves the repeated and intentional use of words or actions which can cause psychological harm. Examples include intimidation, manipulation and stalking.
4. Social bullying: when lies, the spreading of rumors or nasty pranks are used. This includes repeated mimicking and deliberate exclusion.
5. Cyber bullying: when technology is used to verbally, socially or psychologically bully. It can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

## **Behavior Policy**

Inappropriate behaviors will not be tolerated. A child exhibiting any of the following behaviors will be immediately suspended from camp: bullying, violence, sexual harassment, endangering the safety of any camper or staff member, any type of discrimination, theft, verbal abuse, and possession of any type of weapon. Incidents will be reviewed by administrative staff and a determination of the child's eligibility for continued attendance at camp will be made. Parents will be notified of the results of this review. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis. No refunds for any camp fees paid will be issued in the event of disciplinary expulsion.

**Discipline will be handled in the following manner:**

**Step 1: Counselor will address behavior with camper, helping the camper to understand the rules and take responsibility for changing the behavior.**

**Step 2: Assistant Camp Director will meet with the camper to discuss and implement solutions.**

**Step 3: The camper will meet with the Camp Director. Parental contact and clear objectives will be established.**

**Step 4: The camper will be removed from camp without a refund. Dismissed campers must be picked up by a parent/guardian immediately.**

## SAMPLE CAMP DAY

8:30 - 9 A.M. Check In

9 - 9:30 A.M. Morning Orientation and Morning Snack

9:30 – 11:30 A.M. Morning Activities

11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. Lunch and Free Play

12:30 – 3:30 P.M. Afternoon Activities

3:30 - 4 P.M. Large Group Games and Afternoon Snack

4 – 5 P.M. Check Out

## PACKING LIST

Please pack the following items to ensure a comfortable and successful camp day. Mark all items with your camper's name.

- Backpack
- Lunch and snack (nothing that requires refrigeration. Pack all necessary utensils)
- Water bottle – refillable
- Extra clothes including socks and underwear (for water and mud days)
- Close-toed shoes that securely fasten (no Crocs or slip-on shoes)
- Sunscreen and bug spray – campers are responsible for applying sunscreen independently. For efficiency in the camp day, please send them to camp with a layer of sunscreen and bug spray already applied. We will remind campers to reapply sunscreen at lunchtime.
- Rain Gear – we go out rain or shine!
- Hat and sunglasses (optional)
- Any prescription or over-the-counter medication (must be given to the Health Team at Check In)

*Personal possessions such as backpacks and other belongings are the responsibility of the participant. The Outdoor Adventure Center is not responsible for any lost/stolen items.*

## THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING CAMP EXPLORE AT THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER!

You will receive more information from the Camp Explore Office in the weeks preceding your camper's registered session. For more immediate questions, assistance with registration, or an update to your camper's health form, contact:

Emily Grant

GrantE1@michigan.gov

313-396-6891