

FAQ for Youth Camps 2021 at Camp Friedenswald Updated Feb 23, 2021

Background:

Our staff has been hard at work trying to determine how Camp Friedenswald might be able to offer an overnight youth summer camp in 2021. We've consulted with parents, health care providers, our local health department, and the Michigan camp licensing body, to identify the risks and to come up with a plan to reduce risks of COVID-19 among campers, staff, and our communities.

We've learned a lot in the past year as we've welcomed families to camp as part of our Camp Getaway program - and have successfully adapted activities and programs amidst the pandemic. We'll look to integrate our learning into the summer's planning as we prepare for your camper!

Before registering your child/camper for camp this summer, we want to provide you with an idea of what we *anticipate* the camp experience will look like. We recognize that it'll be different, but the adaptations are necessary in order to comply with local and state regulations, and to our own commitments to prioritize the health of staff and campers. While different, we trust that once your camper has arrived, the camp experience will be FUN and one that helps them to form new friendships, grow in their relationship with God, and deepen their love for the natural world.

Hopefully these FAQs will help you get a picture of what we might expect of you and your camper prior to arrival, what a week of camp will look like, and what you can expect from us at Camp Friedenswald. We should note that these plans are **subject to change**, and if at any point we determine we're unable to offer youth camps, we will make new plans to help serve you and you this summer.

Upon registering your camper for summer, you'll receive an email from us with more details. And, as the date approaches, we'll be sure to communicate the latest information.

As always, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out!

1) I saw the schedule and noticed it's different than previous years. Why?!

In a year when nearly everything has changed, how couldn't camp? :) We know you'll understand. Generally, we've tried to create a schedule that provides a way for your camper to experience camp, while trying to set our staff up for success.

As a reminder, here's the schedule for youth camps:

June 13 - 17 - High School Camp (grades 9-12)

June 20 - 24 - Jr High Camp (grades 7-8)

June 27- July 1 - Pre-Junior Camp (grades 3-4)

July 4-8 - Junior Camp (grades 5-6)

You'll note that arrival is **Sunday** afternoon between 3:00 - 4 pm. (Stay tuned for more detailed information on what arrival will look like - it'll certainly be a bit different!) And camp *ends* a night earlier - with pick-up after dinner on Thursday.

You'll also note we aren't running camp for our very youngest campers this year (1-2 graders). We know there will be some disappointed kids (and parents), but we trust you'll understand our need to take on what we feel like we can handle, and handle well.

2) Will there be a limited number of campers each week? How can I be sure to reserve my spot?

Yes, we will limit the number of campers we accept each week in order to keep cabins size small. It might change further based on staffing levels each week. The maximum number of campers we'll have each week is 48. We suggest signing up early to make sure your spot is reserved.

3) Will my camper need to wear a mask all day? Won't that get hot and tiring?

Along with other strategies, mask wearing has shown to be an effective way of reducing the spread of COVID-19. All campers and staff will be required to wear masks throughout the day. For safety reasons, masks will not be worn at the beach or while sleeping. We know that wearing masks all day can be uncomfortable, especially when it gets hot outside. We'll work to incorporate times in the schedule when campers can be mask-free (i.e. while physically distancing from others outside). Regardless of previous COVID-19 diagnosis or vaccination, all campers and staff will be expected to wear masks.

4) How do you plan to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at Camp?

Following guidance from the CDC, Guidelines for Camp Operations During COVID-19 (from the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs in Michigan), and in consultation with health care professionals, we're committed to providing the safest possible experience for your camper, while recognizing the inherent risks in gathering during a pandemic (or coming to camp, in general)

In short, here is what we're planning to do:

- 1) Keep everything outside, whenever possible including activities, worship, play, and meals
- 2) Keep cabin groups small (4 campers to 1 counselor) - We'll say more about this below
- 3) No inter-mixing of small groups (everything happens within small "pods" of campers from two cabins)
- 4) Face masks to be worn whenever interacting with other campers or staff
- 5) Physical distancing of 6 ft whenever possible between campers and staff

- 6) Good ventilation in cabins (windows open, fans)
- 7) Frequent hand washing built into schedule
- 8) Frequent cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces
- 9) Daily health checks

5) With all the necessary precautions in place, will it still feel like camp? Will my camper have a good time?

That's our HOPE! In talking with other camps who opened last summer, they named the stress involved in running camp in a pandemic, but they also noted that once kids were at camp, they were just happy to be there. We hope, and trust, this will be the case for your camper at Friedenswald.

6) You say you're only having 3-4 campers per cabin. Why so small?

It is small, but we recognize that one of the riskiest areas for transmission will be indoors when masks are off - in other words, in the cabin. By keeping cabins small, we can more easily commit to keeping 6 ft of physical distance between campers, even at night when they're sleeping with masks off.

While these are small cabin groups, each cabin will "pod" up with another cabin for all other purposes other than sleeping. This means your camper will actually have a circle of friends between 6-8 campers and two counselors. (The only thing they won't do all together is sleep in the same cabin.) The outdoor activities, with masks and distance, carry far lower risks.

7) How many counselors will be in a cabin with my camper overnight?

This year, due to the small cabin size, it's not realistic for us to be able to provide two counselors per 3-4 campers. We know, and strive to adhere to two counselors per cabin at all times. Due to the changes in 2021, here are additional measures we will take. We've consulted with child abuse and prevention specialists to create this list:

- 1) Explaining clearly to you about this change and why - being transparent about the change during the pandemic.
- 2) Increase training on safety and boundaries in staff training
- 3) Having a roving nighttime person who checks in on cabins at bedtime.
- 4) Counselors keep time logs for nighttime routine for extra accountability.

Child abuse and sexual abuse prevention is something we always take very seriously, and will continue to do so, even under different circumstances.

8) How can we be assured that the staff won't pass along COVID to our campers (if they were with campers the week before)?

While we can't provide any guarantees, this *is* why we have so many preventative measures in place - so that Camp doesn't become a place where COVID is being passed around among staff and campers and then taken back home.

Our summer staff are committed to our COVID policies, and we're working to keep their risks of exposure from week to week very low. (Again, by adhering to strict distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, etc. - even on the weekends!)

It's important to recognize the inherent risks associated with camping in a time of COVID, and in non-pandemic times. As always, we utilize good training and resources, and have solid policies and procedures in place to help reduce and minimize risks to campers and staff.

9) How can we (parents and families) do our part to ensure that campers and staff remain healthy this summer before arriving to camp?

You (parents/guardians and campers) are instrumental in helping to keep camp open and everyone healthy. Here's an idea of what we might ask of campers:

- 1) Get tested. We require a negative test for all campers (completed within the last 10 days) before coming to camp. Campers should assure that they have been tested and that the result was negative, but we will not require you to submit documentation of the test result. We know that a negative test does not eliminate the need to implement prevention measures, but this is one imperfect step we can take to screen out someone with active infection prior to coming to camp.
- 2) Prescreening. Campers play a key role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 before arriving on site. Things to do as part of prescreening:
 - a) Record your child's temperature daily between getting tested and arriving at camp.
 - b) Monitor symptoms (fever of 100.4 or greater, new onset of a cough, new onset of shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle or body aches, congestion or runny nose, nausea, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, vomiting, etc.) in the time between getting tested and arriving at camp.
 - c) Self-quarantine, to the extent possible, prior to arrival. Campers should strive to limit the number of people they meet in the 14 days prior to coming to camp. An ideal scenario, which may not be possible for all campers, is to self-quarantine for 14 days prior to going to camp.

10) Will my camper be screened when they arrive to camp?

Yes, as in the past, each camper will check in with the camp nurse upon arrival, conducting a COVID-19 screen, as well as a general health assessment. If a child displays any COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival, they will need to go home.

11) What happens if my child gets sick-mid week?

As in the past, we expect and will plan for circumstances when a camper has a stomach ache, sore throat, headache, etc. We'll strive to keep your camper comfortable and tend to their needs, while also protecting staff and other campers from exposure. Parents will be contacted, and in consultation with the camp director and health officer, a decision will be made on whether your child can remain at camp or need to return home.

12) You said that campers will be outdoors as much as possible. That's great! But what if it's a rainy week or we experience inclement weather?

Pack the rain coat! This will be a summer to embrace the outdoors, no matter the weather. (Who said we can't worship God while dancing in puddles?!)

Inclement weather is another thing, and we will certainly move campers indoors, into safe spaces, in the case of inclement weather. At any time, in compliance with regulations, we will not host more campers on site than we can safely house in bad weather, while maintaining 6 ft of physical distance. Thankfully, we have several large indoor spaces that can accommodate campers with physical distance, if needed.

13) My camper has health concerns/considerations that make them at higher risk for COVID-19. Should they come to camp?

Families with immunocompromised children and children with chronic health conditions should consult with your primary care provider regarding decisions about camp attendance this summer. You should also disclose any underlying medical conditions on your medical forms.

14) What happens if my camper gets sick and becomes symptomatic while at camp?

We will have a COVID response plan in place that outlines the process, but in short:

- Sick campers will immediately be separated from all other campers and staff to be evaluated and cared for by the health officer. The camper may then be sent home or to a healthcare facility for evaluation depending on how severe their symptoms are.
- If a sick camper can't be picked up immediately, they will be isolated in a safe location until they can be picked up.

16) I'm not sure I'm ready to send my camper. Do you have other options?

We don't expect that everyone will be ready to send their camper this year, and we completely understand. You might consider [Family Camp](#), a fun way for your family to experience camp together. You can read more about Family Camps [here](#).

You might also consider a Camp Getaway experience. We have limited opportunities in the summer, and then into the fall.

17) What activities will be available this year?

We'll do our best to modify and make the beloved camp activities available to your campers. We won't, however, offer food-based activities (sorry, no rainbow bread!). Arts and crafts, swimming, boating, nature-based activities, outdoor improv/drama - just to name a few. We're also working at adapting large group games that we can play across camp in COVID-friendly ways that we're pretty excited about!