

# 2024 Summer Camp Family & Camper Handbook



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*[Rec.rochesternh.gov](http://Rec.rochesternh.gov)*

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2/28/24

**Summer Camp Overview**

At Rochester Rec, we believe the recipe for a great summer is simple: provide a safe environment, and keep kids outside, active and having fun! Role model staff engage campers in a day full of outdoor activities, games, swimming, and occasional enrichment activities. Camp takes place rain or shine (See “Inclement Weather”). For over 60 years, Rec Camp has provided generations of Rochester youth with positive childhood experiences and a sense of belonging. We look forward to welcoming Rochester families, old and new, into this community tradition!

**Camp Age Requirements**

Age	Requirements
6 Year Olds	Must have completed 1 <sup>st</sup> grade
12 Year Olds	Must be 12 on the first day of camp. Must meet the expectations of “Camp Leaders” – See “Camp Leader Expectations”

**Camp Locations - All camps will be based out of the Rec Dept. at the Foley Community Center**

Sign In/Out Location: Athletic Field next to the Foley Community Center

Sign In/Out Rain Location: Rochester Recreation Dept. Gym along the side of the Foley Community Center nearest the Athletic Field.

Photos of specific sign in/sign out locations will be shared with families via email.

**A Typical Camp Day****Schedule**

Pre-Camp 7:30am-9:00am    Camp 9:00am-4:00pm    Post Camp 4:00pm-5:30pm

**Pre-Camp**

While most campers are signed into their camp headquarters between 8:45-9:00am, parents/guardians who need an earlier option may drop their children off beginning at 7:30am. This first hour and a half of the day is designated as “Pre-Camp” and consists of unstructured free play. Campers are supervised by camp staff but play during Pre-Camp is child-driven. *The intention of Pre-Camp is to offer early arrivals the opportunity to gradually ease into the active camp day.*

**Camp**

The traditional camp day takes place from 9:00am-4:00pm. Camp is held outdoors, except for inclement weather or excessive heat/humidity. Much of the camp day will consist of structured activities including, but not limited to, sports, arts and crafts and creative, age-appropriate games and enrichment activities. Each day campers will enjoy designated swim time at the Hanson Pines outdoor pool. Field trips to NH bodies of water typically happen 4 times per year.

**Post-Camp**

The structured activities of camp end at 4:00pm and Post-Camp begins. This portion of the day is like Pre-Camp, consisting of free play and camper-generated activities.

**Sign-In**

Each camp group will host Sign-In at their designated camp headquarters. When a parent/guardian drops their camper off in the morning, they must connect with the counselor/sign-in person and initial/write the time on the Sign-In sheet next to their camper’s name.

- **Drop off is not permitted prior to 7:30am –AND—a counselor must be present.** Parents/guardians are not allowed to leave campers alone at camp sites. Parents/guardians that leave a child without signing in will be called to come back and sign-in. This may result in removal from camp.
- Campers and parents/guardians must show counselors that they have all necessary items (See “What to Bring to Camp”) before being signed into camp. If a camper is signed into camp without all the necessary camp items, parents/guardians will be called and will be expected to bring such items to camp immediately.
- If a camper needs to be dropped off at camp after 9:00am, the parent/guardian must discuss this ahead of time with a counselor (See “Calling in a Planned Absence or Late Arrival”).
- Campers are not allowed to sign themselves in.
- Campers attending summer school must be brought to camp for normal sign-in procedures by their Parent/Guardian or Authorized Pickup/Emergency Contact. Having the summer school bus drop campers off at camp will not be permitted.

### Being Prepared at Sign-In

To ensure a safe, fun, and healthy day for campers, the following items must be brought to camp each day. Camp staff are trained to check for the “Sign-In Essentials” each morning. If campers do not have the following items with them at Sign-In, camp staff will not let them sign into camp for the day. Parents/guardians will not be able to sign their child in and will be asked to return with their camper and all necessary items. Discretion is up to camp staff as to what suffices as the appropriate materials for Sign-In, and we ask that parents/guardians respectfully follow their direction. Please note that camp staff are following the instructions given during their training by department administration.

#### Sign-In Essentials - THE BIG 4!

- 1) Water bottle with camper’s name on it
- 2) Sunscreen with camper’s name on it
- 3) Lots of snacks
- 4) Sneakers (flip-flops, slides, crocs, and sandals are **not** allowed, except on the pool deck). A doctor’s note would allow for an exception.

### Sign-Out

Each camp group will host Sign-Out at their designated camp headquarters. When picking their camper up from camp, parents/guardians must connect with the Camp Director or counselor and initial/write the time on the Sign-Out sheet next to their camper’s name.

- **Only people listed on the camper’s registration form under Parent/Guardian and Authorized Pickup/Emergency Contact will be allowed to sign a camper out.**
- All people signing a camper out must have a proper photo ID. Counselors will verify this ID against the registration form.
- Changes to Parent/Guardian and Authorized Pickup and Emergency Contact lists must be made in the Recreation Office by someone already listed as a Parent/Guardian. A photo ID must be brought to the Recreation Office to make any such changes. Changes will NOT be accepted via telephone or email.
- The Recreation Department does not participate in the coordination of specific sign-out days, sign-out times or any other special arrangements as part of any parent/guardian custody agreement or any other custodial document(s), etc. All individuals listed on the Authorized Pickup/Emergency Contact are eligible for Sign-Out with a photo ID at any given day or time and are also eligible to receive a call as an Emergency Contact.
- Sign-Out hours take place during the post-camp hours of 4:00-5:30pm. If a camper is going to be leaving camp before 4:00 on a specific day, counselors must be made aware of the schedule change while the parent/guardian is signing in the camper. This allows counselors to advise parents/guardians as to the best pick-up location—since campers may be at the pool or inside when the parent/guardian arrives.
- Campers are not allowed to sign themselves out.

**Camper Expectations**

**Is Camp a Good Fit For Your Camper?**

The following list highlights the skills that help a child have a healthy, happy camp experience. If you feel that your child is not a good candidate for camp or may not be able to do these things independently, please connect with Recreation staff who can provide information and resources to attend this camp or for additional summer experience opportunities in the area.

**A Happy Rochester Rec Summer Camper...**

- Follows instruction in a large group dynamic
- Is willing to participate in group games and group-oriented activities
- Enjoys being outdoors
- Likes to swim and be around the pool
- Works well with others in both small and large groups
- Enjoys walking and being physically active
- Can apply sunscreen independently
- Can independently change in and out of clothes/swim attire
- Understands the concept of respect for self and others
- Uses appropriate language
- Uses bathroom independently
- Comfortably engages in a full camp day without taking a nap

**Additional Camper Support**

We understand that some children may need additional support to meet the list above. While we do not provide one on one support staff to campers, we welcome campers who will be accompanied by a support person from an established agency or privately hired by the family. To explore this collaboration or for additional resources, please contact Assistant Director Steve at [Steve.trepanier@rochesternh.gov](mailto:Steve.trepanier@rochesternh.gov).

**Late Fees**

***Campers must be picked up no later than 5:30pm.*** Parents/guardians ***will*** be charged a late fee for any pickup after 5:30pm. Time is kept by the counselor’s watch. Starting at 5:31, parents will be charged \$10 per 15 minutes that they are late. Late fees are charged per individual camper. A written Late Fee Notice may be sent home the next camp day with the camper. All late fees are due no later than a week after the late pick up. Late fees must be paid in the Recreation Office by cash or by a check made out to the City of Rochester. Counselors are not allowed to accept late fee payments at their camp site. If a camper is picked up late three times, dismissal from camp will be considered by administrative staff. **Failure to pay late fees will prevent future participation in all Rochester Recreation & Arena programs and activities.**

<b>Late Fee Examples</b>	
Late pick up between 5:31pm-5:45pm	\$10 Late Fee Per Camper
Late pick up between 5:46-6pm	\$20 Late Fee Per Camper
Late pick up between 6:01-6:15	\$30 Late Fee Per Camper

***...and so on...***

**Calling in an Absence or Late Arrival**

Keeping campers safe is our number one priority. To help us achieve this, we have implemented the practice of requiring that parents notify us if a camper is going to miss camp. **If a camper has not been signed in by 9:30am, and we have not received notification of a planned absence or late arrival, the parent or guardian will be called to confirm absence.** Early notification should be made via email to rochesterrec@rochesternh.gov. Parents and guardians may also call the Rec Office as soon as possible at 603-332-4120 in situations where they are unable to send an email. Telling a counselor or camp director is not sufficient to plan an absence. If you know your child will be periodically absent throughout the summer, please let the Rec Supervisor know at the beginning of camp. Communication is key to safety and allows for better workflow.

**Planned Absence**

Parents/guardians must inform us of planned absences as far in advance as possible.

**Planned Late Arrival**

Camper Sign-In is from 7:30am-9:00am. Sign-ins after 9:00am will be considered a late arrival. We strongly prefer that campers are on time so that we can start our fun day of activities, but we understand that late arrivals are sometimes unavoidable. Late arrivals will not be allowed on field trip days. **Buses leave at 8:30am on field trip days – Thursday, July 18, Thursday, August 1 and Thursday, August 15.**

**Inclement Weather**

Rochester Recreation Summer Camp makes every effort to keep campers active and outdoors. In the event of inclement weather, camp will take place indoors. Sign-In and Sign-Out locations will be at each camp's Rain Location if a "rain day" is declared. Please check your rain location if no campers or staff are at the normal Sign In/Sign Out location. The Rain Location will be along the side of the Foley Community Center nearest the lower athletic field.

**Bathroom Facilities**

Campers will be escorted in groups or pairs by a counselor to use the facilities. Regular bathroom breaks will be worked into the daily camp schedule. Please review "Camper Expectations" for more information.

**Walking Trips**

Camp staff may plan in-town walking trips to explore what Rochester has to offer from hikes, museums, tours, shows, and a few surprises. Parents/guardians will be reminded of these trips in the days leading up to them. On these days, campers should still bring all necessary camp items (See "What to Bring to Camp"). On Walking Trip days, all campers must be signed into camp by 9:00am.

**Free Swim**

Weather permitting, Rec Summer Camp will have a designated swim time each day. All campers will utilize the Hanson Pines Pool. Campers will have the opportunity to use the bathhouse located at the pool to change into their swimwear. The bathhouse and pool area are closed to the public during designated camp swim times. Camp counselors and Rec Dept certified lifeguards will supervise children during swim time. All campers must follow all posted pool rules during this time.

**Swim Test**

To ensure the safety of campers during swim time, all children are required to take a swim test facilitated by Rec Dept Lifeguards before using the pool. Lifeguards will use the results of the swim test to determine which part of the pool swimmers may safely utilize...shallow end or deep end.

**Part 1**

The individual must swim 2 widths of the pool without stopping or touching the bottom of the pool while swimming front crawl. When swimming front crawl, the individual's arms must come all the way out of the water for every stroke.

## **Part 2**

When a camper successfully completes Part 1, they must tread water in the 5 ft area for 60 seconds without having their head go underwater.

The results of the swim test only apply for the pool at which the swim test was taken. Example: If the test is passed at the East Rochester Pool before summer camp begins, the camper will need to take the test again at the Hanson Pines Pool or the Gonic Pool. The same goes for the Gonic Pool. It is up to the lifeguard's discretion whether the swimmer passes or fails. Lifeguards and pool staff also reserve the right to revoke a swimmer's privilege to use the deeper end of the pool.

## **What to Bring to Camp**

### **Backpack or Tote Bag**

Most campers will bring their "Sign-In Essentials" in a backpack or tote bag each day. Backpacks are encouraged, as campers will walk to various locations at their campsite and backpacks are easier to carry. *All clothing and personal articles should be clearly marked with your child's first and last name.*

### **Camp Appropriate Clothing**

Campers will spend most of the day outside, moving around. Clothing should be comfortable. Clothing will get dirty throughout the day, so casual play clothes are recommended. T-shirts and shorts are encouraged. Full coverage shirts are encouraged over sleeveless shirts to better protect campers from the sun. Weather can change hour to hour, so we encourage dressing in layers and bringing a sweatshirt or windbreaker in case it gets chilly.

### **Footwear**

Campers should be wearing sneakers when they arrive at camp. Sneakers are required every day, as camp is very active. ***Sandals, slides, crocs, or any type of open-toed shoes are not allowed at camp.*** Flip flops may be worn on the pool deck only and should be kept in the camper's backpack throughout the rest of the day. Weather permitting, campers will go swimming daily so a properly fitting bathing suit should be brought to camp each day. It is highly recommended to pack an extra, clean change of clothes in your camper's bag each day.

### **Water Bottle**

All campers must bring a refillable water bottle (larger than a 12-20 oz bottle) to camp each day labeled with their first and last name. Days can be long and hot, and more fluids are necessary under these circumstances. There will be a water source for re-fills, but we ask that campers bring a full bottle for the start of each day. Soda and energy drinks are highly discouraged!

### **Sunscreen**

For the safety of our campers, please apply sunscreen before coming to camp. Campers will be expected to have sun block with them at camp to re-apply throughout the day. Camp staff will remind campers to reapply sun block every hour. Per department policy, counselors are not allowed to apply sunblock to campers. Spray sunscreens are typically easier for campers to reapply during the day. If the child refuses to use sunscreen, parents/guardians will be notified to pick up their child immediately.

### **Swimsuit and Towel**

Weather permitting, campers will swim each day and play various games that may include water. Campers who choose to swim in the pool must wear a swimsuit. We recommend swimsuits that are comfortable for active play and easy for a camper to put on and take off independently. Drying off with a towel helps to keep campers comfortable for the remainder of the day. Campers may also choose to use their towel as a picnic blanket for snack and mealtime.

### **Hair & Jewelry**

Campers who have hair that is long enough to be tied back, must wear it tied back each day to camp. Tying one's hair back also helps to prevent entrapment (getting caught in something) and allows for staff to clearly see a camper's face to assess wellbeing, especially when in the pool. Campers should not wear any long or dangly jewelry that may be a safety issue to themselves or others during camp activities.

### **Lunches & Snacks**

The camp day can be long, active, and tiring; therefore, healthy, nutritious food choices are very important for campers. The following information will help parents and guardians provide their campers with adequate snack and lunch options. Pack food in a well-insulated container or cooler. There is no refrigerator or microwave available for lunch/snack storage and preparation. Include a sandwich or main food item for your camper to have at lunch. Oftentimes, when parents/guardians pack only snack items, campers finish all their items at snack time before lunch begins. Talk with your camper prior to camp beginning about your lunch/snack/dietary expectations for them. If you have specific expectations for your camper about what they should and should not eat, please explain this to them. Counselors are asked only to remind campers of parental expectations with snacks and lunches. Pack several snack items in addition to a complete lunch. Counselors will plan snack breaks throughout the day.

### **Summer Meals Program**

All campers are eligible for free breakfast and lunch through the federal Summer Food Service Program offered by Community Action Partnership of Strafford County (CAPSC). This program follows USDA guidelines to provide healthy, nutritious meals to children during the summer months. Campers who take part in this program still must bring lots of additional snacks and a water bottle each day. Please note that the lunch is small and extra snacks are recommended.

### **Camp Leader Expectations (12 Year Olds)**

Twelve-year-olds play an important role at Roch Rec Summer Camp and are designated as official Camp Leaders. As the "older kids" at camp, Camp Leaders assume the responsibility of modeling positive behavior through our camp's Guiding Principles. With the support and guidance of experienced camp staff, Camp Leaders will assist with tasks and projects throughout the camp day. Camp Leaders will be held to a high standard of behavior and positive leadership.

#### **Camp Leaders will...**

- Always model positive behavior
- Be open minded, eager, and willing to learn from staff
- Enrich the camp environment
- Positively engage with all other campers and staff

### **Camp Rules**

All campers are expected to behave in a safe, responsible, respectful manner toward themselves and others. This will be demonstrated by listening to the directions of recreation staff, remaining within designated camp boundaries, and embracing the following Roch Rec Dept values. Counselors will reflect on and refer to these ideals daily with campers to consistently remind them of these expectations. In alignment with the Rochester School District, Rochester Rec Summer Camp parents/guardians, campers and staff commit to practicing and embracing the following guiding principles:

- **Be Safe.**
- **Be Responsible.**
- **Be Respectful.**

### **Positive Behavior**

Staff will design and implement various incentive initiatives throughout the summer that will reinforce positive behaviors and share them with the camp community. Examples of how our three guiding principles can be demonstrated throughout the camp day are:

Be Safe.	Keeping hands and feet to self. Using equipment and play materials responsibly. Stay in designated areas. Follow proper personal hygiene guidelines.
Be Responsible.	Following rules of the game/activity. Listening to adult directions. Cleaning up after activities and meals. Reporting problems to adults.
Be Respectful	Using kind words and tone with others. Looking at and listening to peers and adults when they're speaking. Sharing equipment and play materials.

### **Yellow Cards**

The Rochester Recreation Summer Camp uses a system of “yellow cards” to address, track and modify challenges with camper’s behavior. If a camper’s behavior creates problems for themselves, other campers or staff, a yellow card may be issued. Staff will complete the yellow card with the camper’s name, a brief description of the issue and a brief description of the follow-up action taken. The counselor who completes the yellow card will have a conversation with the camper to address the concern and ways to better handle the situation that warranted the yellow card. A copy of the yellow card is given to the Recreation Supervisor who then reviews each behavior incident and follows up as appropriate to each situation. It is assumed that most difficulties will be resolved through limit clarification and redirection with no further need for disciplinary action. Please note that behavior issues and yellow cards are not simply managed by quantity, but rather each situation is reviewed individually for severity and how it impacted the overall environment of safety, respect, and responsibility at camp. Repeated yellow cards may warrant a conversation with the parent/guardian and possible suspension or dismissal from camp.

### **Camp Suspensions and Dismissals**

Every effort will be made to ensure that campers have an enjoyable experience at camp. In extreme cases, a child may need a day out of camp to regroup. If a camper receives a temporary suspension from camp, parents/guardians will be called and asked to pick their child up. Campers will be removed from the group setting and will wait with staff until their parent/guardian has arrived. In some situations, the active group environment of summer camp is not an ideal fit for a child. If it becomes obvious from a child’s behavior that a different setting other than the Recreation Summer Camp is required, parents/guardians will be notified. Refunds for camp time missed due to behavior-based suspensions and dismissals will not be granted. If a camper is removed from camp, they may not be eligible to return the following summer.

### **Parent/Guardian and Staff Communications**

Rochester Recreation believes that a successful summer experience requires a relationship of respect between staff and parents/guardians. Demonstrating positive adult interactions is crucial for setting healthy examples for all campers. Communication between parents/guardians and camp counselors is expected to be appropriate and professional. If a parent/guardian is communicating in a hostile, disrespectful manner to camp staff, proper follow-up will take place by recreation administrative staff and the child could be removed from camp. If a parent/guardian has concerns, questions or feedback that may result in a high stress conversation, they are strongly encouraged to bring them directly to the Recreation Office so that they may meet with the Recreation Supervisor and/or Assistant Director. Our number one goal in parent/guardian and staff communication is to ensure a safe, comfortable, healthy environment for all involved.

**NOTE:** It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to be accessible by phone during the camp day to ensure that we can make contact for any camper needs. It is also the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to update the office of any changes to their contact information as soon as they are changed. Information on updates to contact information is outlined under “Sign Out.” Failure to update contact information may result in dismissal from camp.



## **What to Leave at Home**

### **Toys, Games & Electronics**

At Summer Camp, we want campers to have a fun, socially and physically engaging experience. Use of individual toys, games and electronic devices can prevent campers from socializing with one another and living 'in the moment' of their camp experience. If such items are found, the parent/guardian will be called, and items will need to be picked up immediately. Counselors cannot take possession of any items found.

### **Examples of what to leave at home:**

- Toys (cars, trading cards, marbles, Legos, drawing tablets, crayons, markers, stuffed animals, figurines, etc.)
- Games (handheld, fidget spinners, dungeons and dragons, magic, uno, phase ten, poker chips, etc.)
- Electronics (cell phones, mp3 players, DS, iPad, etc.)

### **Cell Phones**

Counselors have department issued cell phones that will be used during the camp day. Parents/guardians may choose to send their children with cell phones in the event of an emergency coming to or after leaving camp. Campers with cell phones are responsible for keeping them in their backpacks. They are not permitted to use them while at camp. If this policy is violated, parents/guardians will be called. The parent/guardian will be given the choice to pick up the cell phone immediately or have the child hold it in his/her backpack for the remainder of the day. Counselors are not allowed to take possession of the item.

### **Lost, Broken or Stolen Items**

*Rochester Recreation is not responsible for broken, lost or stolen items.* Under no circumstances will counselors take possession of or be responsible for items brought to camp. If an item is broken, lost, or stolen, please report it to the camp counselor immediately. An incident report will be filled out and turned in to the Recreation Office. Each incident will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### **Maintaining a Healthy Camp**

We must take reasonable steps to reduce and control the spread of communicable diseases within the camp population. Campers should not attend camp if they are sick or have a communicable disease. Depending on the circumstances, a doctor or health care provider note may be required to return to camp. Please help us keep our campers and staff healthy - if your camper is not feeling well, keep them at home.

Regarding communicable diseases, it is important that parents stay vigilant and help us keep a healthy camp environment for our campers, our staff and everyone's families. We will continue to follow best practices as recommended by the CDC and will work with families on a case-by-case basis to ensure that everyone has a safe, healthy summer.

### **Medication Policy**

While medication should ideally be administered at home, we recognize that it is sometimes necessary for a participant to receive medication during camp. Please contact Recreation Supervisor Jeff Turgeon at [Jeffrey.turgeon@rochesternh.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.turgeon@rochesternh.gov) to receive the appropriate forms to complete and return for Camp Staff and Admin Team Staff to provide the medication. Any emergency medication, like EpiPens and inhalers, must be indicated during the camp registration process, which will be reviewed by administrative staff prior to camp starting. Approved emergency medications will be kept in camper's backpack, clearly labeled with their name and instructions for use. Supporting documentation/prescription is required.

**Stay Informed This Summer!**

A fun, healthy summer camp experience relies on teamwork and communication between staff and parents/guardians. To ensure a positive experience for all, Rochester Recreation encourages parents/guardians to utilize the following information to stay in touch and informed about camp and department happenings throughout the summer. Day to day communications pertaining to each camper individually will take place between parents/guardians and camp staff at Sign-In and Sign-Out.

**Camp Updates**

Information can quickly change these days! This summer, we will once again use “Camp Updates” notices to keep families informed on fun camp happenings and updates/reminders on camp routines or rules. Prior to camp starting, these updates will be sent via email to registered camp families. During the summer, email will remain our primary mode of communication with these updates.

**Camp Tuition Refunds**

Our staff values participant feedback about camp and we always try to find fair, appropriate solutions to any challenges that may arise. It is our hope and expectation that parents/guardians will communicate concerns about camp to staff prior to requesting a tuition refund so that we may explore various solutions to their concerns. If a situation occurs that causes a parent/guardian to request a refund, such requests must be submitted to the Recreation Supervisor in writing. All refund requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and require a meeting between the parent/guardian(s) and the Recreation Supervisor. For refund requests that are approved, no cash refunds are given, and distribution of a refund check will take up to 4-6 weeks to be processed and mailed. If you paid by credit/debit card, it should take less time for the refund.

**Recreation Department Location and Contact Information**

**Rec Office Location:** The Recreation Office is located inside of the James W. Foley Memorial Community Center. If you need to come to the office, please use the doorbell located to the right of the Recreation Department Main Entrance doors. Recreation staff will let you in.

**Recreation Office Phone:** 603-332-4120

**Department Website:** [Rec.RochesterNH.gov](http://Rec.RochesterNH.gov)

**Department Facebook:** Rochester NH Recreation & Arena

**Department Instagram:** rochester\_rec

**Staff Contact:**

During the summer, we encourage families to communicate with their Camp Directors with any suggestions, concerns or general feedback. Questions or concerns regarding summer camp should be directed to:

Jeff Turgeon

Recreation Supervisor

[Jeffrey.Turgeon@rochesternh.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Turgeon@rochesternh.gov)

(603) 332-4120

**Subject to Change**

Please note that while we do the best that we can to cover all topics and questions in this handbook, the policies outlined here are subject to change.