

A group of approximately ten children, mostly in teal t-shirts, are posing on a large rock. They exhibit various playful and expressive behaviors: one girl at the top left has her hands near her ears with a pouting face; a girl next to her sticks her tongue out; a boy in the center sticks his tongue out with a grimace; a boy on the right is laughing with his mouth wide open; and a boy in the foreground is crouching with his hands covering his eyes. The background shows a brick building and green trees.

# Mountaineers Summer Camp Volunteer Handbook 2015-2016



## **Overview**

The Mountaineers offers summer day camps at multiple locations. Each camp has a slightly different theme and schedule, but all of them enroll individual youth between the ages of 5 and 13. Youth sign up for a week at a time. It takes teamwork, flexibility, and clear roles to run Summer Camp successfully. Below you will find basic descriptions of the major roles of the camp staff. Because there are a variety of roles volunteers can play with summer camp, this handbook is designed to give an overview of important procedures for our camps. The camp director will orient volunteers to their specific roles and responsibilities.

## **Roles**

### **Camp Director**

The Camp Director is the direct supervisor of the Camp Coordinator, Summer Camp staff, and volunteers. This person will serve as the primary point of contact to Summer Camp families and will create the schedule and groupings for each week of camp. The Camp Director will also keep inventory of camp supplies and assist with any issues that arise during the camp day.

### **Camp Coordinator**

The Camp Coordinator will provide logistical support throughout the summer. This person will be responsible for managing camp supplies and curriculum materials, setting up the facility for daily activities, getting organized for the upcoming camp week, and filling in as needed to support camper groups.

### **Summer Camp Staff**

Summer Camp staff will lead each camp group and hold primary responsibility for the safety of their group. They will be the lead on teaching curriculum, setting behavior expectations, and monitoring transition times during the camp day. Staff should work with volunteers and find ways to use them to their fullest potential.

### **Volunteers**

The role of a volunteer is to support the Summer Camp staff by helping in a specific curriculum role (belaying, teaching how to use a camp stove, facilitating an art project, etc) or by working individually with campers who are having a difficult time, helping walk with the group between activities, and acting as a runner during the day (example: get more sunscreen from the supply room). Volunteers are encouraged to connect with campers and help each kid feel like part of the group.

## **Policies**

### **Electronics**

Cell phones, music and video games are typically not a part of the Summer Camp program. They detract from the outdoor experience and from the community. Youth are encouraged to leave all electronics out of sight (or at home) during Mountaineers programs. The Mountaineers is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronics.

### **Weapons**

Weapons, which include knives with blades longer than 3", are never permitted on any Summer Camp activity. Youth who are found with weapons will have the weapon confiscated by Mountaineers Staff and will be dismissed from the program without refund. Youth dismissed from the program for possession of a weapon may return the following year on a probationary basis.

### **Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco**

Drugs (including marijuana), alcohol and tobacco are never permitted on any Summer Camp activity. Youth who have or are under the influence of these will be sent home immediately and dismissed from the program without refund. Youth dismissed from the program for possession of drugs, alcohol or tobacco may return the following year on a probationary basis.

### **Medication**

Medication prescribed by a licensed medical professional must be reported to The Mountaineers using the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form. This information will be shared with chaperones who are leading any trip that the youth is participating in. If the doctor does *not* authorize the youth to self-administer, the medication will be kept with adult chaperones, who will administer the medication according to the doctor's orders. All controlled medication and medication requiring hypodermic needle administration (with the exception of EpiPens which may be carried by the youth) must be stored with Mountaineers Staff or designated volunteer leaders. All medication must be current and kept in its original bottle.

Over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antacids or topical antibiotics may be kept by youth participants in their personal first aid kits. These medications

should be listed on the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form and kept in a clearly marked container with expiration date.

Mountaineers staff and volunteers may carry over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antihistamine, antacids or topical antibiotics. Staff and volunteer leaders may provide these medications to youth as needed unless otherwise indicated on the youth's health form. All medication administration will be recorded in a notebook in the first aid kit.

### **Medical Clearance**

Summer campers spend a lot of time in outdoor areas and on technical terrain, where group safety is paramount. In some instances, Mountaineers Staff may require medical clearance and/or instructions from a licensed medical professional in order for a youth to participate in the program. Examples include but are not limited to: injuries, surgery, eating disorders, psychological & nervous disorders, developmental disorders, heart conditions, diabetes. Mountaineers Staff will disclose this information only to the people who need to have it in order to maintain a safe environment. In some cases, Mountaineers Staff may, at their discretion, forbid participation in an activity if they feel the circumstances of the trip make it too difficult to safely manage the participant's medical needs or limitations.

### **Volunteers**

Our summer campers rely on volunteers to provide the best possible mentorship to help them develop technical skills, leadership skills and competence in the outdoors. All volunteers play a vital role in the success of our program. THANK YOU for volunteering!

### **Food**

Volunteers should plan to bring their own lunches and snacks.

### **Dogs**

Dogs are not allowed at any Summer Camp activity.

### **Things to Know**

We have a strict "no drugs, alcohol or tobacco" policy that we ask all volunteers to adhere to while you're volunteering.

Please use appropriate language and keep comments and stories "PG", even if you are only talking to other adult volunteers. We are committed to a diverse and inclusive program. This means that we welcome participants and volunteers of all backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnicities, vocations, family models and lifestyles. We ask that volunteers and staff

acknowledge this diversity and refrain from conversations that may be perceived as offensive to others.

### Qualified Youth Leader

All Summer Camp volunteers must be Qualified Youth Leaders. To do this, visit [www.mountaineers.org/QYLtraining](http://www.mountaineers.org/QYLtraining).

### Planning and Arrival

Volunteers should register as an instructor on our website. You will receive an email from the camp director in advance of the program, confirming your availability and providing any details about timing and what to bring.

### A note about the use of photos

Because some families prefer not to have photos of their children publicly available, and because some of the youth in our programs come from unstable home situations, we need to be sensitive about not posting photos in public forums. It's important that photos ONLY be shared with the group participants and Mountaineers Staff. Mountaineers Staff will only use photos of youth whose parents have granted permission to use their photos.

## **Procedures and Protocol**

At Summer Camp we take many precautions to ensure the safety of our campers. Below you will find descriptions of our procedures and protocol that help keep our campers safe and happy.

### **Forms and Paperwork**

Every summer camper must have on file our standard Health and Permission to Treat Form, as well as any pertinent medication authorization forms (including permission to apply sunscreen). Other forms we require for summer camp include:

- Health and Permission to Treat Form – parents give basic medical history for their child, including red flags and allergies, and sign a statement granting health care providers permission to treat the child in an emergency even if we cannot reach the parents. **It is important that this form is quickly accessible to hand to a medical professional should an accident or injury occur.**
- Youth Programs Waiver, including photo release
- Authorized Pick-up Form – parents designate specific people who are authorized to pick up their child at the end of a camp day. Mountaineers staff and volunteers must ensure

(and may check ID) that we release campers only to those people designated on the child's authorized pick-up form

- Field Trip Permission – parents sign that they understand where we are going on our field trip and give permission for their child(ren) to attend
- Special Circumstances – parents list any confidential circumstances or needs their child has. Parents also specifically designate who this information may be disclosed to, and it is critical that our staff and volunteers honor those requests.
- Disaster Preparedness Form – parents list an out of state contact and any medical circumstances we may need to know in the event that we must care for their child for an extended period of time due to a natural disaster such as an earthquake.

It is important that summer camp leaders have read the forms submitted by the parents and file them in a way that they are accessible. They can be found at [www.mountaineers.org/summercampforms](http://www.mountaineers.org/summercampforms)

### **Missing Camper Protocol**

After counting your kids, if you are missing a camper, radio to the Camp Director

- Say “Code Black (name of child): This signals to everyone to check their group for said missing camper
- If you have missing camper, radio into everyone saying “Code Black name of child cleared, they are here with me”
- If no one has child, the Camp Director will tell everyone to go to a common meeting area where we will do a large group camp count, we'll have one adult who stays with group and Counselors will go check their area
- After you check your area, radio in “Area clear” and wait for the Camp Director to assign you a new area to go check
- Once you find child, radio in to say “Code Black name of child cleared, they are here with me”, The Camp Director will tell you where to bring child to meet everyone
- All camp will meet at a designated location once the code is cleared

Camps are often spread out in a large area, so it's important to COUNT YOUR KIDS often. This will ensure that you do not lose a child. Make sure that bathroom procedures are clear and that kids don't wander off alone. Volunteers and staff should work together to ensure camper safety.

Pro tips:

- Come up with a fun count off

- Assign roles to each kids (water, lunch, sunscreen, etc) so that each kids feels like they have an important role in the group

### **Waterfront Procedures**

During summer camp we sometimes use public waterfronts. Even when waterfronts provide lifeguards, we provide additional watchers for our camp on shore. It's very important to know where you campers are and who their buddies are, as there will be other camps and families swimming at the same time.

### **Watchers**

As a watcher, your role is to count the people in your area, and make note of anyone who seems to be having trouble. If anyone is in distress, notify a lifeguard immediately. Do not let campers distract you as a watcher. If a camper is insistent on interacting with you, notify the Camp Director via the radio and we can assist that camper to move somewhere else.

Every 15 minutes, watchers will switch with someone on the shore.

### **Buddy Checks**

Every camper in the swim area will buddy up with someone in the group during lunch time, including campers who choose not to swim. The counselors will write down the buddies and hand these to the Summer Camp Director at the beginning of swim period.

Buddies need to be within two body lengths of their buddy at all times. Buddies can only go to the deep end if both campers have passed the swim test.

We will randomly check with all campers where their buddy is. If you suspect a camper is missing, find their buddy to check with them first.

### **Staff and Volunteers on the shore**

Counselors who are not watchers will be on the shore playing with the kids. They are responsible for taking youth to the bathroom, checking with buddy pairs on shore, and make sure folks are staying in the boundaries of the swim area. These folks will switch with the watchers every 15 minutes.

### **When Leaving the Waterfront**

All campers must be accounted for before any group leaves the waterfront.

## **Transportation Vigilance**

Most of our camps involve some kind of transportation – whether a ferry ride over to our Kitsap Property or a bus trip for a mid-week field trip. When transporting large groups of kids, it's easy to leave someone behind who is in the bathroom, or ran back to get an item they forgot. It is critical that staff and volunteers have systems in place to account for all kids at both ends of the transportation. At both ends of the trip, take attendance by name (not just a head count) to ensure that every kid is on the bus or ferry and every kid gets off.