

Parent Information Guide



Discovery Day Camp



Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to another fantastic summer with the Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation Discovery Day Camp. Our staff is ready for a fun and exciting summer!

Thank you for enrolling your child(ren) in the upcoming camp session at Discovery Day Camp. We're excited to have your family join our DDC family, and hope your child enjoys participating in the program as much as we enjoy running it!

Attached is the Discovery Day Camp handbook. Please make sure to read through and sign this handbook, as it provides relevant information for the Camp programs.

All paperwork must be filled out electronically on CampDoc two weeks prior to your camper attending camp. An email will be sent to the primary email address on file to complete the paperwork.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about our Summer Camp programs, please do not hesitate to contact us directly. We look forward to providing your child with a safe and fun summer!

Sincerely,
The Staff of DDC
discoverydaycamp@valpo.us





OUR STAFF

It is our goal to be available to answer questions or address concerns. You may contact us via phone number or email. Our Youth Enrichment Director's information is below:

Youth Enrichment Director: Katie Ridinger: 219-462-5144 ext. 6314 kridinger@valpo.us

On Site Co-Directors: TBD

Counselors attend an orientation and CPR/AED/First Aid training. All staff have completed an extensive camp training in preparation for camp that included topics on safety and curriculum development.

CAMP LOCATION

Rogers-Lakewood Park: 5320 N Campbell Street, Valparaiso; Discovery Day Camp Shelter

In the event of inclement weather, camp will be held at *Cooks Corners Elementary (358 Bullseye Lake Rd, Valparaiso, IN 46383. Door K)*. Please check our main valpoparks.org website for the alert center banner, our 2023 Discovery Day Camp Facebook Group, or your email for important messages via Camp Doc.

2023 SUMMER DAY CAMP SESSIONS

Below are the eight weeks in which DDC is in session and the themes for that week.

Week 1: Mystery Incorporated | June 5-9

Week 2: Holiday Week | June 12-16

Week 3: H2O | June 19-23

Week 4: Olympics + Soccerfest | June 26-30

Week 5: Science Lab | July 5 – 7

Week 6: Wild West | July 10-14

Week 7: The Great Outdoors | July 17-21

Week 8: Curtain Call | July 24 – 27

REGISTRATION

Registration for camp is a weekly registration. Parents may choose to register their child for one week at a time or may choose to register for multiple weeks at one time. ***Please note your first week's payment of camp does not ensure your child's spot for the duration of the summer. You will need to register for each week of camp your child plans to attend.***

NEW: The registration deadline for camp is **5:00pm the Tuesday prior** to your child starting a new week of camp. For example, registration for Week 2 should be completed by the Tuesday of Week 1 by 5:00 p.m. A \$15 fee will be added when registering the week of camp. This also applies to AM care.

Registrations can be made online at www.valpoparks.org, in person at the Valpo Parks office, 3210 Campbell Street or by phone: 219-462-5144.

NEW: COUNSELORS IN TRAINING

The Counselors in Training (CIT) Leadership program is designed to teach campers (grades 6-8) the basics of project management, leadership skills and child development. CITs will lead groups of younger campers in activities with the assistance of DDC counselors. This group will also participate in CIT only activities at camp. CITs are still considered campers.

Discovery Day Camp Camper groups based on Fall 2023 Enrollment:

Voyagers	Kindergarten
Explorers	1st Grade
Navigators	2nd Grade
Pioneers	3rd Grade
Trailblazers	4th Grade
Jr. Rangers	5th Grade
Counselors in Training (CIT)	6th,7th & 8th grade

CAMPER FORMS

There are five forms that you are required to complete and return to camp prior to the first day.

1. Health History & Emergency Form
2. Photo Release & Authorized Pick-Up Form
3. Medication Dispense Form (if needed)
4. Agreement signed by parent & camper

For your child’s safety, these forms **must** be completed two weeks before the first day of camp. Any medication needed during camp (ie: inhaler, Epipen) must have the medication form completed and given to the Camp Director before it is dispensed. These forms will need to be filled out online. A link will be sent to the primary email address on the account.

DROP-OFF/RELEASE OF CHILDREN

You will receive a rectangle parking pass on your camper’s first day of camp. Passes can also be obtained from the Valpo Parks main office by request. Display this pass in the front windshield of your vehicle to alert the park Gate Attendants that you are there to pick up/drop off your child.

Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures

- All parents will drive to the Discovery Camp Shelter and wait in the line of cars for drop off and pick-up.
- Parents will show a valid ID to the counselors by the gate to gain access to the parking lot.
- Camp Directors will check out campers as they are picked up.
- Drop-off and pick-up will occur every day at Discovery Day Camp Shelter from **8:45 a.m. -9:30am for drop-off** and **pick-up begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends no later than 5:00 p.m.**
- Extended A.M. care is from **6:30 a.m – 8:30am.**
- If you are dropping off or picking up outside of the specified times, please allow extra time and we will do our best to assist you as soon as possible. When able, communicate with Camp Director for such arrangements.



Other Information

- Please drive with caution through Rogers-Lakewood Park. There are many other patrons inside the park, so please be alert when driving.
- There may be a line at camp, so please be patient. We do our best to get your child back to you as quickly as possible.
- For additional people to be allowed to pick up your child please update the camper's profile on CampDoc. Children **will not** be released to anyone other than a parent/guardian or authorized pick-up.
- If a restraining order is in place, please provide a copy to the Youth Enrichment Director.
 - While we will always attempt to follow parental wishes regarding non-pick-up by persons, we are not legally able to stop a parent from picking up their child unless there is a restraining order in place. Please provide us with any custody information so that we are aware of any problems that may arise. **ALL INFORMATION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!**



THE BASICS OF CAMP

WHAT TO BRING

We want our campers to be prepared for the fun-filled days with us! Please send your camper each day with a backpack containing the following items:

- Lunch
 - Lunches will be stored in coolers under our shelter. Refrigeration is not provided for campers' lunches, so please plan accordingly. We recommend ice packs.
- Full Water Bottle
 - We have drinking fountains available in the park, but in order to stay hydrated, we recommend that campers bring their own bottle in order to fill up throughout the day.
- Weather Appropriate Clothing
 - Summer in Indiana can be unpredictable. In order to be prepared, we recommend having a hat to keep the sun off their face and a light jacket/sweatshirt in case it gets chilly.
 - Please be aware of the weather predictions for each day and plan accordingly. Unless there is thunder and lightning or a major downpour by 2pm, we will likely be outside most of the day. Rain jackets are another good idea to bring on days where pop-up showers are predicted.
- Sunscreen & Bug Spray
 - Due to the large number of campers, we are not able to provide either of these items to campers. We encourage sunscreen application before arriving at camp and ask that campers apply their own sunscreen at camp. Staff can assist if help is needed.

Appropriate camp attire includes clothing made for activity and closed-toed shoes. We will be doing a lot of activities that involve movement, so clothing should be comfortable and loose enough to allow for a high level of movement. Closed-toed shoes help reduce the risk of injury to the feet and toes and allow for more participation in camp activities. Please avoid sending your child in open-toed shoes, as these increase the risk of injury.

Please label all belongings with your camper's name. This aids in returning the items to the proper owners in the event an item is lost.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Our camp staff have planned full days of exciting games and activities and we have a lot of equipment for campers to use. For this reason, we ask that items from home are left at home and not brought to camp.

These items include:

- Toys and equipment from home
- Valuables
- Trading cards of any kind
- Electronic devices like cell phones, or other handheld devices, airpods etc.
 - If your child has a cell phone and you would like them to have it at camp in case of emergencies, please instruct them to keep it in their bag during the day. Otherwise, it will be held in the directors office until the end of the day.
- Weapons of any kind (this includes knives of any kind)
 - Bringing weapons of any kind to camp will result in severe consequences



Campers who bring items from home will receive a warning for their first offense. They will be asked to put the items away in their bag and not to bring them out again. If the items are seen again, they will be held in the camp office for the day and returned to parents during pick-up. Discovery Day Camp will not be held responsible for lost/stolen items at camp.

THE ABC'S OF CAMP: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ABSENCES

No refunds will be given for missed days or vacations. Make-up days or refunds cannot be made for campers who are absent from camp.

ACCIDENTS

The staff of the Valparaiso Parks Discovery Camps programs do their best to create a safe, as well as playful environment for your child each day. Sometimes there will be the occasional minor accident – a cut finger, a scrape on the knee or elbow, in which case we will administer simple first aid. We will not contact you when it occurs but will inform you at the time of pick up. In cases where the injury/incident needs more attention, we will immediately contact you or your emergency contact (if you are unavailable) and your child may need to be immediately picked up. If necessary, an ambulance may also be called for serious accidents. In the event an ambulance is called, the Camp Director will accompany your child to the hospital. This is required for your child's safety as well as the safety of other campers. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

ALLERGIES

It is your responsibility to let us know on the medical form if your child has any allergies along with your child's possible reaction should he/she come in contact with the allergen. Camp staff will be aware of the allergy and will do our best to ensure your child does not come into contact with the allergen.

BEHAVIOR

For the safety of all children in the camp program certain behaviors exhibited by children will not be tolerated. The Camp Director is responsible for interpreting the children's behavior and the Valpo Parks Department does reserve the right to dismiss a child from the camp program for inappropriate behavior.

Please see our behavior policy in detail at the end of this document.

For instance, the following behaviors may result in suspension or dismissal from the camp.

1. Continued/constant hitting, kicking or punching campers or camp staff
2. Constant use of foul or inappropriate language
3. Threats to campers or camp staff

BULLYING AND TEASING

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt another. Bullying happens when a person or group of people want to have power over another and use their power to get their way, at the expense of someone else. This type of behavior is unacceptable and will result in severe consequences. Our staff will do everything in our power to create a safe, bully-free environment. If your camper feels that they are being bullied, please have them speak with their counselors; we can't manage a problem we don't know about. We will address the situation in an appropriate and timely manner.



CONFIDENTIALITY

We understand that sensitive information about campers may be shared with camp staff, including presence of disability, medical conditions, family history, and behaviors of campers. Our staff are expected to maintain confidentiality of all information shared with them. Information shared with staff about a camper will only be discussed with the camper, the camper's family, and other staff members in private away from other campers. Information will be shared with staff on the basis of need.

HEALTH CARE POLICIES

The camp staff has the authority to refuse any child who shows signs of illness. In such cases, the camp staff's judgment is final. It is the parent's responsibility to verify their child's daily health is adequate for his/her participation in the program before bringing him/her to camp.

- **Temperature of 100 degrees:** A child who is ill or had a persistent illness may not be at camp with a fever even if controlled by medicine, as they are still contagious to other children.
- **Vomiting:** A child who vomits will be sent home immediately.
- **Strep Throat:** If a physician diagnoses Strep Throat, a child needs to be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before re-admittance to camp is allowed.
- **Diarrhea:** A child who experiences diarrhea more than twice in a day will be sent home.
- **Chicken Pox:** A child must remain home until **all** blisters have dried and formed scabs. This usually is 7-10 days after the pox began.
- **Ring Worm:** A child may be re-admitted after 24 hours of beginning treatment.
- **Pink Eye:** A child with pink eye or conjunctivitis will be sent home with a parent or guardian. If a physician diagnoses pink eye, the child will need to have 3 doses of drops for re-admittance.
- **Head Lice:** A child must remain at home until the first treatment is completed with no further active lice or nits seen.
- A doctor's note will be required for re-admittance after the following illnesses: *Strep Throat, Ring Worm, or Pink Eye, and all others deemed necessary by Recreation Coordinator.*
- **COVID-19**
 - Keep your child home from camp if:
 - They are not feeling well and exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
 - You are waiting for COVID-19 test results for your child; or
 - Your child tests positive for COVID-19. Be sure to report any positive COVID test for your child(ren) to a Camp Director.
 - Practice good healthy habits, including frequent handwashing and covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

If your child comes down with a communicable disease (chicken pox, head lice, etc.), please contact Camp Director immediately for the health and safety of others. The child may not return to the program until the communicable disease is clear or past the contagious stage. The Camp Director will notify the parents of the other participants.



Please make sure you have a plan in place for when your child gets sick while at camp. If you are not able to leave work yourself, you need to have a plan that includes a responsible person who will be available to care for your child. Please notify the staff as soon as possible that the pick-up arrangements have changed. This is for the well-being and comfort of your child as well as all the other children.

LOST AND FOUND

If your child is missing anything, please ask the camp staff. Every Friday the lost and found bin will be laid out for campers to search through. Any unclaimed and unmarked items will be donated to Goodwill at the end of the week. Please ensure that your child has brought home all items brought to camp.

LUNCH

Please send a packed lunch with your child every day. If you do not provide a lunch for your child, you will be called and asked to bring one. There is no refrigeration available – lunches are packed in coolers outside the shelter area; we suggest packing an ice pack etc. for your child's lunch. They will be able to refill their water bottles at the drinking fountains throughout the day. This is why it is very important that you send your child to camp with a refillable water bottle. They will be engaging in high levels of activity throughout the day.

MEDICATION

If your child requires medication during the time they are in our care, please notify the Camp Director. Before medication may be given to the Camp Director, the Health History and Medication forms must be completed by the first day of camp. Both prescription and non-prescription medicines must be in their original container and clearly marked with your child's first and last name and specific dosage directions. Pharmacists are usually willing to provide you with the amount of medicine needed for childcare in a separate "original" container. If these guidelines are not followed, medicine will be not allowed. These medicines will be kept in a secure place where the Camp Director may access it when the need arises. A staff member will verbally assist the child with taking their medication.

OBSCENTIIY

Obscene, profane or vulgar language that is written, oral, or expressed by symbols will not be tolerated. Being respectful of campers and staff is expected. A violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Parents will be provided with a photograph release form to complete at the beginning of their camp experience. Please complete this form so that our staff has permission to use photographs of your child in promotional materials and on our camp Facebook page. If you choose to restrict photograph use, no photographs of your child will be used or posted on any materials or social media sites. Names are never provided with photographs of children.



SPECIFIC NEEDS

Please help us in preparing for a great summer so that your child will be successful! If your child has any specific needs, including but not limited to severe allergies, ADHD, ODD etc., contact the Youth Enrichment Director prior to your child's first day of camp. Depending on the specific need, special arrangements may be needed to best serve the needs of your child. We want them to fully enjoy their summer camp experience. If your child has special accommodations or behavioral needs at school or in general, please reach out to our Youth Enrichment Director to have a conversation to discuss if camp is a well-suited environment for the camper before you register.

COMMUNICATION

We will be using CampDoc for timely updates. We also use our Discovery Day Camp Facebook Page & 2023 Group, which will be available for registered campers and their authorized pickups. Search "Discovery Day Camp 2023" to find the group on Facebook. All questions must be answered to join the group.

SUPERVISION RATIOS

Your child's safety is a foremost priority of our camp staff. Therefore, we maintain these supervision ratios of counselors to campers for each age group and extended care:

<i>Ages 5:</i>	1 to 6
<i>Ages 6-8:</i>	1 to 8
<i>Ages 9-14:</i>	1 to 14
<i>AM Care:</i>	1 to 10

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!!

Your questions and comments are always welcome! Additional information will be distributed to parents as the need arises. We at Valpo Parks look forward to another successful summer with your child.



Discovery Day Camp- Behavior Agreement

Parents: Please take a moment to review the following agreement with your camper. Signify that you both understand and agree to each statement by signing this document. This agreement applies to behavior at Discovery Day Camps, on trips, and while on the bus. This form must be returned to the Camp Director as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

It is expected that campers will abide by our 5-finger promise. This promise outlines 5 major tenants of behavior that should be demonstrated by all campers every day. The promise is further explained below.



Be Kind

- I promise to say positive words to my fellow campers and counselors.
- I promise to treat others as I would like to be treated.

Be Responsible:

- I promise to bring home all items that I bring to camp, including my lunch box, water bottle, and clothes.
- I promise to keep camp clean and free of trash, in the art room, shelter and all outside areas.
- I promise to ask for help when I cannot solve a problem on my own.

Be Respectful:

- I promise to respect my fellow campers and counselors with both my words and my actions.
- I promise to do no intentional harm to anyone or any piece of property or equipment.
- I promise to use camp appropriate language, free of profanity and cruelty.

Be Safe:

- I promise to remain with my respective group and counselors at all times. If I cannot see my counselors, I am not being safe.
- I promise to report unsafe or broken equipment to my counselors immediately when discovered.
- I promise to follow all directions given to me by my counselors during all activities at camp.

Have Fun:

- I promise to have a positive attitude while at camp!
- I promise to try new activities and meet new friends!



Discovery Day Camp operates on a three-strike policy for addressing serious behavioral infractions. The camp directors will implement and enforce the three-strike policy outlined below.

Strike 1

- A discussion between camper and directors about the incident will occur.
- The camper will lose the privilege of free time and will instead use that time to write a letter home about the incident.

Strike 2

- A conference between the camper, directors, and parents will occur.
- A behavior plan will be created specifically to address the reoccurring behavior(s).
- The camper will lose multiple privileges depending on the behavior(s) and will be sent home for the day.

Strike 3

- Suspension from camp will be discussed. The directors will have the authority to determine the appropriate type and duration of suspension from camp.

**NOTE: The three-strike policy is not necessarily a linear progression. The directors reserve the right to skip steps depending on the severity of the behavior and the results of the behavior.*

Refunds are *not* given for any camper who is sent home/removed from the program for disciplinary reasons. As a parent, you will be responsible for picking-up your camper within one hour of the decision to suspend your child from camp. Depending on the behavior, your child may not be able to return to camp for the remainder of the summer.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the entire 2023 Parent Information Guide and agree to abide by all policies. Furthermore, I certify that I have discussed all the policies and their meanings and consequences with my child(ren).

Child's Name: _____

Child's Signature: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

