



# Parent Handbook Summer 2019

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[www.campbirchwoodblog.com](http://www.campbirchwoodblog.com)

1.800.451.5270

Winter Address:

(From NOW to May 15)

3737 Peterson Rd.  
Lawrence, KS 66049

Summer Address:

(May 15 to August 15)

6983 N Steamboat Lake Dr. NW  
Laporte, MN 56461



**We totally know you are super  
duper outrageous busy...  
but PLEASE take some time to  
read this handbook!!!**

WE WORK TIRELESSLY TO CREATE A TOP-NOTCH  
EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR DAUGHTER – AND FOR YOU.

We honestly do not have many parents who are upset  
with us... but when issues have occurred, it is rooted  
in the parent feeling “in the dark” or “caught off guard”  
about a rule, procedure, or tradition we honor.

Sending your child away is highly emotional – the last  
thing you need to deal with is confusion about how to  
pack or what to expect with cabin assignments.

This book is detailed on purpose. It has all the “reasons  
we do what we do” – written in excruciating detail – so  
you have all you need, right in the palm of your hand.

We want this to be a fantastic resource for you – before,  
during, and after camp.

If you have a question, check this book.

Can't find an answer? Simply contact us ASAP and we  
are happy to assist you.

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# Preparing for Camp

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## Read this Handbook & Involve Your Daughter in Prepping

Whether your daughter is thrilled to go to camp or nervous as can be, please include her in your preparations for “going to Birchwood”. (It is the “fear of the unknown” that creates anxiety in girls). The more that you - and she - can anticipate ahead of time, the better!

You will see a checklist in your packet called, “Ready, Set, Go!” Follow this list to make sure your daughter has the basic skills she will need for success. As you check these “requirements” off together, foster her confidence! She needs to know that she ALREADY “has what it takes” to be a Birchwood girl!!

ALSO! Please discuss how travel works, how to write home, what to do when she feels lonely, how to choose healthy meal options, and so on. Equip her with ideas on how to interact with others. What can she DO or SAY to make friends? How can she become a good cabin-mate? (Discuss listening to what others have to say, asking open-ended questions, offering help, and how to show that she is following directions, etc).

Finally... stay organized friends! We know life is hectic - but if you stay on top of camp prep, your stress will lower and your daughter's anxiety will decrease as well.

## Excellent Parenting Advice from the Experts

If your daughter is especially anxious about going to camp, it is tempting to say “Just go and try it, and if you don't like it, I will come and pick you up.”

As logical as it sounds - and even though it feels good to YOU say that in the moment - experts in child psychology are adamant that this sabotages your daughter's success. You are sending the message, “I don't really think you have what it takes to make it on your own, so it will be okay to quit” (Ouch.)

**Therefore --- please DO NOT tell your daughter that she can come home if she doesn't like camp. Do not offer a “cop out”.** Allowing that “option” is a sure-fire way to have her prove to you - and us - that she hates camp from the very beginning.

Instead, instill her with positive, self-affirming thoughts. Deliver messages she will need her entire life: “Yes, this is hard, but you can do it. I'm here for you even if I am not right beside you”. Be firm about how great it is to go away from home - that she CAN enjoy this short time away from you - and you believe in her!

CAVEAT: If for any reason she *cannot* cope or adjust to camp - we will be in contact with you right away and we will partner with you to take excellent care of her - whatever that means for her - for you - and for us. We will take it step by step together.

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# Preparing for Camp

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## Discuss How to Adjust to Camp at the Beginning

Absolutely everyone is nervous at the beginning of camp! Remind your daughter that this is NORMAL and to EXPECT to feel butterflies. (No one arrives at camp - or starts anything new - and is 100% well-adjusted. It takes time! Workshop ways to deal with those wobbly first emotions. Remind her to engage with others and get busy! Her nerves will subside once she settles into the routine and starts opening up to the fun in front of her.

To help ease loneliness, counselors warmly welcome each camper into the cabin group and integrate everyone immediately. Girls will be introduced over and over. For several days, fun “ice breaker” games are played and our staff make sure each child is engaged equally.

Girls who start out with a smile and willingness to listen well to others adjust the fastest! Equip your daughter with some conversation starters and remind her to include herself at all times. We make it VERY easy for girls to join in on the fun.

Also! Make a solid “plan” for coping with sad/lonely feelings ahead of time. Pack some simple games, crafts, puzzles, crosswords, books that promote relaxation, etc. If you know a certain time of day might be the hardest, have a “plan” so she feels in charge of those moments - she might listen to music, talk with someone, start a craft, draw, write letters, etc.

## Empower Your Daughter

Sometimes girls share upsetting/difficult issues with you AFTER CAMP. It is SO VERY UPSETTING for us to know a camper was struggling and we did not have the opportunity to help make things better.

PLEASE discuss the importance of advocating for yourself if your daughter feels upset, disappointed, scared, or uncomfortable in any way! Encourage her to go to her cabin counselors, favorite activity counselor, or any director.

Terry or Rachel (Owners/Operators), along with Sam, our assistant director, are visible in camp and willing to address a problem day or night. If it cannot be solved immediately, they will set up a time to discuss things (confidentially).

Now, we find that some girls find it easier/safer to share a difficulty with mom or dad in a letter home, rather than talk to someone at camp about it. If that's the case, and you think you need to step in, simply contact the camp office and talk to Sam and we will take it from there as a team.

We take each situation case by case and do our very best to accommodate every camper. The only thing we ask of you is to know that our community is based on “What is fair for one, is fair for all” -- so we appreciate it if you would refrain from asking for special favors that will set your daughter apart from the group or compromise our time-honored way of operating our camp.

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# Camp Birchwood Social Media

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Throughout the summer - as well as the rest of the year - we work hard to provide current photos, news, and insights about camp.

This offers you a glimpse into what life is like at camp, and helps keep our worldwide camp community connected with one another.

We encourage you to follow us on any of the social media platforms you use, and MOST OF ALL to check the e-mail account you use as your log-in to our CampMinder account system AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. This is our main form of communication with parents before, during, and after camp.

**Facebook:** Camp Birchwood for Girls

**Instagram:** @campbirchwood4girls

**Camp Blog:** <https://www.campbirchwoodblog.com>

**SnapChat:** CampBirchwood

Daily Photos: [www.Bunk1.com](http://www.Bunk1.com)

\*See additional information regarding photos on the “Photos & Packages” page of the Parent Handbook.\*

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## Fill Out Your Camp Forms ASAP

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Prior to camp, we require a series of forms to be filled out by parents/guardians. We used to send these out as hard copies, but now we are “paperless”.

We process ALL FORMS online through our database, CampMinder. This same database is what you used to enroll your daughter. You can access your account anytime. If you cannot remember your log-in information let us know!

Simply review the notes we have on each form in this book and then log-on. If you haven't bookmarked it, go to:

[www.campbirchwood.com](http://www.campbirchwood.com)

and then click “Camp Account Log-in” under: “Current Campers & Families” (at the bottom right of our launch page).

### NOTE!

Once you submit a form, you cannot go back and change it.

If you need to update or change any answers, please e-mail them directly to us, thanks!

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# Details about Each Form

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## **The Camper Profile Form**

This form is VERY important to us. Your daughter's cabin counselors review this form before she arrives. It helps them welcome her, integrate her in the group, and personalize her experience (we refer to it often). This form is kept confidential amongst our staff members only. Please do not hesitate to inform us of any "issues" your daughter faces socially, academically, physically, emotionally, etc. You are not pre-dispositioning your child in a negative way -- you are giving us the necessary information we need to do our very best!

## **Cabin-Mate Preference Form**

Cabin-mate preferences are recorded OFF THIS FORM. Note! A cabin-mate request is not necessary/required! Most new campers do not have one - and we LOVE it when "old timers" avoid listing anyone so they can have a whole new experience!! Please see our extensive explanation on CABIN ASSIGNMENTS in this book to understand how we process requests!

## **Health History Form**

Every camper must have an updated form on file that documents her health history, provides emergency contact information, and lists your health insurance provider. On the rare occasion your daughter experiences illness or injury, this form is referenced by medical personnel. *A doctor's signature is NOT required to fill out this form nor is it necessary for the child to have a physical prior to camp.*

If your daughter has an advanced medical condition of any kind, you will be prompted to fill out additional information.

We REQUIRE all campers to be up-to-date with their vaccinations. If your daughter has a health condition that prevents her from receiving vaccinations, you must call the camp office well in advance to discuss.

Each camper has a private "check-in" with trained medical personnel within 24 hours of arrival at camp. If any changes occur between the time you fill out the form and coming to camp, call or e-mail us information and we will attach it to her form.

## **Prescription Medication Form**

You only need to complete this form if your daughter will take medication(s) during her stay with us. Please DOWNLOAD this form, fill it out, and fold it up in a zip-lock bag with her medication(s). Pack this baggie in her CARRY-ON so we can have her check it in with us right when she arrives. NOTE: All medications MUST be in their official pharmacy containers.

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# Travel Information

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## Traveling to & from Camp

Campers travel TO camp on Mondays and depart FROM camp on Sundays. Travel charges are separate from camp tuition fees.

It is IMPERITIVE that you make and confirm travel plans with us AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Follow the directions based on your daughter's mode of travel to/from camp. (See the next page).

Once you have all your details confirmed, log-on to your CampMinder account and click on "Forms and Documents" to fill out the Travel Form.

If you book an airline reservation through Travel One (which we prefer) please do NOT rely on Travel One to relay your reservation details to us. They do confirm flights with us, but only one week in advance, and it is crucial we process information far ahead of that, thank you!

## Travel Designations - Pick ONLY ONE "mode" of travel:

We have three designations for how kids travel to/from camp. Only ONE mode is used to define a child's travel TO camp and then ONE mode is used to define her departure FROM camp. NOTE - AIR automatically includes a bus ride to/from the airport and camp.

1. AIR - Camper flies in/out of the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport AND rides a bus to/from the airport and camp.
2. BUS - Camper ONLY rides a bus to/from camp and Minneapolis. This bus picks up and drops off campers in Hopkins (a suburb of Minneapolis).
3. CAR - Camper is dropped off/picked up at Camp Birchwood.

## Confirming Your Travel Plans & Making Changes

About 10-14 days prior to your daughter's session, you will receive an e-mail from us confirming your travel plans. This will reflect the information YOU have given us via your account on CampMinder or through an e-mail or phone call. Please review this information and respond immediately if there are any errors.

If your travel plans change please inform us right away! Last minute changes are nearly impossible to accommodate once we send our lists to the airport staff in Minneapolis. Also, please do not tell your daughter to relay changes to us during her stay - contact us directly. Thanks!

Please make travel arrangements ASAP!

All travel reservations are arranged for AND paid for by the parent (not us).

Travel expenses are NOT included in the tuition fee for camp.



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# Travel Information

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## Travel in General

We take your daughter's travel to/from camp VERY SERIOUSLY and we are committed to absolute excellence. We are known as the PREMIER camp to work with in the Minneapolis airport because we are so organized.

PLEASE meet us half way by communicating with us about your daughter's travel arrangements as soon as possible. Last minute changes are practically impossible (we must confirm air lists 3 days in advance) so if things change, we must know well in advance.

## Travel Days

If all goes well, travel days run smoothly and everything is on time! BUT in case of unexpected hiccups, weather difficulties, or traffic congestion, give yourself extra time to arrive at our meeting spots!!

Please do not expect our staff members to carry luggage to/from the ticketing counter and/or bus loading area.

Also please avoid having your daughter dress the same as the other girls she is traveling with (a large group of girls in matching outfits is intimidating and awkward in our setting). Thanks!

## Travel Contact People

Peyton Bartley is our Travel Director this summer. She is a former camper of ten years and a previous staff member. (Last summer Peyton was a cabin counselor and waterfront instructor). After excelling as our Kansas City chaperone last summer, she is well-versed in travel details. Peyton will be the lady behind travel e-mails, notices and phone calls.

Birchwood's owner & operator, Terry Bredemus, is present in Minneapolis on all travel days (he also chaperones the Chicago flights himself). Nearly a dozen staff members accompany him in the airport and on the busses as well.

If you have questions or emergencies ON travel days, contact Terry directly at (612) 616-3644.

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Confirm Travel via your CampMinder Account!

Once your travel plans are CONFIRMED, please fill out the Travel form via your CampMinder account by clicking on "Forms & Documents"

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### BUS Transportation (for those who do NOT fly)

Pick up time is at 8am. (Busses depart for Minneapolis between 7:00am and 7:30am). On both drop-off and pick-up, a staff member will greet you at our gazebo (follow the signs) and he/she will request your signature at that time to sign your daughter in/out.

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# AIR Travel

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## Booking Airline Flights

Please book your flight on Delta Airlines with the assistance of our Minneapolis-based travel agency, TRAVEL ONE.

Enclosed in this packet is a letter from Travel One with directions on how to book flights. They prefer you fill out the form and mail it in. Once they have your flight booked they will e-mail you a confirmation number.

We know these prices are not as competitive as some other airlines. But when it comes to routing 100+ campers through the airport within three hours (and sorting 200+ heavy duffel bags), Delta is the ONLY airline that helps us route our luggage! Other airlines do NOT assist us at all. In fact, we pay Delta \$4 per bag to expedite the process so it reduces issues/stress.

ALSO! Booking with Travel One guarantees that your daughter is taken care of by our agents if/when issues arise. This keeps her within our scope of care in the airport (she won't be separated with Unaccompanied Minors).

NOTE! If you book separately, your daughter may be bumped to a different flight without our Birchwood chaperone and we will not have the power to change her reservation. If you must book on your own, PLEASE book on Delta Airlines and follow the directions within this handbook (next page).

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: To Call Travel One: Ask for Heidi Beyer at 952.278.1102 :  
: .....  
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## Flying to/from Chicago, St. Louis & Kansas City Specifically

For added safety - and to avoid paying VERY EXPENSIVE unaccompanied minor form fees - we provide a Camp Birchwood chaperone on flights to/from Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City. A fee of \$40 (one-way) is applied to your daughter's store account for this service.

You will find flight information in your packet along with a form from Travel One. Since Delta has pre-booked seats for us, it is important to make your reservation right away!! To do so, fill out the form in your packet and mail it in to Travel One.

Note: the ONLY way to guarantee your daughter is on the chaperoned flight is if you book through Travel One. Booking on your own EVEN FOR THE SAME FLIGHT (with miles for example) will potentially bump your child on a different flight if/when flight changes occur.

NOTE! Luggage fees are charged by the airline. Unless we cover this charge ourselves to expedite large groups checking in, you will pay for luggage fees at the ticketing counter. Any charges we incur will be passed on to you on the store account after your daughter's session. In 2018, luggage fees were \$62.50 per bag (boooo!)... We expect it to be the same for 2019. (Darn airlines)!



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# **AIR Travel Cont.**

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## **Arriving in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport**

Our director, Terry Bredemus, or a Camp Birchwood representative will meet your daughter at her gate (if she is not already chaperoned by one of our staff members). Please have your daughter wear the name tag enclosed in the packet on her travel day.

If a staff member is NOT at the gate to greet your daughter immediately, she should WAIT at the gate! There are always last minute flight changes and inevitable hiccups on travel days.

If after 10 to 15 minutes no one shows up, call Terry directly on his cell phone at 612-616-3644 or the camp office at 800.451.5270. But do NOT have your daughter go off on her own to find our group no matter how old she is or how many times she's flown to camp.

## **Contacting Parents upon Arrival**

If your daughter does not have a cell phone and you want a call once she's arrived in Minneapolis, she is welcome to use her chaperone's phone (just ask). If you want a call once she arrives at camp, she needs to tell her cabin counselor that she must use the camp phone. At that time, she will be brought to the camp office to place a BRIEF call to you.

## **Time in the Airport upon Arrival & Departure**

When in the airport, girls are gathered together to eat lunch. Please provide at least \$30 for lunch/travel money (\$15 per meal on arrival and on departure). While at camp, this money is kept in a personal "valuables envelope" that is locked up in the camp office. Upon departure, her envelope is returned to her so she can zip it in her carry-on.

## **Loading the Bus at the Airport**

Girls who fly to/from the Minneapolis airport ride a coach bus to and from camp. A charge of \$40 one-way (\$80 round-trip) is added to your daughter's store account to cover the cost. The trip to/from camp is about 3 1/2 hours. *Please do not request seat assignments or try to maneuver your child from one bus to another.* Our staff members are wonderful with building friendships and taking care of everyone.

## **Please Use a Backpack as a Carry-On**

Campers who fly should use a backpack as a carry-on so items are physically attached to them at all times. Please make sure it fits her well and is not too heavy.

Pack a change of clothes, a swimsuit, and any medication(s) in this backpack. DO NOT PACK ANY LIQUIDS. In the rare event your daughter's luggage is delayed, we will lend her toiletries and bedding until we retrieve her bags.

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# Packing for Camp

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- Your Blue Birchwood scarf if you are a return camper  
          \*new campers receive their scarf at their first campfire
- 4 pairs of shorts (we prefer an inseam of at least 3 inches)
- 2-3 pairs of jeans/long pants (add in riding pants if  
          necessary)
- 5-7 short sleeve t-shirts
- 2 long sleeve t-shirts
- 2-3 sweatshirts/fleece jackets
- 10+ pairs of socks
- 10+ pairs of underwear
- 1-2 sets of pajamas
- 2 swimsuits (in good taste)
- 1 rain suit (jacket and pants that are waterproof NOT just  
          resistant)
- 1 pair of tennis shoes
- 1 pair of water shoes (that strap fully to the foot - not flip  
          flops)
- 2-3 washcloths
- 2-3 large towels
- 1 bathrobe (optional)
- 1 pillow & pillow case
- 1 set single or cot sized sheets
- 1-2 blankets (fleece is great)
- 1 sleeping bag that packs into a VERY SMALL stuff sack
- 1 laundry bag with drawstring at top
- 1 small mesh “Lingerie” bag to wash socks and underwear in
- 1 bottle of insect repellent
- 1 tube of benadryl/afterbite lotion
- 1 sun block (spf 30+) that you rub on, not the spray on!
- 1 comb/ brush
- 1 shampoo/conditioner
- 1 soap - bar/body wash
- 1 toothbrush/toothpaste
- 1+ misc. toiletries (tampons etc.)
- 1 small waterproof bucket to carry items to/from the  
          shower house
- 1 pair sunglasses
- 1 baseball cap/hat/visor/bandana + items to pull hair back
- 1 re-usable water bottle that washes easily by hand
- 1 flashlight with batteries
- 1+ set stationery, pen, stamps
- 1+ reading book, crafts, deck of cards, etc. for free time
- 1 banquet outfit\* (sundress or nice shorts & top)  
          \*Only needed if attending camp during Session 1, 2, 4 or 6

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# Packing for Camp

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## **Pack in TWO Duffel Bags Please!**

Please pack in TWO “soft” duffel bags (with or without wheels). Please do NOT pack in footlockers, trunks, or hard suitcases.

We ask that you pack in two bags instead of cramming everything into one duffel. We look for TWO bags in the airport for each child. If we cannot find a second bag, it is a huge time waster!

Also, packing in just one puts you over the weight limit and adds a fee upon check-in.

An affordable duffel bag that kids like is featured in the brochure titled “Everything Summer Camp”. You can also get a good deal at Land’s End and LLBean if you are buying new.

Don’t forget to attach your blue bag tags to each of your daughter’s duffels!

These blue paper tags are in your packet. They help the Delta baggage handlers identify “our” luggage.

*Bags without tags may be left behind accidentally!!*

## **Packing for Activity Interests**

Our packing list is a general guideline and not “activity specific”. So if your daughter hates wearing jeans and won’t be riding horses, don’t bother packing heavy denim.

On the other hand, if she plans on riding everyday, pack extra or include her riding pants, boots, and her own helmet. Similarly, avid tennis players may want to bring their own racquet, swimmers might want an extra swimsuit, sailors might want gloves, etc. Girls who want to go on camping trips MUST have waterproof (NOT water-resistant) pants and jacket.

We provide lifejackets, camping supplies, and safety equipment at every activity (like helmets etc). Unless your daughter is advanced at an activity, there is no need to pack specialized or safety equipment.

## **Regarding Clothing at Camp**

Please avoid packing name-brand clothing that requires special washing (like Lululemon etc). Do not pack anything that will be devastating to lose or cannot be stained or shrunk.

We prefer girls wear longer shorts (a 3 inch inseam at least) and tank tops and/or t-shirts that are conservative (not cut up or open on the sides). Clothing should be void of advertising or logos that promote alcohol, smoking, snarky attitudes, etc. Girls must wear SHOES AT ALL TIMES in camp and cover-ups are required when eating in the dining hall.

We do ‘dress up’ often at camp for special events so having a few silly items on hand is always a good idea. (Wigs, crazy fabrics, fun skirts, etc).

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# Packing for Camp

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## Laundry

Laundry is done once a week in industrial machines so you will want to pack clothes that can withstand a workout.

Girls sort laundry the night before we send it to town. It is sorted by the girls into large bags for the whole cabin. Socks and underwear are put in mesh “lingerie” bags that zip up and are laundered as a whole. (These are about \$5 - see our packing list). Laundry is returned the next day (or two) in the same bags. Counselors help redistribute everyone’s items upon return.

## Regarding Sheets & Bedding

State health codes require campers to “make their beds (instead of sleeping inside their sleeping bag every night). Therefore, pack a bottom sheet, a top sheet, a blanket or two and a sleeping bag that can unzip like a “comforter”.

A thick fleece or cotton blanket is nice to lay under the bottom sheet as a “mattress pad” since our mattresses are made of a cold, crinkly plastic (so they can be disinfected).

Once a week girls send out their dirty linens. On that hold-over night, girls will use their sleeping bag until laundry returns.

PLEASE pack a sleeping bag that packs into a very small stuff sack. This is VERY important because on the last night of camp, girls will ONLY have their sleeping bag (sheets and blankets are packed up that day so luggage can be prepared for departure).

Don’t forget to LABEL both the bag and the sack with her first and last name, thanks!

Please pack a sleeping bag that stuffs into a very small sack!

Girls who fly home will need to carry this on their flight - so the smaller the better!

## Beauty Gadgets & Toiletries

With very few electrical outlets in our cabins, please do not pack electric toothbrushes, curling irons, or hair dryers.

Girls do not need to wake up and “get ready” in the morning at Birchwood. We stress the importance of not judging anyone on their outward appearance.

As for toiletries, please pack smaller bottles of shampoo and conditioner/soap, etc. These weigh less and if your daughter runs out of anything, items are available for purchase in the camp store.



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# **Packing for Camp**

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## **Please do NOT Pack Treats, Decorations, etc!**

To keep our cabins free of critters, please do not pack candy, gum, mints, drinks, powder water mixes, etc. These items cannot be sent to camp in care packages either (along with any other goodies - please pass that information on to friends and family too).

To foster a clean camp setting, please avoid packing items that kids will not bother packing up again like plastic trinkets. Also, please do not pack items make a mess like silly string, 4th of July decorations or water guns.

## **Pack Appropriate Reading Material Only**

Every summer we see how refreshingly beneficial it is for girls to take a break from the constant barrage of over-stimulating, sexually-laden, and highly provocative reading materials that are marketed to girls and women.

Please do not pack any “glamour” or “gossip” magazines like “Seventeen”, “Cosmo”, “People”, etc. If your daughter has traveled with these types of magazines we request that she turn them in the night of arrival.

The same goes for packing appropriate books. Please consider the content and use your best judgment! Books that involve sensational topics like sex, drugs, drinking, etc. are not part of our culture at camp.

NOTE: KINDLES and other e-readers are NOT allowed at camp. Go “old school” and send real books. :) If your camper is an avid reader and finishes her packed book(s) quickly, we have plenty on hand in our library.

## **Remember! Label EVERYTHING!!!!**

For a super easy way to label belongings, order Mabel’s Labels! You will be shocked at how sturdy they are wash after wash! We have included a small flyer in your packet. Please enter the special Birchwood code when you order so we can get a credit :) Otherwise, label items with a permanent marker. Write your daughter’s first initial and FULL last name, thanks!

## **Lost & Found**

We try VERY HARD to make sure girls take EVERYTHING they own back home!! Please remind your daughter that it is her responsibility to keep track of her personal belongings while at camp! Any items left behind are gathered together, washed, and set aside. ONLY UPON REQUEST do we mail belongings home. A \$25 Lost & Found return fee is applied to your account to cover shipping and handling.

All unclaimed items are donated to Goodwill after camp. If you are missing an item, call or e-mail us as soon as possible and we will do our best to locate it and mail it out ASAP.

## Packing for Camp

## Unplugging at Camp - Putting the Electronic Gadgets Away

To keep camp as much “like camp” as possible, we disconnect girls from their beloved gadgets and screens. This allows girls to connect with REAL people in REAL time. (Yay!)

PLEASE keep electronic devices at home, such as laptops, iPads, gameboys, DSi's, Kindles etc. WE PREFER GIRLS DO NOT TRAVEL WITH GADGETS DUE TO OUR LIMITED STORAGE DURING CAMP!

Immediately upon arrival, girls are asked to turn off their cell phones and to store them in their “Valuables Envelope”. Even if girls only want to use their phone to play music or take photos, they have to turn them in.

Phones etc. are locked in the camp office for the duration of their stay and returned on the day of departure. (We have yet to encounter a cell phone that doesn't maintain its charge for the return trip. But just in case, girls can charge them at the airport).

We know this “no cell phone” stuff takes adjusting, even for adults. As parents, we are used to immediate, gratifying contact with our children. But PLEASE do not encourage your daughter to hide her phone so she can report in to you secretly. That blatant lack of trust in us creates anxiety in children and prevents your daughter from engaging fully in our program. It also creates issues for other campers who inevitably find out/catch her ‘sneaking her phone’.

If a camper is hiding a cell phone, we simply invite everyone in the cabin to “anonymously” turn their phone in - no questions asked. If it is turned in, we put it in her envelope. If she keeps it, we will consider that infraction if/when she wants to return to camp next summer.

NOTE: If you have a concern about your daughter's well-being or want to check in at any time, call the camp office and we'll take care of you!

Please! NO Go-Pro Cameras or Drones!

Yes, they are awesome, but there are too many issues with these expensive toys.

We do not want to deal with the layers of liability they could invoke either. Sorry girls!

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# Packing for Camp

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## Music Players and Other Electronic Devices

We love to sing and dance at Birchwood so music is important to us. Unlike most camps, we still allow girls to bring a “music player” to camp as long as it does NOT HAVE A SCREEN FOR PLAYING MOVIES/VIDEOS and does NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET.

We suggest packing an I-pod “shuffle” with a selection of appropriate music on it. Remember, cell phones cannot be kept in a child’s possession even if her music is on it and that is all she wants to keep it for - same goes for camera use. All music players must be kept in the cabin and are to be used only during individual bunk time (like before bed).

If blue tooth speakers are brought to play music for everyone, only appropriate, non-explicit tunes approved by the counselor are allowed. Make sure your music player & headphones are labeled with your daughter’s first and last name.

## Digital Cameras & Policies on Taking Photos

We suggest sending a disposable camera rather than a digital camera that could get lost, broken, left behind, or dropped in the lake (which happens every summer).

If you do send a digital camera it must be a simple one that does NOT have access to the internet. Make sure the camera and the camera case is labeled with your daughter’s first and last name.

Please understand -- there is a huge amount of liability that is introduced into our lives - and your daughter’s life - if she has the ability to upload images or videos to the internet straight from her camera. We also ask that campers gain our written permission prior to posting ANY images on internet sites that are not privacy protected.

To protect us and your camper, remind her to be vigilant of her camera and to respect everyone’s privacy when taking photos at camp. Taking videos is NOT allowed.

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### Viewing Camp Photos:

We take photos every day at camp. Photos are uploaded to Bunk1.com (the same service that you can send Bunk Notes through). These images are downloadable and you can purchase prints if you are interested.

See more about “Photos” in this handbook.

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# Arriving at Camp

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## Regarding Cabin Assignments - PLEASE READ!

Cabin assignments are announced upon arrival. We place 6 to 12 girls in a cabin according to similar age, school grade, hometown, previous camp experience, etc. Two-weekers are in separate cabins from four-weekers so everyone can arrive - and depart - all together.

We value the connections girls make at school/camp, however we sway from placing large groups of girls who know already each other in the same cabin. Every summer should be a fresh experience free of “cliques”. Remember, a big part of “going to camp” is meeting new friends and having brand new experiences!!

Therefore, we only “guarantee” ONE cabin-mate request IF it matches our requirements and ONLY if it is MUTUAL. (Susie Camper requests Sally Girl and Sally Girl requests Susie Camper). If your daughter has more than one friend request, we will take it into consideration but we will honor the FIRST child listed before any others.

For those returning campers out there -- please do not rely on us to remember who your daughter was friends with the summer before - we are good but we're not that good!!

Cabin-mate preferences are recorded and confirmed when you fill out the “Cabin-mate Request” form via your CampMinder account.

Note: if you want to make sure your daughter is NOT placed in a cabin as another child, we encourage you to enroll during a different session or discuss the situation with the other parent so you can come to a mutual understanding. If that is not possible, we will hear you out, but will not “triangulate” or lie to other parents to make it seem like we are the ones keeping them apart.

Cabin assignments are not solidified until the night before girls arrive and they are kept confidential until the opening day of a session.

We do not give assignments out to parents ahead of time, but we are happy to discuss any concerns you may have and/or review our data entry to make sure we have everything arranged correctly.

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PLEASE NOTE!!

If your daughter arrives at camp and does not like her cabin assignment, we will listen to her with compassion and do all we can to make her comfortable, but we will NOT move her out or shift things around.

ALSO! We do NOT take disgruntled phone calls regarding cabin assignments the first night of camp. We are too busy!! Call the next day and we'll take care of her in the meantime.

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# **Arriving at Camp**

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## **When Campers Arrive at Camp**

When girls arrive at camp, they immediately receive their cabin assignment and meet their cabin counselors. Everyone is introduced to each other and shown to the cabin.

If luggage has arrived (it follows the busses in a U-Haul), girls retrieve their bags and begin to unpack. During this time they do a medical check-in (see below) and dinner is served shortly thereafter with activity introductions after.

Girls also check in their phones along with any other valuables by putting everything in a 6x9 envelope. These are locked up in the camp office for the duration of their stay.

## **Medical Check-in**

On the first night of camp, each camper sits down privately with a medically trained staff member. At that time she is asked questions based on the Health History form you filled out (on-line via your CampMinder account).

A lice check is done at this time as well as a general wellness check-up. If your daughter has recently been diagnosed with any kind of illness, or health condition, PLEASE inform us prior to her arrival so we can be aware of how it has been treated and how to proceed with her care.

## **Activity Skits**

After dinner on the first night in camp, counselors present skits to introduce all of our activities. Girls are given an idea of what to expect, what to wear, where to go, and when to sign-up to participate.

## **Camp Orientation**

At the beginning of camp, girls rotate through “stations” with their cabin group. During this time, they are fitted for a life jacket, given a tour of camp, assigned a swim tag, taught how to sign up for activities, and gathered together for a cabin photo (which we post on-line).

## **Swim Ability Check**

Girls have the choice to qualify for advanced water activities by displaying their swimming capabilities during a “swim check”. If a camper can do the front-stroke, back-stroke, side-stroke, breast-stroke, and tread water for two minutes, she can sign up for windsurfing, waterskiing, tubing, knee-boarding and wakeboarding.

If a camper is unable to do these strokes, but wants to learn, she can sign up for individual swim lessons and keep practicing until she passes. Lessons are NOT offered every day so she needs to request them at the sign up window.

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# **Camp Life**

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## **Signing Up for Activities**

“Sign Up Time” is when campers go to the Program Office window to choose their activities for the next day. Each camper’s choices are recorded on a piece of paper that is posted in their cabin for so they can reference it the next day.

Cabin groups are called to the window when it is their turn so girls don’t have to wait in line. To keep it fair for everyone, sign up order rotates each day. Cabins move “up” in line each day.

## **Daily Activity Choices**

Since campers choose their own activities, your daughter will practice a lot of independent decision making each day. If you want her to sign up for a particular activity, or learn a certain skill, discuss it with her in advance. Though we are happy to encourage girls to meet a parent’s goal, we will not force a child to do any activity at camp that she does not want to do.

## **Activity Equipment & Skill Levels**

No experience is necessary to participate in any activity at camp, however girls must be competent swimmers (pass the swim test) to participate in advanced water activities. Some wilderness trips have a minimum age requirement. Tennis and horseback riding are offered certain times of the day according to “skill level” which is determined by the staff. All equipment is provided and there is a mix of 2 and 4 weekers at each.

## **Earning Activity Awards - Our Birchwood Badges**

At nearly every activity, girls can choose to earn a series of badges to mark their progress. These are hallmarks of achievement at Birchwood and treasured for years and years!!

Every camper receives a blue fleece scarf her first year at camp (given out at the first campfire of each session). Badges are added to these scarves. Every year campers must take good care of their scarf and bring it back. It’s nice to have her scarf embroidered with her name on it, so she never loses it. AVOID applying an IRON to this scarf, it will melt. If she loses it, she can purchase a new one for \$15.00 from the camp office.

## **Wilderness Trips**

We offer a variety of out-of-camp adventures. Trip leaders “advertise” their trips in the dining hall two or three days in advance. Girls who are interested in any trip meet with the counselors to sign up. If your daughter wants to go camping, she needs a waterproof rainsuit (NOT just water resistant), water shoes that COVER her TOES, and a sleeping bag that packs in a SMALL bag.

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# Camp Life

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## The Daily Schedule

7:30	Power Hour (optional)
8:30	Wake Up Bell
8:45	Hopper Bell
8:55	Flag Raising Bell
9:00	Breakfast
9:30	Morning Caper Time
10:15 – 11:15	Activity 1
11:15 – 11:30	Morning Snack
11:30 – 12:30	Activity 2
12:45	Hopper Bell
1:00	Lunch
1:30 – 2:30	Rest Hour
2:30 – 3:30	Activity 4
3:45 – 4:45	Activity 5
4:45	“Merchandise” Store
5:15	Hopper Bell
5:30	Dinner (followed by “Free Time”)
6:45/7:00	Evening Activity
8:00	Evening Snack & Cabin Time Together
9:00 – 10:00	Lights Out (depending on age)

## Evening Activity

In the evenings, we run an all-camp activity that blends girls from every cabin. This might be an active game like Capture the Flag or a fun night of swimming and going down the waterslide for “Open Waterfront”. We also have a lip sync every two weeks, campfire on the weekends, and cookouts on Tuesdays.

## Sunday Schedule

On Sundays we have homemade cinnamon rolls for breakfast and then sign up for special activities run by our teen campers. These include a variety of art classes, sporting events, relay games, yoga, etc. After lunch everyone participates in a traditional “all-camp” activity that builds teamwork and camp morale. For dinner we have a big outdoor BBQ on the boardwalk in front of Steamboat Lake.

## Spiritual “Services”

Many different religions are represented at Birchwood. We embrace an atmosphere of tolerance and promote a deep appreciation for each other, the beauty of nature, and our individual beliefs. On Sundays we conduct non-secular services that focus on universal themes like respect, kindness, gratitude, friendship, etc. These last about 15 minutes.

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# Camp Life

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## Doing Capers to Earn a Trip to “Store”

After breakfast, campers do “capers” (or chores). Each cabin has a “caper chart” posted on the wall that designates who does what task. The chart rotates so every day girls do something new. Tasks include sweeping, taking out the trash, delivering mail, tidying the bathroom, setting the table, scraping plates after the meal, etc.

Girls must also make their bed on their own, tidy their cubbies, clean up the cabin table and store their shoes and toiletries. A counselor is present during caper time but girls are ultimately responsible for getting everything done before the first activity bell rings.

To reward girls for doing a great job and working well as a team, the mysterious Mrs. Whitegloves secretly visits the cabin and gives a “point” if it passes her inspection. This “point” earns the cabin group a trip to the camp store after evening activity.

At this time campers may select one juice/vitamin water/milk and one healthy treat/snack. Selections are individually itemized and reflected on their “store account” which is billed to you after your camper’s stay. If campers did not earn a “Whiteglove” for the day, fresh fruit and veggies are served in the dining hall so they don’t go to bed hungry.

## All-Camp Capers

In addition to doing morning capers in their cabin, girls also rotate through “all-camp capers”. These jobs contribute to our whole community - such as sweeping the dining hall, returning lost and found, and picking up trash around camp.

## Special Time with Cabin Groups before Bed

Each night, cabin groups join together to do an activity before bedtime. This is led by the cabin counselor(s) and is an intentional activity that settles girls down and bring everyone’s voice to the circle. Girls share viewpoints, deepen friendships, and have lots of fun as a group. It also offers the opportunity to reflect on the good things that happened that day, and to focus on group goals that have been established by the cabin.

## The Camp Store Before Dinner

Prior to dinner, non-food items are sold at the camp store like stamps, batteries, sweatshirts, t-shirts, soap, shampoo, stationery sets, song books, etc. To curb spending, campers can only purchase items for their own use. If you want your daughter to buy additional clothing, please send us a permission slip. All purchases are individually itemized and billed to you after her stay.



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# Camp Life

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## Meals & Snacks

Everyone eats together in our main dining hall. Cabin groups sit together at their own table and share the meal “family style”. In addition to passing around the “main dish”, there is always fresh fruit, a vegetable, and a whole grain (rice, bread, pasta).

For lunch and dinner girls can help themselves to our large salad bar. It has dark lettuces, legumes, fresh veggies of all kinds, cold salads, hard boiled eggs, diced chicken, and low-fat dressings. In the morning they can help themselves to a cereal bar if they do not want the “main” dish. It has 4-5 varieties of nut-free, non-sugary cereals and several kinds of greek yogurt.

We work very hard to serve fresh whole foods that promote excellent nutrition while ALSO being “kid-friendly”. Nearly everything is made from scratch. Counselors promote healthy eating habits and encourage girls to eat a well-balanced meal.

It is a good idea to discuss good nutrition with your daughter ahead of time so she knows the importance of eating a diet high in fiber and the importance of drinking plenty of water (constipation and dehydration are our two biggest health issues).

Please review proper table manners prior to camp - including how to cut meat yourself, chewing with your mouth closed, and taking small helpings that you can finish (there's always enough for seconds).

## Peanut Butter Substitutes & Other Food Allergies

Due to the proliferation of peanut/tree nut allergies, we use a peanut butter alternative (Sunbutter or Soybutter).

If your daughter requires a special diet, is a vegetarian, or has a food allergy or intolerance we MUST know well in advance to make sure we can accommodate her. We do not store individual foods or drinks for campers. Instead, we provide alternatives like soy milk, gluten-free breads, and nut-free options. A charge of \$75 to \$150 may be added to your store account to cover the additional costs and labor that alternative diets require. This is billed to you after your daughter's stay at camp.

## Final Banquet

At the end of our two 4-week sessions we hold a banquet (during Session 1 & 4 and Session 2 & 6). This special dinner boasts the talents of our chefs and highlights the top award winners for the summer.

Our older teens decorate the dining hall and we all “dress up” a little. Pack a sundress or nice pair of shorts and shirt if your daughter attends during this time. This outfit is often worn the next day when she travels home.

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# Health & Hygiene

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## Healthcare at Birchwood

We have an RN or MD in camp who is on-call 24-hours a day. He/she meets with campers who are not feeling well after lunch and/or after dinner.

Campers are required to have a counselor accompany them to the health center. There is no need to send “over the counter” medications - we stock everything you can imagine.

Campers who have a fever, are throwing up, or cannot reasonably function in our program are given a bed in our Health Center to rest up and get better. If necessary, our Health Care Manager will take the camper to the walk-in clinic in nearby Bemidji. If antibiotics are prescribed, we keep the camper in the Health Center for 24 hours before immersing her back into our population. (Girls staying in the Health Center are supervised, served meals, and supervised overnight.) All conditions/ailments are documented on the camper's health form which is kept locked and confidential within the Health Center. If a condition is notable (not taken care of easily and quickly) we will call you.

In the event of an advanced emergency, the Cass County Ambulance can reach us within 10 minutes. Parents are notified as soon as possible by the camp, and given direct access to the physicians attending to the camper.

## Our Sensitive Septic System

Our plumbing at camp is sensitive!!! Unlike living in a city, our water and sewer is based on a rural septic system. So ONLY toilet paper and what has passed through the body can be flushed down our toilets -- NO flushing of tampons, tampon applicators, bottom wipes, sanitary napkins, hair, wrappers of any kind, etc. We provide convenient “sani-bags” for girls to dispose of feminine products neatly. Girls should avoid using too much toilet paper all at once and it is crucial to hold the handle down until the toilet flushes completely.

## Menstruation

If you suspect that your daughter might start her period for the first time at camp, pack appropriate supplies “just in case”. (We do have a variety of products available for confidential purchase in our camp store as well). If this is an especially emotional situation let us know and we will extend phone privileges.

Whether it is her first time or not, it is also good to have a “game plan” for how your daughter will handle her period while at camp. Please stress how she must take special care to dispose of EVERYTHING neatly in the trash (and NEVER EVER flush anything at all).

If campers do not want to participate in water activities for a week or so, they can politely request to watch from the dock instead. We get it. No questions asked.

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# Health & Hygiene

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## **How We Dispense Prescription Medications**

Prescription medications are dispensed 15 minutes prior to mealtimes at what is called the “hopper bell”. If your daughter takes medication, you must download and fill out the prescription “medication record” (access your on-line account) prior to camp. Send her medication (in the official pharmacy container) to camp in her CARRY-ON (not her checked luggage) so we can process it upon arrival.

Campers are supervised as they take their medication(s). HOWEVER your daughter MUST understand what she takes and why she takes it. She must also be capable and trustworthy to swallow/chew/inject her medication HERSELF (with adult leadership). Our supervisor will initial a label on the outside of the Ziploc baggie that her medication is stored in, to document the time and date.

We prefer to dispense all medications before breakfast, lunch, or dinner. If your daughter MUST take her meds before bed, we can personally deliver it to her, but it often interrupts the cabin’s activities. So if at all possible, please accommodate us by scheduling her meds before a meal instead.

If your daughter takes a medication “only as needed” please fill out the “medication record” but make it clear that this is only dispensed for particular conditions or situations.

All medications are stored and locked in our Health Center EXCEPT for asthma inhalers and epi-pens. If your daughter has an allergy that requires her to carry an epi-pen at all times we MUST know prior to camp.

Upon departure, medications are returned to campers in the Ziploc bag once they board the bus to Minneapolis/upon pick up at camp.

## **Camp Showers & Personal Hygiene**

There are 12 showers available in our shower house. It is located centrally in camp. (The teenage “senior campers” have showers in their cabins for their exclusive use). Each shower is private with an attached dressing area that is also private. Water pressure is not always good but there is continuous hot water.

It is ideal to have a small waterproof basket/bucket to carry shampoo, conditioner and soap to/from the shower house. Most girls prefer to wear a pair of cheap flip-flops in the shower as well.

Girls can shower during free times but NOT during activities or at rest hour. We ask that they be considerate of others (if there’s a line, hurry it along), to keep showers tidy (don’t leave trash, bottles, hair ties etc behind), and try not to be wasteful of water.

Counselors encourage regular bathing and always remind girls to actually use shampoo and soap. Please help us by making sure your daughter can take a shower on her own and that she can comb her wet hair after.

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# Healthy & Happy

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## Staying Healthy at Camp - Preventing Illness

Our biggest health issues at camp are dehydration and constipation. We encourage girls to drink water regularly and to eat a healthy diet. Often times, upset tummies and headaches are solved with a tall glass of water.

Pack a waterbottle that is easy to send through our industrial dishwasher or can be hand-washed by your daughter. If your daughter needs her water bottle to be washed she is responsible for handing it over to our kitchen staff after mealtime. It will then be run through a cycle and air-dried (she can pick it up at the next meal).

To prevent illnesses from spreading in our tight-knit family atmosphere, we stress hand washing, coughing into the elbow, and to avoid sharing personal items like toothpaste, chapstick, hair brushes, drinks, etc.

## Preventing Over-Exposure to the Sun

We are VERY pro-active about applying sunscreen each and every day, rain or shine. Girls are not allowed to sun bathe or "lay out" EVER!!

Please pack a waterproof sunscreen with at least 30 SPF. Make sure your daughter can apply her sunscreen evenly, all by herself, on a regular basis. If she is young and needs help, make a note of it in her Camper Profile form.

Also, please DO NOT pack the aerosol sunscreens - they do NOT spray on evenly and we see the WORST sunburns when girls use them!

## Preventing Mosquito Bites

Mosquitos can be relatively non-existent or a REALLY BIG hassle, depending on the weather.

We stock bug spray at all the activities for everyone's use and constantly remind girls to apply spray, throughout the day. Please pack a spray that is in a non-aerosol with a small percentage of DEET in it (but not 100%). If she runs out, we have a variety of natural and mainstream bug sprays available for purchase at the camp store.

Make sure your daughter knows how to apply it well (we usually keep it on the porch of the cabin so we aren't spraying it inside). It is really good to send "afterbite" or cortisone cream as well - and teach her how to apply it to prevent scratching and scabbing.

If we see any bites getting infected we will promptly take the child to the health center. Let us know too, if your child has a particular sensitivity to bites so we can help her as much as possible.

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# Healthy & Happy

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## Ticks & Lyme Disease

Depending on the summer, we may deal with a heavy tick population, especially in June.

We mainly see wood ticks, however our horses may introduce deer ticks to campers. Wearing bug spray helps and we tell girls to tuck their pants into their socks whenever they are out in the woodsy areas for cookouts and games.

We also remind campers to do a “tick check” before bed (feel all around their scalp, behind their ears, and in “tight” spots - like panty lines, bra lines, etc). If a camper finds a tick “in” her, we have it removed by medical personnel, it is documented, and even saved.

If your campers develops an odd rash, sees a “bullseye” around a bite, feels sore in her joints or just plain sick, she needs to let her counselors know right away just in case she has contracted Lyme’s Disease.

If after camp, your daughter has flu symptoms and/or joint pain, etc. we recommend alerting her pediatrician that she has been in the woods of Minnesota and/or asking for a blood test to rule out Lyme’s Disease.

## Emotional Health & Discipline at Camp

As we all know, emotional well-being is as important as a healthy body. We are committed to maintaining an environment that allows girls to thrive physically AND mentally.

We do not tolerate “bullying” (blatent or otherwise) at camp. We also do not allow girls to tease or “put down” each other (even when it “is just a joke between friends”).

Our staff members role-model kind and caring behavior that is inclusive and considerate. They help shape the social dynamic in the cabin so each child feels welcome, included, and equal.

It isn’t always easy to get along with 8-12 peers within the confines of a small cabin. There will be challenges along the way, but it is crucial to be considerate of other’s space, belongings, ideas, and preferences.

Campers who thrive at Birchwood practice “the Golden Rule” -- they treat others the way they wish to be treated. Specifically, they use good manners, take their turn, share with others, ask before borrowing something, listen well to others (they avoid interrupting or talking on top of people), do their fair share of the cleaning up, and maintain a positive attitude as often as possible (they avoid whining, complaining, and arguing).

To avoid offending others, we ask that campers refrain from discussing sex, drugs, alcohol, religious practices, heavy issues like suicide, etc. and to avoid swearing or using slang that is off-putting. Note that telling ghost stories, frightening others on purpose, or “pranking” is absolutely not allowed.

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# Phone Calls & Mail

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## Regarding the Phone

Campers do not make or receive telephone calls unless it is an emergency. Girls who travel with a cell phone are required to turn it in upon arrival (it is stored in “valuables” envelope in the camp office).

Not using the phone is a very normal part of camp life. When a child is given the time and space to “make it on her very own”, an independent sense of self emerges, from which confidence is built and resilience is fostered.

This simply cannot happen if a healthy detachment does not occur. It is imperative that you recognize this important hallmark of growth and encourage your daughter to “spread her wings” without you. (So bittersweet).

With that said, we are always willing to facilitate a phone call if necessary. But we will always discuss it with you first, so we can decide, together, if a call home will help or not. (Often times it makes things much, much worse).

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### Emergency Contact Numbers

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To reach camp in an emergency during regular office hours, dial 800-451-5270 OR 218-335-6706. If the answering machine comes on, leave a message - as we only have two lines so we check our messages all the time. If it is an emergency “after hours” call Terry’s cell phone at 612.616.3644.

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## Sending Mail

“Real Mail” is distributed Monday through Saturday at 4:45. Campers LOVE “real mail” more than anything!! But that does not mean you need to send dozens of letters everyday - so let family members know that too.

NOTE! Unfortunately, a lot of girls do not like writing home. We encourage girls to write often but they prefer to play outside or socialize. That means if you are not hearing anything, “no news is good news” and she is loving life and too busy to sit down and write. (Ugh)!

Please ONLY send letters/cards that fit USPS requirements for a ONE OUNCE item. Anything OVER one ounce falls into the “package” category. Also, please do not insert gum, mints, bracelets, etc. in envelopes.

### To address an envelope:

Daughter’s First & Last Name (Cabin Name)\*  
C/O Camp Birchwood  
6983 N Steamboat Lake Dr NW  
Laporte, MN 56461

\*You will be notified of your daughter’s cabin assignment when you receive an arrival email from us on the first evening of camp. We send this email once all the busses have arrived. If you do not see it, call or e-mail the camp office.

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# Sending E-mails

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## Sending Emails (Bunk Notes) to Your Daughter

To send an e-mail (a Bunk Note) to your camper, set up an account via [www.Bunk1.com](http://www.Bunk1.com) by creating a log-in and password. (Past parents -- you should have an account already.)

You will see there are a variety of options to choose from when it comes to sending and receiving “e-mails” (these are actually notes from you that we print out everyday on computer paper, fold in half, and distribute along with “regular” mail each day).

If all you want to do is SEND bunk notes, you can purchase a block of one-way bunk notes. These are printed off each afternoon right after lunch. IF you want your child to WRITE BACK to you, via a “two-way” bunk note, you MUST CHOOSE that option and PAY an additional fee. These are not automatically included with each e-mail.

This second piece of paper prints out at the same time as your e-mail and we deliver it to your daughter. It has a digital code at the top and your daughter's name. The rest of the page is blank to allow room for her to write.

Once she has completed her note, campers deliver these to the white mailbox near the camp office. At that point we fax it, it is converted into a PDF, and then e-mailed to you so your daughter's actual hand-writing comes up on your computer screen.

Though two-way bunk notes do speed up communication between you and your daughter (vs. “snail mail”), it is NOT instantaneous nor is it the perfect system!! First off, a lot of girls don't bother to write even though you have paid for the two-way note (and despite our encouragement). Secondly, once girls do write, they often forget to put it in the white mailbox. Of course, only if the child has written it, and gotten it to us, can WE do anything with it.

Even then, it takes about 24 hours to process so please be patient. If after a day or two you have not heard anything, then contact us. Also, if you are having issues with purchasing or processing Bunk Notes, call Bunk 1 directly and they will help walk you through it step by step.

If your daughter sends a bunk note, you can expect that to arrive in your email around 11:00 am central. You then have until 1:00 pm to send a bunk note back, for that letter to be received by your daughter on the same day.

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### Bunk 1 Services:

Remember – though we use the CampMinder database for registration and all paperwork, we use Bunk1 for two-way “bunk notes” and posting photos online. Therefore it is important to register with Bunk1 in order to have access to these services.

For all other services, access your CampMinder account.

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# Photos & Packages

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## Viewing Photos Online

To view camp photos online, log on to your Bunk1 account ([www.Bunk1.com](http://www.Bunk1.com)). Photos are posted by the day of the week/month.

We post photos in order to give you, the parent, a glimpse into camp life. We do understand how important it is to feel like your child is doing well and a photo speaks volumes in that regard. Therefore, we employ a photographer all summer long to take photos just for this reason.

It is important to note however, our intention with posting photos is to REPRESENT camp and all that it offers - NOT to document every child's experience, first-hand, every day.

Our photographer usually uploads images everyday, but we only guarantee new photos every THREE days (since we are in a very remote area and hiccups with our internet are known to happen often).

If we are not including your daughter enough, it is not personal nor does it mean she is not having a good time! Some shy away on purpose and we want to honor their privacy. If you do not see your daughter often enough though, and you are concerned, call the office and we will do our best to upload an image as soon as possible.

## Our “No Care Packages” Policy

Sorry, but we do NOT accept care packages. This became a huge competition between parents and it overwhelmed our tiny post office and our little mail room at camp. Plus most of the items were left behind or put in the trash.

NOTE: A package is anything that weighs more than 1 oz. or is BULKY due to its contents.

The ONLY exceptions to our “no package” rule are (1) if your daughter needs an essential item (like eye contacts, a swimsuit, or a book to read for school) OR (2) it is your daughter's birthday while at camp (please mail a reasonable sized box if so).

When a camper receives a package, she is notified at mail time to go to the camp store. Once there, she opens her package herself in front of Betsy, Terry's sister, and the contents are inspected to make sure there is no food, candy, gum, drinks, gossip magazines, silly string, etc.

The contents are then transferred to a plastic bag to take back to the cabin. Questioning what constitutes an “ESSENTIAL”? Call us before you mail anything!!

Please let friends and family know that care packages are not allowed!

If mailing essentials or sending a birthday package, be sure to write “ESSENTIALS” or “BIRTHDAY” on the outside of your package or we will send it back.



## Checking Up on an Unhappy Camper

No matter what, our counselors are there to listen, explain, support, and maintain everyone's safety. Rachel and Terry are ALWAYS available to talk too -- even if they look busy -- they will stop and listen discreetly and do whatever they can to help.

We can support, guide, and solve problems together (confidentially). And we can include you in on it as well.

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# **Post-Camp Policies**

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## **Post-Camp Communication with Staff Members**

Though technology has brought many wonderful benefits when it comes to maintaining connections with others, we must also contend with the negative impact social media can have in the lives of our children.

Our pledge is to put your children in the company of the most trustworthy and capable young adults we can hire - counselors and activity instructors who are well suited to the task of caring for campers. The effort we put into screening and selecting our staff is part of that pledge.

Our staff work with your children in the context of a visible, well scrutinized environment that has many built-in checks and balances. Counselors are supervised and guided by clear, firm policies regarding behavior. Their actions are also visible to co-workers and campers.

Even though we hire employees for the summer, we do not recommend our staff members as babysitters, nannies, or child companions outside of camp. In general we discourage our staff from having contact with your children after camp is over since we cannot supervise it.

We hire our staff for the camp season. We do not take responsibility for their behavior off-season. As a parent, you are, of course, free to make your own choice in this matter. While we cannot keep you from allowing your child to maintain contact with one of our staff members, in doing so you take full responsibility.

To prevent issues, we ask our staff to refrain from “friending” or “following” campers on FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT, WHATSAPP, etc since college girls post images on the internet for their contemporaries - not for young impressionable girls who look up to them.

Therefore, if your daughter wants to remain in contact with a staff member, we encourage her to do so through e-mails and letters ONLY. We also require our staff to obtain written permission from YOU, the PARENT prior to contact with the camper so they are legally protected and you are fully aware of their interaction with your daughter.

## **Post-Camp Internet Policies**

Most campers exchange e-mails with one another before departing camp. We hope campers foster their friendships for years to come! As a precaution, we recommend that you as the parent supervise your child's online activities just as you do other aspects of their life in your home.

We do not assume liability or responsibility for any inappropriate or harmful communication between campers outside of our actual camp setting. We also do not bear responsibility if/when campers visit one another and call it a “Birchwood Reunion” but do not invite everyone. For an event that everyone is included in, we hold official reunions in most big cities come winter.

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# **Policies & Procedures**

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## **Policy on Risks in Camp**

There are numerous risks associated with participation in summer camp activities. This includes, but is not limited to: horseback riding, camping, archery, riflery, climbing, biking, canoeing, kayaking, waterskiing, windsurfing, wake-boarding, tubing, and transportation to and from camp activities.

These risks which contribute to the unique character and desirability of the activities involved, pose the possibility of severe injury, illness, or death. Most of the activities take place in an outdoor environment.

For this, and other reasons, the risks cannot be eliminated, altered, or controlled. While our camp operates on the highest standard of safety, we do not assume liability for sickness, disease, or accidents.

## **Following the Rules**

Campers are expected to listen to their counselors and to follow the guidelines that our staff are trained to uphold.

Unlike the “old days”, a lot of kids today tend to argue and whine whenever they are displeased -- or when they have to do something challenging -- like clean up, motivate, work hard, do something new etc.

We really appreciate campers who cooperate with a positive attitude and support their cabin counselor's efforts.

Any camper who blatantly disobeys a camp rule, goes against safety protocol, disrupts our camp program, or harms another individual physically or emotionally will be subject to a series of disciplinary actions. To know more about our 5-step disciplinary program or how we train our counselors in Love & Logic, contact us.

**We reserve the right to dismiss a camper if she is unable to participate positively in our program.**

**In all cases, parents will be notified of our decision promptly. The camper will be removed from the cabin immediately. Parents are responsible for all travel expenses. No tuition refund is provided.**

## **Dismissal from Camp**

Campers are not allowed to have alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, weapons, explicit music, inappropriate reading material, or toys that invoke fear, ridicule, injury, or big messes (like silly string).

We do not tolerate emotional or physical abuse, the threat of abuse, relational aggression (bullying), sexual behavior, or any kind of emotional or psychological intimidation. If the emotional or physical safety of other campers is at risk, immediate dismissal takes place.

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# **Tuition Fees & Charges**

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## **Tuition Fees**

We require full tuition payment prior to your daughter's session. To pay for camp, access your account on CampMinder and process a credit card or mail a check to our camp office.

All travel charges are separate from tuition fees. We do not book or pay for flights. Expenses like BUS charges (\$40 one way) and chaperone fees (\$40 one way) are added to your daughter's "store account" and billed to you after your daughter's session. Note you may have luggage fees added to your store account if you did not cover them initially.

## **Cancellation Fees & Procedures**

Cancellations prior to March 1st result in a full refund. After March 1st, a \$200 cancellation fee will be assessed before providing a refund. Unless you have paid by check, we process refunds by crediting the credit card we have on file for you.

**NO REFUND IS PROVIDED IF A CANCELLATION  
OCCURS WITHIN 30 DAYS OF YOUR DAUGHTER'S  
SESSION START DATE.**

Campers are expected to complete the full term of their session. If a camper is dismissed from camp by the camp director, removed from camp at any time (even at the discretion of a disgruntled parent), or departs camp due to illness or a medical condition, tuition costs are not refunded.

Any/all medical costs incurred at local clinics or hospitals are covered by the parent(s) NOT THE CAMP. Any charges not billed directly to your health insurance will be added to your store account bill.

## **Charges After Camp**

After camp, we will e-mail you a store account invoice within four weeks. Your daughter's store purchases and travel fees (chaperone charges, bus fees etc) are itemized on this bill.

IF YOU ARE ON AUTO-BILL already, we will charge the credit card we have on file for you. Otherwise, we kindly request that you mail a check promptly to the camp office or call us with a credit card number you prefer to use. Thanks!

Lastly, We Want to Do Great Work with Every  
Child, Every Parent, Every Time, Every Summer!

We have dedicated our lives to creating a joyful environment for girls to learn and grow in, summer after summer. This work is both our profession and our passion.

YOU are our most profound and valued partner(s) in doing this most impactful work.

Every day we strive for excellence. So, if at anytime you are disappointed, angry, worried, or have an issue of any kind, please contact us – we want to know while we have the chance to respond!

If/when campers face difficulties at camp, there are always many different “sides to the story”. Sharing the “nuance” with you is crucial for your understanding and it makes us better teachers, care-givers, leaders, and business owners.

PLUS! Most the time, we come up with very do-able, very easy solutions together!

Even after your daughter’s session, we are open and eager to receiving feedback via phone or email. We welcome the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue regarding your daughter’s experience. And we so appreciate a direct line of communication vs. a review on-line that might be erroneous and/or last forever about a minor.

THANK YOU friends,

Terry & Rachel Bredemus  
Owners & Operators





# Going to Birchwood

## To-do List:

- ☐ Read this handbook!
- ☐ Make travel arrangements.
- ☐ Fill out the following forms via your CampMinder account:
  - \_\_\_ Travel Form
  - \_\_\_ Health History Form
  - \_\_\_ Camper Profile Form
  - \_\_\_ Daily Medication Form\*

\*Only if your daughter will take prescription medication at camp
- ☐ Review the packing list. Make any purchases if necessary, especially the correct kind of sleeping bag
- ☐ Order Mabel's Labels (see insert).
- ☐ Label Everything!!!
- ☐ Pack for camp! Please pay attention to what items are/are not allowed at camp.
- ☐ Attach the enclosed blue baggage tags to each duffel.