



CAMPER & PARENT HANDBOOK
2026
OUR 69th SUMMER!!!

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Family-Owned Since 1958



THE DEERKILL DAY CAMP ANTHEM

“Down at Deerkill”

(Sung to Raffi's "[Down By The Bay](#)")

REFRAIN:

Down At Deerkill, Where We Play All Day
Out In The Sun, And In The Shade
I Don't Want To Go Home, I Want To Stay,

Did You Ever Make A Pot In The Ceramics Hut?
Down At Deerkill,

(REFRAIN)

Did You Ever Run Amock On The Fire Truck?
Down At Deerkill,

(REFRAIN)

Did You Ever Take A Ride On The Water Slide?
Down At Deerkill,

(REFRAIN)

Baseball, Basketball, Volleyball, Dodgeball
Down At Deerkill!

HELP US MAKE YOUR CHILDREN'S SUMMER A GREAT ONE!

Welcome to our Deerkill community! We are honored that you have selected Deerkill, and we want to do everything possible to make your child's summer happy and memorable. You can be a big help to us. If your child has any problems or concerns, please let us know about them as soon as possible. Don't be afraid to "bother" us - we are very discreet and that is why we are here. We are always available at camp during the week, as well as every evening from Sunday through Thursday by phone until 8 PM. Of course, if you would like to speak with your child's Group Leader they will be happy to call you at a time that is mutually convenient. Also, if there are any changes at home that may impact your child's experience, kindly let us know. Then we can give that little extra attention that often means so much. See you soon!

Todd and Rebecca

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FOR MY CHILD THIS SUMMER?

Our camp philosophy is based on our three fundamental principles of community, tradition and fun. For seven decades, children have been coming to Deerkill to learn about the world around them, gain new life skills, and build self-esteem, all of which are critical to youth development. We have four main goals for your children this camp summer:



Goal #1

To provide opportunities for campers to become more **independent** while building self-esteem and confidence in their abilities

Goal #2

To encourage each child to learn to thrive in a **group environment** and larger community

Goal #3

To encourage each child to **challenge themselves** by attempting new things and gaining new skills

Goal #4

To provide each camper with a **safe and secure** environment and opportunities for fun

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure your children achieve these goals this summer!

HOW DO I STAY CONNECTED WITH CAMP?

CAMPMINDER Online Family Accounts

We send out regular emails and texts along with our weekly newsletter and event reminders through your online account. To access and update your online account, simply visit www.deerkilldaycamp.com and click "Log In" on the bottom right side. Please use the same email address you used to register your camper. Please do complete the Text Message Opt-in Form.

You can see photos and keep up with the latest news around camp at the following sites:

Deerkill **CAMPANION** App (Download for access to summer photos!)

Apple iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/campanion/id1457911692?ign-mpt=uo%3D4>

Android: https://play.google.com/store/search?q=campanion&c=apps&hl=en_US

Deerkill **Social Media** Accounts

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/deerkilldaycamp>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/DeerkillDayCamp>

Instagram: @deerkilldaycamp

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/DeerkillDayCamp1/feed>

TikTok: @deerkilldaycamp4

Snapchat: NOT YET...

WHO'S WHO AT DEERKILL

If you need to contact camp, please call the office at (845) 354-1466. You may also email us with your questions at the emails below. **Please do not email time-sensitive requests in the summer (e.g. transportation, dietary, etc.) as we may not check our email during the camp day.**

Owners/Directors



Todd & Rebecca
Rothman

directors@deerkilldaycamp.com

Head of Transportation



Dennis Gordon

transportation@deerkilldaycamp.com

Head of Waterfront



Brett Crowne

swim@deerkilldaycamp.com

Camp Office Manager



Pam McAndrew

office@deerkilldaycamp.com

Head of Programming



Lyndsey Stodnick

lyndsey@deerkilldaycamp.com

Head Counselors



Junior Camp: Colleen McCabe
colleen@deerkilldaycamp.com

Upper Boys: Steve Greenberg
steve@deerkilldaycamp.com

Upper Girls: Mallory Greenberg
mallory@deerkilldaycamp.com




Head of Specialties



Diane Murray

diane@deerkilldaycamp.com

WHAT HEALTH FORMS ARE REQUIRED AND WHEN?

1. **HEALTH HISTORY FORM:** The New York State Department of Health requires *non-parental* emergency contacts as well as a parent's signature on the emergency medical release on the bottom of the form. **We request parents complete this ONLINE form with emergency release by June 1st but absolutely no later than the week before their campers start camp.** 
2. **IMMUNIZATION AND EXAM FORM:** We do require evidence of an examination completed within the past year with a **physician's signature**. Often times, physician's offices will send over their own immunization form which is acceptable as long as there is a physician signature or stamp on the form. The Board of Health reviews our records early in July, so please send us the completed form as soon as possible after the examination. 
3. **OTC MEDICATION FORM:** This form needs to be completed **AND SIGNED** by parents. For those who choose to authorize Deerkill to administer any medications, including sprays and ointments, **this form also requires a physician signature per the Board of Health.** 

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN A HEALTHY CAMP?



MEDICATIONS: Our Camp Nurses review all camper health forms prior to the start of camp. If your camper requires medications to be administered at camp or has a medical issue, please call the office and we will coordinate a time for you to speak with a Camp Nurse. Children may NOT carry any medications around while at camp. Medications sent to camp, including epi-pens, must be in their original packaging with doctor's orders and a clear expiration date and should either be sent prior to camp or given by the parent to your bus counselor. Please do not place medication or messages for camp in a child's backpack.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION: At Deerkill we require that if a child appears to be injured or appears to have an illness the child must be brought to one of our Camp Nurses, who are solely responsible for diagnosis. In case of an injury we will always call parents if the injury involves anything more than a small scrape or bruise, for which we will send home a note.



As necessary, children may need to return to the Health Center for periodic re-examination after initial treatment. We will contact parents if the injury takes place near the end of the day and we are not able to evaluate the injury over time.

Serious injuries at Deerkill are extremely rare. If we do have to take your child to receive further medical care outside of camp we will inform you as soon as possible. Under most circumstances, when there is a need for further medical attention we go to an appropriate local physician. Here again we would of course first contact you to coordinate with you and your physician.

ILLNESS: If your child has a temperature of **100.4 degrees** or higher in the morning or if your child may have a communicable illness (e.g. pink eye, lice), please do NOT send your child to camp. If your child develops a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher or shows signs of a communicable illness during the day, we will ask you to pick your child up. A child with a temperature or stomach illness should quarantine at home. If you have any doubts, call us between 7 AM and 9 AM and we will have our Camp Nurse call you back. Ill children do not enjoy their camp day and the Board of Health does not allow children with communicable illnesses to remain at camp. Our Camp Nurse is available throughout the day at 845-354-1466.

LICE: We recommend parents spray their child's hair daily with lice prevention spray (Boo, Fairy Tales) and put any long hair into braids or pony tails. Any child who is found with evidence of lice will be required to provide evidence of treatment and be lice-free before returning to camp.



WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TRANSPORTATION?

We want to guarantee that all campers are picked up and returned home as quickly and safely as possible. Your child's bus counselor is responsible for each camper's safety and the social atmosphere on the bus. Please remind your child that our bus counselors will insist that all campers keep their seatbelts on securely throughout their trip. If your child is unhappy on the bus for any reason, please don't hesitate to discuss the problem with the bus counselor and/or Todd, Rebecca or Dennis. We are very discreet and find that virtually all bus issues are easily resolved when we are aware of them.

TIMING: Bus pick-up and drop-off times are provided to you just prior to the start of camp. Please be understanding about pick-up times for the first week until adjustments, if necessary, can be implemented. If a bus is running more than 15 minutes behind schedule, our camp office will contact you via phone, email and/or text. In the morning, we ask that you wait with your child for the bus. A few minutes lost waiting for children at their homes or at central locations quickly become a real delay by the end of a route. **Please do not board the bus** with your child as this often delays our buses. You should also be waiting outside when the bus returns at the end of the day.



CAMPER SELF-DISMISS / ALTERNATIVE GROWN-UPS AUTHORIZATION: We will not drop a child off at home unless we know that you are there waiting or we have prior written approval through our Camper Self Dismiss Authorization form. We will ONLY leave a young child in the care of another adult (e.g. a babysitter or doorman) IF we have your prior written approval through our Authorized Grown-Ups form. Please return these forms if you wish to authorize other individuals to pick up your child, have your child dropped off to an empty home or doorman, or self-dismiss from a central bus drop-off location.



CARPools/ABSENCES: If your child is sick or is going to be absent, please call the camp promptly. Please do NOT give your child oral permission to: 1) Go home on a different bus, 2) Go home to another child's house, or 3) Wait at camp because somebody is picking them up. **We must have your written permission 24 hours in advance if you are changing your childcare arrangements at the end of the day.** Please call us in advance so you know there is room on the bus. We have often heard "My grandparent is picking me up" only to find when we call home that the child has their days or weeks confused. If we cannot reach you we will keep your child at the camp rather than send them out on a different bus.



PICK-UP/DROP-OFF AT CAMP: For parents dropping children off at camp in the morning or picking up in the afternoon, please enter camp using the lower driveway by our archery area in lower camp to enter the lower lot. We request drop-off in the morning to be between 8:35 AM and 8:50 AM and afternoon pick-up between 4:15 and 4:30.



FOOD & DRINK: Standard bus company policy does NOT allow food or drinks to be consumed on school buses while in transit. Please be considerate of our campers with nut allergies and do NOT in any case send your children with any snacks containing any nut products.



WHAT SHOULD I SEND TO CAMP?

BATHING SUITS

We ask that parents send **two bathing suits** to camp on Mondays and leave them here for the week. We will make sure they are properly hung up to dry and that they go home on Friday to be washed over the weekend. We will provide a wet bathing suit bag for all campers who require one. Parents may also send in a Ziploc bag for wet bathing suits to be taken home for the weekend.



SUNSCREEN



We recommend sunscreen of SPF 30 or above. Please apply water-resistant sunscreen each morning and send an FDA-approved sunscreen with your child the first day of camp (labeled with your child's name) to be reapplied after each swim period. **Many parents prefer sunscreen sticks for the face and spray for the body.** Please do not use expired lotion as it may be ineffective. We also strongly recommend that you encourage your camper to wear a baseball cap while out in the sun.

CAMP "UNIFORM"

Though we have no camp "uniform," we strongly encourage all campers wear shorts, a t-shirt, **sneakers** and perhaps a hat. **On rainy days, please remember to send along a sweatshirt and/or raincoat** with your camper's name. All rainy day activities are in covered areas however campers will walk outside between periods. **On "camp photo" days we will ask that all campers proudly wear their Deerkill t-shirt (to be provided).** Also keep an eye out for our weekly special dress-up theme days when you receive the summer activity calendar prior to camp. Please note that while we do provide smocks to our campers for Arts & Crafts and Woodworking, paint sometimes does get on our campers' clothes and may be hard to remove - **we recommend you plan accordingly on those days.**



CHANGE OF CLOTHES

A change of clothing, including underwear and socks, is recommended for Pre-K and Junior Camp campers and can be left at camp during the week.



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO MAKE SURE EVERY ITEM COMES HOME?

Deerkill cannot be held responsible for lost personal items but our staff does their best to ensure all belongings return home. All clothes and other items should be marked with your **camper's first initial and last name**. We have a special discount through Label Daddy (sent separately). We also recommend parents tie a distinctive ribbon or keychain to their child's backpack for quick identification. Anything that is "lost" is returned immediately if it has a name on it, but unmarked belongings often find their way to our Lost & Found, which is checked on a regular basis by our staff. At the end of the summer, we will send home any labeled items, however anything without an owner is donated to local charities.

WHAT SHOULD I LEAVE AT HOME?



TOWELS / SANDALS

Fortunately, **it is not necessary to send towels** to camp. Towels sent from home frequently become dirty or join our Lost & Found. We have found it is much easier for everyone if you let us supply your children's towels. We supply a fresh towel each swim to our campers. As we have our own laundry at camp, we know that our towels are clean and dry. Also, except for our younger Flippers and Dolphins, **please do NOT send flip-flops, sandals or crocs** as our locker rooms are adjacent to our pools.



ELECTRONICS

We believe camp is a place for your child to connect with other campers in the real world (not the virtual one). We offer a large variety of activities every moment your child is at camp to give them this opportunity. Parents who need to reach their children during the camp day may call the camp office. **As such, we have a firm policy banning the use of cellphones, video games, devices requiring headphones (iPods, Apple Watches etc.) and other electronics while at camp.** While we discourage campers from bringing any electronics we understand that some parents may choose to send these devices for the bus ride only. If a camper brings a cell phone or other electronic device on the bus, it will be locked in the group locker upon arrival and retrieved at the end of the day. We are not responsible for these items as they may get misplaced, broken or stolen. **For campers who violate our electronics policy while at camp, they will receive a warning. Repeated violators may lose the privilege of participating in the next group activity (trip, show, etc.) and are subject to dismissal.** We appreciate your support of this policy. **We also discourage parents from sending in Airtags** with their campers. While we appreciate parents' concern about their child's safety, they often are misplaced leading to unnecessary concern and confusion.



SOCIAL MEDIA & REASONS FOR DISMISSAL

Campers are not allowed to post any photos or videos of other campers or of the camp on any public forum, including any social media sites. We also ask all campers to refrain from posting any inappropriate messages to such websites. All communication via text messaging, email and online social networking sites need to remain positive and cannot include the singling out, bullying, threatening or harassment of other campers. Any campers who violate this policy or who bring alcohol, vaping pens, tobacco, drugs or weapons to camp may be dismissed from camp at our discretion. Pets only allowed to visit with explicit permission.

ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT



We provide all of our campers with age-appropriate equipment. On days that older campers are scheduled for softball, they may bring their own glove or use one provided at camp. Children scheduled for tennis instruction or who choose Tennis as an elective may use either our lightweight racquets or they may bring their own.

WHAT IS SERVED FOR LUNCH AND WILL MY CHILD LIKE IT?

We serve simple nutritious menus with food that almost all children like. We publish the menu in the Camp App prior to camp and again in our weekly newsletter, "Deerkill Days," which is emailed home on Fridays. A hot entrée is served every day. Soy butter, jelly, turkey, tuna, cheese and bagel and cream cheese sandwiches are available at lunch along with fruit, vegetable sticks and yogurt. We serve water first to hydrate our campers followed by regular and chocolate milk.



We ask campers to try everything as this is part of their learning experience – we are typically very successful. In no case will we permit a camper to leave the table hungry. If your child has any food allergies, dietary concerns or is simply a "picky eater," please do indicate as such on the Health History Form and the Camper Personal Profile. We provide Gluten Free, Dairy Free and Vegetarian options. We do not provide vegan or kosher meals. If you choose to send in your own lunch, please be sure to email us the day before at office@deerkilldaycamp.com so that the lunch can be properly refrigerated upon arrival at camp. Lunch will be provided for off-site camp trips (TBD).

Lunch is served in shifts at 11:30 and 12:10. We provide morning snacks for our pre-k groups as well as any 5-year old group that is scheduled for second lunch. All campers receive afternoon refreshments, which includes a daily selection of fruit, ice cream, ice pops, yogurt and cookies. Please note Deerkill has a strict "nut-aware" policy. **At no time should a camper ever be sent to camp with a snack that contains nuts, peanut butter or peanut oils.**

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS AT CAMP?

We LOVE to celebrate camper birthdays at Deerkill. We announce camper birthdays during our morning Daily Dish as well as in our weekly newsletter and each group celebrates camper birthdays during our Refreshments period. **We ask all parents NOT to send or bring in any food for their child's birthday due to allergy and special diet concerns.** Thank you for respecting this policy.



VISITING POLICY

We do not have a formal visiting day at Deerkill. As we are proud of our spacious and un-crowded campground and our mature staff, we welcome parents who would like to visit during the summer. **We simply ask that you call in advance of your visit.** You may visit camp any day from 9:45 AM to 11:30 AM and from 1:45 PM to 3:30 PM. If you are particularly interested in viewing a special activity, we can assist you in arranging your camp visit. Parents who visit in the morning are **requested to leave at 11:30.** **If you do visit, please DO NOT attempt to enter the camp via the lower parking lot gate.** We ask all visitors to check in at our main entrance with our Gatekeeper. You may park in our main lot until 3 PM at which time you will need to park across the street. You will receive a nametag when you arrive at our gate and you will be asked to go to the office to sign in and be escorted to your child's group. Please do not distract the counselors from their job when they are on duty. **Please remember that children must be signed out at the office if they are leaving camp with you.** We respectfully request that parents do NOT visit the first or last 3 days of camp or during our late-night Theme Night, Talent Show or Carnival.

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON SWIM INSTRUCTION?



We take swimming very seriously at Deerkill. Our philosophy is never to force a child, but rather to encourage campers to progress in the water through playful instruction – we have had wonderful success with our campers in the pool. We heat our pools to a minimum of 82 degrees (secret: it's usually 84!) so that we can go swimming even when it is a little cool. One of our favorite traditions is to swim in the rain! All our lifeguards and instructors are Red Cross certified with many being higher level Water Safety Instructors.

During the first few days of camp all campers' swim skills are assessed and they are placed in appropriate groups. Sometimes children ask, "Why am I doing this again? I did this last year." Review at the beginning of the summer is very important as swimming is a progressive activity. Children often forget skills during the winter and it sometimes takes two or even three weeks before children reach the level of physical conditioning that enabled them to perform specific skills the previous summer. In order for children to swim in the deep end of our pools, they need to pass a deep-water test. Campers will be given this test when their instructors feel they are ready. **Campers who do not initially pass the test may retake the test once they demonstrate progress.** Parents may track their child's swimming progress on our swim boards near the summer office and swim reports will be sent home during the summer. If you have any concerns about your child's swim group or his/her progress in the pool, please call or email Todd, Rebecca or Brett Crowne, our Head of Waterfront.

IS IT REALLY TRUE WE CAN USE THE POOL EVERY WEEKEND?



Yes, it is! **We will be opening our weekend club on Saturday June 27th. The weekend club opens at 12:00 P.M. and closes at 5:00 P.M. every Saturday and Sunday through Sunday August 9th.** Many families visit during the opening weekend as it provides a great opportunity for children who have not been to Deerkill to jump in the pool and make new friends at the start of the summer. It is also a convenient way for parents to drop off any medications (be sure to bring the original packaging with valid expiration date).

The pool club will also be open on Friday July 3rd as camp is closed that day. Bring your beach chairs, bring your lunch, but, most important, bring yourselves. Lifeguards will be provided.

Even if your child is enrolled for only one month you are invited to come on weekends throughout the summer. Grandparents are always welcome free of charge. There is a one-time season charge of \$10 per child for siblings over the age of 3 who are not enrolled at Deerkill. **Guests are allowed to attend the weekend club on Saturdays and Sundays.** Guest fees are \$10 for adults and children. Directions are available at www.deerkilldaycamp.com. **Please note that the number at the pool on weekends is (845) 354-3663.** You can call this number for updates on the pool club during inclement weather.