



# CATOCTIN QUAKER CAMP

## FAMILY HANDBOOK - SUMMER 2024

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Welcome to Summer 2024! This Family Handbook will answer many of your questions about sending your camper to Catoctin. It'll provide you with important information about how camp operates, how to drop campers off and pick them up, the necessary paperwork and preparation before your child arrives at camp, what to pack (and what not to pack), and so much more! Even if you are a returning family, please read this handbook carefully, as every year there are new and different things at camp.

We will be in touch throughout the fall, winter, and spring, as we get ready for another fantastic summer, and you can always find more information on the [BYM Camps website](#), especially on the [Family Portal](#) page. But if you have any additional questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We're here to help you get ready for camp!

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SUMMER PHONE #: 301-271-2156

OFF-SEASON PHONE #: 301-774-7663

# PACKING FOR CAMP

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## **Clothing & Luggage**

Please read the [Catoctin Packing List](#) for complete details of what to bring. There is no camp uniform, and no need to “dress to impress” while at camp. Campers will get dirty, and clothes that come to camp may not come back the same. Don't pack your favorite outfits! Multiple pairs of socks and changes of shoes and outer layers are important in case we have rainy weather. Good shoes for hiking (such as hiking boots or sturdy sneakers) are essential, as are sneakers for running around and sandals or water shoes that can get wet. Labeled clothing will help ensure that your child's clothes come home with them on closing day! Space in the cabins is limited – you should plan on keeping most of your belongings under your bunk (the space is at least 15” high). Trunks and plastic storage bins work well, as they keep possessions easy to find. One container is better than many, as this helps campers avoid leaving items in the parking lot on closing day.

## **Laundry and Labeling**

Catoctin is unable to provide laundry services during a session. You should bring enough clothing to last at least the full session. To minimize lost items, put your name on everything you bring.

## **Electronics**

Catoctin is an “unplugged” camp. That means that campers are prohibited from using electronics, including cell phones, ipads, ipods, laptops, smart watches, and e-readers. Campers will be asked to turn over any electronics for storage in the camp office until departure. Digital cameras are allowed, however campers should be aware that they may not be able to recharge their batteries. Camp can be a harsh environment for cameras, and Catoctin is not responsible for the safety of these items. Inexpensive or disposable cameras are a good solution.

## **Candy, Snacks and Other Food**

Food is prohibited in the cabins, as it attracts wildlife. Food brought to camp will be put into a collective snack bin and eaten by others. Healthy snacks are available in the dining hall throughout the day, so there is no need to worry about your child going hungry.

## **Bedding**

Camp beds accommodate single bed sized mattresses and linens. Many campers will bring a foam pad (2”-4” thick) or an inflatable pad (no electricity required) to sleep on in the cabin. Temperatures can fall to 40 degrees at night, so be certain to pack warm bedding. Campers will be most comfortable with sheets and a sleeping bag or a warm blanket. Campers should also bring a pillow and multiple towels for showering and swimming.

## **Personal Property**

Please leave expensive or hard to replace items at home. This includes jewelry, and any electronic equipment. Don't forget to label everything. We do not assume responsibility for the loss or damage of campers' personal property. We will ask that campers turn over passports, tickets, and other valuables for storage in the camp office. There is no need for campers to bring money to camp. Please refrain from sending it with them.

# IMPORTANT DATES

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- January 16th: Registration opens for the 2024 camp season
- April 1st: Cancellation deadline, after which families are not eligible for a refund
- May 15th: Full balance of camper tuition is due
- May 15th: Medical form and all other camper information is due
- June 29 - July 13: Session One
- July 14 - July 27: Session Two
- July 28 - August 11: Session Three

# ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DAYS

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## **Arrival Day**

Campers can be dropped off between **2pm and 4pm** on Arrival Day. When you arrive, counselors will show you where to go. You will turn over any medications to the camp medical staff, we will check to make sure your camper is feeling healthy and check hair for lice. Once everything checks out, you and your camper can unload their luggage. Staff will then show campers to their cabins and help them get settled in.

To alleviate arrival day jitters and homesickness, we make drop-off as quick and seamless as possible so that campers can start making friends and having fun right away. Families are encouraged to stay just long enough to help their camper meet their counselors and move into their cabins.

If you would like to chat with a Camp Leadership Team member before the start of your session, please let us know in your Tell Us More! form, or [contact us](#) directly.

## **Departure Day**

Campers can be picked up on departure day anytime between **10am and 12pm**. If someone other than the camper's parents will be picking them up, please let us know in advance. Once you've found your camper, we encourage them to take you on a tour of camp and show you everything they've done over the past two weeks.

This day can be very emotional for our campers as they've developed close connections with camp and their friends and counselors. They will most likely be exhausted after the rigorous schedule and looking forward to seeing you. Please leave some space in your schedule for parting rituals and goodbyes.

# STAYING IN TOUCH

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## **Our Philosophy**

We live in a world where everyone can be in constant communication. In many ways, this is helpful and efficient; but it has some downsides too. Because parents are so easily accessible, children are increasingly deprived of the chance to make choices, resolve conflicts, and make mistakes - valuable learning opportunities necessary to the process of becoming an independent adult. Catoctin is a place where campers can safely have these experiences, and our program and staff are primed to facilitate these opportunities. However, the only way to provide this confidence-building feeling of independence is to make communication less immediate than what we are used to. When determining what communication methods are allowable, we look at the overall effect on the experience of independence.

## **Checking-In**

You may always contact camp directly to check in on how your child is doing. However, we ask that you limit these check-ins as much as possible. We will ALWAYS contact you if there is a concern about your child.

If you have an emergency and need to get a hold of Catoctin staff quickly, please call camp directly: 301-271-2156. Additionally, if possible, please email the Program Manager ([brian@bymcamps.org](mailto:brian@bymcamps.org)) and put "URGENT" in the email subject line.

## **Calls Home**

Campers are not allowed to use cell phones or to make calls home. Counselors will be checking in with your child on a regular basis. Should they need something, we will be in touch. You may call us and ask to speak with a member of the camp leadership team about your child at any time and as often as needed. Our phone number is: 301-271-2156.

## **Letters**

Everyone loves getting letters from home, and almost every camper will receive at least one letter while they're at camp. We will schedule time for campers to write letters home, so you'll probably get some mail from camp! Generally, letters mailed less than four days from the end of camp will arrive too late. Letters received after the end of the session will be returned to the sender. Due to USPS regulations, postcards cannot be returned. Lastly, because we believe in being "unplugged" while at camp, campers will not have access to computers and will not be able to send or receive emails.

## **Care Packages**

The majority of campers do not receive care packages while at camp, and we discourage sending packages. If you do feel the need to send a care package, please limit your packages to one per session, and we recommend avoiding impersonal Amazon shipments in favor of personalized gifts; such as handmade items, posters or photos from home, magazines, or stationery. Knowing that someone they love is thinking about them is what campers are really looking for. Due to the proximity of wildlife to our cabins, we do not allow campers to receive care packages containing food. Packages generally arrive late in the day, after mail is received and distributed. Because of this, packages may reach your child a day later than you would expect. Packages and other mail that arrive after the end of the session will be forwarded to campers' home address, or returned to the sender.

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Your child's health and wellness are our top priorities. Catoctin has a team of nurses and medical personnel who are on-site and on-call throughout the summer. We have a health and wellness center, as well as access to local hospitals and medical professionals. Please read through the following information to ensure a safe and healthy summer for your child. And if any of your health and wellness questions are still unanswered, please reach out directly to [Brian Massey, Program Manager](#).

## **Camper Medical Form & Physical Exam**

Your camper's Medical Form and [Physical Exam Form](#) are required and due by May 15th. The Medical Form is completed in our [registration portal](#), and the Physical Exam Form is to be uploaded into our registration portal. If you have any questions, let us know immediately.

When completing these forms, remember that we need to make informed decisions about all of the campers who are a part of the Catoctin community. Our purpose in having pertinent health information, both physical and emotional, is to be able to better serve your child. Please provide us with all the necessary information we need to care for your camper in the best way possible.

## **Medications**

For the safety of our campers, our rules require that all medications, from prescription drugs to over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, or herbal remedies, be kept in a locked cabinet at our health center. These are given to campers as needed and only by our nurse or other designated staff member. All medications should be brought to the medical team on arrival day. Medicines are then dispensed per physician's orders or label directions. Prescriptions must be in their original container with camper's name and dosage information. Please note that we also require a doctor's note for any over-the-counter medications your camper brings to camp. If sending medications to camp, be sure we have enough for the camper's entire stay.

Per Maryland law, Catoctin families are required to fill out and submit the [Medication Administration Authorization Form](#) for all medications (prescription & over-the-counter) that they send to camp.

## **Health Care Costs and Insurance**

Medical attention in our camp health center is covered by your tuition. All additional medical costs incurred during camp are the responsibility of the camper's family. These include any prescribed medications, doctor's office or hospital visits, and/or any other outside medical/dental/mental health visits. Parents are financially responsible for any and all charges related to medical treatment which are not covered by their medical insurance. For this reason, we require that all campers have health insurance coverage. This insurance information must be uploaded into your camper's account in our [registration portal](#).

## **Communication Regarding Sickness, Injury, & Other Healthcare Needs**

If there is a sickness, an injury, or another healthcare need, our medical team will evaluate the camper and determine whether a visit to the doctor or hospital is needed. If so, the camper's parent or emergency contact will be notified as soon as possible. In a non-emergency, the parent will be notified by the camp nurse before the camper is taken to receive medical treatment. In an emergency situation, the parent may be contacted by any camp representative so that the camper can continue to be treated by the nurse, and it may be necessary to begin treatment or

transportation before reaching the parents. We may administer medications before contacting you. We do not generally call parents for routine health issues such as blisters, headaches, sore muscles, sunburns, etc.

The Primary Contact in your account will be contacted:

- If a camper requires any form of outside medical treatment (doctor or emergency room visit). If it is not an emergency, the nurse will attempt to contact the parents before arranging for outside treatment.
- If a camper needs to spend the night in the health center / infirmary.
- If a camper requires a medication other than one which is prescribed to them (unless it is on the list of OTC medications authorized by the parent on the Medical Form.) Camp staff do not need to contact the parent before providing medication if it is an emergency and waiting to provide the medication would be unsafe.
- If there is an ongoing issue lasting more than 24 hours, such as a persistent cough, recurring fever, infection, rash, headache, or sprained ankle.
- If a concussion is suspected.
- If an allergic reaction is suspected.
- If the issue will require follow-up at home.

If the Primary Contact cannot be reached, the Secondary Contact and/or Emergency Contact will be contacted. Generally, the Medical Team will reach out via phone, however they may email the Primary Contact when notifying a parent of an ongoing issue which does not require input, to explain follow up care at home, or when a parent has agreed that email will be a good means of follow up regarding an ongoing issue.

### **Mental Health**

Catoctin has a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) on call throughout the summer to advise our staff when assisting campers managing mental health issues. If your camper is experiencing mental health or extreme behavior difficulties at camp, our staff will work with the LCSW to determine if camp can continue to meet the camper's needs, and what needs to be done to keep the camper safe and help them through their difficulties if they stay at Catoctin. In this situation the LCSW or Director will be in touch with the camper's family before decisions are made.

### **Communicable Diseases and Disease Symptoms**

If your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases (including Covid-19) or has a fever or other symptoms within two weeks of opening day, please notify the camp right away. We will make a plan with the camp nurse and/or our consulting physician for the best way to safely get your child to camp. If they are not able to attend and cannot reschedule to another session, we will refund tuition in full.

### **Lice**

Take a moment prior to camp to check your child's head for lice- it's more common than you think! [You can find instructions here](#). To keep our camp lice-free, we will screen campers for head lice at camp as well. If your child is found to have lice, the camp nurse will assist in making a treatment plan. Generally, we will try to treat campers at camp, but we reserve the right to send campers home if we cannot adequately treat them.

### **Ticks**

Ticks are becoming more common in the Mid-Atlantic Appalachian Mountains where the BYM Camps operate. Ticks are the primary transmitters of Lyme Disease, and several other diseases. To prevent tick bites, we recommend that campers bring lightweight long pants and an EPA

registered tick repellent (such as 30% Deet or 30% lemon eucalyptus oil) to spray on shoes, clothing, and exposed skin during activities in the woods. We will also have insect repellents available for campers to use. Permethrin treated clothing is also effective at stopping ticks, and is available commercially, or you can treat your child's clothing yourself. Counselors will instruct campers on how to look for ticks when changing into their swimsuits or showering. Any ticks which are discovered will be removed by trained camp staff, and campers will be monitored for any signs of illness. Parents will be notified if their child was known to be bitten by a tick. The early symptoms of Lyme Disease include one or more of the following: circular target-shaped rash, fever, headache, muscle ache, and fatigue. We advise parents to be on the lookout for these symptoms after camp, and to seek immediate medical attention should they occur. We urge all parents to talk with their children about preventing tick bites and tick-borne illnesses. You can find more information on prevention [from the American Camp Association here](#).

### **Food Allergies**

We provide healthy, high-quality food and regularly accommodate a variety of dietary needs such as omnivores, vegetarians, vegans, and gluten-free diets. We are also able to provide for campers with allergies to such things as peanuts, eggs, etc. Every camper has access to healthy food choices that are safe for them to eat. We do our best to accommodate a wide range of eating needs but cannot guarantee that all preferences / pickiness can be accommodated. We ask questions about your camper's diet during the registration process, so our staff can be informed and prepared to safely nourish all members of our camp community.

## CAMP RULES & COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

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At BYM Camps, our mission is to welcome all with open arms, and to nurture campers' ability to both find themselves and be themselves. We seek to promote the values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equity, and stewardship in all aspects of our program. To accomplish these goals and to create the summer camp experience that we all want and deserve, all campers and staff must agree to these three community agreements in order to be a part of the BYM Camps community and to live at camp:

- 1. Respect ourselves and others**

*Building people up, not putting people down*

- 2. Don't jeopardize the future of camp**

*Staying safe!*

- 3. Work through conflict together**

*Being willing to sit down and talk with others if conflict or concerns come up*

We will talk about these agreements and what they mean during the first few days of camp. But before arriving at camp, we ask that all campers and parents/guardians discuss what these agreements mean, and sign [the community agreement form](#) to signal your commitment to follow them.

If a camper or other community member refuses (or is unable) to abide by these agreements, they may be asked to leave camp. We obviously hope that isn't necessary!

Beyond those broad community agreements, Catoctin has many specific rules, designed to make sure camp is safe and fun for everyone, that we expect all campers to follow.

Some of our most important rules are:

- Under no circumstances may a camper be in the possession of any of the following: alcohol, drugs, tobacco or cannabis products (including e-cigarettes, vapes, jules, pipes, and edibles), fireworks, matches, lighters, or weapons.
- Campers may not leave camp grounds without Director or Parent permission, and must remain in their cabins after lights out (except for trips to the bathhouse).
- Any harassment, hazing, or teasing with the intent to belittle, scare, offend, coerce, or harm is unacceptable at camp.
- Campers may not engage in public displays of affection or levels of physical contact that make others feel uncomfortable or which are deemed unsafe.
- All persons at camp must ask for and receive consent before initiating physical contact, romantic or otherwise.

Please ensure that your camper is prepared to follow these and other Catoctin rules before arrival.

At BYM Camps, we strive to strike a balance between the needs of the individual and needs of the community, in order to provide a safe and fun camp experience for all. Behaviors that imperil individual or group safety, or actions that seriously violate community norms may necessitate that camper(s) be sent home.

We spend time at the beginning of each session discussing positive behavioral expectations. As with any community, conflicts or disruptive behaviors will arise. Staff are trained to help campers work through these issues productively, and most can be dealt with through discussion and with support. We will respond to each situation lovingly and with attention to all circumstances; however, conflicts or behaviors that are egregious or that cannot be resolved in a way that supports the community may result in a camper being sent home from camp.

## HOMESICKNESS & VISITS

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Campers often say their weeks at Catoctin are the best of the summer, sometimes the best of their year. Camp is a wonderful place to exercise independence, learn, and grow. Nevertheless, we have all experienced homesickness at some point in our lives. It is a necessary part of growing up, can be mild or severe, and sometimes is harder on the parent than on the child.

Many children will experience homesickness during their stay at camp, but with a coordinated effort by family members and the camp staff, we are confident that it can be overcome. We don't treat homesickness lightly and are willing to spend as much time as is necessary to ensure a positive camp experience for your child. Our counselors and directors have the tools and experience to help children through their difficult periods, and turn conquering homesickness into an empowering experience. With all that said, we should emphasize that most campers will be fine within the first couple of hours or days at camp.

In order to better promote a smooth transition into the camp community, we have a busy schedule of activities, create lots of ways for children to get to know each other, and have counselors available and engaged with each individual child. Someone from the leadership team will certainly be in touch if a child's homesickness is getting in the way of their ability to have fun at camp so we can strategize about messaging. When homesickness is preventing a camper from



enjoying themselves, we pair them with staff who check in with them between activities and help them set achievable goals for their day. This gives them a feeling of success which builds as they adjust to the camp environment. Almost always, the homesickness will fade within a few days, and the camper will feel a sense of achievement as they complete their session.

Here are some tips to help you and your child prepare for the ups and downs of their stay at camp:

- Speak openly of possible homesickness. Feeling homesick and missing family, friends, and pets is totally normal, even for adults, and learning how to have fun anyway is part of growing up. Knowing this, your child may accept feeling homesick with less anxiety.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is the first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing situations, like asking a counselor for help or introducing yourself to someone for the first time.
- Practice spending nights away from home by scheduling some multi-night overnight stays with family or friends before camp.
- Examine your child's daily routine, especially bedtime. Are there parts of the routine that will be hard to replicate at camp, such as having a parent read a bedtime story? If so, work with your child to invent and test changes to the routine that give them more independence, such as the child reading their own bedtime story! This will give them confidence that they can manage without you at camp.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal or favorite blanket.
- Heighten your child's interest by pointing out some of the exciting activities at camp, perhaps by reading more about camp on the website. Or schedule a time for them to chat with a Camp Director or connect with another camper. At the same time, be sure your child's expectations are realistic. He or she will be challenged and sometimes things may turn out differently than what they planned.
- Don't tell your child that you will come get them if they are homesick. This removes the motivation to overcome homesickness, and encourages campers to "wait it out" and stay miserable instead of trying to make friends or make the most of the activities offered. If allowed to stay for the full two weeks, we can almost guarantee that they will come to love camp.
- When dropping your child off at camp, take enough time to say hello to their counselor, and then leave. This is not a good time to linger. A cheerful, confident attitude on your part will get camp off to a good start. Our experience has been that campers come to feel that Catocin is a second home. We offer support and encouragement to all our campers. We offer an opportunity for them to make lifelong friends while they are participating in activities they enjoy. It is our hope that you will find your child returning with more self-confidence, more of a sense of responsibility, and very happy (even if they're sad at first, having to leave their new friends). They will also have missed you and will love being with you again.

### **Visiting Camp**

We do not have a visiting day during our sessions, as we find visits from parents often exacerbate homesickness and take away from the camp experience for the child being visited (or their friends who did not receive a visit). Thank you for understanding.

# CABINMATE REQUESTS

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Camp is a place to grow and make new friends. We also understand that it may make coming to camp a bit easier if your child comes with a friend. If that is the case, please let us know and we will take that into consideration when making cabin assignments. Cabinmate requests must be included on the Camper Information form. We arrange cabin groupings based on age, grade, and gender, so if your child's friend is of similar age we can likely meet your request. But please understand that despite our best efforts, we might not be able to accommodate your request.

# CAMP CULTURE & VALUES

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At BYM Camps, our **Mission** is to build a vibrant, diverse, and youth-centered community where we: Welcome all with open arms; Nurture campers' ability to both find themselves and be themselves; Create opportunities for campers to step into community leadership; and Cultivate life-long connections to wild spaces and to each other.

Our **Vision** is generations of campers who: Believe in their own power and brilliance; Find their voice, their courage, their artistry, and their work ethic; Contribute to and sustain their camp community; and Transform the world by joyfully carrying the values of BYM Camps into the rest of their lives.

Our **Values** are: Simplicity: Allowing connections to each other and our surroundings to flourish; Peace: Conflict resolution through deep listening; Integrity: Acting on our inner voice, which is guided by truth and justice; Community: Playing, living and working together; Equity: Valuing each other's gifts and working to make camp available for all; and Stewardship: Giving support and care to our environment and people near us.

## **Inclusivity & Equity**

All of the BYM Camps are intentionally and explicitly values-based, and we incorporate the principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) into every aspect of our program. We believe that a truly diverse camp community makes us stronger, wiser, and more resilient. We believe that the Quaker value of honoring the divine in every person compels us to not just build an environment that is welcoming, but to build one together, incorporating the voices and lived experiences of all campers and staff, and centering those that have been historically marginalized.

Our commitments to the BYM Camps community include:

- Doing the necessary legwork to recruit a genuinely diverse staff that is committed to JEDI values, and to recruit a genuinely diverse camper population that represents a broad range of lived experiences.
- Continuously refining and improving the JEDI training that staff receive at the start of the summer, and the support they receive throughout the summer.
- Investing in partnerships with youth-facing organizations throughout the mid-Atlantic region that have similar values around youth empowerment and experiential education.

- Building age-appropriate social and emotional curricula for campers that includes opportunities to build meaningful relationships and transform conflict across difference.

At BYM Camps we believe that people from diverse backgrounds can come together, build authentic friendships, have ridiculous amounts of fun, make life-long memories, all while living in a community where everyone is seen, heard, and valued. We believe that by living in a diverse community based on trust, empathy, and compassion, we can start to imagine a world built on the same values. At BYM Camps, these issues are real and tangible, not abstract and theoretical, and we will joyously and fiercely engage with them every day.

### **Gender Inclusive Camps**

Here at BYM Camps, we believe our camps are strengthened by genuine diversity of all kinds, and we commit to creating camps where people of any race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or economic status actively want to attend or work, where anyone and everyone feels at home.

Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure are gender-inclusive summer camps and communities where we support each community member to be in housing and social groupings that most align with their gender identity. We are a community where campers and staff use the full spectrum of gender pronouns and identify with the full non-binary spectrum of gender.

At all of our camps, in age appropriate ways, we make space for exploring and discussing individual gender identities, while developing empathy, critical thinking, and other skills to advocate for those whose gender identities may differ from their own. The result is a meaningful opportunity to challenge male and female social constructs and prejudices, such as homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny.

### Community Commitment – For all campers, families, staff, and volunteers

We recognize that each of us has our own lived experiences and identities. As members of this community, each of us commits to contributing to camp in a way that is safe and welcoming for all. We understand that learning and growing are part of the human experience, but we also understand that harmful words and behaviors cannot be accepted in a true space of belonging. As members of this community, we individually commit to being a positive contributor toward this culture of inclusion and respect.

### Acknowledgement

LGBTQIA+ campers often are victims of higher instances of bullying and harassment, and as a camping program, their safety and belonging are our top priorities. While we are happy to share information regarding our gender-inclusive housing policies with campers and families, we are not willing to debate these practices as they relate back to our core mission and our commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

### **Sustainability**

BYM Camps runs programs at four different sites, each one a unique and beautiful ecosystem. We teach and practice the principles of Leave No Trace, both at camp and when out on wilderness adventures, and we generally seek to walk gently and live in a sustainable, reciprocal relationship with the non-human systems and places that are all around us.

All of our construction and land management decisions are made with sustainability, stewardship, and restoration at their core. When we design and build new essential structures, be they cabins or bathhouses, we incorporate sustainable materials and design as much as possible. The new bathhouse at Catoctin is a shining example of our values made visible and tangible in the world.

# ROLE OF THE FIRE CIRCLE

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At each of the BYM Camps, the Fire Circle is a sacred space, the center of spiritual and communal life. It is where campers and staff gather every day for 10-20 minutes of reflective stillness, and it is where most meaningful ceremonies are held. It is where many campers and staff learn to hear their inner voice, and where they find the courage to share their truth and wisdom with the community.

Modeled off of, and often referred to as, Quaker Meeting for Worship, campers and staff are invited to speak out of the silence as they are moved, to share a thought or a poem or a story or even a song. Many campers have not had prior experience with silence or stillness in this way, but most campers learn to appreciate and value the daily ritual.

It can take a while to settle into silence at the Fire Circle, and it can be intimidating at first, but new campers quickly realize that “silence” is not truly silent, especially in the woods. Birds and bugs and trees are always making noise if we listen, clouds and ants and shadows are always moving if we look. We are surrounded by friends, by fresh memories of joy and adventure. By the end of camp, the time flies by. Being together around the Fire Circle on a daily basis allows us to know, trust, and appreciate each other in a deeper way. It knits us together as a community.

# TUITION, CANCELLATION, & OTHER CAMP POLICIES

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It is our commitment that no child will be turned away due to their family’s financial situation. For Summer 2024, our Sliding Scale Tuition Levels can be found [here](#). If you have any questions or need any support, don’t hesitate to [contact us](#).

- Before May 15: Non-refundable deposit is required upon registration.
- After May 15: The full tuition balance is required upon registration.
- Unpaid balances must be reconciled in order for a camper to be registered.
- No tuition reduction will be made for a late arrival or an early departure.
- Payment can be made by credit card through our online registration system, or by check through the mail (Address: [BYM Camps, 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860](#))
- Registration cancellations made before April 1 are eligible for a tuition refund, except for the non-refundable deposit.
- Families are responsible for the full amount of tuition if a cancellation is made after April 1, except in cases of severe illness, injury, emergency, or other extenuating circumstance.
- Families who request reduced tuition through the Sliding Scale have two weeks from confirmation of their rate to accept and confirm registration to hold their camper’s spot.
- There will be no refund if a camper is asked to leave during the session for an infraction of a camp rule, for disruptive behavior, or if a camper is voluntarily withdrawn.

Gifts to the [BYM Campership Fund](#) help ensure that all young people can have an impactful experience at BYM Camps, regardless of their ability to pay. Each year, more than 40% of our families receive financial aid through the Sliding Scale Tuition System that enables them to send their kids to camp. To learn more or donate, [visit here](#).

# AFTER CAMP

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## **Staying in Touch with Each Other**

If you or your camper would like to stay in touch with other campers and their families throughout the year, please encourage your camper to get the necessary contact information while still at camp! However, if they get home and either lost it or forgot to get it, please feel free to use the [Camper & Family Directory](#), or to [contact us](#) directly. We love to help the camp community stay connected all year round!

## **Staying in Touch with Us**

[The Spark](#) is our newsletter for parents and families of current campers. [Way Opens](#) is our newsletter for all members of the BYM Camps community. Please make sure you're signed up for both by clicking [here](#).

## **Surveys & Feedback**

Throughout the summer and in the fall, BYM Camps emails surveys to all parents and campers. The information we collect from these is essential to our ongoing processes of growth, development, and evolution. Please pass the survey to your camper and take the time to complete the survey yourself. Your voice and perspective really matters and has a big impact!

## **Mail, Lost & Found, & Shipping Items Home**

Any mail that arrives for your child after they have left camp will be forwarded to you or returned to sender. BYM Camps claims no financial responsibility for personal items lost, stolen, or damaged during your child's stay at camp. For this reason, we discourage camper families from sending any items to camp they wouldn't be willing to risk losing. Any lost and found items not claimed within 72 hours of departure will be donated or disposed of. If you claim an item before that time, we may have to bill you for the shipping cost required to return it to you.

## **Medical Bills**

Medical bills incurred over the summer will be sent from off-site facilities to your insurance provider. If unavoidable situations arise where BYM camps are required to pay up front for medical needs, we will pay and bill families later.

## **Photos from Camp**

With today's emphasis on preserving every moment in pictures and social media posts, we prioritize an environment where campers can live in the moment and not worry about how they look. We understand many families want to see photos of their children at camp, but because of the sizes and locations of our camps and the scope of our programming, we are unable to photograph every camper. We will take and share as many photos as possible without impacting programming or the camper experience. Campers are welcome to bring disposable cameras or digital cameras (that they don't mind getting lost or broken) if they want to take pictures themselves. If they do, we always love when campers share their best photos with us as well. The magic that happens at camp is hard to capture!