

# THE GROUP

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The Counselor and his/her group is what CAMP is all about! We are a “group-centered” camp – our campers stay in their groups, all day, every day. Groups play together, eat together, and include EVERYONE. Your first and most important job – create a strong group identity!

## CAMPER GROUPS

OSC campers range in age from five to fourteen; Groups are split up by ages: the younger groups are all male or female and the Senior Outpost groups (6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders) are co-ed. Our summer has three 3-week sessions. Our boys and girls are divided into MWF groups and TTH groups (some kids come all 5 days, so those kids are basically in two groups – a MWF group and a TTH group). Senior Outpost kids come 5 days per week only.

## GROUP NAME

Each group has a group name, chosen by the group each session. Your group name will be for all your campers - 2 day, 3 day, and 5 day per week campers. Therefore, waiting until Tuesday to pick your name (unless you are Senior OP) is appropriate – otherwise, kids show up to camp Tuesday with a group name already missed out. Voting on a name is never really successful –try and create a name using consensus. ***\*Before you announce your name at Campfire, get the approval from your director\*.***

## THE GROUP FORT AND GROUP FLAG

Each group finds a secret fort and makes a group flag. A fort is “designed” by each group in the preserve. Traditionally, if another group finds your flag, you owe that group a watermelon (which the camp will provide, so you do NOT need to buy any watermelon). We’ll show you how this works in person, at training. Campers feel VERY proud about their forts and flags – it’s one of the most special, unique things about Outpost Summer Camp.

## MORNING CAMPFIRE

Campers and Counselors go to the logs in the morning after their van ride. Counselors sit with their groups and start participating in Blitz right away! Once all the vans have arrived, we do our own rendition of the Pledge of Allegiance and announcements are made. Immediately after Campfire, attendance is taken.

## AFTERNOON CAMPFIRE

“Campfire” at the end of each day is a special event. The Directors will call up as many groups, counselors, or even campers to share their adventures for that day with the whole camp. Sharing time can include Storytelling (usually very exaggerated!) about the places the group has been and things they participated in that day, a fun creative skit, or even special accomplishments by individual campers.

**The success of Campfire depends upon all staff participating and supporting whoever is in front of the group. Sit with your campers, sing loudly, cheer for everyone, and help campers pay attention. Remember, your campers want to see you up front. YOU DO THIS FOR THEM.**

Sometimes a group will challenge another group to a "feat of skill and dexterity". Examples include water balloon tosses, counselor decorating contests and dirtiest camper or group challenges. These challenges should be CAREFULLY planned as time is limited every afternoon. Please don't have food challenges that are messy enough to attract ants or other critters at the logs! **You MUST get approval by a director for your challenge before you make it public, and most challenges will be completed two days after it is announced.**

Remember, challenges are for the campers and the audience. We encourage loud, raucous cheering – for everyone, at all times. Boogie is never ok at OSC – nor is "hazing" of any type – in which the intent of the challenge or activity is to make someone uncomfortable, embarrassed or humiliated.

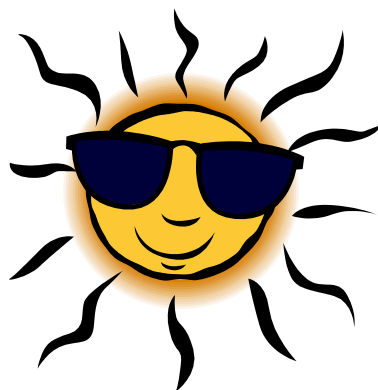
Some days will have a special theme for Campfire, such as Red, White and Blue Day, Halloween, or Olympic Day. This means – DRESS UP, be enthusiastic and create a sense of anticipation with your group!

## GROUP ORGANIZATION AND RULES

Set down **guidelines and your expectations on the first day**. The following group rules apply to all campers and it is the responsibility of the group counselor to teach:



1. Everything is done as a group – not individually.
2. **Stay with the group at all times.**
3. Rocks, sticks and mud (pretty much anything that campers might pick up from the ground) stay on the ground. So do campers ☺
4. Everyone must wear closed toe shoes at camp at all times.
5. Inappropriate language is not allowed.
6. Books, Toys, phones, and electronic equipment of any kind all stay at home – we won't be needing or using them at camp!
7. Fighting, hitting, pushing, shoving, biting, kicking, elbowing, or other physical violence is not allowed.
8. Chewing gum is not permitted at camp.
9. Listen to your counselors.
10. See "Camp Safety" and "Pool Safety" for additional guidelines.
11. HAVE FUN!



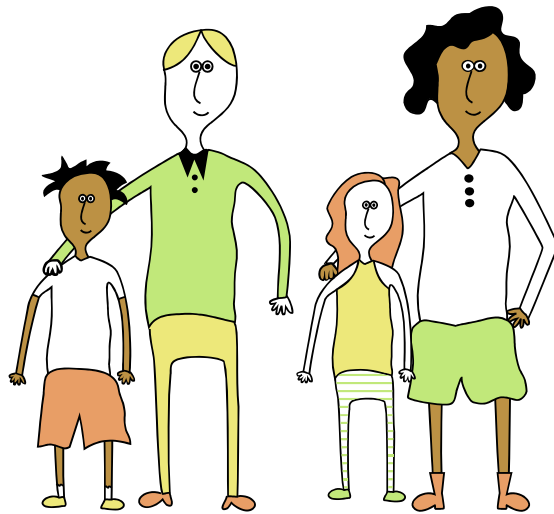
# **CAMPER SUPERVISION POLICY**

At Outpost Summer Camps, we stress a “Parental Approach to Supervision.” This means that staff must act much as a parent would when supervising their campers.

Please be sure you are watching your campers for tangible needs (i.e. sunscreen, shoes tied, first aid given) and also those that are less tangible (feeling like a part of the group, knowing they are safe in their group, not overheating or exhausting themselves). This approach is covered in detail in your Staff Manual and throughout training.

Staff must always be with their assigned campers. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the on-site supervisor/director so that substitute supervision can be provided. For more information about staff’s day-to-day activities and duties please read your manual thoroughly.

Staff who need help supervising their campers, as with any aspect of camp, should see their directors immediately. OSC directors encourage open communication and appreciate staff that bring issues to their attention promptly.



# **TYPICAL DAYS AT OUTPOST SUMMER CAMPS**

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## **About 8:00 - Morning Van Route**

1. **Start your van** (they need to warm up).
2. Complete your pre-route van inspection.
3. Fill out a Vehicle Problem Card.
4. **CALL THE OFFICE FOR ANY MESSAGES BEFORE YOU LEAVE - 858-842-4900.** Record any notes or absences on your clipboard.
5. Make sure you consult the right transportation list: i.e., MWF or TTH.
6. Turn on your lights - we always drive with lights on.
7. Give yourself plenty of time to reach the first house.
8. Give some thoughts to the day's activities.



## ***About 9:00 - Arrive at the park***

1. Drive slowly in park.
2. The campers leave using the side door only. Have a JC or other staff open the door for them. Send them to the logs under the supervision of a counselor. If none are present, wait until one becomes available.
3. Check in with the Program Director, report absences, and turn in the day's Vehicle Problem Card.
4. Park the van carefully as children could be around the vans.
5. Make sure your lights are off.
6. Go immediately to the Campfire area and sit with your group on the logs.

## **9:15am – Morning Campfire**

1. Make sure you, your JC and your campers are on the logs sitting as a group.
2. Blitz, Announcements, Songs, Stories, etc.
3. Flag salute - all rise. "Hats off ... Glasses upside down."
4. Dismissal. Take attendance and help your JC get an activity started.
5. Attendance meeting – bring your clipboard!

## **9:45 - 3:30 Day Camp Program**

Mystery Blocks, Nature, Swimming, and other special activities are all done according to schedule; other activities are worked out by the Counselor and are scheduled around the main program (including lunch). Each week you will get a schedule for the week's activities. **Make sure you tell your Director where you are going if you are leaving the area (e.g., fort, creek, etc).**

### **3:30 Afternoon Campfire**

Counselors bring their groups up front to “report” on the day's activities. This is the time we sing songs and have skits, stories and challenges. Support each other and cheer loudly! We will lend everyone an OSC songbook, a game book and hand-out skit ideas for the summer.

### **3:50 - 4:00 Van Departure**

1. Gather your van route campers near the logs and take a preliminary headcount. Walk as a group to your van.
2. In the van take a verbal and visual roll call (campers like to play games and sometimes answer "here" for those not on the van).
3. **Do not leave the park until dismissed by a director.** We leave the park at approximately 4:00pm.



### **End of Day**

**REMEMBER TO CALL THE OFFICE AS SOON AS YOU HAVE FINISHED YOUR VAN ROUTE - 858-842-4900.**

# FIRST TWO DAYS AT CAMP

The most important two days of the session!!! Know this section well and you'll have a great chance of kicking off your summer (and each session) with a great start.

Campers often arrive with anxieties and questions. We want them to see an atmosphere which is organized and open to their concerns. On the ride to camp tell them what will happen on the first day and how they will meet their Counselor and other members of their group. Be sure to check the information sheet for campers on your route and in your group so you are aware of any special medications and/or requests. Tell them your name (over and over) and that you will be driving them home in the afternoon. Assure them that you will not leave the park without them!

The first two days at camp will be different from the normal program. To compensate for the inevitable chaotic reaction from the kids and Counselors alike, we have a basic orientation schedule set up which hopefully will start everyone off on the right foot for the summer.

## **Starting your van route: About 8:00 A.M.**

Do pre-trip inspection and call the office before you begin your route. This is a critical time. You may have to adjust your time accordingly until you become more familiar with your route. **Remember the first contact for each child with the camp is the driver that first day. Go out of your way to be friendly and enthusiastically wonderful as you greet each camper and parent.** A new camper may be having second thoughts and fears and an old camper may test you to see if you are as great and fun as their driver last year. This is a good time to talk about all of the neat things they will be doing this summer. Make a name for your van! Make sure campers know you will take them home.

## **Arriving at camp: About 9:00 A.M.**

When you arrive at camp, remember to drive slowly into the park. It looks very different with several vans and children in it.

Before they leave the van, remind the campers to hang onto their lunches and swim suits. (Campers bring a lunch every day. They bring their swimsuits the first day and leave them at camp.) This can be tough the first couple of days. A lost lunch or swimsuit can ruin the camper's whole day. Also, remind them of your name and your van name so they will get on the proper van to go home.

As you stop the van -- make sure you or another counselor or director is the one who opens the side door and lets the children out. Some of the campers may not have refined social graces and a pushing and shoving contest may ensue with injurious consequences . . . a bad way to start camp!!!

Direct the kids to the campfire area. Park your van and help the campers to the campfire area.

## **Morning Campfire**

On the first two days Campfire will start when all the vans are in. Don't rush to be on time; **DRIVE SAFELY**. Once you arrive, bring your group list with you to campfire.

1. Once everyone arrives, there will be a brief welcome, some introductions, and a Flag salute.
2. Next -- some reminders for both Counselors and campers.
3. Assignment of campers to groups – The Directors will call one Counselor at a time to the front. He or she will in turn call out the names of their campers. **Remember to have your group list with you.**
4. Once all the campers on the Counselor's list are accounted for, the group goes to a nearby spot until all the groups have been formed. Stay in this place until a director checks in with you. They'll bring you any campers that are confused or lost!
5. Introduce yourself and your JC. Go over your rules and expectations and play some "ice breakers." Try to include everyone as the quiet, shy child will like/need attention as much as the outgoing "talkative camper" type. Make sure each swimsuit is labeled and is placed in the swim bag, and ensure each lunch goes into the group's bin.
6. **Learn the names of each camper.** This is very important. Help campers learn the names of the other campers in the group. Creative name tags have been used with much success by many counselors.
7. Begin to discuss the adventures they will share in their group - swimming, fort building, games, nature, hiking and exploring. Start to develop group spirit by telling them how they are obviously the **BEST GROUP IN CAMP!** Start thinking about a group name.

## **Day Camp Program**

Once all the campers are in their groups, the directors will let you know that it's time to start the day's activities. Now is a good time to take your group on an orientation hike around the camp. Point out the bathrooms, water fountains, etc. Introduce the campers to your van.

**Swimming 12pm-2:30pm** - The Pool Director will provide an orientation. All campers will be assessed to see which swim groups they will be put in. Again, make sure campers have swimsuits. Give yourself an **EXTRA 10 minutes** to get from the park to the pool, and ten minutes at the pool to get the kids ready to swim (to change their clothes). Frontload your campers so they know that they will swim less these first two days.

## **Afternoon Campfire: 3:30pm**

Be on time! Be enthusiastic. Share stories about your day and the exciting adventures you encountered. Close the day with lots of energy and a BANG!

### **Departure: 4pm**

Remember that the campers will need help finding their van for a couple of days. Have your van list with you at campfire.

1. Each driver will be called forward (one at a time) so that campers may leave with their driver. Do not leave for the van until you have all your riders.
2. Take both verbal and visual role – count your campers and match names with faces.
3. Do not leave the park until you are dismissed by a director.
4. Drive slowly out of the park.
5. Campers not riding on vans will be assigned a meeting spot with the camp specialist, who is responsible for signing those campers in and out of camp with an adult.

### **End of Day**

At the end of your route, call the office (858-842-4900) IMMEDIATELY upon dropping off your last camper. **We need you to call so we know everyone is home safe and sound and to give you any important messages.**

### **P.S.**



Top 10 tidbits to remember on the 1st day (and every day!):

1. To call in to the office before and after routes: A.M. and P.M.
2. Know if any campers are getting picked-up early or dropped-off late.
3. To return your cooler and swim bag to the clubhouse area.
4. To turn off lights on in van.
5. To have a copy of your route, and use the correct one (MWF or TuTh).
6. To have your van keys.
7. To have your weekly schedule, group list and clipboard.
8. To be on time for all activities.
9. TO SMILE!
10. TO HAVE FUN!

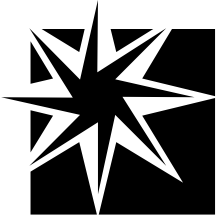


# 100+ THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR GROUP

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Do any of these ideas sound good but you don't know what they are? Just ask!

Scavenger hunt	Kick the can
Water fight	Invent a new game
Charades	Look for Tree People artifacts
Power walk	Two Truths and a Lie
Make a memory book	Card games
Van wash	Dance party
Share funny memories	Crazy Hair Contest
Treasure hunt	Triathlon
Sing songs from songbook	Make up new lyrics to a song
Wink murder	Define a word (fun, friendship, camp)
Charades race	Write a camp poem
Trust walks	Progressive stories
Mad Libs	Amiriball
Book of questions	Jedi dodgeball
Three-legged soccer	Clam free
Blind volleyball	Attacker-defender
Hula-hoop contests	Parachute games
Skit-in-a-bag	Hospital tag
Dictionary trivia	Steal the bacon
Cops and robbers	Whiz...Bonk!
Cut the pie	Name that Tune
Tunnel tag	Adopt another group
Signature hunt	Freeze tag
Pictionary	Capture the flag
Celebrity game	TV tag
Sardines	Lemonade
Make up cheers	Giants wizards and elves
Clean your fort	Track Jake the Giant
Build forts	Pretend to fish for Crawfish
Fortune telling	Find a secret place and name it
Spud	Crazy Ball / normal Ball
Senses scavenger hunt	Track another group
Nature walks	Make a secret group handshake
Group initiatives	Hike to London - use an accent!
Make necklaces or bracelets	Sculptuary
Add-on stories	Count to Ten
Fantasy Tag	Smaug's Jewels
Elbow Tag	Slow motion tag
Bingo	Follow the leader
Lip sync contest	Make up a new Camp tradition
Hodgie Podgie	Famous pairs
Line dancing	People to people
Host a party for another group	Theme day (i.e. we're on another planet)
Organize a kidnapping	All group unbirthday
Simon Says	Everyone in your group is a robot...
Tattoo parlor (using washable markers)	Everyone in your group is a cat...
Minute mysteries	Sneak up on a director (plan this)
Categories (with or without water)	Starburst
Have you ever?	Octopus tag



## EVERY CHILD

Every child should know a hill,  
Should know a tree  
The comfort of its cool lap of shade,  
And the supple strength of its arms  
Balancing the child between earth and sky  
So the child is the creature of both.

Every child should know bits of singing water  
The strange mysteries of its depths  
And the long sweet grasses that border it.

Every child should know  
some scrap of uninterrupted sky,  
To shout against;  
And have one star,  
dependable and bright,  
for wishing upon.

-Edna Casler Joll