



2024 Camp Laurel
Sleepaway Camp
Parent/Caregiver Handbook

Letter from our Director, Outdoor Program

Dear Campers & Families,

We are so excited to have you join us at Camp Laurel this summer! A summer full of adventure, lifelong memories and new friendships is right around the corner! We know that sleepaway camp is an exciting yet nerve-wracking experience for both campers and families which is why we wanted to create this handbook full of useful information and frequently asked questions to help our campers and families have an easier transition to camp life!

It's going to be an amazing summer of discovering all the adventures to be had at Laurel. From boating on Sweatheart Lake, to primitive camping at Rocky Ledge, to discovering all the hiking trails, and sleeping in platform tents. So many memories will be created this summer to last a lifetime.

Providing girls of all ages the tools they need to develop healthy relationships is at the core of Girl Scout's mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

Melissa Mason

Director of Outdoor Program

Manager of Summer Camps: Carrie Milton

cmilton@gsofct.org

203-239-2922 ext. 3501

For all General Camp Questions:

customer care@gsofct.org

Customer Care: 800-922-2770

Payment Information and Financial Assistance

Balance Due

The balance of the camp fee, less the deposit, must be paid online by credit card before June 1, 2024. You can manage your payments in your myGS account.

If your camp balance is not paid by June 1st your campers registration will be cancelled, (deposits and Girl Scout Memberships are non-refundable). Should there be an unforeseen issue making your final payment on time, please contact [Customer Care](#).

To pay your final Payment

1. We use [myGS](#) for you to make payments
2. Enter your email address (example: jsmith) and password
3. After you log on click on “My Events” and your camp weeks should be listed
4. Click: “Pay Now” to make payment for an individual registration

Where can I apply for Financial Assistance?

Financial Assistance will available. It is conducted on the honor system. No documentation of income will be required to apply. Financial Aid form can be found [here](#).

All registrations not paid in full by June 1st will be canceled and the financial aid will be waved. Should there be an unforeseen issue making your final payment on time, we ask that you contact [Customer Care](#).

Refunds and Cancellations

Deposits are non-refundable. Cookie Credits are non-refundable. If campers leave camp early, by choice or due to disciplinary reasons, there will be no refund.

Eligibility for partial or full refund if the following:

- If GSOFCT receives a written request for your camper(s) withdrawal at least **five weeks** prior to the start of the session, the remainder of the camp fee will be refunded.
- If campers are sent home due to communicable illness or injury, a prorated refund due to medical exemption will be issued.
- If a program is cancelled without an alternative, a full refund will be issued.
- If the Council cancels in-person programming for summer 2024 due to Covid-19 or other communicable disease, registrants will receive a full refund.

Arrival at Camp

Let the fun begin!

- Arrival time at camp is Sunday from 2pm-4pm
- Please limit the amount of family members attending check-in to 2 people.

Upon Arrival

When you arrive at camp, a staff member will inform you of your camper's assigned unit and let their counselors know they have arrived and guide you through luggage drop-off and check-in stations.

Health Screening and Check-in Procedure

If your camper(s) requires any medications see Health & Wellness.

All campers and staff will be required to have a health screening at check-in (e.g., Have you been sick in the past week? Have you been in close contact with anyone who has been sick in the past two weeks?). Any camper or staff with potential symptoms of illness will not be allowed in the camp until cleared by a medical professional.

If your camper has a food allergy, please make sure it is noted on the health form. We will need documentation of the reaction they have to the allergen.

During this check-in time, medications and paperwork will be collected by the camp counselors and delivered to the Director of First Aid to be locked in the secure space. Healthcare staff will also be available to answer questions.

**Have the
Following
Items with
you for
Check-in:**

**Prescription
Medications**

*In their original
containers

**Over-the-
counter
Medications**

(e.g., vitamins,
Advil, etc.)

*In new,
unopened,
containers

**An
Administration
of Medication
Form**

*For each
medication,
including
Over-the-counter

Absences

Please notify us of any absences, by phone call or email, **by 9:30 a.m.**

Picking up your Camper

- Checkout will be on Fridays from 3pm-5pm

Camper Pick-up Authorization

- When you arrive, staff will direct you to parking and let you know where to pick up your camper and their belongings.
- We will only release campers to those listed on their registration. We will be crosschecking the name with Photo Identification, so please have **everyone** use their legal name.
 - Upon sign out, you will also be given their medications back
- Please remember to check the Lost & Found on your way out

Late drop offs & Early pick ups

We understand there may be an occasion where you will need to drop off your camper(s) late or pick them up early and we will do our best to accommodate this. If this is the case, please contact our Camp Director to make arrangements ASAP!

Camp Facilities

- Our living units consist of either platform tents or cabins depending on the age of your camper(s), the program they are participating in, and number of campers.
- All cabins and platform tents contain cots with mattresses; adding mosquito netting is optional, but highly recommended.
- Our cabins house up to 8 campers each and our platform tents house 4 campers each
- Units do not have electricity-campers are encouraged to bring and use a flashlight or lantern
- At night, our latrines and staff buildings have electric lights so campers can find them
- Campers share common areas such as the shower house that has multiple, individual stalls with enough room to also get dressed in that stall

Communication

Rallyhood is a private, social media platform that we will use to share files and links to forms, photos from camp, and share information with you before and during camp. You will receive an invitation to join the rally that is associated with the week(s) that your camper is registered for camp. If you do not receive your email to join the rally within 2 weeks of registering for camp or after January 15, 2024, please reach out to Customer Care and let us know. The rally will remain open for you to download photos from the camp week until September 1, 2024.

No Cellphone Policy

Do not send your camper(s) to camp with cellphones. All internet enabled devices are prohibited (e.g., smartwatches). Your camper should not be distracted from the camp experience as well as a connection with nature. If brought to camp, these devices will be collected and kept in the director's office until pick-up. GSOFCT is not responsible for prohibited items being lost or damaged.

Camp Phone Calls

Camps can be reached via phone from early June to mid-August. Our Camp Directors and Camp Administrative Staff are happy to talk with parents/caregivers. While we are at camp during the camp season, we are not always near the phone. When leaving a voicemail please speak slowly; provide your name, your camper's name(s), your phone number, and the best time to reach you. We make every effort to return phone calls as soon as we can.

There is one office telephone line, and it serves emergencies only. Campers are NOT allowed to make or receive calls. This line must be kept free whenever possible. Please be assured that camp will contact you if there is ever any concern about campers' health or well-being.

Parents/Caregivers will be contacted in the following situations:

- If your camper visits the First Aid Station and is ill, running a fever for an extended period, or needs to see a doctor/visit the Emergency Room.
- If your camper's behavior is a threat to themselves or others in the camp community.
- If a camper or staff member tested positive for a communicable disease while at camp (e.g., COVID-19 or Measles).

Parents/Caregivers may be contacted if:

- The Director of First Aid has a question regarding your camper's health history (e.g., medications, chronic health conditions, etc.).
- Camp staff need your assistance/support regarding your camper's well-being.

Health and Wellness

Every camper MUST have their health form completed and submitted by June 1st, 2024!

Camp Laurel will have an APRN or RN on site at all times in our Health Center

While we take every precaution at camp, illnesses and injuries can occur. All staff members are trained, at a minimum, in basic First Aid/CPR, but many staff also have higher-level and lifeguard certifications. Our Director of First Aid is responsible for the well-being of everyone at camp. All visits to the health supervisor are documented—parents and guardians will be notified of incidents beyond basic cuts and scrapes.

In the event that health care outside of camp is necessary, camp staff will contact the family to pick up the camper. In the event that emergency medical care is needed, camp staff will contact EMS and the family.

If your camper(s) requires medications while at camp:

- Keep medications in the original containers, including inhalers, epi-pens, vitamins, etc., which identify them as your camper's medication, the instructions for dispensing, etc. Put all medications in a zip-lock bag with your camper's name. Medications that are not in their original containers will NOT be dispensed.
- Medication labels must match health profiles and must be current. Expired medications will not be accepted.
- Campers may not keep medications in their possession. The Director of First Aid will keep medications, vitamins, ointments, etc., in the health center. These will be sent with counselors if your camper is on a trip.
- Inhalers, bee sting kits, and other necessary items will be kept with campers/staff as determined by the Director of First Aid and as noted on the health profile.
- If your child has specific health needs (injections, specialized equipment, dietary concerns), please contact the camp director before your camper's session so our staff can prepare to meet their needs.
- The Director of First Aid will ensure that your camper receives their medication. Emergency medications, like those required for allergies, are kept close at hand by the counselors if needed.

Camper Behavior

Camp staff will help campers adjust to camp life. Campers are expected to follow the Girl Scout Promise and Girl Scout Law while at camp. Council policy states that campers and adults may not use weapons, alcohol, unprescribed drugs, or tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaporizers, etc., at Girl Scout functions or on Girl Scout property.

Every effort will be made to correct the issue and ensure a positive camping experience for all if a situation arises. Camp Laurel reserves the right to send home anyone who consistently exhibits inappropriate behavior, endangers the camp community, or acts unacceptably towards others. This is at the expense of the parent/guardian; we will not grant a refund of session fees.

Occasionally at camp, campers may share private, salacious, or sensitive information with their peers that may be potentially upsetting to other campers. We encourage you to speak with your camper about conversations and interactions with peers before they arrive and what is appropriate or inappropriate to share with others while at camp. Please encourage your camper to report any upsetting conversations or topics to their counselor or other staff members while they are at camp. Counselors will work with campers to understand appropriate boundaries and coach campers to resolve these issues.

The following are the expectations of all campers:

- Respect and cooperate with campers and counselors in your unit and throughout camp. Try to get to know campers in your unit and find ways to include everyone.
- Tell a counselor about any problems at camp. It's okay to tell if you (or someone you care about) are having trouble getting along with another camper, are frightened, don't feel well, or miss your family.
- Disagreements at camp will be settled by talking through the problem. Adults at camp will help campers discuss their differences and find solutions.
- Offensive or abusive language is not permitted. Harassment and teasing will not be tolerated.
- Pets and animals cannot be on the camp property.
- Theft, physical threats, physical violence, aggressive behavior, destructive behavior, or threats of destructive behavior will be taken seriously and not tolerated—at camp, on field trips, and outside of camp.
- Self-destructive or abusive threats or actions will be taken seriously.
- Campers are not allowed to drive a vehicle to camp.

Camp Packing List

Please label all items with your camper's first and last name

Pack clothing/equipment into one bag, tote, or backpack your camper can carry. Campers should help pack to know what they bring to camp. Put the camper's name on all clothing, laundry bag, and equipment. Use nametags or a laundry marker.

The packing checklist is for your convenience. Avoid unnecessary purchases. If you can substitute something on the list with an item you already have, feel free to do so. Remember, they will be outdoors most of the time and, therefore, need clothing suitable for warm days, cool mornings/evenings, and rain. We suggest they bring enough clothes to have a complete change every day. Leave anything of value at home. We cannot be responsible for missing articles or items ruined at camp.

Clothing:

- Pajamas
- Jacket/Sweatshirt & Raincoat
- T-shirts (one for each day)
- Shorts (one pair for each day, plus extras)
- Underwear (one pair for each day, plus extras)
- Socks (one pair for each day)
- Swimsuits (two one-piece or tankini style)
- Sneakers and/or hiking shoes
- Water shoes
- Shower shoes (flip flop or crocs can not be worn around camp)

Personal Items:

- Bath & Swim towels
- Travel sized soap/body wash
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Sunscreen (non-aerosol)
- Insect repellent (non-aerosol)
- Comb/brush
- Hair fasteners/headbands
- Lip balm
- Feminine products (if needed)
- Hand sanitizer

Do NOT Bring:

- Food, snacks, or drinks
- Phones, smart watches, radios, music devices
- Electronic games
- Makeup
- Hoop/Dangle earrings
- Weapons
- Pets

Equipment:

- Mess kit (plate, cup, fork, spoon, knife)
- Warm sleeping bag or blankets
- Twin fitted sheet to place over mattress
- Pillow with pillowcase
- Flashlight with new batteries
- Extra batteries
- Water bottle
- Laundry bag
- Backpack or drawstring bag to carry items around camp

Optional Items:

- Stationary, postcards, stamps, address book, envelopes with addresses on them
- Quiet games or books
- Notebook, journal, pens, pencils
- Disposable or digital camera phones (Phones cannot be brought to camp to use as cameras)
- Hat or bandana
- Sunglasses
- Favorite stuffed animal

Frequently Asked Packing Questions

1. Why two swimsuits? And why one-piece or tankini swimsuits?

Weather permitting, campers may swim multiple times per day. It's nice to have a dry swimsuit. We prefer swimsuits that accommodate active swimming/play activities. Send a one-piece or tankini to prevent sunburn and ensure campers stay covered.

2. Why do I need a fitted sheet when packing a sleeping bag?

Campers find it more comfortable to have a sheet (not required) on the vinyl mattress and use their sleeping bag as a comforter.

3. Do I need two pairs of shoes? And why can't I wear flip-flops at camp?

Campers can get wet and messy. Sudden downpours can leave shoes wet for the remainder of the week. It's best to pack an extra pair. Flip-flops are not sturdy enough for activities. Campers will be running, jumping, and having fun, and we want to ensure their feet are taken care of. Flip-flops are only allowed for showering and to and from the shower house.

4. Do they need a mess kit, and what is it?

We cook at least two meals over the fire and more if programs require it or campers want to. Campers need mess kits for their meal. A mess kit is a plate, bowl, cup, spoon, fork, and knife, often in a mesh bag (a dunk bag for sanitizing after washing). Mess kits can be purchased in our shops, online, or from sporting goods stores. Please only send metal or plastic, nothing that is breakable.

Homesickness

It is natural for children to experience homesickness while away from home and their routines. Talk to your camper about things that will be different. Prepare campers to expect to compromise with other campers, help with clean-up, and share the counselor's attention. Talk about all the great things that will happen at camp: making new friends, learning new skills, and having fun. Do not make promises that they can go home whenever they want. **DO NOT** send along a personal cell phone or smartwatch.

Please encourage your camper to have the confidence to enjoy the experiences at camp and have the courage to be open to new friends and activities. Most importantly, talk to them about how excited you are for them to go to Girl Scout camp and all the fun they will have. Do not tell them how sad you will be without them and how much you will miss them. While this is okay to do in a small amount, it only makes them think about how sad you are without them and that they might miss out on something at home, making them more homesick.

The following are researched suggestions from camping professionals at the American Camp Association:

Before Camp:

- Kids are more likely to have a positive experience if you prepare for camp together.
- Pack their favorite stuffed animal.
- Practice nights away from home before coming to camp.
- Do not tell your child you will 'rescue' them from camp. Don't bribe—the reward will be self-confidence and independence. Don't tell your camper they can call you or that you will call them. These promises only increase homesickness since that becomes all a homesick child can think about.
- Acknowledge you will miss them but reinforce that you know they will have fun and be safe at camp.
- Ask your child if they think they will get homesick.
- Acknowledge their feelings regarding camp before they leave.
- Let them know things at home will be taken care of—pets will be fed, etc. It's tough for kids to feel worried or guilty for being away from home.

During camp:

- Avoid the temptation to pick up your child early.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp.
- Trust your instincts; most homesick incidents will pass.

Life at Camp

Every camper who channels their wild side at Camp Laurel will get to swim, shoot archery, go boating, learn team-building skills, play field games, learn about nature, make art, and cook over the fire—how they do each is up to them and their fellow campers! Campers have an opportunity to swim each day. There is one shower house at camp. Campers will shower once per day.

We have an all-camp campfire for introduction, skits, and songs on camp's opening and closing nights. Other evenings may be spent camping out overnight, cooking, and doing other activities. Campers will be active most of the day. A one-hour rest time is scheduled after lunch for campers to rest and relax, write letters, read a book, or nap.

Girl-led Camping

When kids come to camp, no matter what program they signed up for, they will work with their counselor to help plan and decide what they will do during their stay. Girl Scouts develop their courage, confidence, and character by speaking up for what they want to experience at camp each summer. Campers work as a team to plan out their week of activities. Some activities have been planned out as part of the camp session campers signed up for. But the group will decide on all general activities. Encourage your camper to have ideas about what they want to do or try while at camp. Each camper will get at least one of their choices of activities while helping to plan their group's week at camp. And therefore, we can't tell you what they will do before the campers arrive.

Camp Staff

Camp Laurel is proud to have staff from here in Connecticut and worldwide! Bringing together people of different backgrounds allows our staff and campers to learn and experience new things. The staff undergo thorough training to learn how to work with our campers. They learn games and songs, team-building activities, conflict management, age-level development, how to help with homesickness, and much more.

Food

Counselors and campers will sit together at dining hall tables, and some meals will be eaten outside as a group. Meals are served family-style in the dining hall three times per day. Campers are encouraged to try all foods—trying new foods promotes healthy eating habits, and campers may find something new they like. Campers get a “no thank you” helping of each food. If they don’t like the breakfast option, cereal is offered. If they don’t like the lunch or dinner option, nut butter and jelly sandwiches are offered. A salad bar is at each meal. Juice, milk, and water are provided daily. Meals may include pancakes, eggs, French toast, oatmeal, tacos, pizza, burgers, tater tot casserole, grilled cheese and tomato soup, sandwiches, spaghetti, meatloaf, lasagna, mac and cheese, sloppy joes, and baked chicken. Menus vary and may change based on food orders and group size.

Gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, and dairy-free food will be provided as necessary for campers. Campers needing an alternative option for food will get it from the kitchen. Should your camper have other food needs besides gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, or vegan, please email the camp director at laurel@gsofct.org to notify them of any other dietary needs. Dietary needs must be discussed before your camper arrives at camp. Parents and caregivers are welcome to provide their child’s food for the week if needed for special dietary restrictions.

Camp is **not** a nut-free environment. Please let us know of any food sensitivity/allergy your camper(s) may have so that we may take precautions.

Daily Schedule

7:15 a.m.	Wake-up
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Unit/All Camp Kapers
9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Morning Activities
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	Rest Hour
2:45 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Afternoon Activities
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.	Evening activities
9:30 p.m./10:00 p.m.	Lights-out

**Kapers are camp jobs like cleaning, organizing, and helping around camp.*

Campers sleep on mattresses on cots. Each unit has a porta toilet, pit toilet or bathroom nearby with a light to light the way. Camp is a safe environment for campers to learn independence; therefore, staff does not sleep in the same room as campers. Counselors sleep in a separate space within earshot of campers. Counselors are always on duty, occasionally checking each sleeping area. Campers should always be willing to ask for help.

Laundry Facilities

We do not have laundry facilities for camper use. Please indicate on your camper's health profile if they are a bed-wetter (not unusual and nothing to worry about). Campers should talk with their counselor if they have an accident. Staff will take care of laundering bedding and clothing and return them as discreetly as possible.

Telephone

Camp Laurel has a phone line for business purposes only. Campers are not allowed to make or receive calls at camp. Please do not send a cell phone or smartwatch with call/text capabilities to camp, as we want to focus on creating a healthy team environment. Cell phones distract from this process and create homesickness problems for the entire group. We will hold personal phones in the office until the end of camp.

Change, Cancellation, and Refund Policy

5+ weeks in advance—full refund, less camp deposit; deposit may be transferred to a different session.

Refunds are not issued for cancellations within five weeks of your camp session. Exceptions for extenuating circumstances, providing documentation of family emergency or health condition, may be considered. Refunds will not be made if a participant is sent home due to homesickness, misconduct, or parent request. If a participant is sent home, a parent or guardian handles and pays for transportation.

Emergency Procedures

Severe Heat

At times during the summer, the camps may be affected by extreme heat. During those times, the schedule may be altered with other activities so that campers are not in the direct sunlight during the hottest part of the day. These activities could include more water games/activities, indoor programs, or shaded games. Staff will also encourage more sunscreen and increase water breaks.

Hydrated campers are happy and healthy campers. Many campers are not used to being outdoors in the summer heat for long periods. Our staff make sure campers are all taking frequent water breaks and drinking water at every meal. You can help by getting your camper in the habit of carrying a water bottle throughout the day and encourage them to take sips of water (always avoid chugging!)

Thunderstorms

Occasional storms may roll through the area during the summer. Each camp has a designated area where they gather for severe storms. If thunder or lightning is observed, certain program activities are postponed until the threat has passed. These activities might include—water games, target sports, and hiking activities.

Each camp practices emergency drills with their campers weekly. In the event of a weather related, or national emergency, the most up-to-date information will be conveyed through Rallyhood and the [GSOFACT website](#).

Weather and Cancellations

Camp is open rain or shine. There are cabins, shelters, and covered porches where activities take place. Please pack a raincoat or poncho daily for summer rain showers. **Should camp need to be cancelled in the event of an emergency**, we will attempt to call your primary phone number. The announcement will also be posted on the homepage of the [GSOFACT website](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does my camper(s) need to be a Girl Scout?

You must be a registered Girl Scout to attend a Girl Scout Summer Camp—if you do not wish to be a member of a troop at this time, you can register as a Juliette member to solely attend camp.

2. Do you offer any Open Houses?

- YES! We will have a Virtual Camp Information Night via Zoom on December 4th at 6pm
- Camp Laurel's Open House is scheduled for the Spring of 2024

3. Can I call my camper(s) while they are at camp?

We have a strict no cell phone policy at camp. If you need to get in touch with someone at camp, please call our office and our staff will be happy to speak with you.

4. Can I send my camper mail while they are at camp?

Yes! We recommend writing letters or sending care packages in advance of the session so that they have ample time to arrive at camp. You are also welcome to drop off letters at camp upon dropping off your camper(s). Please address any mail to Camp Laurel, C/O Camper Name, 175 clubhouse road, Lebanon, CT 06249

5. How much money should I send with my camper(s) for their Trading Post times?

\$10 - \$40

6. What if my camper(s) requires special accommodations while at camp?

If your camper(s) requires special accommodations, please contact the camp director to discuss their needs. GSOFCT can make reasonable accommodations for medical, behavioral, and individual educational needs.

7. How can I best help to prepare my camper(s)?

- Attend the Camp Information Night and/or the Open House to meet some of our staff and tour camp
- Talk to them about camp life and how much fun they will have - keep it positive
- Encourage your camper to always see a camp staff member if any issues arise while they are with us
- LABEL EVERYTHING!!!
- Help your camper(s) pack for camp, being sure not to do it all - they'll be more familiar with where everything is once at camp

8. If I need to cancel a session of camp, will I receive a refund?

- Our deposit is non-refundable
- The remainder of the fees will be refunded if the withdraw is more than 5 weeks prior to the start of the session, if the camper has a communicable illness or an unforeseen injury, a program is cancelled with no alternative program offered, or if camp is cancelled due to COVID-19 or any other reasons.

Frequently Asked Questions for Campers

1. Do you have any tips to prepare for camp?

- Be sure to do as much packing as you can on your own so that you know where everything is when you arrive at camp
- Be prepared to try new foods while you are at camp; one of those meals may be your new favorite!
- Make sure your first AND last name is on everything you are bringing to camp

2. What about tips for while I am at camp?

- Drink plenty of water!!!
- Always wear sunscreen and bug spray

3. What are the facilities like at camp?

- You will either be living in a unit with platform tents or cabins; both of which have no electricity
- Each unit has latrines and camp has a large, shared shower house with individual shower stalls
- Camp has a large dining hall, health center, lake and much more!

4. What activities will I participate in while I am at camp?

You'll have fun activities daily: swimming, boating, arts and crafts, sports, archery, hiking, games, and even slingshot.

5. What if I have a birthday during camp?

Our staff will absolutely help to make your day special while at camp. Please let us know if you will be celebrating a birthday while you are with us.

6. Can I stay with a friend while I am at camp?

- Yes! Campers may request one “buddy” to sleep in the same cabin or tent with if they are in the same session and program
- We will not accommodate a whole troop staying together in a cabin though



Customer Care

customer care@gsofct.org | 800-922-2770

Si Necesita Ayuda En Español

Santa Gonzalez | 800-922-2770 X3317