

CAMP WALDEN PARENT ORIENTATION GUIDE



We are excited that you and your child have chosen to make Camp Walden a part of your summer!

Our top priority is to provide your camper with a safe and memorable overnight camping experience. To do that, we need to familiarize you with how camp runs and **how best to prepare yourself and your camper**. This guide seeks to answer many questions that parents have—especially those new to Walden.

As this guide is updated annually, even parents of RETURNING campers should read it thoroughly. We occasionally add topics and alter the way we address others.

Most of this information will also be sent to you in bite-size chunks throughout the spring, via email, text, and the **Campanion app** on your phone.

At the end of the POG, you'll find **the packing list**, directions to camp and **Do Not Bring list**. If there is anything we've missed—and surely there is—please do not hesitate to call us for answers or guidance.

Here's to a summer of sunshine and lazy mosquitoes!!
Liz and Scott

Fall/Winter/Spring
2335 Mistletoe Ave.
Fort Worth, TX 76110
Phones: 248-225-1256 (Liz)
817-253-0722 (Scott)

Summer
5607 South River Road,
Cheboygan, MI 49721
Phone: 231-625-2050
summer@campwaldenmi.com (year-round!)

SUMMER 2024 IMPORTANT DATES

- **Monday, May 27**—The Texas office closes. Scott and Liz are available by cell phone through June 7. Please use the main camp number beginning June 8, 231-625-2050. All snail mail should now be addressed to our SUMMER address.
- **Saturday, June 8**—Staff Training Week begins. Office staff will begin answering camp phones.
- **Monday, June 17**—**CAMP BEGINS**. First Session and Mini Session campers arrive.
- **Saturday, June 29**—Mini Session campers depart.
- **Sunday, June 30**—Five-Week and Weeks 3-4 campers arrive.
- **Saturday, July 13**—First Session ends; Parents picking up may tour the grounds until noon.
- **July 13-15**—**Visiting Weekend**. See page 11 for details.
- **Monday, July 15**—Second Session begins.
- **Saturday, July 27**—Two-week campers depart.
- **July 28-31**—Mini-Mini Session
- **Saturday, August 3**—**CAMP ENDS**. All campers depart.

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A TYPICAL DAY AT WALDEN (A-DAYS AND B-DAYS)

8 a.m. WAKE-UP BELL
8:30 a.m. BREAKFAST

CLEAN-UP Everyone back to the cabin! Counselors will assist and supervise the clean-up of your cabin and grounds. Get dressed for 1st and 2nd periods.

10 a.m. FIRST PERIOD
11:15 a.m. SECOND PERIOD

12:30 p.m. WASH-UP
12:45 LUNCH

1:30 to 2:30 REST PERIOD
 One counselor per cabin accompanies campers back to the cabin area for quiet activities.

2:30 p.m. THIRD PERIOD

3:45 p.m. PUNCH AND COOKIES Snack and Mail Call in the Meadow.

4:15 p.m. FOURTH PERIOD

5:30 p.m. WASH-UP
6 p.m. DINNER & WUDDLE*

7-8 p.m. TWILIGHT Free time. Campers choice.

8:15 p.m. EVENING PROGRAM With Unit Group.

9-9:30 p.m. SNACK

9:30-10:30 p.m. BEDTIME/ LIGHTS-OUT
 Supervision by Rounds or, on Sack-In nights, in-cabin counselor.

**A Wuddle is a Walden, all-cabin huddle. We circle-up every evening to discuss a topic provided by the directors or a subject of importance to a cabin.*

ACTIVITY AREAS

Upon arriving at camp, your campers choose their activity schedules for two weeks at a time (First Session) or for the entire three weeks (Second Session). We'll assure it's well-rounded and fulfills any requests you have (e.g., swim lessons). Following are classes that are regularly offered, but this summer's staff may bring a special skill for us to add to the list. (Good examples from recent summers are salsa dancing, African drumming, and rugby.)

Arts & Crafts—Ceramics (hand-building for Units I-II; wheel for Units III-IV), drawing/painting, candle making, jewelry (string and beads; wire and metals), tie dye, batik, lapidary (shaping and polishing rocks), screen printing, needlework, and sculpture.

Athletics—Archery, fencing, gymnastics, fitness, tennis, pickleball, yoga, basketball, lacrosse, flag football, softball, baseball, soccer, biking, ultimate Frisbee. Special unit/cabin programs can include kickball, ga-ga-ga, and dodge ball. Off camp athletic events may include inter-camp sports competitions, tennis outings, the Walden triathlon, and the Harbor Springs July 4th 5K.

Horseback Riding—Focuses primarily on English-saddle techniques, taught in the school ring; and the occasional Western ride. Riders may also participate in trail rides, Adopt-a-Horse classes, and other special events at the stables. Fees for horseback riding include these extra activities.

Media—Includes black & white photography (Unit IV), digital photography, videography/filmmaking; radio/podcasting (playing music/hosting shows on WLDN); and the Walden Pond, the daily camp newspaper, for which campers draw cartoons and write poetry and stories.

Outdoor Life—A general heading for nature, animals, climbing, gardening, and outdoor cooking. The Walden Nature Nook houses rabbits and kittens; on the farm are chickens, goats, and other livestock. In these classes, campers learn to care for animals; identify plants, hone wilderness skills; and cook over a campfire; The Walden garden grows vegetables and herbs used in our Mess Hall.



Performing Arts—Improv comedy and drama classes, plus the First Session musical. Dance classes include hip-hop and poms, sometimes ballet. Walden counselors teach guitar and ukulele and lead a 'jam session' for musicians and singers. Campers are welcome to bring their smaller instruments to camp.

Tripping—Overnights of 1- to 3-nights travel to a variety of scenic locations in the Lower and Upper Peninsulas. Campers will have the opportunity to join a cabin trip and/or sign up individually for day and overnight excursions. We will take "tent trips" at approved camp grounds where Walden staff are in contact with Michigan Department of Natural Resources personnel. All trips are voluntary; we assure that the campers going on trips are physically prepared, have the proper equipment, and take part in a pre-trip orientation. Trips remain in areas where there is an emergency medical facility within 45 minutes, unless a certified Wilderness First Aid staff member accompanies the trip. Trippers carry cell phones and are trained in emergency procedures.

Waterfront—Canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding (for Units III and IV), sailing, waterskiing, wakeboarding and tubing, as well as fishing. Campers can earn certifications in sailing and swimming. Campers who pass the swim test may participate in all waterfront sports and activities. When campers do not pass the test, we encourage them to sign up for swim lessons and to retake the test as many times as they need to be successful.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Walden is an “intentional community,” which means that our program purposely directs campers toward desired goals and outcomes. Here, broadly, are the results we strive for. As a result of being a member of the Walden family this summer, campers will...

- **Use more positive, specific words to describe themselves** than when they arrive at camp. Those words will be supported by actions taken at camp or goals achieved. *Example: Become more responsible, e.g. “I created my own activity schedule.”*
- **Build skills to make and keep new friendships.** *Example: Become a better listener, e.g. “I sat on Katie’s bed with her when she was homesick and let her tell me about her favorite stuffed animal.”*
- **Live productively and positively in a group setting;** work as a member of a team. *Example: Learn to share small spaces, e.g. “I moved my stack of T-shirts so that Josh could fit his jeans on the shelf.”*
- **Appreciate more deeply and spend more time in the natural world.** *Example: Learn about a specific tree or bird, e.g. “Now I know that planting milkweed helps monarch butterfly populations.”*
- **Increase their willingness to try NEW activities and take HEALTHY risks.** *Example: Sign up to go on an overnight camping trip, when you’ve never done it before, e.g. “I slept in a tent for the first time!”*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Your CampInTouch Account



CamplnTouch and the **Campanion** app are your portals to preparing for and sharing your camper’s experience. By logging in online or opening the app, you’ll have **access to forms, transportation and financial information**, the camp store account and more. You can pay your outstanding balance in CamplnTouch and send your camper email from either one.

The Campanion app lets you upload forms just by taking pictures of them. When you provide the app a “training photograph” of your camper prior to their session, Campanion can notify you when a picture of your child appears in the photo gallery. Download Campanion from the app store on your smartphone.

Every Walden family has one or more CamplnTouch accounts, assigned to individual email addresses. The parent/guardian who filled out your camper’s online application was asked to create a password that, along with that person’s email address, provides them access to this private account. To access CamplnTouch, go to our website and click on “Login” in the top navigation.

Parents and legal guardians who reside in the same or different households can have separate CamplnTouch accounts. They should request a link from us in order to set up an account. Please don’t give your personal password out to friends and relatives. However, you can create **guest accounts** that allow them access to CamplnTouch photographs and email. This is great for grandparents! However, if pops or nana get locked out of their guest accounts, you will need to unlock them. We cannot do so.

Packing for Camp

The Walden Packing List can be found in your CampInTouch account, at the end of this document, and on our Web site. A few suggestions: You should not need more than two Large/Jumbo duffels for each camper (please avoid Brody's "Big Bertha"; it is too heavy when full). You might pack clothes in one and save the other for bulky items such as bedding/towels. Two-week campers will need a 13-day supply of clothes; all others, a 10-day supply. Walden apparel can be purchased at **Brody's in West Bloomfield, MI**, brodysonline.com, **248-851-6232**, and **Perfect Trading Co., in Bloomfield Hills**, perfecttradingco.com, **248.792.5949**

We no longer allow "EGG CRATES" as mattress pads. These foam pads end up in our dumpsters and, thus, in landfills. You'll find washable, reusable, cot-sized mattress pads or camping pads online. Campers should take these items home. Please don't request that they leave them behind!

Other packing tips:

- Walden will provide 1st Session and 2nd Session campers with a string backpack for the trip to Mackinac Island. Campers will not be allowed to bring other bags.
- Refrain from sending traditional area rugs and plastic-drawer units for use next to your camper's bunk. Rugs trap dirt and mildew, and drawers take up too much floor space (and are a sure sign that your camper is overpacked!).
- Don't worry about not sending enough. If your child runs out of clean underwear or another wardrobe component, we will wash the item or, if you would like, purchase an inexpensive replacement in town.

Transportation

You'll find detailed information about travel to and from camp in your CampInTouch account.

BY BUS

Walden provides charter bus service **to camp**...

- **June 17**, at the start of First Session/Mini Session from the Detroit and Chicago areas*
- **June 30**, at the start of Weeks 3-4 and the five-week session from the Detroit area only
- **July 15**, at the start of Second Session/Two Weeks Second Session from Detroit and Chicago

Walden provides buses **from camp**...

- **June 29**, the last day of the Mini Session, to the Detroit area only
- **July 13**, the end of First Session, to the Detroit and Chicago areas
- **July 27**, at the end of the Two Weeks Second Session, to the Detroit area only
- **August 3**, the last day of Second Session and end of camp, to the Detroit and Chicago areas

**Buses from and back to Toledo/Cleveland will depend on demand*

BATHING SUIT POLICY

We do not allow "string" bikinis or "tube" tops

Bathing suits that tie, OR APPEAR TO TIE, to keep them in place on top or bottom, are not worn at Walden. **Nor are "tube"-style tops with no straps.**

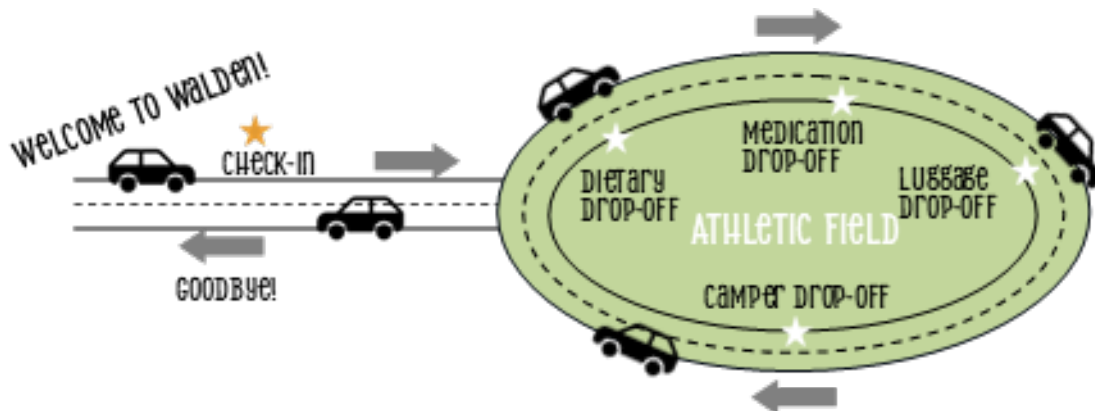
Swimwear that campers bring with them should be "full coverage" and appropriate for **athletic waterfront activities.**

Walden partners with Blue Lakes Charters, whose buses feature HEPA filtered air-conditioning and bathrooms, and Walden staff ride on the buses with campers to and from camp.

Campers taking the bus to camp may pack a small snack and reusable water bottle in a backpack, along with items to pass the time, such as cards or books. **Phones and electronics are not allowed on the bus ride to or from camp. Candy and/or snacks must be eaten by the time your camper arrives at Walden.** We will provide a snack for the bus ride home.

BY CAR

Many Walden campers travel to camp by car. This year, drop-off will be a little earlier, closer to 10 a.m. on the first day of First and Second sessions (exact times will be sent later in the spring). Depending on the weather, you will be directed onto our Athletic Field. Check-in is “drive thru” style, around a loop. At each stop, you’ll be greeted by our staff and hand over any special dietary items, medications, duffels and, lastly, campers:



Campers are escorted by counselors back to their cabins and their luggage is delivered by our staff. **Parents are not allowed any further onto camp grounds on these days—sorry!** We welcome parents to come into and tour camp on the last day of First Session, July 13, and the last day of Second Session, August 3. Pick up times vary depending on your camper’s session, between 9:30-10:30. Please consult the Car Travel Information 2024 document when it becomes available in your CampInTouch account.

BY PLANE

Pellston Regional Airport (PLN) is the closest commercial airport to Walden—a 30-minute drive. If your child is flying alone, please make sure that you, and we, are aware of all the airline’s rules and restrictions regarding “unaccompanied minors.” Please pre-pay the unaccompanied minor fee and provide camp with copies of the receipts so that the airlines does not charge you/us twice.

SHOULD MY CAMPER RIDE THE BUS?

For most first-time campers, taking the bus to camp is the easier way to acclimate to leaving home. The hours on the bus allow a gradual digestion of this separation. Plus, taking the bus offers the opportunity to start making friends right away, to listen to the anecdotes of returning campers, and maybe even to learn some Walden songs!

Laundry: Label Everything!

Walden provides laundry service for all campers *registered for three or more weeks*. Our laundry service picks up your child's dirty laundry bag from his/her cabin porch on Thursdays and returns the laundry to the office three to five days later. **It is essential that you label every item of clothing, every sock, towel, and piece of bedding that your camper brings to camp; that is the only method the laundromat has to sort! Test drive** your iron-on or stick on labels: Will they hold up in a commercial washer/dryer? **If an item is not labeled, or not labeled clearly, do not plan on getting it back in your camper's duffel.** Walden partners with Oliver's Labels, www.oliverslabels.com, so you can purchase labels directly from your CampInTouch account.

Lost and Found

Walden's Lost and Found Box is located next to the Mess Hall. Items left behind at activities and events are brought here. During "Messages" after lunch and dinner we regularly hold up the items for all campers to see and, hopefully, claim. Items that remain at camp AFTER your camper's departure can be shipped to you, if you want the item (we'll have to pass along to you the cost of shipping). **Please think twice before allowing your camper to bring an expensive item of clothing to camp.** When things go missing, we try hard to locate them, but it's better to leave more valuable items at home.

Personal Technology Policy

Walden is a "screen-free" community! **We forbid smartphones/smartwatches, hand-held video games, DVD players, iTouches, and anything else with a screen that plays video.** Additionally, these items cannot accompany your camper on the camp bus. Please, plan ahead. Transfer music and audio books to a screen-free music player like the Mighty (<https://bemighty.com/pages/kids-spotify-music-player>).

We also do not allow e-readers, such as Kindles. Why? Call us sticklers, but a screen is a screen as far as human eyeballs are concerned! We're proponents of the tactile sensation of holding a book in hand. Campers who like to read are welcome to bring books, magazines, comics and other reading material. For voracious readers, Walden has a nice lending library of children's/teen books. With your permission, we are happy to order a book for your child while they are at camp.

PHONES AND OTHER "SMART" DEVICES ARE BANNED FROM CAMP WALDEN!

**IT IS BANNED EVEN IF THE DEVICE HAS BEEN SCRUBBED OF ALL VIDEOS.
IT IS BANNED EVEN IF IT CONTAINS THE MUSIC THEY USE TO FALL ASLEEP.
IT IS BANNED NO MATTER WHAT IF IT HAS A SCREEN!**

Unfortunately, screen technologies continue to find their way into camp, sometimes with the full knowledge and consent of parents. For the camp administration, ferreting out phones and dealing with the consequences of their use is a tremendous waste of time. For parents/kids who comply with our policy, it's more than a little frustrating to discover that another camper has one of these devices.

Therefore, our policy is as follows. If we become aware that a camper has a phone or other “smart” device at camp, either by finding the device or having evidence of its use, we will:

- Call the camper’s parents/guardians.
- **Charge the camper’s account \$200.**
- **Remove the camper from all camp activities** for a 24-hour period immediately following the discovery of the device. This may mean missing a favorite activity, a trip out of camp, or a special event. However, there will be no exceptions.
- More than one device infraction will result in a camper being sent home from camp with no refund.

We feel that this is a proportional response, based on Walden’s philosophy and on research of other camps’ policies.

MAIL

On the first day of camp, you will receive an email confirming your child’s safe arrival and telling you their **CABIN NUMBER**. Please include this designation (“B-7,” “G-15,” etc.) next to his/her name on all correspondence thereafter. If you want to send a letter prior to your child’s arrival so they’ll receive mail in the first couple days, that’s great! You do not need a cabin number to do so; we know where to find them! **Walden does not provide cabin assignments prior to campers’ arrival.**

NEW!! No Packages or Large Envelopes—Just Letters!

Our policy on mail is as follows:

- **Walden campers can receive postcards or letters in #10 or #11 envelopes only!**
- Sending food to camp or having food in cabins is prohibited.
- Mail for campers in anything other than #10 or #11 envelope will be
 - returned to the sender at their expense,
 - disposed of
 - donated to a nonprofit organization in Cheboygan.
- **Please advise grandparents and other family/friends of our Letters Only Rule.**

Email—You have the ability to email your camper directly from CampInTouch/Campanion. To send an email, you must have a “Camp Stamp,” for purchase in your account. Camp Stamps cost \$1 each. Emails that arrive in our office before approximately 11 a.m. will be delivered to your camper that day.

Letters Home from Campers—Like most places, Northern Michigan has experienced a slowdown in USPS mail service. We are considering ways to expedite your camper’s first letter home, possibly via email. We use Letter Days twice a week to encourage campers to write home. If you have not received mail in a while, contact us! **It helps to send younger children to camp with pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes.**

The “COME GET ME NOW!” letter: You may receive a letter that your child wrote during a sad or lonely moment, especially in the first week of camp. The “Pick Me Up!” letter is more common than you think and quite normal. Campers tend to write more when feeling glum than when they are happy and busy. By the time this letter arrives, your child has most likely conquered the uncomfortable feelings and moved on. Nonetheless, don’t torture yourself! Let us know your concern. We’re happy to update you on your camper.

Phone calls—Campers are prohibited from using the camp phone, except under special circumstances. If a situation arises in which we feel it would benefit the camper to speak with you, we will certainly allow a traditional or Zoom call.

Camper Birthdays

If your camper's birthday falls during their session, we'll make sure it's special! You can help us by completing the Camper Birthday form in your CampInTouch account. It will ask how your camper would like his/her/their birthday acknowledged and celebrated that day (quietly with just his/her/their cabin or with great fanfare in front of the whole camp!). We also ask what sort of special dessert our kitchen should prepare.

Campers who have birthdays while at camp may **receive a call** from home at a predetermined time. Because we have only two phone lines over which to conduct all of camp's business, we must limit calls from home to 10 minutes. **Please note: We can no longer accommodate calls home for parent or sibling birthdays.**

The Camp Store

Walden's camp store, Wald-Mart, sells Walden logo apparel, teddy bears, water bottles, and knick-knacks. We have also added snack items. **Prices range from \$2 -\$12 for a magnet, sunglasses, water bottle; \$15-\$20 for a teddy bear, beanie, or T-shirt; and \$25-\$50 for blankets, hoodies, sweatpants, or jackets.**

Allergen-free food items cost from \$1-\$3 and campers are limited in the number of snacks they can buy per visit/per week. You can fund this account online, in your CampInTouch account. Twenty-five dollars is sufficient for a little shopping for younger campers. \$100 is our preferred maximum. Campers who run out of store funds are done shopping, unless you request that we allow a special one-time purchase, or you replenish their online account.

Mackinac Island

The day trip to Mackinac Island has been a highlight of the camper experience for many decades. Camp buses take campers to Mackinaw City where they board the ferry for the 15- to 40-minute ride to the island (it depends on which boat we catch!). **Two-week campers do not go to Mackinac Island.**

This year, we will automatically add Mackinac Spending money to camper accounts: \$40 for Units I and II; \$55 for Units III; \$70 for Unit IV (after further discussion, we've increased these amounts from what we quoted in the application). If you have a special request that your camper receive more, please contact us. We cannot be responsible for money kept in cabins!

Cabin and Bed Assignments

Cabins—Cabin assignments are determined by the directors, though very much informed by camper requests. We will do our best to place your camper with one or two of his/her bunkmate choices. However, this complicated puzzle of personalities, camper/parent desires, and child history is only wholly known to the directors. We ask that you allow us to create cabins based on our full spectrum of knowledge and trust that we have the best interest of every camper in mind.

Beds—For campers entering 2nd through 8th grades, Walden has instituted uses a random “draw” for beds. As soon as they arrive, campers will be asked to pick a bed from the “top bunk hat” or the “bottom bunk hat.” That assignment will be recorded, and campers will take that bed upon arrival/unpacking at the cabin. This system assures a democratic distribution of campers, old and new, friends and strangers, throughout the cabin. The directors reserve the right to move a camper’s bed or cabin assignment if we deem it appropriate.

Our Dining Room, or “Mess Hall”

Meals—Camp Walden serves three meals and two snacks daily. Meals in the Mess Hall offer a variety of choices—hot and cold cereals and a “breakfast bar” serving muffins, yogurt and fruit; a salad bar with greens and toppings at lunch/dinner; soup at lunch; bread and butter; plus, vegetarian and gluten-free alternatives. Campers who still do not find an appealing option can request a sandwich of peanut-butter alternative and jelly. *The Mess Hall is peanut and tree-nut free; we do not serve shellfish.* Besides water and traditional dairy milk at every meal, we make lactose-free-milk soy and oatmilk available.

Snacks—Campers receive snacks at 3:30 p.m. and before bed each evening. Despite its name, Punch and Cookies often means **a bagged snack like animal crackers!** Nighttime snacks consist of individual bags of chips or popcorn.

Food Allergies—As mentioned previously, a significant number of Walden campers have severe food allergies. Our Mess Hall is prepared to handle peanut/tree nut allergies, as well as allergies to gluten, sesame seeds, and legumes. If your camper has special dietary needs or food allergies, and you have not made us aware of these yet, please contact us right away. **The online Health History form provides the opportunity to explain in detail what your child’s allergy is and how you handle it at home.**

Water—Campers can stay hydrated by bringing a reusable water bottle to camp and refilling it at the Mess Hall and at camp’s five drinking fountains throughout the day. If your camper is bothered by the taste of well water, **water bottles with built-in carbon filters** will provide great-tasting water. Or fill up at the legendary Boys Front fountain!

“Stayover” Campers

We schedule a day between sessions to give staff a longer break before Second Session. First Session will end on Saturday, July 13, and Second Session will begin on Monday, July 15. Therefore, we request that parents pick up their campers Saturday morning and return them to camp Monday mid-morning or, if necessary, Sunday late afternoon (we will provide you with *more detailed times and information* later in the spring).

If your camper has arrived on June 30, you live in a distant state, or you have a conflict that prevents a trip to camp, your camper(s) may remain at camp that weekend. Walden will employ a few of our staff as chaperones. Campers will typically spend some time off camp in Cheboygan that weekend.

NEW!! The fees for Stayover Campers are \$150 for both Saturday and Sunday nights; and \$75 for those spending either Saturday or Sunday nights at camp.

Alternatively, stayover campers may **ride the camp buses to Detroit or Chicago for free**, going south, on Saturday, and/or coming back north on Monday.

Visiting Day

Visiting Day is the final day of First Session, Saturday, July 13.

- Parents/guardians are welcome to tour camp between 10 and noon.
- Please dress for the outdoors: sturdy shoes; comfortable clothing; and bug spray.
- **Pets are prohibited on camp.** You may be confident in your animal's sweet disposition, but an unforeseen incident presents a liability for Walden. If a four-legged family member is with you, they must remain on the Athletic Field, leashed, and attended by a family member.

For those families remaining overnight in Northern Michigan, there are many nearby hotel options. TripAdvisor is a great place to start. For a general overview of the area, please refer to the Staying in Northern Michigan document in CampInTouch. Make your reservations early: "Up North" is a very popular summer vacation spot!

We will only release campers to parents/legal guardians. If your camper will leave camp, at any point, with relatives or family friends, we require your written permission.

Tours for Prospective Families

If you have friends/family who wish to tour camp this summer, please have them reach out to us.

Off-Season Staff-Camper Contact

It is not unusual for strong bonds to develop between campers and their college-age counselors. These relationships are healthy, fun and beneficial to campers and staff alike. However, this inevitably means that some children/teens will want to keep in touch with staff over the winter—by phone, email or social-media sites such as Snapchat and Instagram. We understand the desire to maintain contact, however, **Walden's policy prohibits the exchange of contact information between campers and staff.**

Our staff are prohibited from "friending" or "following" campers or parents on social media while employed by Walden. We have Walden group sites on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok where our camp family can interact publicly without having access to each other's private information.

At Walden, our foremost responsibility is to put your children in the company of the most trustworthy and appropriate young adults we can hire. **However, by hiring staff, we do not implicitly recommend them as baby-sitters, nannies or child companions outside of camp.**

Our counselors work with your camper in the context of a **visible, well-scrutinized community** that has many built-in checks and balances. Counselors are supervised by senior staff and are guided by clear, firm policies regarding behavior. We hire our staff for the camp season and do not take responsibility for their behavior during the off-season.

In the end, **it is up to you how much interaction your camper has with Walden staff after camp.** If you as a parent or legal guardian wish your child to exchange contact information with a camp staff member, that is, of course, your right. However, by doing so, you understand that you accept full responsibility for overseeing that interaction.

Your Contact Information

We need to know how to reach you at all times. If you are moving or vacationing during the time your child is camp, please let us know this. **Parents who will be traveling during their camper's session must leave camp with an itinerary and instructions of how to best contact you.** Walden sends out mail in the winter, too. If you relocate and wish to continue receiving, for instance, the winter/spring Walden Pond, please change your address, phone numbers and/or email in your CampInTouch account.

Refund Policy

As a summer camp, our biggest expenses are fixed costs, and a camper's decision not to attend does not lower those expenses. As stated on the Camper Application, Walden's cancellation policy is as follows:

- No financial penalties for cancellations through October 31
- \$750 penalty for cancellations in November/December (including the \$250 registration fee)
- \$1250 for cancellations in January/February
- \$1500 for cancellations in March
- No refunds for cancellations after April 1 (Please purchase **Program Protector insurance via Trip Mate!**)

Enrolled campers may switch sessions without penalty through December 31. Between January 1-April 1, Walden will assess a fee for switching to a shorter session (e.g. from Five Weeks to Second Session; from Second Session to Two Weeks Second Session; etc.). That fee equals 15 percent of the *full-price tuition* of the originally enrolled session. For instance, if a camper switches from Second Session to Two Weeks Second Session, the penalty would be 15 percent of \$5,500 or \$825.

After April 1, there will be no refund of tuition due to cancellations for any reason. Your original and entire financial obligation to Walden for your camper's previously enrolled session will remain your fiduciary responsibility—whether it has already been paid-in-full or not. We cannot make exceptions to our cancellation policy. Thank you for your understanding.

Please make certain that your camper is **prepared for the experience** of a residential camp, specifically the behavior standards that Walden upholds. This includes **using appropriate language and respecting other's property**, as well as displaying kindness, acceptance, and empathy.

Once the Camper Contract is released in the spring, please be sure that you and your camper(s) have a thorough understanding of our behavior policy.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND BEHAVIOR AT CAMP

Homesickness

Homesickness is the top concern of new campers and their parents. Indeed, **the vast majority of children** have some homesick feelings when they are away. Don't be surprised if you receive a "come and get me" letter a few days into camp. Fortunately, this feeling has almost always passed by the time you receive the mail: Campers become busy at activities, establish friendships, and soon understand that friends and staff

wants them to succeed. Rest assured, if we are unable to help your child adjust to camp life, we will contact you.

The best thing you can do to decrease the likelihood that homesickness will disrupt your child's experience at camp is to be proactive. The following is from the American Camp Association (ACA) Website:

A study by Phillips Exeter Academy psychologist Dr. Christopher Thurber found that homesickness among campers is the norm rather than the exception. A whopping 83 percent of the campers studied reported homesickness on at least one day of camp. Thurber and the ACA suggest the following tips for parents to help their child with homesickness:

- *Encourage your child's independence throughout the year. **Practice separations, such as sleepovers** at a friend's house that simulate the camp environment.*
- *Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing anticipated situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.*
- *Use a calendar to show exactly the amount of time a child will be away. Predictability and perspective on the length of separation is important whenever possible.*
- ***Send a letter ahead of time, to be delivered to your camper the first day of camp.** Acknowledge, in a positive way, your excitement for their new adventure!*
- ***Don't bribe.** Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's newfound confidence and independence.*
- ***Pack a personal item** from home, such as a stuffed animal, special pillow or blanket.*
- *Speak positively about your child's upcoming camp experience and avoid exposing your camper to your own anxiety or ambivalence*
- ***Don't make a plan or deal to bring a child home if they don't like the experience of being away!** This undermines a camper's sense that you have confidence in their ability to be on their own. It sets a camper up to expect that they will be miserable. **Campers who have been told by parents, "We'll pick you up if you don't like it," never even give camp a chance.***
- *Talk candidly with the camp's parent liaison, social workers or camp directors to obtain their perspective on your child's adjustment.*
- *Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.*

While most incidents of homesickness will pass in a few days, Thurber's research shows that approximately seven percent of cases are severe. **If a camper is not eating or sleeping because of anxiety due to homesickness, it is time to leave camp.**

Please remember that we have a no-phone-calls-home policy, and cases of homesickness are no exception. Hearing your voice at the other end of the phone line magnifies the distance between you and your child and intensifies emotions on both ends. Only in rare cases, and after we have thoroughly discussed the situation with you, might we recommend a phone conversation.

The good news is that it is uncommon for a Walden camper to leave camp early due to homesickness. Most campers overcome these feelings and enjoy the camp experience. We recommend Michael Thompson's book, *Homesick and Happy*. We encourage anxious new campers and their parents to take advantage of the resources Walden will offer between now and the summer.

Bullying, i.e. Relational Aggression

Bullies systematically act to undermine the social status of another person. They do so in obvious ways: physical and verbal aggression *a la* shoving or put-downs. And in more insidious ways: starting rumors, ignoring, eye-rolling, and subtle body language that prevents targets from walking with or sitting with the group. Bullies are everywhere, including at camp.

Walden takes a pre-emptive, three-pronged approach to reducing bullying behaviors:

- 1) **Forcefully relaying our message before camp** that bullying is unacceptable and assuring that our campers are aware of the high expectations we have for them.
- 2) **Training our staff** to watch for, detect and act when they witness or suspect bullying at camp. This includes Staff Week seminars using role-playing, as well as facilitating conversations about staff's own experiences being bullied or *BEING the bully*.
- 3) **Addressing the subject head-on with campers** within the first couple days of camp. Liz and Scott speak directly with three-to-five cabins at a time (Unit groups). We discuss what bullying behaviors look like; define the difference between bullying and meanness or insensitivity; and prompt campers who wish to, to share their own experiences.

What can you do to partner with us?

- **Discuss bullying** with your campers, specifically in the context of camp, and stress Walden's intolerance for it.
- **Teach children how to stand up to bullies.** The fact is adults can and often do make bullying worse when they get involved. Children can be their own best defense if they are armed with "back-pocket" words and actions that can neutralize bullies. Walden has worked with [Kids Empowered](#) in the past and highly recommends its programs to families in the suburban Detroit area. (Please do not read this as relieving adults of the responsibility of dealing with bullies!)
- **Inform us**, before camp, of any past incidents or behaviors. If your child has been a target of bullying, Counselors should be aware of this so that they are vigilant about helping your child make friends and adjust. If your child has been a perpetrator, we can prepare your camper's counselors with methods for strengthening empathy, and harnessing your camper's leadership skills in a positive way.

Chronic bullying behavior will warrant a camper's removal from camp with no refund of tuition.

Swearing

Clearly, American popular cultural has expanded its tolerance for swearing over the past decades, and each household creates its own rules when it comes to acceptable language. But, as an all-ages community, Walden feels strongly that swearing is inappropriate, and we train our staff to address "colorful language" when they hear it. We understand kids (and adults) will slip, but chronic cursing will warrant disciplinary measures and, if those prove ineffective, may result in a camper's dismissal with no refund of tuition. The word "bitch," for instance, which has become much more common in pop culture, has no place at camp.

Being There (Physically)

Parents often express concern about new campers finding their way around Walden. With few exceptions, it takes only a couple days of staff actively directing traffic for kids to get their bearings. Nonetheless, campers will sometimes linger or become distracted on their way to an activity. So what happens when a camper does not show up for an activity in a timely manner? **We initiate the “Missing Camper Drill.”** This sets in motion a time- and energy-consuming string of events in which staff are called away from what they are meant to be doing to find the unaccounted-for camper. It’s serious business! Please stress to your camper the importance of being where they are supposed to be at camp.

Being There (Mentally)

Two days a week and each evening, your camper will participate in large-group programs designed by camp’s program director and unit programmers. Not everyone is a die-hard kickball fan or looks forward to a challenging scavenger hunt. But experience has shown us that campers who participate nearly always end up enjoying the activity. Programs that involve the entire camp, especially, are designed to have **multiple components to engage kids of all interests and abilities:** athletic, intellectual, and artistic! Therefore, we expect children to join these group activities unless a good reason exists for them not to.

Graffiti

Walden takes great pride in its facilities and natural beauty. We forbid writing on building walls, beams, mattresses, bed frames, or carving into trees. **Campers who leave their autographs or other marks on our facilities will be billed** for the time and effort it requires to remove those marks. Campers may not bring permanent markers to Walden; we can supply those when necessary, for autographs and art.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT WALDEN

Medical forms

To fully provide for your child’s medical well-being, we require three items, all of which can be found under the “Forms and Documents” section of your CamplnTouch account.

- **A complete ONLINE health history** for your camper, including mental-health history. The Health History is an opportunity for you to provide detailed information about your child’s wellbeing. Unless you specify otherwise, everything you include in the Health History will be shared with your camper’s counselors and any other staff/areas that need to know this information (i.e. the Kitchen or Waterfront). You will submit the Health History electronically between April 15-May 15. It does not need a doctor’s signature.
- **A doctor-signed physical-examination form and an immunization record.** This physical must be less than a year old from the date your child begins camp. The immunization form should show that your camper has received all childhood vaccines, **according to the Centers for Disease Control recommended vaccine schedule.** If your camper is not fully vaccinated, please contact us immediately. Physician’s Exam and Immunization forms must be delivered to us electronically, by uploading a PDF to CamplnTouch or **(easier!) taking a picture of the form and uploading it through the Companion.**

- **We cannot accept JPG files of your camper's forms. If you want to take a picture of the completed form, you must upload it via Campanion, which converts it to the file type we need.**

State law requires that we have your camper's medical forms before s/he can participate in ANY camp activities. **Forms for all campers are due May 15***. The directors and Walden's camp health officers need time to read these forms and prepare for potential health issues BEFORE the campers arrive. Please make completing the health forms early a top priority!

(*We understand that some children's annual well-check appointments fall between May 15 and the time he/she/they arrive at camp. Just let us know when your camper's appointment is and submit those forms within 24 hours of the appointment. Thank you!)

Health Center (a.k.a. Infirmary)

Walden employs two or three camp health officers (CHOs)—non-medical professionals—and houses rotating doctors-in-residence who change weekly (MDs, DOs or PAs). Our health center is stocked to handle common camp medical issues: bites, bruises, colds, and sore throats, e.g. The camp doctor oversees "sick call" immediately following breakfast and dinner for campers with medical complaints. You will receive a call from the Infirmary staff if:

- Your child spends the night in the Infirmary due to illness.
- The camp doctor/health professional deems it necessary to prescribe a medication for your child.
- The camp doctor believes your child's medication regimen should change for any reason.
- The camp doctor concludes that it necessary for your camper to seek additional treatment or tests at the McLaren-Northern Michigan hospitals in Cheboygan or Petoskey, or at the office of a specialist.

Medications

Daily prescription and over-the-counter meds **must arrive at camp pre-packaged**, either via the **CampMeds pharmacy** or according to Walden's detailed specifications. **We regret that we must charge families who send medications in ways that do not comply with our instructions.** Medication-management fees will be presented to you in the spring.

State law requires that all medications, except for emergency inhalers and Epi-pens, be kept in the health center. This includes OVER-THE-COUNTER painkillers, inhalers used daily, herbal remedies (such as melatonin), and allergy and cold medicines. The camp health officers will deliver morning medications at breakfast, lunch and dinner, so no trip to the infirmary is necessary—this includes daily asthma "puffers" and multi-vitamins. In the evening the CHOs deliver nighttime medications to counselors during evening programs. If your camper takes a regular dose of medication any other time of the day, s/he will need to visit the infirmary.

Braces and Glasses

Campers whose braces break or become uncomfortable during the summer will be taken to a local dentist for treatment or to the orthodontist in Petoskey. If your child wears glasses, please be sure to send either an extra pair or the prescription (or both!).

Arriving Healthy

It's vital that you send your children to camp well-rested and illness-free! Group living situations provide a mecca for contagious illnesses and infestations. A child who arrives at camp in poor health puts many others at immediate risk. We ask that you let us know if your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases in the weeks leading up to camp (flu, chicken pox, head lice, etc.) Our health officers visually screen all campers within 24 hours of their arrival.

Lice checks are required for all campers. These checks must be performed by a *trained technician*. Have your camper checked for lice no more than five days before camp starts (If s/he is arriving on a Sunday, then Wednesday would be the first day for a check). Walden works with various Lice Check professionals who deliver to us the list of children checked. We will send emails specific to this issue before camp starts.

Staying Healthy

There are certain habits that your child will need to practice at Walden that they don't necessarily need to practice at home. Our counselors will assist younger campers with these new routines and remind older campers of them. But discussing with your camper the following issues BEFORE CAMP will go a long way toward preparing them.

Your camper will use a lot of energy during his/her days at camp. Remind children about the importance of **staying hydrated and eating properly**. Let them know that if they do not see food to their liking at a particular meal to ask their counselor, unit programmer or a director. We will find them something!

Sunscreen is vitally important at camp. The Northern Michigan sun is particularly strong, and campers should be in the habit of **applying a 30+SPF, broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen** several times a day to exposed areas. Rash guards, hats and other protective clothing are essential. Our athletic fields and waterfront have sunscreen on hand for campers who need to reapply. The Skin Cancer Foundation's recommended products can be found here: <http://www.skincancer.org/products/categories>

Showering and daily hygiene are a new responsibility for some younger campers. We do not require campers to shower every day, but please discuss with your 2nd through 6th graders that keeping clean includes brushing their teeth in the morning and evening, brushing their hair, and changing clothes each day. Make sure your camper is comfortable with showering (as opposed to bathing in the tub) before camp begins.

For middle-school-age campers, hygiene can be a tricky topic. Their changing bodies may be ahead of how perceptive they are about how they look and smell. This can become a health problem, of course, but at camp, when the issue does arise, it usually bears more on social/peer interactions. All this is to say, it's a good idea to discuss a tween's or young teen's changing hygiene needs with him/her before camp.

Mosquitoes are part of life in the woods. Please send your child with **bug repellent**. Whether it is DEET-based, Picaridin-based or herbal is up to you. Talk about the importance of using it daily and covering up when doing activities under the trees: Nature/animal care, outdoor cooking, and fencing all take place in wooded parts of camp. Most evenings at Walden are cool enough that campers will be comfortable in long sleeves and long pants, which help to protect against mosquitoes during the insects' dusk meal time.

Ticks are always a concern. We have the campers perform "tick checks" on themselves every so often, stressing these areas of the body: under the arms; in and around the ears, hair and hairline; inside the belly button; behind the knees; in the groin area; and around the waist. Practice at home!

Parents of children who occasionally **wet the bed at night** should let camp know ahead of time. Walden has a lot of experience with this issue, and our staff manage it in a discrete, hygienic fashion. However, campers are sometimes hesitant to let anyone know about a bed-wetting incident. Remind them that their counselors are there to help and that sleeping in a soiled bed is not only uncomfortable but unhealthy.

Counselors will be watching your camper closely for signs that something might be physically amiss: persistent scratching, refusing food, acting unusually tired, etc. But some ailments are harder to see and easier to hide. Stress to your child that s/he should **never hesitate to seek out an adult** for help when feeling unwell!

Directions to camp

GPS devices have been known to get parents lost on their way to camp! We suggest following these specific directions or referring to the Google map on our Web site.

- **Take I-75 North**
- **Take exit 313 (Hwy 27) and turn right toward Cheboygan.**
- **Drive approximately 13 miles (you will pass through Topinabee and hug the shore of Mullett Lake for part of the drive.)**
- **Turn right at the blinking yellow light. This is Hwy 33. Drive approx. 3 miles.**
- **Turn left at Orchard Beach Road. Drive approximately two miles.**
- **At the stop sign, turn right onto South River Road. Drive two miles.**
- **Camp will be at the top of the hill on your right. (You'll see our riding rings and stables.)**
- **If you reach the entrance to Michakewa Shores, on the right, you've gone a quarter mile too far.**



SPRING PRE-CAMP CHECKLIST

I have logged into my CampInTouch account and ...

- Filled out my camper's **Online "Camper Health History"** form and included information about my camper's past and current mental health.
 - Uploaded to CampInTouch or emailed to camp my child's **"Physician's Exam" form, signed by the doctor's office**
 - Uploaded my camper's **"Immunization Record."**
 - Filled out the **Transportation Form** and made any changes by June 1.
 - In **Additional Options**, funded my camper's Mackinac Island account and signed up for Horseback Riding, if necessary.
 - Printed out, and discussed the content of, the **"Parent/Camper Contract"** with my camper. We have each signed this form, and submitted it to camp.
 - Downloaded the **Packing List**.
 - Uploaded a *current* head-and-shoulders photograph of my camper in the **Camper Photo** section.
 - Downloaded and read the **"Parent Orientation Guide."**
 - Funded my camper's **Walmart** camp store account.
 - Paid the entirety of **my tuition bill** by April 15. Understand that late payments will incur penalties.
 - Created **Guest Accounts** for family and friends who want access to one-way email, photos and camp news.
- ### OTHER TO-DOS:
- Registered with **CampMeds** and ordered my camper's daily over-the-counter and prescription medication for delivery directly to camp. First Session deadline is May 26; Second Session is June 24!
 - Made plans to have my camper **checked for lice** by a professional lice clinician, dermatologist or pediatrician within five days of arrival at camp. (The Lice Sisters will do checks for Walden campers in West Bloomfield. In the Chicago area, Walden will have appointment times with Lice Clinics of America.)
 - Downloaded the **Campanion App** onto my phone, so that I have easy access to one-way email, photo galleries and microposts, and can receive push notifications if I choose.
 - Reminded friends and family of Walden's **NO PACKAGES** rule.
 - Made Walden aware of any **travel plans** that I have during my child's session and delivered a written itinerary, with dates and locations, to camp.

CAMP WALDEN 2023 PACKING LIST

Clothes that come to camp should be comfortable and **modest**. **BATHING SUITS** should be “full coverage” and athletic in style. Use your best judgment or call us with questions! While half-shirts and very short shorts are fashionable, some of them cross the line for camp. We will not hesitate to ask a camper to change clothes if we feel that an outfit is not “camp appropriate.”

This is a **suggested** list. If your child tends to go through clothes rapidly, then pack a bit more. If s/he loves sports, probably best to send more pairs of athletic shoes. Please remember: We will not send out laundry for two-week campers. These campers will need a **13-day clothing supply**. All other campers should have a **10-to-12-day clothing supply**. For trips out of camp, such as Mackinac Island, we request that campers wear a Walden T-shirt or sweatshirt for easy identification. Closed-toe shoes are required after 8 p.m. each night. Walden’s camp outfitters are Brody’s in West Bloomfield, MI. www.brodysonline.com, 248-851-6232. And Perfect Trading Co., in Bloomfield Township, perfecttradingco.com, 248-792-5949

Clothing

- ___ 8-10 pr shorts (*At least 3-inch inseam*)
- ___ 4-6 pr jeans/athletic pants
- ___ 13 long- and short-sleeve T-shirts, (1 green or grey that says “Walden”)
- ___ 3 sweatshirts (1 “Walden”)
- ___ 3 pr pajamas (1 for cool weather)
- ___ 13 pr underwear
- ___ 13 pr socks (*we wear closed-toed shoes in the evenings, which typically require socks!*)
- ___ 3 swimsuits, consider long-sleeve rash guards for sun protection (*please note our **swimwear policy** in the Parent Guide*)
- ___ 1 rain jacket
- ___ 1-2 mid-weight (i.e. fleece) jackets
- ___ **1 cap or hat for sun protection**

Shoes

- ___ 1 pr water shoes (*not flip flops; shoes that will reliably stay on feet when in the water/river*)
- ___ 2 pr athletic shoes
- ___ 1 pr hiking shoes (*a sturdy athletic shoe can often substitute*)
- ___ 1 pr rainboots, if hiking shoe is not waterproof
- ___ **If horseback riding: 1 pr paddock or cowboy boot, or a hard shoe with small heel (no tennis shoes)**

Bed and Bath

- ___ 2 washable laundry bags.
Two-week campers need only one.
- ___ 4 bath towels
- ___ 4 wash cloths and/or hand towels
- ___ 3 beach towels
- ___ 1 mattress pad (no egg crates)

Bed and Bath (cont'd)

- ___ 1-2 pillows
- ___ 2-4 pillowcases
- ___ 2 **cot-sized fitted** sheets (avail. at Brody’s and online)
- ___ 2 **cot-sized flat** sheets (avail. at Brody’s and online)
- ___ 2 blankets
- ___ 1 sleeping bag (*may be unzipped and used as the second blanket*)

Miscellaneous

- ___ 2 large/jumbo duffel bags (*please avoid “Big Berthas”; they’re too heavy when filled*)
- ___ Toiletries
- ___ Flashlight and batteries
- ___ Reusable H2O bottle (*with or w/out carbon filters for taste*)
- ___ Kleenex
- ___ Toilet articles in box/case
- ___ Sunscreen and bug spray
- ___ Stationary/stamps

Optional Items (*available at camp)

- ___ Personal music player (No video capability)
- ___ Disposable cameras
- ___ Stuffed animal, blankie, pictures from home
- ___ *Personal tennis racket, archery bow, lacrosse stick, baseball glove, etc.
- ___ Dance shoes (Tap, Ballet, Etc.)
- ___ *Board games, cards, books
- ___ *Horseback riding helmet
- ___ Riding breeches or riding boots
- ___ Costumes for the banquet(s), July 12 and August 2
- ___ Camping chair, e.g. a Crazy Creek

PLEASE DO NOT BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO CAMP

- Anything with a screen that can play videos
- Food/candy
- Bottled water
- Cooking equipment such as hot pots or grills
- Electric fans. Battery-powered fans are okay
- Shaving cream. Other than for the purpose of shaving. Shaving cream on the cabin walls both inside and out eats through the shellac on the wood
- Duct tape—also destructive to cabin walls
- Walkie-talkies
- Knives or any weapon
- Bungee cords or extra blankets for “tenting” one’s bed
- Hammocks. We have a supervised hammock activity at camp
- Water balloons. We will use them in a controlled way during some camp programs, and campers and staff will clean up thoroughly. We don’t want our Walden birds choking on bits of balloon!
- Water blasters. Those huge “guns” that spray like hoses

THANK YOU!