



MDA® | Muscular
Dystrophy
Association

Summer Camp Family Handbook

Dear MDA Family,

Thank you for your interest in MDA Summer Camp! Whether this is your first time exploring camp or your family has been part of our community for years, we're thrilled to share what makes this experience so special.

For children and teens living with neuromuscular disease, camp is more than just a week away from home, it's a place to belong, to build confidence, to try new things, and to simply be a kid. Research and decades of experience show that inclusive camp programs support social connection, independence, emotional well-being, and resilience. Families often tell us that even one week at camp can spark growth and confidence that reach far beyond the summer.

We have created this Family Handbook to help you understand what to expect at MDA Summer Camp and to prepare your camper and your family for a safe, fun, and meaningful experience. Inside, you'll find important information about our program, policies, health services, daily life at camp, and how we work together to make each session unforgettable. Please review the Table of Contents on the next page to help guide you through the details.

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of program standards that apply to MDA Summer Camp sessions nationwide. While some details may vary slightly by location, our commitment to safety, inclusion, and joy remains the same everywhere we serve.

If you have any questions at any time, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to support you every step of the way and are happy to talk through anything that will help your family feel confident and prepared.

Please note that receiving this Family Handbook does not guarantee acceptance into the MDA Summer Camp program, rather it is intended to provide a glimpse into the care, community, and magic that make camp so meaningful.

We're so glad you're here.

With warmth and excitement,

The MDA Recreation Programs Team

*"It was, perhaps, the single most meaningful experience of my child's life.
We've taken a lot of trips to a lot of fun places and destinations,
but nothing compared to spending a week having a ton of fun with kids just like her.
She felt a sense of belonging there that she'd never experienced before.
1,000,000/10 experience."*

- Camper Parent

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Our Story and Team

Mission

Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is the #1 voluntary health organization in the United States for people living with muscular dystrophy, ALS, and related neuromuscular diseases. For 75 years, MDA has led the way in accelerating research, advancing care, and advocating for the support of our families. MDA's mission is to empower the people we serve to live longer, more independent lives.

At MDA, we want every individual to have the freedom to fully participate in all aspects of community life. MDA is committed to leveraging its voice and platforms to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Together, let's lead the way to creating a more inclusive and accessible world.

Visit www.mda.org for more information about the comprehensive services that MDA offers.

Summer Camp Program

MDA Summer Camp began in 1955, when 16 campers from five New York MDA chapters boarded a bus and set off on an unforgettable adventure. This innovative program was the first of its kind, created by a voluntary health organization and designed exclusively for youth living with neuromuscular diseases. While the program has grown and evolved over the decades, the spirit of MDA Summer Camp remains the same.

Today, MDA Summer Camp is a week-long experience designed for MDA Community Members ages 8–17 living with a neuromuscular disease. Sessions are available throughout the summer at some of the top residential camp facilities in the nation recognized for their accessible accommodations, adaptive programming, and expertise in serving individuals with complex medical needs. Many of these facilities are accredited by the American Camp Association, reflecting our commitment to health, safety, and excellence.

Campers may attend one session each year, either a residential or virtual experience, and families can choose the session that best fit their needs. While all camps follow national program standards, each session offers its own unique experience shaped by the facility, volunteers, and local community.

Regardless of the session, MDA Summer Camp is a place where kids can be themselves, build friendships, and enjoy fun, engaging activities in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment. From classic camp traditions to themed adventures, every activity is thoughtfully adapted so campers of all abilities can participate. Housing, meals, and activities are provided at no cost to families.

Refer to MDA Virtual Summer Camp Program section for more information about this program.

Recreation Programs Team

At the heart of MDA Summer Camp is a team of caring, dedicated MDA staff who love camp just as much as our campers do. Our Recreation Programs team works collaboratively year-round to plan meaningful, fun, and safe experiences where every child feels included, supported, and celebrated.

Recreation Program Specialists, also called "Camp Directors", lead each session, blending national standards with local traditions. All come from diverse backgrounds in medical specialty camps, recreation therapy, and nonprofit work, and are excited to get to know each camper. You can expect to hear regularly from your Camp Director, who will work closely with you in the months leading to the camp week to help us gather everything we need to best support your camper.

Summer Camp Connections Program

If your family is interested in connecting with current MDA Summer Camp families to learn more about the MDA Summer Camp experience from their perspective, go to mda.org/peer-connections to learn more!

Camper Application Process

Each year, families can expect to receive an email in November with upcoming MDA Summer Camp session dates and locations, followed by another email in January, when application links officially open and the registration process begins.

Submitting Your Application

Submitting an application does not guarantee acceptance into MDA Summer Camp. Each application is reviewed by MDA staff and the session's Medical Team to assess care needs and confirm we have the right support in place to provide a safe and positive camp experience for everyone.

To get started, visit mda.org/summer-camp and select the session you'd like to attend. Each session has its own link that will take you to UltraCamp, MDA's online application system. From there, you can create a new account or log in to an existing one and complete your application. For some locations, you may be guided to apply directly through our partner camp facilities. If so, the facility team or your MDA Summer Camp Director will guide you through the next steps.

The application must be completed by a legal guardian and helps us learn more about your camper's unique needs so we can provide the safest and most supportive camp experience possible. Families must also submit immunization records, a medication list, and an MDA Health Form completed and signed by a physician familiar with the child's neuromuscular care. Additional forms may be required based on your camper's care needs. For example, campers who use respiratory equipment will be asked to complete a Respiratory Equipment Details Form.

All parts of the camper application are due 6 weeks before the start of the session to give MDA staff and our Medical Team enough time to carefully review each camper's information. Throughout the process, families can expect regular communication from their Camp Director.

If you need any support with the application process, including translation support, please contact camp@mdausa.org.

Session Waitlist

If a session fills to capacity, you'll have the option to join the UltraCamp waitlist. If a spot becomes available, we'll reach out right away and invite you to complete your application within 10 days.

Acceptance Notification

Applications are reviewed in the order they are received and thoughtfully evaluated by MDA staff alongside our volunteer Medical Team. This process helps us make sure camp is a good fit for each child and that we have the right support in place for a successful camp week. Once your application has been reviewed and volunteer support is confirmed, families will be notified of their camper's acceptance status in writing, typically about four weeks before the start of the session.

The MDA Summer Camp Experience

Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of our camp community, serving as counselors, cabin leaders, Program Team, and Medical Team. Counselors and Cabin Leaders engage in the summer camp experience alongside the campers while also supporting their physical, emotional, social, and personal care needs. The Program Team helps plan and lead camp activities, while health professionals on our Medical Team administer medications, provide first aid, and monitor the health and well-being of all participants.

Many of our volunteers return year after year, becoming a familiar part of our camp family. New volunteers are thoughtfully recruited through schools, community organizations, social media, and word of mouth from current MDA Summer Camp participants. Every volunteer completes a thorough screening process, including an application, professional references, an interview, and a background check, to ensure they are a great fit.

To best prepare volunteers for the MDA Summer Camp experience, they are required to participate in both virtual and on-site training to learn more about program standards, policies and procedures, neuromuscular diseases, supporting campers' social and emotional health, supporting campers' with personal care (i.e., bathing, dressing, feeding, toileting, etc.), safe lifts and transfers, and much more. Additionally, Medical Team volunteers thoroughly review each camper application, and counselors and cabin leaders are provided with pertinent information about the individual care needs for each of the campers with their cabin.

Lodging

All campers are assigned a cabin along with approximately 4-6 other campers and a team of volunteer counselors to reside during the week. Our goal is to create safe, supportive lodging spaces where every camper feels comfortable and cared for throughout their week at camp. While layouts and features vary by location, campers typically stay in bunk-style cabins, on the lower bunks or single beds. Hospital beds may be available to campers who share this preference in their application. Cabins have bathrooms and showers nearby, are comfort-cooled, and include outlets for charging wheelchairs and medical equipment.

Counselors stay in the cabins with campers to provide 24/7 supervision and support, so there's always a trusted adult close by. Cabin placements are thoughtfully arranged before each session based on age, gender, and the space available. Female camper and younger male camper cabins are always assigned female counselors, while older male camper cabins are assigned male counselors. Because it is common for camper attendance to change leading up to camp, cabin assignments are not shared prior to the session.

Schedule and Activities

No two days at MDA Summer Camp are exactly the same and that's part of the fun! While schedules and activities may vary by session, most days follow a common routine. A typical day includes:

- Rise and Shine
- Breakfast
- Morning Activities
- Lunch
- Rest Time
- Afternoon Activities
- Dinner
- All-Camp Evening Activity
- Get Ready for Bed
- Lights Out

Campers enjoy a wide variety of inclusive activities adaptable to all abilities. Depending on the session, campers might try archery, fishing, swimming or splash pads, horseback riding, ziplining or ropes courses, arts and crafts, cooking, music, scavenger hunts, and more. Evenings often bring everyone together for special traditions like campfires, talent shows, and dance parties.

We follow a "challenge by choice" approach, which means campers are always encouraged and supported to try new things, but participation is never required. Our goal is for every child to feel comfortable, confident, and excited about their camp experience.

Meals

Mealtimes are a fun and important part of the camp day; a time to refuel, connect with friends, and enjoy favorite foods together. While processes and traditions may vary by session, well-rounded menus are thoughtfully planned with kid-friendly options like pancakes, pizza, and chicken nuggets, along with a variety of choices to meet different tastes and needs.

We take food allergies and dietary restrictions seriously and work closely with families to ensure campers are safe and comfortable. Please share any dietary needs on your camper's application and plan to discuss a meal plan with your Camp Director. Alternate options may be available as needed.

Communications

At MDA Summer Camp, we encourage campers to unplug and fully enjoy the experience. To help everyone stay present and engaged, campers should not bring phones, smartwatches, tablets, or other personal electronic devices. If your camper has a documented medical need that requires technology, please contact the Camp Director in advance to discuss accommodations.

During the session, communication from camp leadership will be limited so everyone can focus on daily activities. We often say, "no news is good news," and the Camp Director will always reach out if anything important comes up. Phone calls home are also limited, as staying immersed is key in helping campers build

independence and confidence. Our volunteers are well prepared to support them through the normal ups and downs of being away from home.

Contact information for camp leadership will be shared in your Welcome Packet. Families are also encouraged to send notes or small care packages on Arrival Day to help campers feel connected throughout the week.

While unplugging can feel unfamiliar at first, many families share that campers return home more confident, more connected, and proud of what they accomplished on their own.

Camper Health

Health Services

Your camper's health, safety, and well-being are always our top priorities. At MDA Summer Camp, every volunteer plays a role in supporting campers' physical, emotional, and social needs as we work together to create a safe and positive experience for the entire camp community.

Our volunteer Medical Team stays on-site throughout the entire session to provide daily care and support. They administer medications, offer first aid, and keep a close eye on participants' overall health. This team includes a variety of healthcare professionals, which may include nurses, physicians, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, behavioral health providers, and more, depending on the needs of each session.

To ensure that we are best prepared to support our camp community, the Medical Team thoroughly reviews each camper application and meets with every family on Arrival Day to verify health information, evaluate for illness, injury, or communicable diseases, and discuss your camper's specific health needs. Throughout the camp week, counselors submit *Daily Health Check* forms for every camper in their cabin, detailing the camper's experience for the day (i.e., did they sleep well, are they having enough to eat/ drink, did they have a bowel movement today, did they brush their teeth & shower today, did they take their medication, are there any concerns, etc.). These updates are reviewed closely by the Medical Team and Camp Director so we can quickly address any concerns and adjust care as needed.

While we take every precaution, unexpected health needs can arise. We have first aid supplies and over the counter medications available to treat minor injuries and illnesses. In the unlikely event of a serious injury or illness requiring immediate, specialized medical attention, camper care will be transitioned to local emergency medical services. In these instances, guardians will be notified as soon as possible. An MDA Staff or volunteer will accompany campers requiring off-site medical services.

Our team is here to provide thoughtful, attentive care so you can feel confident your camper is safe, supported, and well cared for throughout their time at camp.

Medication Policies

MDA Summer Camp Camper Medication Policies are detailed below:

- At MDA Summer Camp, 'medication' is defined as: FDA approved substances, supplements, and clinical trial medications and treatments. CBD and marijuana are prohibited, with the exception of Epidiolex, Marinol, and Syndros.
- A prescription or order from a prescriber is required for all medications brought to camp; this includes over the counter medications, probiotics, and vitamins. A valid prescription or order must include the date, the camper's name and date of birth, the licensed prescriber's name and signature, the medication name, the medication strength, and clear dosage instructions. A medication list from the applicant's electronic health record may serve as an order, at the discretion of the Medical Team, if it includes the date, the camper's name and date of birth, the licensed prescriber's name, the medication name, the medication strength, and clear dosage instructions.
- Families should only bring medications that are medically necessary and are prescribed for routine use.
- All medications must be in their original containers with a medication label, or unit-dosed by a pharmacy; medications that are repackaged without a prescription medication label (i.e. storage bags, pill boxes) will not be accepted.
- Medications may not be expired; expired medications will not be accepted.
- Families should ensure enough medication for 10 days.

- All medications must be turned over to the Medical Team upon arrival and will be administered by the Medical Team as prescribed. If a parent or guardian requests a schedule, dosage or equipment setting other than what is prescribed, an updated prescription or order from the camper's health provider is required.
- All medications are locked away and monitored by the Medical Team when not being administered. Inhalers and epinephrine 'epi-pens' may stay with the camper or other designated adult camp participant.

Preparing Your Camper for MDA Summer Camp

Welcome Packet

Once a camper is accepted for the MDA Summer Camp session, families will receive the *MDA Summer Camp Welcome Packet* by email. We know you may be eager for details sooner, but camp plans often include last-minute updates, and we want to be sure you receive the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.

This packet will include everything you need to prepare for an incredible week at camp, including emergency contact information for camp leadership, what to pack, how to prepare medications and medical equipment, directions and arrival times, Arrival and Departure Day procedures, daily themes, and other helpful tips.

If urgent questions come up before your Welcome Packet arrives, your Camp Director is always happy to help.

Packing List

Getting ready for MDA Summer Camp is an exciting part of the experience! While packing needs may vary by location, this general guide gives you an idea of what your camper may need. A detailed, session-specific packing list will be included in the *MDA Summer Camp Welcome Packet*. Please reach out if you're unable to provide any items on the list, we're happy to help make sure everyone has what they need.

Camp runs rain or shine and we spend much of the day outdoors, so be sure to pack layers and clothes for changing weather conditions. We recommend labeling all clothing and personal items to help keep track of belongings. Laundry is typically available only for unexpected needs, so please pack enough for a full week with a few extras.

Use the checklist below to help you prepare for a fun and comfortable week at MDA Summer camp.

Clothing: Enough clean, weather appropriate, casual play clothing for 6 days, and 4 extra outfits because summer camp can get messy!

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirts and Shorts • Sweatshirt or Jacket • Pants or Sweatpants • Underwear • Pajamas • 2 Pairs of Sturdy, Rubber-Soled Shoes (sneakers or fully strapped open-toed shoes; flip-flops and slip-ons may only be work for bathing and water activities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socks • Shower Shoes / Pool Sandals • "Dress-Up" Outfit for the Dance • Swimsuit • Hat • Raincoat or Poncho • Sunglasses |
|---|--|

Bed and Bath

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set of Bed Sheets (twin or XL twin) • Blanket or Sleeping Bag • Pillow • Mattress Pad • Bath Towels • Washcloths • Bathrobe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laundry Bag • Toothbrush and Toothpaste • Shampoo and Conditioner • Soap • Deodorant • Hairbrush • Shower Caddy |
|---|---|

Outdoors and Extras

- Water Bottle
- Sunscreen
- Insect Repellent
- Flashlight and Batteries
- Personal Fan
- Favorite Comfort Item
- Favorite Snacks (Peanut Free)
- Beach Towel
- Swim Gear (ear plugs, nose plugs, goggles)
- Books, Playing Cards, Non-Electronic Games
- Watch or Alarm Clock
- Notebook and Pen
- Stationery and Stamps
- Musical Instrument
- Props for the Talent Show
- Items to Tie-Dye

Medical Equipment and Supplies: All medical equipment and supplies that your camper uses at home should be brought to the camp session. Many of the camp facilities are large, with some distance between activities, and some are quite hilly. If your Camper uses both a power wheelchair and a manual wheelchair, it is recommended that you bring the power wheelchair, but you are certainly welcome to bring both.

- Prescribed Medication
- Patient/ Hoyer Lift and Sling
- Wheelchair (must have seatbelt)
- Scooter (must have seatbelt)
- Commode and/or Urinal
- Shower Chair
- Feeding Supplies
- Ostomy Supplies
- Positioners
- Respiratory Equipment
- Equipment Battery Chargers and Extra Equipment Battery
- Extension Cord and Surge Protector

Tips for a Happy, Healthy Camper

A healthy and enjoyable camp experience begins at home. Here are some important tips from the American Camp Association (ACA) to ensure your camper is ready to have a safe and successful time at MDA Summer Camp:

- **Involve Your Camper in the Decision:** Even before applying, let your camper help decide if they are ready to attend MDA Summer Camp. When they feel a sense of ownership over the decision, they'll feel more confident and excited about attending.
- **Practice Camp Life:** Talk with your camper about what a typical day at camp might look like, the new friends they'll meet, the different routines they'll follow, the new food and activities they'll try, and any questions or concerns they may have. You can also role-play common camp moments like introducing themselves to cabinmates or winding down before bed without screens. Remember that challenges like being away from home or trying new activities are opportunities to grow!
- **Practice Separations:** Build your camper's confidence by practicing separations, such as sleepovers or spending the night with a trusted friend or family member. These experiences can help simulate the camp environment.
- **Practice Being Tech-Free:** Discuss how MDA Summer Camp is "UNPLUGGED". If your camper typically watches TV or their phone before bed, take some time to practice what their evening routine will be like without technology.
- **Prepare for Loud Environments:** There are many times and places at camp where things can get loud. If this may be challenging or overwhelming for your camper, work with them to come up with strategies they can use to manage these situations. If your camper would do best with noise cancelling headphones in these situations, we encourage you to send them with your camper.
- **Make a Communication Plan:** We strongly avoid campers making phone calls home. Talk with your camper about this ahead of time and reassure them that you'll be excited to hear all about their adventures when camp ends. Encourage alternatives like writing letters, so they can share their experiences without needing to call home.

- **Practice Self-Advocacy:** Encourage your camper to speak up if they have any concerns or need help, whether it's with personal care, feeling homesick, or needing support in another way. Remind them that their counselors, Camp Director, and Medical Team are always available to support them.
- **Practice Hygiene:** Teach your camper to cough or sneeze into their elbow, wash their hands frequently (*especially before eating and after using the restroom*), and avoid touching their face. These habits keep everyone healthy.
- **Prepare for Rest:** Help your camper understand the importance of sleep at camp. Explain that camp isn't like a one-night sleepover – getting enough rest is crucial for enjoying activities and staying healthy. Campers also have 90-minute rest time during the day, so work with your camper to find relaxing and quiet options that they can do during this time if they do not want to nap.
- **Practice Bed Positioning:** At camp, your camper will likely sleep on a single twin bed or the bottom bunk of a twin bunk bed. Practice getting comfortable in this type of bed and pack any pillows or wedges your camper may need for a good night's sleep. Be ready to share these details with their counselors, and if possible, help your camper practice communicating their needs independently.
- **Practice Sunscreen and Hydration:** Send your camper with sunscreen that they have used before and a refillable water bottle and stress the importance of staying protected and hydrated throughout the day.
- **Send a Care Package or Note:** Write a positive message that acknowledges you'll miss them while emphasizing their upcoming adventure. For instance, say "I'll miss you, but I know you're having an amazing time making new friends and trying new activities." Letters can be brought to Camper Arrival Day, and counselors will deliver them throughout the week.
- **Pack a Comfort Item:** Include a personal item, like a favorite stuffed animal or a special blanket, to help your camper feel at home while they're away.

If you're concerned about your camper's adjustment to MDA Summer Camp, reach out to your Camp Director. They have extensive experience helping campers feel comfortable and supported!

Preparing for Camper Arrival Day

On Camper Arrival Day, counselors and/or the Cabin Leader in your camper's cabin will spend time getting to know them by asking questions about their care, routines, and personal preferences. Counselors review the important information provided in camper applications as part of their training, but these conversations help further prepare them to support your camper's unique needs. As you prepare for camp, be sure you and your camper are ready to answer the following questions:

- What are your favorite things to do in your free time (hobby, sports, etc.)?
- What are you most excited about for the week of camp? Is there anything that you're nervous about?
- If you become upset, what is the best way to support you?
- Does your camper have any allergies?
- Did your camper bring any equipment to camp (*i.e., respiratory equipment, wheelchair, braces, etc.*)? Please demonstrate how to use this equipment safely.
- Do you/ your camper need support with lifts and transfers? How do you prefer to be lifted and transferred? If there is a specific method you use, will you show me?
- How can I support your camper with personal care (*i.e., bathroom, bathing, etc.*)?
- Will your camper need support with stretching? What does that process look like?
- What does your camper's bedtime routine look like? Do they need support with special positioning or turning in bed during the night?
- Is there anything specific you would like your camper to be encouraged to do or try?
- If your camper is missing home, how can I best comfort them (*other than calling home*)?
- Is there any additional information you would like to share? What else would be helpful to know about caring for your camper this week?

MDA Summer Camp Camper Policies

Camper Policies

As part of the MDA Summer Camp application, families review and sign the MDA Participant Agreement and Summer Camp Policies, which outline the guidelines that help us maintain a safe, respectful, and positive camp environment. Campers are expected to follow these policies, along with any guidance shared by the Camp Director. Following these shared expectations helps ensure a great experience for everyone. In rare cases where policies are not followed, additional steps may be needed to protect the well-being of the camp community.

Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, and Weapons: The possession or use of tobacco, marijuana, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited and grounds for dismissal. It is expected that participants will not arrive under the influence, regardless of prescription permissions.

Cell Phones & Smart Devices: Summer Camp is a technology-free environment; cell phones and smart devices (ex. iPads, computers, gaming consoles, etc.) are not permitted. All devices brought to camp must be given to MDA staff upon arrival to be stored in a secure area until the participant's departure from camp. Participants will be permitted to wear smart watches, but all network capabilities must be disabled. MDA is not liable for any damage to cell phones or smart devices brought to camp.

Confidentiality: Participant personal information, including but not limited to protected health information as described under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as well as their ages, addresses and any other personal information given and received throughout camp must be held in the strictest confidence. Camp participants must protect the confidentiality of all personal information received as a participant of the MDA Summer Camp and will not use or disclose it other than as permitted in writing by MDA.

Curfew: All camp participants are expected to return to and remain in their sleeping quarters with lights out by the established curfews. These curfews will be strictly enforced and may be grounds for dismissal.

Dress Code: All clothing should be comfortable and within the bounds of good taste. Clothing which displays profanity or is disruptive is prohibited. All camp participants are required to wear sturdy, rubber-soled shoes to provide protection from outdoor elements and the large durable medical equipment utilized by our camp community. Acceptable shoes include tennis shoes and fully strapped open-toed shoes (i.e. Chacos or Keens); flip-flops and slip-ons may only be worn during designated pool/ lakefront/ splashpad time and bathing. Please note, some facilities require close-toed shoes for all participants. Additionally, some facility programming, such as high ropes course and horseback riding, may require long pants to participate. Modest, full coverage swimsuits are required.

Ethical Conduct: All participants are expected to: be honest, treat others with dignity and respect, be tolerant of differences, be kind and inclusive, support each other, respect leadership, and protect their environment. Bullying and/or hazing of any kind is prohibited; pranks are strongly discouraged. Camp participants are only permitted inside of their assigned cabins. As cabins are often open spaces, all participants must respect others' privacy when changing, bathing or otherwise exposed and should expect the same level of allowable privacy in return. Acts of physical intimacy, both in public and in private, are prohibited and may be grounds for dismissal. The Camp Dance is intended to be an inclusive community program; 'dates' are not appropriate as they do not support this objective.

Leaving Campgrounds: Participants must remain within designated areas on facility grounds for the duration of the session, unless otherwise arranged by the Camp Director. Leaving facility grounds without permission from the Camp Director is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Medication & Medical Services: At MDA Summer Camp, 'medication' is defined as: FDA approved substances, vitamins, clinical trial medications and treatments. CBD and marijuana are prohibited, with the exception of Epidiolex, Marinol, and Syndros. A prescription or order from a prescriber is required for all medications, herbals, homeopathics and probiotics administered to campers. All camper medications must be their original containers, must be turned over to the Medical Team upon arrival and must be administered by the Medical Team as prescribed. Inhalers and epinephrine 'epi-pens' may stay with the participant but must be reported to the Medical Team upon arrival to camp. Additionally, all treatment and/or health care will be

administered by the Medical Team. The Medical Team must be advised promptly of any injuries, allergies or health concerns.

Rest Time: A 90-minute rest period is required for Campers each afternoon.

Social Networking: Popular social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, etc., are commonly used by many MDA Summer Camp participants. All participants are expected to be cognizant of their engagement with MDA Summer Camp when posting to any social media platform and should keep their posts positive and respectful.

Travel-In-Three's System: Every camper must always be accompanied by at least two volunteers. Our camp community is safer and functions better when we all stay in groups.

Valuables and Cash: Participants are urged not to bring money and other valued personal property. MDA and the camp facility are not responsible for loss or damage to either.

Visitors: Participants are not permitted to invite guests to the session.

Communicable Disease Policy

Recreation Programs can be a prime setting for the spread of communicable diseases including but not limited to: COVID-19, Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye), Head Lice, Hepatitis, Influenza (Flu), Measles, Mononucleosis (Mono), Mumps, Strep Throat, Tuberculosis (TB), and Varicella (Chicken Pox).

Arrival Day procedures include a Communicable Disease Assessment. Individuals may not be permitted to participate in the session if they have tested positive for or have been suspected of having a communicable disease or condition within the previous 2 weeks, or are found to currently have head lice, a temperature over 100.4 degrees, new loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or eye discharge. If symptomatic otherwise, acceptance will be further determined based on Medical Team assessment in consultation with the Camp Director.

In the event a camp participant is exposed to or test positive for any of the above communicable diseases in the two weeks prior to camp session, please contact the Camp Director to discuss your specific situation. In the event a camp participant becomes ill or symptomatic of a communicable disease during the session, departure must be coordinated within 12 hours of notification.

Immunization Policy

MDA requires that participants be up-to-date with the MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella), Varicella and DTaP / Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis) vaccinations. MDA strongly recommends participants are up-to-date with all other vaccinations recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Participants must provide a copy of their current immunization record with their application. If you do not have a record of your immunizations, please contact the MDA Camp Director to provide more information.

MDA may grant exemptions for required vaccines, provided there is no documented outbreak. If Parents/Legal Guardians are requesting an exemption, they must sign and return the Request for Exemption form by the application deadline. MDA reserves the right to require participants provide additional documentation, including proof of immunization or immunity, in order to attend camp.

Medical Equipment Policy

All equipment needed daily must be sent to camp with the camper. This includes, but is not limited to, any respiratory, digestive and/or Durable Medical Equipment. All equipment must be clearly identified with the camper's first and last name. If sending electronic equipment, a surge protector clearly marked with the camper's name, should also be brought to camp. Any extra pillows or foam wedges required for positioning should also be brought, as they will not be available at the camp facility. All splints, braces, wheelchairs, respiratory equipment, and assistive accessories should be checked or serviced prior to arrival at camp. All wheelchairs and scooters must have seatbelts. Use of seatbelts at all times, except for near bodies of water, is strictly enforced. If the equipment does not have a seatbelt, a temporary seatbelt will be provided. Participants must provide enough medical supplies for one week, plus 2 additional days.

Equipment the camper brings to camp must be in good operating condition, to the best of the guardian's knowledge. Any repairs made to the equipment while at camp that are the result of routine use will be the guardian's responsibility. MDA will contact guardian for consultation if extensive repairs are necessary.

MDA is not responsible for loss or damage to any equipment brought to camp. It will be guardian's sole responsibility to coordinate pick up/shipping of any item(s) left at camp.

Name Tag Policy

The Camp Director will provide a name tag to every camper, volunteer, and visitor during arrival procedures. Name tags must be worn at all times during the session, as they help our camp community identify each other, making it easier to connect and interact. Name tags also enhance security, as they help to differentiate those outside of our camp community. Volunteers are trained to notify camp leadership when they spot an unfamiliar individual without a name tag.

Virtual Summer Camp Program

Overview

MDA Virtual Summer Camp is a week-long, virtual program available to MDA Community Members ages 8-17 living with neuromuscular disease. Each day, campers are invited to log in to our online summer camp platform anytime between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. CST to connect with peers and engage in camp-inspired activities like arts and crafts, themed group games, creative projects, homemade snacks, and more. All of the activity supplies are provided at no cost to campers so they are able to fully participate in the camp experience from home.

MDA prioritizes the safety and privacy of every camper and has thoughtfully designed the virtual camp experience with security in mind. The platform features invitation-only and password-protected groups, restricted private messaging and commenting, and protective measures that help block unauthorized access. These built-in safeguards help create a secure, supportive online environment for all participants.

Virtual Camper Application Process

To get started, visit mda.org/summer-camp and select the Virtual Summer Camp session. This link will take you to UltraCamp, MDA's online application system. From there, you can create a new account or log in to an existing one and complete your application. The application must be completed by a legal guardian and helps us learn more about your camper's unique needs so we can provide the most supportive camp experience possible. **All parts of the camper application are due 1 month before the start of the session** to give MDA staff enough time to carefully review each camper's information.

If you need any support with the application process, including translation support, please contact camp@mdausa.org.

Volunteers

Volunteer counselors are an essential part of our MDA Virtual Summer Camp community. They engage in the virtual summer camp experience along with the campers while also supporting the campers' emotional and social needs and help lead activities. Many of them return year after year, becoming a familiar part of our camp family.

Every volunteer completes a thorough screening process, including an application, an interview, and a background check, to ensure they are a great fit. To best prepare them for this experience, they participate in virtual training to learn more about program standards, policies and procedures, neuromuscular diseases, and best practices for supporting campers' social and emotional well-being.

Preparing Your Camper for MDA Virtual Summer Camp

Getting ready for MDA Virtual Summer Camp is an exciting first step in helping your camper feel confident, comfortable, and ready to fully enjoy the online experience. In the weeks leading up to the camp session, families will receive two important messages to help you prepare:

- The *MDA Virtual Summer Camp Welcome Letter* is sent by email and includes information about your unique username and password for the designated online summer camp platform, the program schedule and themes, tips for preparing your camper and for creating a camp-friendly virtual space, and more.
- The *MDA Virtual Summer Camp Supply Kit* is sent by snail mail to your home and includes all of the necessary supplies to fully engage in the program.

If urgent questions come up before your Welcome Packet arrives, your Camp Director is always happy to help.

MDA Virtual Summer Camp Camper Policies

As part of the MDA Virtual Summer Camp application, families review and sign the MDA Participant Agreement and Summer Camp Policies, which outline guidelines that help us maintain a safe, respectful, and positive camp environment. Campers are expected to follow these policies, along with any guidance shared by the Camp Director. Following these shared expectations helps ensure a great experience for everyone. In rare cases where policies are not followed, additional steps may be needed to protect the well-being of the camp community.

Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, and Weapons: The use of tobacco, marijuana, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited and grounds for dismissal. It is expected that participants will not take part while under the influence, regardless of prescription permissions.

Dress Code: All clothing should be comfortable and within the bounds of good taste. Clothing which displays profanity or is disruptive is prohibited.

Confidentiality: Participant personal information, including but not limited to protected health information as described under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as well as their ages, addresses and any other personal information given and received throughout camp must be held in the strictest confidence. Camp participants must protect the confidentiality of all personal information received as a participant of the MDA Virtual Summer Camp and will not use or disclose it other than as permitted in writing by MDA.

Ethical Conduct: All participants are expected to: be honest, treat others with dignity and respect, be tolerant of differences, be kind and inclusive, support each other, and respect leadership. Bullying and/or hazing of any kind is prohibited.

Messaging: Participants may only communicate through approved group chats within the designated online summer camp platform and content must be age-appropriate, respectful, and consistent with MDA's standards for a child-centered environment. Direct messaging and private chats are strictly prohibited and grounds for dismissal.

Privacy & Security: Participants may not share their login information and may only access their own accounts. Participants may only engage with trusted links and files and should refrain from any activities that could compromise devices, accounts, or systems.

Social Networking: Popular social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, etc., are commonly used by many MDA Summer Camp participants. All participants are expected to be cognizant of their engagement with MDA Summer Camp when posting to any social media platform and should keep their posts positive and respectful.

Supervision: Two adult volunteers must be present during live camper interactive activities. Our camp community is safer and functions better when we all stay in groups.

Visitors: Participants are not permitted to invite guests to take part in the session.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does MDA recruit volunteers? Can families help recruit volunteers?

MDA dedicates extensive time to the recruitment of qualified volunteers for MDA Summer Camp. Many of our volunteers return year after year, while new volunteers are recruited through schools, community organizations, social media, and word of mouth from current MDA Summer Camp families and volunteers. Families are welcome and encouraged to support our recruitment efforts.

If you are interested in supporting recruitment efforts, here are some ways you can help:

- Post or share social media posts encouraging your network to get involved through volunteering. Your Camp Director is happy to share templates for posting on social media and the MDA Summer Camp Volunteer Recruitment Flyer.
- Talk with your Camp Director if you have connections in your network that can help share information with large groups of potential volunteers.
- Reach out to health professionals in your network and encourage them to volunteer on the Medical Team.
- Direct friends and family who may be interested to visit mda.org/summer-camp/volunteer for more information and to begin the application process.

Does MDA help with transportation to camp?

Transportation to and from camp is the responsibility of each family. However, we never want transportation challenges to prevent a camper from attending. If you need financial assistance to help with travel costs, please contact your Camp Director for information about our transportation stipend and how we can support your family.

As the parent/ guardian of a camper, can I volunteer at camp?

We love having family members involved in MDA Summer Camp! Parents or guardians are not eligible to volunteer during the same session their camper is attending, unless they are a license health professional serving on the Medical Team. In those cases, guardians are not assigned to care for their own camper or their camper's cabin. Other family members — including siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, and more — are welcome to volunteer during your camper's session.

Can parents/ guardians visit during the camp week?

MDA Summer Camp is designed to be a fully immersive experience. To support this environment, campers are not permitted to have visitors during the camp week, this includes parents/ guardians.

Does my camper have to stay at camp for the whole week, or can they come home each night?

MDA Summer Camp is designed to be fully immersive experience, which requires campers to stay at camp for the full week. Leaving camp each night would disrupt routines, social connections, and the overall camp experience. If your camper has a scheduled medical appointment during the camp week that cannot be rescheduled, please contact your Camp Director in advance so we can make arrangements to support them while minimizing disruption.

What if my camper misses home?

It's normal for campers to miss home at first, and our volunteers are trained to support them through these ups and downs. Most campers adjust within a day or two and begin enjoying all that camp has to offer. If they aren't eating, sleeping, or engaging, the Camp Director will reach out to you to make a plan. If, ultimately, the decision is made to bring them home early, celebrate their effort and encourage them to try again next year!

Appendix A

Application Components- Listing

	Required Application Components:	Additional Application Components (based on your camper's care needs):
Camper Application Components:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized Pick-Up Listing • Camper Applicant Information • Camper Applicant Profile Photo • Emergency Contacts • Immunization Record • MDA Camper Application Form • MDA Camper Health Form • MDA Camper Health Services Policy Form • MDA Family and Participant Agreement and Summer Camp Policies • Prescribed Medication List • Primary and Secondary Contact Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral or Mental Health Provider Camper Support Form • Camp Facility Waiver • Diabetes Details • Feeding Tube Details • Joint Custody Parental Agreement Form • Ostomy Details • Request for Exemption from Immunization Policy Form • Respiratory Equipment Details • Seizure Details • Service Animal Policy, Waiver and Release Form
Virtual Summer Camp Camper Application:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camper Applicant Information • Camper Applicant Profile Photo • MDA Virtual Summer Camp Camper Application Form 	None.

Application Components- Descriptions (*alphabetical*)

Authorized Pick-Up Listing

Families are asked to list at least two additional trusted adults (beyond Primary and Secondary Contacts) as authorized to pick up their camper. This helps ensure that campers are only released to a parent/guardian or a designated adult if you're unable to pick them up. You may choose to list individuals from your "Emergency Contacts" as authorized pick-ups as well; just be sure their information is included in both sections of the application.

Behavioral or Mental Health Provider Camper Support Form

Based on the information in your camper's application, the Camp Director may request a Behavioral or Mental Health Provider Camper Support Form to better understand your camper's needs and ensure the right supports are in place for a positive camp experience. If required, this form must be completed and signed by your camper's behavioral or mental health provider, or by a physician or licensed practitioner involved in their care.

Camp Facility Waiver

Some camp facility partners may require additional waivers specific to their facility or programming. If needed, these will either be shared with you ahead of time or provided during check-in on Arrival Day.

Camper Applicant Information

As part of the UltraCamp application process, families will provide basic information about their camper, such as date of birth, gender expression, and home address.

Camper Applicant Profile Photo

Families are asked to upload a clear, color photo of their camper taken within the past year to UltraCamp. This photo helps our team easily identify campers.

Diabetes Care Details

If your camper has a diabetes diagnosis noted in their application, an additional form will be required. This gives families the opportunity to share important details about their camper's care, including the type of diabetes, glucose monitoring, and insulin needs and routines.

Emergency Contacts

Families are asked to provide the names and phone numbers of at least two additional emergency contacts (beyond the Primary and Secondary Contacts) in their UltraCamp account. These individuals may be contacted during the session if we are unable to reach the primary contacts.

Feeding Tube Details

If your camper uses a feeding tube, an additional form will be required. This allows families to share important details about their camper's feeding needs, including the type of tube, feeding method, and timing of feeds.

Immunization Record

MDA requires immunization records to help protect all participants from contagious illnesses and to better understand each camper's overall health. This information may also be shared with health officials if needed in the event of a medical emergency or disease outbreak. Families will be asked to upload this documentation directly to their UltraCamp account.

Joint Custody Parental Agreement Form

In cases of joint custody, both guardians must provide permission for the camper to attend camp. The Primary Contact will enter the name and email address of the other custodial guardian, and UltraCamp will automatically send the form for electronic signature. Once completed, the form will be added directly to the camper's account.

MDA Camper Application Form

This comprehensive form gives families the opportunity to share important details about their camper, including personal interests, sleep routines, dietary needs and preferences, allergies, physical health, and social, emotional, and overall care needs.

MDA Camper Health Form

Families must have a physician or licensed practitioner familiar with their camper's neuromuscular disease complete the MDA Camper Health Form based on an exam within 12 months of the camp session. This should include immunization records, prescribed medications, and the most recent visit summary. Exams older than 12 months, forms completed by family members, late submissions, or alternate forms cannot be accepted. The Camp Director will email the form after the Camper Application is submitted, and it can also be downloaded from the Document Center in UltraCamp.

MDA Camper Health Services Policy Form

This form gives families the opportunity to review and acknowledge MDA Summer Camp health policies.

MDA Family and Participant Agreement and Summer Camp Policies Form

This form gives families the opportunity to review and acknowledge key program policies, permissions, and safety guidelines.

Ostomy Details

If your camper uses an ostomy, an additional form will be required. This allows families to share important details about their camper's ostomy care.

Prescribed Medication List

All medications your camper will bring to camp should be listed in this section of the UltraCamp application. Please include the full medication name, how it's taken, the schedule, the dosage, and the reason it's being used. For more details, please refer to the MDA Summer Camp Medication Policies.

Primary and Secondary Contact Information

The primary contact must be the camper's legal guardian. You may also add a secondary contact, who does not need to be a legal guardian.

Request for Exemption from Immunization Policy Form

Families may request an immunization exemption if there's no reported outbreak. The Request for Exemption from Immunization Policy Form lets you specify which vaccine(s), the type of exemption (medical, religious, or philosophical), and any previous exemptions. Notify the Camp Director, who will add the form to the applicant's UltraCamp account, as it isn't included automatically.

Respiratory Equipment Details

If your camper uses respiratory equipment, an additional form will be required. This allows families to share important details about their camper's respiratory needs, such as settings, frequency of use, and duration.

Seizure Details

If your camper has a seizure diagnosis noted in their application, an additional form will be required. This gives families the opportunity to share important details about their camper's care, such as the type of seizure, symptoms, frequency, length, last incidence, triggers or warning signs, response after the seizure, and emergency protocol.

Service Animal Policy, Waiver and Release Form

This form is added automatically when a camper requires a service animal and lets families provide details such as the animal's name, breed, trained tasks, and veterinarian contact. By signing, the guardian agrees to follow the service animal policy. Some camp locations may require additional documentation.