

Summer Day Camp **Parent Handbook**



Summer 2026

Welcome to the Vernon Parks & Recreation Summer Camp Program!

Please review the following information thoroughly and discuss camp rules and expectations with your camper prior to their first day in the program.

In accordance with Public Act 16-100 the Vernon Parks & Recreation Department wants you to be aware that our day camps are administered by a municipal agency, which is exempt from licensing by the CT Office of Early Childhood.

Contact Information:

Vernon Parks & Recreation Office

120 South Street, Vernon CT

Phone: (860) 870-3520

Fax: (860) 870-3525

E-mail: parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov

Camp Newhoca

195 Grier Road, Vernon CT

Cell Phone: (860) 308-0943

Monday - Friday

Regular Camp Day: 8:00am - 3:00pm

Extended PM Program: 3:00pm - 6:00pm

Center 375 Camp

375 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon CT

Cell Phone: (860) 308-0932

Monday - Friday

Regular Camp Day: 8:00am - 3:00pm

Extended PM Program: 3:00pm - 6:00pm

Teen Camp

195 Grier Road, Vernon CT

Cell Phone: TBD

Tuesday - Thursday

Regular Camp Day: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Extended PM Program: 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Counselor in Training (CIT) Program

Program location varies

Cell Phone: TBD

Monday - Friday

8:00am - 3:00pm

Pack List

Please label all belongings that are sent to camp with the camper's first and last name

- Non-refrigerated lunch
- Snack
 - Two snacks recommended for campers staying for Extended PM program
- Reusable water bottle
 - Camp does not provide water bottles to campers. Drinking fountains are not available at camp, although a location to re-fill water bottles will be available. Campers who arrive at camp without a water bottle will receive a call home.
- Swimwear, towel
- Change of clothing
- Sweatshirt for chilly days
- Sunscreen, bug spray

Please do NOT send your child to camp with electronics, toys, or other valuables. Campers are not permitted to have phones or screens out during the camp day. Camp staff are not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken personal items.

Attire

Campers should wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing each day to camp. The majority of camp activities take place outdoors, so campers should be prepared to be outdoors in all weather, including heat, light precipitation, etc.

Sneakers or other close-toed, securely fitting athletic footwear is required each day. Crocs are not considered to be close-toed athletic footwear. Flip-flops, sandals, and crocs are only allowed in the swimming areas. In the event that a camper does not have appropriate footwear, a call home will be made to see if appropriate footwear can be brought to camp. Campers may be required to sit out of certain activities if they do not have appropriate footwear. CROCS ARE NOT CONSIDERED APPROPRAITE FOOTWEAR FOR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES INCLUDING FIELD GAMES, PLAYGROUND TIME, HIKES, ETC.

Swimsuits are required to enter the water at a swimming facility. Determination of appropriate swim attire is at the discretion of the Lifeguards on duty. Campers without appropriate swim attire may not be permitted to enter the water at aquatic sites.

Sunscreen and other sun protective clothing such as hats is highly recommended. Camp staff is not permitted to apply sunscreen or bug spray directly to campers. Campers without sunscreen or other appropriate sun protection may be required to sit out of certain activities if it is deemed a risk to their health and safety by Camp staff.

Campers may not share bug spray or sunscreen with other campers outside of their direct family.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Drop-off: Campers may not be dropped off earlier than the camp opening time listed. At Newhoca and Center 375, the drop-off time is between 8:00am - 9:00am. Campers may be dropped off at any time during this hour; main camp-day activities will begin at 9:00am. At Teen Camp, drop-off time begins at 8:00am; please be aware of field trip departure times as the bus will not wait for campers to arrive on site before leaving.

Pick-up: Anyone signing a child out of camp must be listed on the camper's Info Form and MUST show a photo I.D. at the time of pick-up each day. Camp Staff will not release a child to any adult that is not listed on the camper's form and cannot or will not show a valid photo ID. If an attempt is made by an unauthorized adult to remove a child from camp, the listed Parent/Guardian will be contacted. The Vernon Police Department may also be contacted for assistance if needed.

If you will be picking up your child early or need to make changes to your authorized pick-up list, please submit a written note to the Camp Director or an e-mail to parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov. If you would like to give permission to your camper, age 13+, to sign themselves out of camp, written permission must be submitted. Once a camper has been signed out of the program, they are no longer under the supervision of Vernon Parks & Recreation Staff and must leave the program site.

Late-Pick Up Fees: Campers must be signed out of camp by the listed program end time. Late pick-up will result in a fee of \$5 for the first 15 minutes, plus \$1/minute thereafter. Repeated late pickups will result in a cancellation of the registration and dismissal of the participant from the program. If a camper remains at the program more than 30 minutes past the pickup time, the Vernon Police will be called for assistance. Late pick-up fees must be paid in full before the camper can attend the program again.

Daily Camp Schedule & Activities

Each day of camp will begin with a Morning Meeting. Counselors will take their groups through the assigned schedule for the day, including a variety of activities that may include group games, arts & crafts, sports, swimming, and special theme activities. An emphasis on physical activity and outdoor time is made throughout the day when possible. Not every group will participate in every activity each day at camp. A break for lunch is held mid-day. A Closing Meeting will be held at the end of each camp day.

All campers are encouraged to try new activities and participate to the best of their ability. Healthy physical activity is encouraged. We understand that campers have varying levels of ability and coordination so the emphasis will be on fitness, fun, good sportsmanship, and skill building rather than winning/losing. Campers who refuse to participate in an activity must remain with their group, but will be given a quiet, seated alternative activity to do. Movies or

other screen-based activities will be used sparingly, but may be offered in the event of inclement weather.

Swimming

The municipal Community Pool is utilized for swimming at Center 375 Camp. A restricted, roped off area of Middle Bolton Lake is utilized for swimming for programs held at Camp Newhoca. The availability of swimming at camp each day is determined by weather, lifeguard availability, and facility conditions. A determination of whether swimming is available to camp on a given day is made by the Aquatics Supervisor on site.

Lifeguards will test each camper at their first visit to the aquatic facility to assess their swim ability. Campers may be restricted to swim in particular areas of the facility based on their ability to pass the swim test. A re-test may be requested only at the start of a new session. Campers that refuse to participate in the Swim Test will not be allowed to enter the water.

Lifejackets, puddle jumpers, or other flotation devices are not permitted. Goggles or face masks that cover the nose and/or mouth are not permitted.

Appropriate swim attire is required to enter the water at the Aquatics facilities. Determination of appropriate swim attire is at the discretion of the Lifeguards on duty. Campers without appropriate swim attire may not be permitted to enter the water at aquatic sites.

Campers are required to follow all the rules of Camp and the Aquatics Facility while at the facility. Campers who are unable to follow the rules or create a safety hazard as determined by Camp Staff or Lifeguards may be asked to sit out of swimming. Repeated unsafe behaviors at the Aquatics facilities may result in the camper not being permitted to enter the facility or beach area.

Weather

Campers will be outdoors at times in all weather conditions that are not hazardous to health and safety. Please plan accordingly and pack weather-appropriate clothing for your camper. This may include rain coat, sweatshirt, hat, sunscreen, etc. Inclement weather may affect certain planned activities including field trips, theme activities, swimming, and sleepovers, causing them to be delayed or cancelled.

Illnesses & Injuries at Camp

A minimum of two Emergency Contacts who are over the age of 18 and who are reachable during the camp day by phone must be listed on each Camper's form in order to register for Camp.

Illness: If a camper shows common signs of being sick (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, severe cough, etc.) during the camp day, an adult from the camper's authorized pick-up list will be contacted to come pick up the camper immediately from camp.

Please do not send your child to camp if they are showing signs of being sick prior to arrival at the program.

Headlice: If a camper shows signs of a headlice infestation, the camper will be evaluated by the Camp Nurse. If found to have an active headlice infestation, the Parent/Guardian will be notified and a written note confirming the headlice has been treated must be provided upon return to camp.

Injuries: Campers that incur minor injuries at camp (minor cuts, bumps, insect bites, etc.) will be evaluated by a staff member who is certified in CPR/First Aid, and treatment given in line with First Aid certification training. The injury will be recorded and the adult picking up the camper will be notified at pickup time of the incident.

In the event a camper incurs a more serious injury, the camper will be evaluated by Camp staff certified in CPR/First Aid, and the Camp Nurse will be called for additional support. A parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. In the event that a parent/guardian cannot be reached, a phone message will be left and the next adult on the authorized pick-up list will be contacted. If the Camp Staff determine the situation to be an emergency or require more intensive medical follow-up, emergency services will be called for further assistance. If a determination is made by Emergency Services Personnel that a camper needs immediate transportation to a hospital and the parent/guardian cannot be reached or cannot arrive on site in a timely manner, the camper will be accompanied in the ambulance by a Camp Staff member.

By registering for Summer Camp, you are granting consent for First Aid/CPR certified Camp Staff and/or the Camp Nurse to administer first aid and CPR to a camper in the event of an illness, injury, or other emergency. Consent is also given to transport a camper to the nearest appropriate hospital, as determined by Emergency Services Personnel, in the event of a medical emergency. Parents/Guardians are responsible for all medical fees incurred.

A Camp Nurse is retained as part of the Summer Camp Staff. The Camp Nurse covers multiple program sites, and consequently may not be immediately available at any one program site during the camp day.

Medications

Camp staff are not permitted to dispense or administer medications to campers with the exception of Epi-pens or inhalers in an emergency situation.

For campers that require an inhaler or Epi-Pen at Camp:

- An “Authorization for the Administration of Medication” Form (available on our website) must be returned to the Vernon Parks & Recreation Department no later than one week before the camper’s first day at camp. If the form needs to be faxed, the fax number is (860) 870-3535. A copy of the form may be on file and can be obtained by the parent at your child’s school. Campers will not be permitted to attend camp until this form is obtained.
- The Epi-Pen and/or inhaler must be brought to camp on the first day of attendance. Campers will not be permitted to remain at camp if the medication is not present
- Epi-pens and inhalers will be returned to the adult picking up the child on Friday, unless the camper is attending multiple sessions and alternative arrangements are made with Camp Staff.
- Campers who have parent and physician permission to self-carry and self-administer medication will be required to show that the Epi-Pen or Inhaler is on site at the start of each camp day. Campers who are self-carrying their medication must keep it with them at all times during the camp day. Camp staff are not responsible for the retention or management of medications of campers who are approved to self-carry.

Campers with Special Needs

The Vernon Parks & Recreation Department, in accordance with ADA, accepts campers with special needs in an integrated group setting when it is determined that the child can best be served and program safety for all participants can be maintained in this group setting. All program participants are expected to abide by the Camp Rules at all times when at the program site. If you would like to discuss the special needs of a camper before the start of the program, a written request for a meeting must be submitted to the Vernon Parks & Recreation Office a minimum of four weeks prior to the first day of attendance in the program.

Summer Camp Staff

A Camp Director and/or Assistant Director and Counselors will be at the program site each day. Program Specialists with special training in experience in specialty areas may also be present at camp. A Camp Nurse is retained on staff and covers multiple program sites throughout the season. All Camp Staff will be a minimum of 16 years old, and will receive training in First Aid/CPR, games and activities, behavior management, leadership, Child Abuse or Neglect Recognition and Reporting, and other relevant topics.

Communication with Camp Staff

A camp cell phone number will be made available to all parents/guardians. Camp staff will be reachable at this phone number during camp hours. Inquiries regarding camp can also be made to the Vernon Parks & Recreation Office.

Group Assignments

Campers are grouped based on their grade, with a minimum ratio of 1 staff member for every 10 campers. Campers must be able to function safely and respectfully within this group setting. We do not guarantee that requests for certain campers to be grouped together, as group assignments are made in the best interest of the operations of the full camp program.

Lost and Found

A lost and found area will be maintained at each program site. Please remind your camper to periodically check this area to claim any of their lost belongings. Parents looking for lost items past the end date of the camp program can e-mail parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov to check for the item. Lost & found items will be held for two weeks past the last day of the program, then will be donated. Please label all personal items with camper's first and last name before sending to camp to help us re-unite found items with their owners! Summer Camp staff is not responsible for keeping track of any camper's personal belongings. Program spaces are sometimes shared with other members of the public and we cannot guarantee lost items will be found and returned to campers.

Field Trips

Teen Campers may attend one or more field trips in each program session. Field trips are subject to change or cancellation based on weather, venue changes, disruption to transportation, or other unforeseen events. Campers who arrive at camp must attend any field trips scheduled for that day and are not permitted to stay behind at the program site during a field trip. Refunds are not provided for campers who miss the bus for a field trip or elect not to attend camp on a field trip day. Participants in field trips are expected to follow all camp rules, as well as the rules of the venue while on the trip. Campers behaving in an unsafe or excessively disruptive manner on a field trip may require immediate pick-up from the venue. Some field trips may have a lunch included, while others may require campers to bring a packed lunch. Parents/guardians may send their camper with additional spending money on a field trip, but the availability of food for purchase is dependent on the venue.

Registrations and Payments

Children that are not registered for camp will not be permitted to stay at the program site until the registration issue is rectified. Any questions regarding registration can be directed to the Vernon Parks & Recreation Department. Information regarding registrations, cancellations, and refunds can be found at www.vernonrec.org.

Any adult registering a child for camp is responsible for ensuring that any outstanding balances are paid by the deadlines. Vernon Parks & Recreation staff will make reasonable efforts to contact families about outstanding balances (e-mail and phone call). Any registrations with a remaining unpaid balance by Wednesday of the week prior to the start of the session will be cancelled, and the camper will not be permitted to attend the program. Refunds of partial payments made are not given in the event of a cancelled registration due to unpaid balances.

Behavior & Disciplinary Procedures

We strive to foster a safe, respectful, and fun environment at camp. As such, campers are expected to behave in accordance with the camp behavior rules (below) at all times. Campers that do not follow the camp rules will be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined below. Campers should be fully toilet trained and able to change independently.

Camp Rules

1. Campers must check in every morning upon arrival. Campers must stay with their assigned group at all times, unless instructed otherwise by a staff member.
2. Sneakers or other close-toes shoes must be worn at all times (bare feet, sandals, flip flops, Crocs are only allowed in aquatic areas)
3. Use of bikes, scooters, roller blades, skateboards, hoverboards, etc is not permitted at camp.
4. Use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, etc.) is not permitted during camp. These items and other valuables and toys should be left at home or remain in the camper's backpack during the day. Camp staff are not responsible for any lost, broken, or stolen personal items that are brought to camp.
4. Campers are expected to behave in a safe manner at all times. This includes listening to and following instructions from staff and utilizing camp equipment and facilities for their intended purpose in the intended manner.
5. Behaviors such as throwing objects at others, hitting, pushing, punching, unwanted touching, etc. are not tolerated at camp. Hands and feet should be kept to yourself.
6. Campers are expected to behave in a respectful manner at all times towards fellow campers and staff. Swearing, other foul language, teasing, and bullying are not tolerated at camp.
7. Campers must follow all camp and aquatic facility rules when utilizing an aquatic facility during camp. Failure to do so may result in suspension from aquatic activities in the future.

Violation of these rules will result in disciplinary action. All disciplinary cases and actions will be documented in writing in a log or report.

Disciplinary Procedures

A. NON-PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR

Includes, but not limited to: not following directions, foul language use, disrespectfulness, leaving assigned group without permission, minor disruptive behaviors, name calling/teasing, or any other infraction deemed inappropriate for this category.

Action 1: The counselor issues a verbal warning explaining the inappropriate behavior to the camper. The camper is advised that the next warning will be a written discipline warning. Record behavior in discipline log.

Action 2: The counselor issues the first written warning to the camper. The parent/guardian may receive a call, or may be informed at pick-up about the behavior, depending on the severity. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent/guardian upon request. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time.

Action 3: The counselor issues a second written warning to the camper and a call home is made to the parent. A one-day suspension is issued. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent upon request. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time.

Action 4: The counselor issues a third written warning to the camper and a call home is made to the parent. A 2-3 day suspension is issued. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent upon request. A meeting between the parent/guardian and camp staff is required before the camper is allowed to attend the program again. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time.

Action 5: The parent/guardian will be notified and required to pick up the camper immediately from camp. Expulsion from Camp is issued. A meeting with Camp staff and Vernon Parks & Recreation full-time staff is required to discuss future attendance at Vernon Parks & Recreation programming.

Campers whose behavior is significantly disruptive to the safety of other campers may require immediate pick-up from camp or field trip location.

B. PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR (mild)

Includes, but not limited to: pushing, spitting, tripping, throwing any item, repeated refusal to stay with assigned group, other physical actions of no severe danger or any other infraction deemed inappropriate for this category.

Action 1: The counselor issues the first written warning to the camper. A call is made to the parent/guardian. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent/guardian upon request. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time.

Action 2: The counselor issues a second written warning to the camper. A call is made to the parent/guardian and a 1-3 day suspension is issued. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent/guardian upon request. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time.

Action 3: The counselor issues a third written warning to the camper. A call is made to the parent/guardian and a 2-4 day suspension is issued. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent/guardian upon request. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time. A meeting between the parent/guardian and camp staff is required before the camper is allowed to attend the program again.

Action 4: The parent/guardian will be notified and required to pick up the camper immediately from camp. Expulsion from Camp is issued. A meeting with Camp staff and Vernon Parks & Recreation full-time staff is required to discuss future attendance at Vernon Parks & Recreation programming.

C. PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR (severe) & BULLYING

Includes, but not limited to: bullying, biting, rock throwing, punching, dangerous use of facilities or equipment, revealing inappropriate areas of the body (panting, flashing), actions resulting in significant injury to self or others, or any other infraction deemed inappropriate for this category.

Action 1: The counselor issues a written warning to the camper. Camper may be required to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time. A call is made to the parent/guardian, and immediate pickup may be required. A copy of the written report will be made available to the parent/guardian upon request. A suspension of up to 1 week is issued, and a meeting between the parent/guardian and camp staff is required before the camper is allowed to attend the program again.

Action 2: The parent/guardian will be notified and required to pick up the camper immediately from camp. Expulsion from Camp is issued. A meeting with Camp staff and Vernon Parks & Recreation full-time staff is required to discuss future attendance at Vernon Parks & Recreation programming.

Campers whose behavior is significantly disruptive camp operations or presents a risk to the safety of other campers and staff may require immediate pick-up from camp.

Each case involving a suspension or expulsion will be reviewed by our full-time administrative staff. If your child is expelled from the program, they will not be allowed back for the summer and they will be put on probation for the following year. Parks and Recreation reserves the right to determine the seriousness of the discipline issued and categorize it accordingly. Parks and Recreation also reserves the right to make decisions in the best interest of the program and in the best interest to ALL participants. Refunds are NOT given for suspensions/expulsions.

If you have any questions about any of the information contained within this Handbook, please contact the Vernon Parks & Recreation Department at parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov.