

# WANAKEE HANDBOOK

*A Guide for Wanakee Families*

**PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE**

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# About Wanakee

Wanakee is a co-ed sleep-away camp in Meredith, NH in the foothills of the White Mountains. Wanakee's 227 acres include wooded trails, half a mile of lakefront on Lake Pemigewasset, and open fields. Wanakee's focus is on building and nurturing strong communities of radical acceptance, where campers of all ages can grow personally, socially, and spiritually.

Each day, campers of all ages live, eat, explore, play, and create Christian community in small groups called sites. Depending upon the camper's age and event, activities may include canoeing, drama practice, sailing, rock climbing, off-site trips, and more. There is truly something for everyone! No matter which program your camper chooses, we know they will have a safe, fun, and formative experience at Wanakee.

We are committed to delivering a unique small-group experience, ideal for building meaningful relationships. By the end of the week, sites feel a lot like family. It is this strong sense of community that keeps people coming back to Wanakee long after their camper years have passed.

Wanakee summer camps run from late June or early July through mid-August, with programs for all ages, including parent-child programs, spread across our 7 weeks. To see the current schedule, visit [www.wanakee.org/dates](http://www.wanakee.org/dates). The dates and rates for the coming summer are typically released around February 1.



Our mission at camp is to...

love, accept, challenge and provide opportunities for growth to all God's people

help individuals interact with one another, build relationships and to grow in their Christian faith through experiences within a Christian community

send participants forth into the world to celebrate and share God's love



# A Note From the Director

Greetings from Wanakee,

Summer is almost here! Can you believe it? In just a few short months we'll be singing songs, building campfires, and visiting Monkey Island. As I am writing this letter, snow blankets the picturesque Wanakee woods – but soon, these 227 acres will be ready for adventure and exploration. I can't wait to meet you and experience an incredible camp season together!

Our 2024 program guide features the return of many classics, as well as several new additions. Whether you come for one week or all seven, we know that you will have a transformational experience here at Wanakee.

To help ensure the best possible experience for every camper, we recruit the very best counselors and support staff from across the globe. These competent and capable leaders are trained onsite in skills such as: leadership, first aid, mentoring, emergency procedures, conflict transformation, faith exploration, games, campfire cooking, and so much more. Wanakee is proud to have been recertified in 2023 by the American Camp Association for meeting (and in many cases exceeding) their rigorous safety and quality standards.

Some of the most meaningful experiences in my life have come from days spent at camp. As campers are shaping similar memories, they'll be developing their personal, social, spiritual, and emotional skills. As new and old friends swap stories, visit the rec hall, swim at the waterfront, and enjoy Friday pizza, campers will be welcomed into the camp community as their full and authentic selves. In this empathetic and accepting place, young people encounter a safe space to explore who they are and who they want to be. It's no surprise that so many have come to faith and experienced God in a community that welcomes them because of the things that make them unique.

Wanakee offers one of the most cost-effective summer camp programs in New England, thanks to the generous support of our many volunteers, donors, and the United Methodist Church. We provide a high-quality and affordable experience for campers, with scholarship funds available to ensure inclusivity. Reach out if you need assistance in making the camp experience accessible. Together, we will embrace growth, foster connection, and create a future filled with unforgettable memories.

I can't wait to welcome you and your family to Wanakee – see you this summer!

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Evan R. McElreath, Executive Director



# Cost and Contributions

We believe that every child should have the opportunity to experience summer camp.

That's why we're proud that all of our camp programs are offered at prices well below the industry average of \$2,690/week, made possible by our partnership with the New England Annual Conference. We're grateful for their financial support which ensures we are able to help as many families as possible join the Wanakee community.

Our Tier Pricing system recognizes the costs related to the camp experience while allowing families to select the level of payment most appropriate for their circumstances. Each family may freely select how much they are able to pay, and every child will receive the same camp experience regardless of the level chosen.

## Tier Pricing Levels

### ***TIER 1: SUSTAINING***

Our Sustaining Tier reflects what it actually costs to operate Wanakee, including year-round, professional staff. For decades, support from the United Methodist Church has allowed us to run summer camp while charging fees lower than our expenses. In 2023 alone, support from the UMC exceeded \$115,000.

With changing realities for the denomination and the possibility of decreased funding, our Sustaining Tier is a chance for all of us who love Wanakee and are financially able to step in and keep camp as financially accessible as possible today and in the future. This tier includes an additional \$150 (\$75 for half weeks) that will be used for strategic expenses, such as deferred maintenance, strengthening our reserves, or other future-oriented investments. If you are inspired to pay this amount, we are grateful. Thank you.

### ***TIER 2: DEFAULT***

Tier 2 is our normal subsidized cost. This rate reflects the cost of our summer operations, including summer staff, food service, insurance, vehicles, activity costs, etc. It does not cover our Executive Director, whose salary, benefits, and housing expenses are funded by New England United Methodists. If you are able to pay this amount, please do so. Thank you.



## Tier Pricing Levels Continued

### **TIER 3: SPONSORED**

Tier 3 is more heavily subsidized through generous donations to Wanakee by individuals and churches. This rate is available for families who need assistance to send children to camp. Choose this rate if your family has the need.

*If you have questions about which tier your camper is registered at or would like to switch tiers, please contact the office.*

## Registration Fees, Discounts, and Scholarships

- \$100 deposit per session due with registration- please make your final payment online [here](#) prior to arrival at camp for check-in (or send a check in the mail)
- **MULTI-WEEK DISCOUNT:** \$100 off – Register your camper for a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th full-week overnight session and receive \$100 off each additional week. For example, if your child comes to 3 weeks of camp, they will receive \$100 off the price of weeks 2 and 3. This discount is only available after a full week of camp (or two half weeks). The discount will be available proportionally (\$50) for half week camps after one full week. Multi-week discounts will be applied by our office staff.
- **SCHOLARSHIPS:** Finances should never stop a child from having a camp experience and we are eager to work with you. Additional assistance is available through our “Campership” fund, including for families sending multiple children. Please contact the office at [mail@wanakee.org](mailto:mail@wanakee.org) for a confidential conversation about scholarship opportunities, or download the form from our website.





# Pillars of the Wanakee Experience

## **MUSIC**

Music is an important part of Wanakee's culture. You can typically hear sites singing as they walk from place to place or around the campfire at night, in addition to singing after every meal. Songs are sometimes inspirational, sometimes silly, and always fun.



## **MEALS**

Served family style, meals are a time for sites to get to know each other better and talk about their day. Before each meal, a specific site will lead a sung grace. Meals are often camper favorites like french toast, eggs, mac n' cheese, hamburgers, tacos, and chicken patties. For campers who may not like what is served, sandwiches, fruit, and the salad bar are always available. After the meal, the same site that led grace will lead songs and help wash dishes.

## **COOKOUTS**

Campers help counselors prepare meals over the fire several times during the week. Favorites include pancakes, hearty pasta stir-fry, tin foil babies, no-bake cookies, and pizza. (You'll have to come to camp to discover campfire pizza).

## **TRIPS**

Some camp programs may include off-site trips for activities similar to rock climbing, hiking, horseback riding, or canoeing. Some trips may require additional waivers which will be signed at check-in. Camp provides all supervision and transportation.



# Pillars of the Wanakee Experience

## **CAMPFIRE**

Each site has its own campfire most nights for songs, stories, snacks, and meaningful discussions. Don't forget s'mores at the end of the week!

## **CABINS**

A site is a pair of cabins with a fire circle nearby. All sites are set on the hill across from main camp. Cabins are rustic with no electricity or running water but campers have access to the shower house, which does have those amenities. Falling asleep to the sounds of nature is a special experience for many of our campers. Lanterns are great for campers who are nervous about the dark.



## **STAFF**

Wanakee has three year-round staff members and welcomes around 25 seasonal staff each year. Many of the young adults who work at Wanakee were once campers themselves, and some join us from all over the world. Our staff are chosen for their maturity, commitment to helping children grow in confidence and faith, and their love of community. Counselors are assigned to programs based on ages and interests; you and your camper will find out who their counselors are upon arrival.

## **A COMMUNITY OF RADICAL ACCEPTANCE**

Our programming focuses on building loving relationships and communities of radical acceptance. Throughout the week, each site creates a community of acceptance and respect for camp, nature, and each other. More than this, Wanakee is a place where each individual is accepted for exactly who they are and embraced for the unique background and identities they bring to camp. Wanakee is a great place to learn about yourself, build your confidence, and form friendships that will last a lifetime.



# Health Paperwork and Policies

Getting health paperwork done in advance makes check-in easier for you and for us.

We ask that you:

1. Complete your child's health history online in our [registration portal](#).
2. Upload a signed physical dated within 2 years of your child's week at camp and a copy of their immunizations. You can submit either our attached HCP authorization form OR a standard camp/school physical form from your provider.
3. Upload a copy of your child's Covid-19 vaccination card, if applicable (NOTE: you only need to include this separately if your camper's vaccines are not yet up-to-date on their general immunization record). Please see notes about Covid-19 vaccinations below.



It's not too early to start getting paperwork in order (or make that physical appointment)!

## Medication Instructions

- All prescriptions must be in ORIGINAL CONTAINER, labeled with pharmacy, physician, & medicine name/strength/dosage & time/frequency of administration.
- Due to nursing practice/licensing state laws, no medication will be administered without a physician's written order.
- No over-the-counter medications can be given without a doctor's order. Please do not bring any medications unless you have a doctor's order.





# Health Paperwork and Policies

Wanakee's physician's standing orders enable the Camp Health Officer to treat simple injuries, headaches, bee stings, etc. This includes dispensing antiseptic to cuts, Tylenol, oral antihistamine, and other over-the counter meds as they deem necessary.

Note: Camp is similar to a school environment. Many of our campers are more successful taking medications normally taken during school. Questions? Talk to our Camp Health Officer or Executive Director [603] 279-7950.

We hope that everyone has a fun and safe week at camp but occasionally health concerns arise during a camper's time at Wanakee. While we prefer to err on the side of caution and contact parents and guardians when there are any questions or concerns, in the following situations Wanakee will always contact you to discuss the treatment of your camper immediately.

- A camper has to be transported to the hospital or clinic
- If a camper has an allergic reaction
- Any illness lasting more than 12 hours
- If a camper requests treatment that contradicts his/her health form.



## **A Note About Communicable Diseases at Camp:**

The health and safety of our campers, staff, and volunteers will always be our highest priority. This includes managing and reducing the risks associated with Covid-19. We continue to closely monitor guidance from medical professionals as well as local, state, and national public health leaders.

While we hope we can operate with minimal additional protocols due to Covid-19, measures such as testing, cohorting, and/or masking could be implemented. We continue to recommend vaccination for all eligible individuals, and will communicate with our families as summer approaches. Visit [www.wanakee.org/health](http://www.wanakee.org/health) for the most recent information.

Please join us in praying that public health realities allow us to operate safely and with minimal disruption. We are grateful for your patience and flexibility.



# Packing List

- Medications (in original containers only)
- Sleeping bag/or sheet
- Blankets (nights might be cold)
- Pillow
- Sturdy “closed toed” shoes (Open toed sandals, etc. cannot be worn around camp. We recommend having 2 pairs of shoes for rainy days)
- T-shirts
- Long sleeve shirts/sweatshirts
- Shorts
- Jeans/pants
- Socks & underwear
- Raincoat / Poncho
- Shower towels (at least two) & wash cloths
- Soap/toothbrush & paste/personal care items
- Swimsuit(s)
- Towels for swimming (at least two)
- Beach coverup/shirt/sweatshirt (for walking to the Waterfront)
- Bag/Backpack (to carry swimsuit, towels, & showering articles)
- Insect repellent
- Sun screen
- Flashlight/camp light with extra batteries
- Stamps, stationery, addresses, paper, & pen/pencil
- Water bottle (essential)
- Camera (many of our campers choose to bring disposable ones)



# Packing List

## Items Available For Purchase

Inexpensive “poncho” / raincoat	Hats
Flashlights	Coffee Mugs
Water Bottles	Picture Frames
Toothbrushes	Bean bag animals with Wanakee accessories
Postcards and Stamps	"Songs" books
Pens	Other small items (friendship bracelets, hair scrunchies, frisbees mini magnets, animal coin purses, etc.)
Wanakee t-shirts	
Wanakee Sweatshirts	

## Items Not Allowed At Camp

NO electronics: cell phone/tablet/any type of media player

NO weapons of any kind

NO drugs or alcohol of any kind

NO cigarettes/e-cigarettes/smoking items of any kind

NO dress clothes/jewelry/hair dryers

NO food/snacks/candy/glass containers

NO pets (though maybe they will send you mail!)

NO personal sports equipment

If a camper is in possession of items such as snacks or electronics, they will be taken and held in the office until check-out.

Wanakee is an alcohol and drug free facility. We reserve the right to immediately dismiss any individual found to be in possession of an illegal substance (including e-cigarettes).



# Check In / Check Out

Check in is on Sunday afternoon, and your camper will be assigned an arrival window between 2:00 and 4:00 pm. We will email you with specific information closer to the summer. Check-in for half week camps starting on Wednesday will be at 4 pm.

If your camper has not arrived by 5:15 pm and we haven't heard that you will be late, we will reach out to check in.

If your camper is 16+ and will be driving to camp, we will hold their phone and keys in the office for the week.

All programs end at 10 AM on Saturday (or 10 am Tuesday/Wednesday for partial week camps). The only exceptions to this are Wanakee Adventure 2, Sweet Treats and Fun Eats, Night Camp, and Ultimate Night Camp, which check-out at 7 PM on Friday, August 16th.

## Program Goals

Our camping programs are designed to:

- Provide opportunities for personal growth that stimulate the development of a camper's self-esteem.
- Provide campers with techniques for safe and appropriate ways to explore their personal faith.
- Help individuals interact with one another, build relationships, and contribute to a diverse Christian Community.
- Help campers experience and appreciate nature within the rustic environment of camp and camp programs.





# While Your Child is at Camp

## Behavior

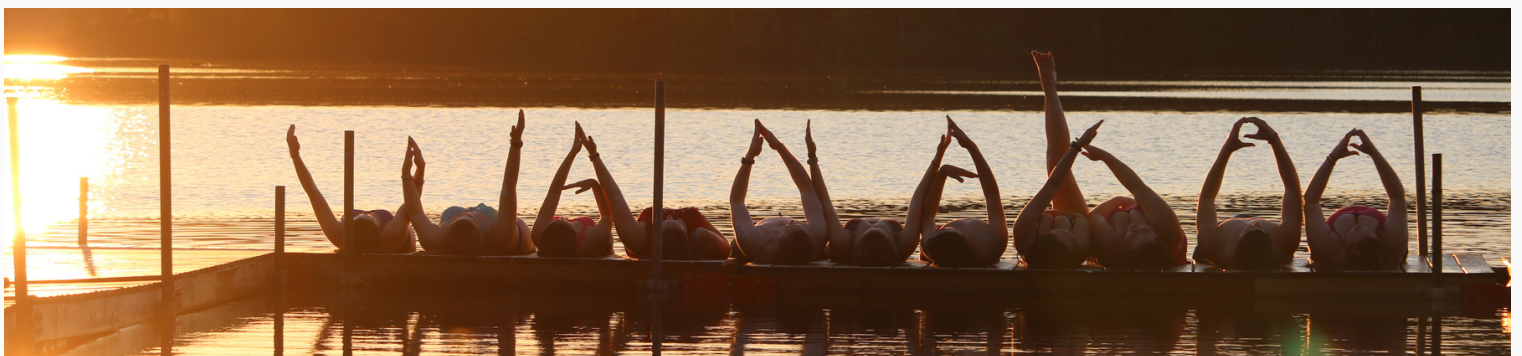
As a close-knit community, we expect each camper to respect themselves, their fellow campers, staff, volunteers, and the rustic facilities and natural surroundings.

Staff are trained to support all campers, but do not have the ability to be 1:1 with individual campers as they are responsible for supervising the entire site. Our hope is that each child has a positive camp experience, and we ask for your help in setting them up for success.

The best way to do this is to inform us about your camper's needs and how we can support them. The more we know, the better prepared we will be. Please include any pertinent information in your camper's medical form. If you would like to have a conversation with the staff ahead of your child's week at camp, please contact the office.

If we have questions or concerns while your child is at Wanakee, we will reach out. You know your camper best, and we are always open to collaborating with parents to help campers who may be struggling.

All members of the Wanakee community—including staff and campers—are expected to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times and contribute to a respectful and positive community.





# While Your Child is at Camp

## Homesickness

Homesickness is a normal feeling that many campers experience, and we know you may be concerned that it will impact your child's experience. We are here to support your camper during their time at camp should those feelings arise. Homesickness prevention starts before camp begins. This [article](#) from the American Camp Association lists some helpful strategies and advice for both campers and their parents/guardians.

While you may be tempted to send a phone to camp with your child, we ask that you refrain and keep them at home. As a technology free program, cell phones disrupt the camp experience and a camper's ability to be fully present. Being able to call or text home whenever they like often increases homesickness.

Should you receive a letter from your child telling you they are homesick and you are concerned please reach out to the office for an update. Often by the time the letter is delivered towards the end of the week, the homesickness that was present at the beginning of the week has subsided. If a camper is so homesick that it is impeding their day to day participation in camp activities, we will contact you and work together to come up with a plan to support them.





# While Your Child is at Camp

## First Year Families

In order to support the experience of first year families, we will send updates about how your camper is doing during the week. You will get an email on Monday or Tuesday with an update about how the start of the week has gone, and another email later on in the week with another update and a photo.

## Camper Mail

All campers love to receive mail! Letters and packages to your camper may be secretly dropped off with staff when you drop your camper off at the start of the week or may be sent by mail:

(Camper's Name and Program Name)

Wanakee

75 Upper New Hampton Road

Meredith, NH 03253

We ask that you please do not send food, powdered drinks, candy, gum or duct tape. Food attracts mice, raccoons, skunks, and more. All food sent to camp will be held in the office and returned upon check-out.





# A Day In The Life of a Wanakee Camper

## **7:00 am**

You wake up in your cabin to the sound of the first bell of the day and the birds chirping in the trees outside. It's time to get dressed, and pack your bag for the day's activities before you head down the hill with your site.

## **7:15 am**

The second bell of the day is rung signaling that it's time for the hopper to set the tables for breakfast. Each table has a hopper, and they help set up for the meal, serve it, and clear the table at the end. Everyone in the site takes a turn being the hopper!

## **7:30 am**

Time for breakfast! Before the meal is served, one site leads grace. Then, you sit down at the table with your site and enjoy a variety of different breakfast foods like pancakes, eggs, bacon, yogurt and cereal! Once all the tables are cleared, we sing three songs- you'll love learning all the camp songs! At some point during the week, your site will get the chance to pick and lead three songs too!

## **8:30 am**

After breakfast, the whole camp sits down for morning watch where you see a skit, sing some more songs, and learn about the lesson for the day. It's a nice way to start the day before jumping into all the activities the day brings.

## **9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am**

You're off to your first activities of the day. You might be swimming, playing games in the field, going into the low ropes course, or going to arts and crafts. Each day will bring new adventures with your friends.

## **12:00 pm**

You hear the hopper bell ring and prepare to head to the dining hall for lunch.

## **12:15 pm**

Lunch is served! You'll enjoy a different lunch each day, sometimes burgers, grilled cheese, or chicken nuggets, and there is always a salad bar and sandwiches offered.

## **1:30 pm**

After lunch, everyone at camp takes a rest hour. You can't decide if you want to a nap, read a book, or write a letter home. You've got a busy afternoon, so it's nice to take a break for a bit!





# A Day In The Life of a Wanakee Camper

**2:30, 3:30, 4:30 pm**

Afternoon activities begin! Maybe you'll play water games, go sailing, or go on a hike to one of the awesome spots at camp.

**5:15 pm**

The hopper bell rings for dinner, but your site is heading to the back of the dining hall to pick up your cooler and pans for a cookout. You go to the fire pit near the waterfront because you're going to go for a sunset swim after you eat your meal. Your counselors help you prep campfire pizzas and then grill them over the fire. Don't forget about dessert, no bake cookies are on the menu!

**7:00 pm**

After dinner, you head into the lake for a sunset swim. You have a blast playing games with your friends as the sun sets over the lake. You dry off and get ready to go to your cabin for a fire.

**8:00pm**

You walk back up the hill to your cabin and put on some sweat pants and a sweatshirt for a fire. After collecting sticks, you sit down and watch as the fire comes to life. Your counselor passes around a snack as everyone reflects on the day. You tell funny stories, laugh, and sing a couple more songs as you enjoy the bright stars above you. You can feel yourself start to get sleepy after a long day.

**9:00pm**

After you put the fire out, you head to the shower house to brush your teeth and change into your PJ's. You then go to the cabin and settle into your sleeping bag for the night. Your counselor reads you a story but you don't remember the end because you drift off to sleep before they finish. You were so tired after a fun day, and can't wait for tomorrow to begin!





# After Camp Ends

## Parent Feedback

You will receive an email with a survey after the week is over. Your feedback is important to us as it will help us to continue to improve for future summers.

## Lost and Found

- During check - out make sure to look in all lost and found locations for your child's belongings.
- If you notice you're still missing items after returning home, email us and we will let you know if we have it. We are not able to send lost and found items in the mail.

## Social Media and Camp

You should be aware that it is Wanakee's position to discourage camper-staff interactions on social media. However, Wanakee does maintain its own monitored social media accounts, where campers and staff may contact each other.

We hope parents can help their campers understand that staff's personal accounts are "their own space" where they can participate in their private lives, while the Wanakee accounts give a public location for campers and staff to communicate. As a close-knit community, social networks present a special challenge for Wanakee during the year. We encourage parents to talk to their children about this issue, and research their own children's internet activities so they can stay informed.





# Connect With Us!

## Follow us on socials!

Find us at [www.wanakee.org](http://www.wanakee.org) or friend and follow us on social media at **WANAKEENH**.



By liking Wanakee on our social media platforms, you can stay up-to-date with the happenings of Camp, events, and daily photos.





Wanakee is licensed by the State of New Hampshire and inspected annually by New Hampshire DHHS. Wanakee is also accredited by the American Camp Association which reviews 300 health and safety standards and policies. Camp is visited every five years (most recently in 2023) by the ACA for this purpose.

Wanakee events are available to persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, marital status, genetic information, pregnancy, or political orientation. For accessibility questions and support, contact Wanakee at 603-279-7950.

In the event of policy or procedure changes you will be notified by email.

If language assistance is needed for civil rights purposes, please contact the NH commission for human rights at: 1-603-271-2767, dial "0", ask for an interpreter.

Si asistencia de lenguaje es necesario para civiles derechos propósitos, por favor contacto con la comisión nh los derechos humanos a: 1-603-271-2767, marcar "0", pedir una interpeter.

The purpose of this Instruction is to establish and convey policy and provide guidance and direction to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and its recipients and customers, and ensure compliance with and enforcement of the prohibition discrimination.

All legal disputes shall be settled under NH state Law.

