



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Camp Walden's philosophy?

In a society where children are bombarded daily with media messages, entertained primarily in front of screens, and experience nature minimally, if at all, we believe that summer camp provides an invaluable retreat. Once all the distractions of modern life have disappeared, children are free to explore other sides of themselves! Walden teaches them how to live among their peers, build friendships and take acceptable and safe risks—ones that make them more confident and independent individuals, even in just a couple of weeks!

What training do counselors receive?

The counseling and support staff participate in a **week-long orientation** led by the directors and senior staff. In addition, they are required to complete several hours of **online-training workshops** prior to arriving at camp. Topics include: *safety/emergency procedures, creating a positive environment, coaching/teaching skills, camper supervision, bullying and inclusion, homesickness, child-abuse prevention, and positive behavior-management techniques.*

How does the camp handle food allergies?

Walden has years of experience with food allergies, such as peanut/tree-nut, allergies, lactose intolerance and gluten/wheat allergies. **Our Mess Hall is nut-free** and stocks soy milk. Walden's kitchen manager and directors work closely with parents prior to the summer, to assure a safe food environment for those campers with allergies.

How can I communicate with my camper?

Parents can communicate with their campers in three ways: sending letters through the mail, faxing and emailing. Campers may only communicate with home by sending letters through the mail. Walden does not allow campers to call home, unless it is the child's, the parent's or a sibling's birthday (sorry—this rule excludes grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, pets, etc!). If a situation should arise in which we believe you should be contacted, the directors will call you. You may also phone or email Liz and Scott at any time with concerns or questions! **Campers are prohibited from bringing cell phones to camp.** We do NOT allow calls home from Mackinac Island.

Does the camp post pictures online?

Yes! Our camp photographer Mark Goodine is quite prolific and posts new photographs nearly every day. You can access those pictures through your online CampInTouch account.

How does the camp deal with homesickness and other adjustment issues?

Lots of campers face feelings of homesickness! Experience has shown us that activity and routine are useful tools to combat this emotion. Counselors are trained to acknowledge homesickness, share their own experiences and offer encouragement.* They also report all of these issues to the senior staff, who meet daily to discuss individual camper concerns. Early in their stay, campers complete formal evaluations of their camp experience, which we use to identify potential problems.

How are behavioral problems handled?

Our job is to help campers learn from, and accept responsibility for, inappropriate words and actions. This requires clearly defined acceptable behaviors (as laid out in our Parent Guide), staff trained to react constructively, and consequences meted out swiftly and fairly. When issues do arise, camp directors and counselors work together to help campers understand the consequences of their actions and to develop positive alternative behaviors.

**Is your child a first-time camper? Are you a first-time camp parent? If so, ask us about obtaining a copy of "The Secret Ingredients of Summer Camp Success," a great video for kids and parents that addresses the normal anxieties that camp can arouse.*