



American Youth Foundation
Merrowvista

2024 Merrowvista Camper & Family Handbook



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Welcome to Merrowvista

Dear Campers and Families,

Welcome to Camp Merrowvista 2024! Thank you for choosing to spend your summer with us. We have been hard at work planning and preparing for your arrival into the valley and are excited to share the magic of this summer with you!

A key part of the preparation for summer is a review of Camper Forms. In recent years, we have simplified this process by providing all forms in a **fillable online format**. To access the forms, please log in to [your CampBrain account using](#) the same password you used to register. Please complete and submit these forms as soon as possible, **no later than April 1, 2024**.

Please note the Camper Physical Form is required for all campers and must be completed and signed by your child's health care provider. This form confirms your child has had a physical exam within 12 months of Opening Day and is prepared to participate in the camp program. The [2024 Camper Physical Form](#) is available online. If your physician's office is unable to complete the Camper Physical Form by April 1, please submit all other forms and contact Merrowvista at merrowvistacamps@ayf.com to let us know your camper's form will be late.

It is essential our staff members review these forms well before Opening Day to prepare for your camper's arrival, creating a smooth transition into the camp community and making the registration process faster for everyone. Thank you in advance for your work on these forms.

If you have any questions, call us at 603-539-6607. We are excited to see you at camp!

Sincerely,
Katsu Okuma
Director of Camp Programs

Merrowvista Contact Information

Merrowvista Main Office: (603) 539-6607
merrowvistacamps@ayf.com

Katsu Okuma
Director of Camp Programs
Ext. 2044

Aubrie Boyd
Assistant Director of Camp Programs
Ext: 2017

Jamie O'Hagin
Client Relations Manager
Ext. 2026

Highlights for 2024

Medication Management

Families may choose between two options for daily medication administration at camp:

1. Multidose packaging prepared by a pharmacy.
2. The Health Team will package and prepare your camper's daily medications – **\$200 fee.**

Families must list all prescription medication and over-the-counter medications on the Camper Health History form. All daily medications (including over the counter medications, vitamins, supplements, etc.) must have a valid prescription or administration instructions provided by the parent/guardian or the camper's health care provider. **The Health Team will not accept any daily medication without these written instructions or prescription.**

Please see our [2024 Health & Wellness policies](#) on our website for up-to-date detailed information about medication packaging and other health policies.

Campers with EpiPens or Inhalers

Families whose campers use EpiPens or Inhalers must submit the AYF Permission to Self-Administer Emergency Medication form (available on [CampBrain](#)) signed by a parent/guardian and the camper's healthcare provider.

2024 Onsite Photo Policy

As always, we seek to find balance between documenting the campers' experiences and honoring the technology-free life we so carefully build as a community each summer. With this balance in mind, please review our [Onsite Photo Policy for 2024](#).

2024 Merrowvista Dates & Forms

Please note: If you have not submitted the following [forms via CampBrain](#) by April 1, 2024, **your camper will be moved to the program waitlist** until Merrowvista receives their completed forms.

Due by April 1, 2024:

- Remainder of 2024 tuition
- Acknowledgement of 2024 Health Policies
- Camper Health History Form (completed by parent/guardian)
- 2024 Camper Physical* (signed by healthcare provider based on recent exam)
- Immunization Record

If applicable:

- Asthma/Allergy Action Plan
- Permission to Self-Administer Emergency Medication Form (for participants prescribed an EpiPen and/or rescue inhaler)
- Medication Questionnaire (due two weeks after AYF emails the form)

*If your camper's physical is after April 1, please let Merrowvista know at merrowvistacamps@ayf.com.

Session A Dates

One- and three-week programs

- Camper Health Update and Letter to Leader
Due: Sunday, June 2
- Opening Day: Sunday, June 30

Two-week programs

- Camper Health Update and Letter to Leader
Due: Sunday, June 9
- Opening Day: Sunday, July 7

Session B Dates

One- and three-week programs

- Camper Health Update and Letter to Leader
Due: Sunday, June 23
- Opening Day: Sunday, July 21

Two-week programs

- Camper Health Update and Letter to Leader
Due: Sunday, June 30
- Opening Day: Sunday, July 28

AYF Program Outcomes & Values

For our campers to have fun and learn, they need to be and feel safe. Campers and staff work together to create this environment. The Merrowvista camp program is built around the following program outcomes:

1. Discovering and Developing Your Own Best Self

AYF program days are filled with new experiences designed to encourage participants to develop a deeper understanding of who they are and what they are capable of achieving – their own best self.

They will grow in confidence as they learn to celebrate their unique sense of self, while taking advantage of opportunities to put their best self into action.

Participants will:

- Value themselves as unique, capable individuals.
- Grow in self-confidence as they discover more about their capacities.
- Explore how their values and “Best Self” influence their decision-making.
- Recognize their agency, articulate their ideas, and act with purpose.

2. Growing Through the Four Folds

AYF’s Four Folds is a signature framework through which participants assess their strengths and areas of growth through four complimentary facets of life (mental, physical, social, and reverential).

Our program days provide diverse activities in each “fold” creating opportunities for young people to stretch their minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits.

Participants will:

- Reflect on the mental, social, physical, and reverential different facets of their life, identifying strengths and areas for exploration and growth.
- Practice developing clearly defined goals and taking healthy risks.
- Gain resilience as they work through the challenges of trying new things.
- Identify how each day includes opportunities in all four folds.

3. Working Together to Build Community

When youth come together to create AYF program communities, they gain a greater understanding of their impact on the people around them. They develop the skills for creating and maintaining healthy friendships and gain a greater understanding of their role and value within a group.

Participants create shared expectations for how they will have fun and work together

successfully, with safety and kindness at the core. Programs provide opportunities to strengthen relationships, practice acting with integrity in navigating challenges, and share in the responsibility of caring for a larger community.

Participants will:

- Develop skills important to creating and maintaining healthy friendships.
- Practice effectively working within a group to achieve a common goal.
- Learn positive leadership skills and show support for others.
- Identify their role in creating a sense of belonging within community.

4. Making a Positive Difference in the World

In AYF programs, participants are called to reflect on their actions and impact – both positive and negative – gaining a greater understanding of the positive difference they can make for others.

Staff members guide in making connections between program and home, identifying how their actions each day have the power to make a positive difference in their communities and the world around them.

Participants will:

- Recognize how their actions and interactions impact others.
- Take responsibility to act for the good of others and for a sustainable environment.
- Make connections between lessons learned in program and how they apply to home.
- Develop a greater understanding of how everyday actions have the power to make a positive difference in their communities and the world around them.

Core Values

We believe how we act and interact reflects who we are as a community. In practice, at the AYF we value...

Investing in Youth

Empowering youth is the core of our mission. We aim to offer equitable access to outdoor, experiential adventures. We seek to amplify youth voices as they recognize their own agency, articulate their ideas, and act with bold purpose throughout their lives.

Stewarding the Environment

Our programs foster a sense of respect and reverence for the natural world. We commit to using only what we need in order to minimize our impact on the planet. We practice environmental stewardship, conserving resources for future generations and offering the experience of connecting deeply with the natural world.

Enkindling Inner Sparks

Each person has inherent strengths and passions that, when ignited, form the foundation of best self and a balanced life. We challenge people to be brave, think creatively, develop wholehearted social connections, and explore their values and beliefs.

Belonging in Community

Our communities are joy-filled, optimistic, hopeful places where each person is encouraged to explore through play and express their own authentic spirit. We aspire to create spaces where all people are included and feel a sense of belonging. In these thriving program communities, diverse perspectives provide a foundation to build greater understanding and foster equity.

Growing Together

Teamwork and collaboration provide essential tools for overcoming challenges. We believe powerful growth happens when we live in community, set boundaries, and take healthy risks. To adventure daringly with the support of others is an opportunity to put our best selves into action.

Our Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

One of the most powerful aspects of AYF programs is the intentional push for our communities to be diverse, equitable, and inclusive for all participants, volunteers, and staff. These intentional communities are the foundation of our work. We seek, encourage, and support those who join us from around the world and those who hold various identities, such as race/ethnicity, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, education, etc. At the AYF, we believe we are all responsible for this outcome and count on each person to maintain this culture. This means all participants and their family members are expected to welcome and respect individuals who may hold different identities than their own.

Creating a Fun, Safe Summer

Creating a Merrowvista community where everyone feels valued and secure requires commitment from all campers and staff. Once camp begins, the Director of Camp Programs will meet with each age group to discuss what a fun, safe summer looks, sounds, and feels like. We encourage campers to let staff know if there is a problem. Every camper can meet individually with their Village Leader and has a weekly age group check-in with a Camp Coordinator, where they will complete a Fun, Safe Summer Evaluation of their experiences.

Please encourage your camper to talk to any staff member if others are not adhering to the following Community Responsibilities or if they feel physically or emotionally unsafe. We depend on them to help us create this unique community.

Parents and guardians, please review the following Community Responsibilities with your camper prior to arrival and help them understand that breaking this agreement may be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Community Responsibilities

At Merrowvista, I will show...

Respect for Others

We respect other people's ideas and values, even if they differ from our own. Merrowvista embraces a diverse community, and this should be displayed in all ways, including language, humor, and behavior. All actions and language should have a positive impact on the Merrowvista community. Any disrespectful behaviors that could potentially harm (physically or emotionally) a camper or staff member are unacceptable and may result in dismissal.

Respect for Self

We take care of ourselves by eating balanced meals, getting plenty of sleep, and practicing good hygiene: brushing teeth, wearing clean clothes, showering, etc. We participate fully in camp activities, are punctual, try new things, and have a positive attitude. We seek to reach the challenge of "My own self, at my very best, all the time."

Respect for the Environment and Camp Facilities

Merrowvista should feel like home, so we enjoy it and help take care of it. We share in the regular cleaning of personal and community areas, including the eating lodge, restrooms, cabins, activity fields, and common buildings. We leave any space we use better than we found it.

We are sensitive to Merrowvista's fragile environment by staying on trails, caring for plant and animal life, recycling, composting, and putting litter in trash bins. The buildings and activity equipment supplied by Merrowvista are for all campers to enjoy. We care for both responsibly.

Respect for the Health and Safety of Self and Others

We look out for others' physical and emotional safety. We seek help when needed. We are in our cabin or tent by lights-out and remain there until the rising bell rings.

We abide by the safety standards provided by the staff, especially in water-related and adventure/challenge experiences.

We recognize that possession and use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs and the possession of fireworks, firearms, and other weapons are prohibited onsite and will result in immediate dismissal.

We acknowledge that threats to harm ourselves or others will be taken seriously and will result in dismissal.



Getting Ready for Camp

Preparing for camp can be a big undertaking logistically and emotionally. We encourage families to review articles from the [American Camp Association](#) on this topic as they prepare for this summer.

What to Bring to Camp

We dare our campers to live more simply at Merrowvista: Pack fewer clothes, bring fewer bags, and aim to bring or buy less plastic (such as plastic drawers). We encourage campers to bring no more than two large duffle bags or a trunk and one carry on-sized bag to camp.

[Packing lists are available online](#). Clothes worn at camp are subject to an active, outdoor lifestyle. We suggest you avoid bringing expensive or favorite items. **Families must clearly label all camper items.**

We recommend functional swimwear that covers the body appropriately to allow for active and unencumbered movement and play on the waterfront. Clothing should reflect our camp values. Please leave clothes with inappropriate slogans or images at home.

Electronics such as smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, or fitness trackers are not allowed at camp. If the camper still has a smartphone or other Internet-connected devices after arrival, Merrowvista staff will place them in safekeeping for the duration of the session. Campers will not have access to these items during their time at Merrowvista. All items in safekeeping will be returned on Closing Day. We do allow digital cameras, but we recommend disposable cameras due to the rugged nature of camp.

Merrowvista staff will do camper laundry once during the two-week session, twice during the three-week session, and in the event of an accident or emergency. All clothing, equipment, and laundry bags must be marked with the camper's name.

Merrowvista is not responsible for personal items lost, stolen, or damaged during camp. Campers should frequently check the Lost and Found for missing items. Labeled items left or found at the end of can be mailed. The family is responsible for shipping costs, plus a \$10 handling fee. We will hold all found items for two weeks following the session. If unclaimed, these items will be donated.

If you are planning to ship luggage, we suggest doing so **two weeks prior** to the start of camp to make sure it is received before your camper arrives. Please make sure the camper's name is clearly written on the mailing label. Address it to:

**Camper Name
Merrowvista
147 Canaan Road
Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816**

If your camper is shipping luggage home, mark the boxes you ship your luggage in to be saved, and make sure your camper knows to set their luggage out to be shipped on Closing Day.

Lice Prevention

In accordance with health regulations, we will screen campers for head lice during the first 24 hours of camp check-in. Please check that your camper is completely free of lice and nits before arrival. Review our [Head Lice Policy](#) for timing and detailed instructions.

If campers have head lice or nits upon arrival at camp, they must be picked up and cannot return until they are lice-free.

Only campers who arrive via plane or who live more than four hours away from camp will be treated onsite for a \$500 fee. The camper will stay in the Health Center, and their activities will be limited until they are lice-free.

Early and regular head checks will allow time to treat your camper, if necessary, prior to Opening Day. **Please check your camper's scalp weekly, preferably after the hair has been washed and still a bit damp.**

Look for:

- An itchy scalp
- Small rashes around hairline/behind ears
- White or tan specks (looking like dandruff) in hair

If your child has lice before camp, we strongly encourage you to work with a lice treatment professional [to ensure your camper is lice free](#) when they arrive.

Preventing Homesickness

It is natural for most campers to experience a degree of homesickness, particularly if it is their first time away from home. Merrowvista staff plan the first 48 hours of camp to accommodate the adjustment process and help campers feel more comfortable. If feelings of homesickness persist, the Camp Director will contact you and assess the next steps, if necessary.

Families can implement many strategies to help reduce or prevent homesickness before and during camp. The American Camp Association has several suggestions in its article, ["Homesickness Dos and Don'ts for Parents Preparing for Camp."](#) We highly recommend families review this information, especially those with first-time campers or campers prone to homesickness.

The most common mistake families make is the Pick-Up Deal: "If you feel homesick, I'll come and get you." This statement undermines a camper's confidence and independence. Pick-Up Deals often become self-fulfilling prophecies. Instead, encourage your camper to enjoy this new experience and reinforce your confidence in them that they can do it. We will help them adjust quickly and thrive at Merrowvista.

Joining a New Community

Our Merrowvista camp community includes individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences coming together to share in the joy of summer camp. We value each person's right to fully experience our programs free from prejudice and harassment. We honor and welcome campers and staff of all gender identities, including transgender and gender-expansive individuals.

Before camp begins, we ask camp families to have open conversations about what to expect in a diverse camp community that may be different from home. The following strategies may be helpful as you prepare your camper to live and play alongside others with different backgrounds and experiences:

- Encourage your camper to ask questions and express any concerns they may have about meeting new people from different backgrounds.
- Emphasize the importance of being respectful, kind, and inclusive towards everyone they encounter at camp, regardless of differences.
- Share stories or examples that highlight how diversity creates a richer community experience.
- Discuss new situations they might face and brainstorm how to handle them with grace and understanding. By proactively discussing these topics, families can help their campers feel more confident and prepared to embrace diversity.

Opening Day

Session A Opening Days

June 30: one- and three-week campers
July 7: two-week campers

Session B Opening Days

July 21: one- and three-week campers
July 28: two-week campers

Driving to Camp

All camper families arriving by vehicle must select an arrival time the [Merrowvista Travel Information 2024 form in CampBrain](#) by Thursday, June 1. If you do not select an arrival time, Merrowvista will assign one to you. Families must arrive at their designated time to ensure a smooth registration process. Families with campers in multiple sessions must complete the travel information form for each camper.

Final arrival times will be emailed to camper families four weeks prior to Opening Day when they receive their Camper Health Update reminder. If you have questions about your arrival time, please email merrowvistacamps@ayf.com.

Do not depend solely on GPS to guide you to Merrowvista, as they do not always have accurate directions. Google Maps directions are usually correct.

Airport Travel Information

Merrowvista will also offer one-way or roundtrip shuttle pickups from Boston Logan International Airport for an additional fee.

One-way: \$90
Roundtrip: \$180

Families can sign up for the bus or shuttle through your [CampBrain online portal](#).

We strongly recommend that you contact your airline to set up the service for unescorted minors.

Unaccompanied minor fees need to be taken care of with airlines before camp begins.

International Campers: Please contact Jamie O'Hagin at johagin@ayf.com before booking your flight.

Arrivals (airport): Please arrange flight arrivals between 10:00am and 3:00pm. A Merrowvista staff member wearing a staff t-shirt will meet each camper at the airport. The staff member will have a camp cell phone with them, and that phone number will be distributed to each parent and camper who is flying in. If there are any problems, please call camp at (603) 539-6607.

Once your child is with a Merrowvista staff member, they will be with our staff until they arrive at camp. They will be oriented to travel safety procedures before departing the airport.

Departures (airport): Campers leaving via Merrowvista transportation will depart directly after the closing ceremony ends, at approximately 12:00pm on closing day. Please arrange all flight departures after 4:30pm.

Health

- Please inform the Health Team if your child becomes ill or is diagnosed with an illness or lice in the 10 days prior to camp. This does not necessarily preclude your camper from coming to camp as planned, but it is important information for us to have as we come together as a camp community.
- On the morning of opening day, perform one final lice check on your child.
- **Please do not come to camp if you or your child is sick.** Contact Merrowvista at 603-539-6607 as soon as possible to inform the Health Team and discuss next steps.

Check-In Process

- To expedite the check-in process, please limit the number of people who will travel with your camper to only those in their immediate household. Please do not bring pets.
- Upon arrival, staff will screen each camper for signs/symptoms of illness and take their temperature. Anyone with a fever (100.4 degrees or higher) must return home until they are fever-free without fever reducing medications for 24 hours. Campers who arrive by airplane with a fever will be isolated in the health center and may need to be picked up from camp as soon as possible.
- Families will have the opportunity to speak with the Health Team. Families must turn in all camper medication to the Health Team to be kept in the Health Center. This includes vitamins, supplements, over the counter and prescription medications, and inhaled and injectable medications such as inhalers or Epi-pens. (See our [Medication Management](#) updates and all [2024 Health & Wellness Information](#).)

Families will park on the A-field to unload their camper's luggage. There will be a welcoming committee in the Eating Lodge and an opportunity for families to meet their camper's leader and other critical staff. Families will be able to explore the main areas of camp.

Our staff has a designed plan to help your camper adjust to these first few hours at Merrowvista. Therefore, we encourage families to keep their goodbyes somewhat brief to help your camper adjust to their new setting

The first full meal for campers will be at 5:30 p.m. ET. We suggest your child eats a meal in your vehicle shortly before arriving. Snacks will be available for campers all afternoon.

Life at Camp

Your Camper's Village

Your camper's village is their home, and their cabinmates will be their family. A village consists of six to twelve campers of a similar age and two to three Leaders. They will sleep in a cabin with up to five other campers; Leaders sleep in the same room as the campers. Cabins are rustic, screened spaces with bunkbeds and no electricity.

We strive to place campers in the strongest possible cabin groups, mixing youth from different communities and schools. Having detailed information about each camper is essential in forming these communities. We cannot guarantee cabin placement or bunk requests, but we do take them into consideration. If there is a specific concern about cabin placement (with or without another camper) or bunk bed (top or bottom bunk needed), please share that with the Client Relations Manager (Jamie O'Hagin, johagin@ayf.com) before the beginning of camp.

Your Camper's Village Leaders

A Cabin Leader lives with campers, and campers will get to know many other Leaders through the camp activities and Interest Groups. Our Leaders are thoroughly trained youth empowerment professionals who are just as excited about the summer as their campers. Many were Merrowvista campers themselves.

Cabin Leaders are at least 18 years old and have had at least one year of post high school-graduation experience. Leaders go through an extensive hiring process, including interviews, three reference checks, and a background check. They receive all the training needed for a successful summer before camp starts. All leaders are certified in CPR and first aid.

Swimming

The Merrowvista waterfront is staffed by certified lifeguards. Each camper participates in a swim assessment on the first day of camp. Red Cross swim lessons are available to Pioneer and Trailblazer campers who have not tested out of Red Cross Level 4. Families can opt out of swim lessons or allow their camper to opt out by [completing their online forms](#). **If your camper does not know how to swim or is uncomfortable in the water, please inform the Merrowvista team before Opening Day.**

Merrowvista Food Program

We intentionally design our Food Program to help campers be their best self by offering healthy, balanced meal options. Our Food Program is guided by four principles:

1. **Inspire respect and reverence for food**, understanding the value of the food we have and the knowledge that many in our world go to bed hungry.
2. **Reduce the carbon footprint of our food programs**, both in getting food to our tables and reducing our waste by taking only what we can eat.
3. **Educate and empower participants and staff toward action**. Spend time talking about what and why we are eating, and why we compost our ORT. Be mindful of the link between how we fuel our bodies and the development of our best self.
4. **Develop menus that provide a variety of healthy options** for our participants and staff. We seek to offer “premium fuel” menu options including whole grains, fresh fruit, and vegetables.

The produce included in meals is extensive, and whenever possible, we buy locally grown, including from our own gardens. We offer healthy beverage options including water, milk, and orange juice, and we do not serve soda or drinks that are overly high in sugar. Healthy snacks and fruits are available throughout the day.

Campers are involved in our composting system and help care for the eating lodge through table setting, clearing, and sweeping. We begin each meal with a moment of gratitude. We believe these intentional activities encourage campers to be healthy, productive, and engaged members of our camp community.



Food Allergies & Dietary Needs

Merrowvista's standard menu offerings do not include tree nuts. A vegetarian option, rice and soy milks are offered at each meal. It is essential that we have detailed information regarding special dietary needs, including allergies, well before camp starts to determine if the Merrowvista Food Program staff can meet your camper's requirements. Our Food Program manager is available to discuss your camper's needs, which foods Merrowvista can provide and what, if any, food the family may need to provide. You can share this information on the [Camper Information form](#).

AYF Peanut Protocol

The American Youth Foundation and its facilities are "peanut-aware" communities. Our kitchens do not serve food containing peanuts, peanut butter, or peanut oil in their ingredient listings during meals. However, some snacks and desserts may contain trace amounts of peanuts, or they may have been manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts. We will not serve peanut butter in our eating lodges, but we will provide a camper-friendly sandwich substitute. Our goal is to provide the safest experience possible for all campers.

Daily Camp Schedule

This is a typical day in the Pioneer and Trailblazer schedule. Most weeks at Merrowvista have four or five typical days and two or three special days, providing a balance of form and predictability with the fun and spontaneity of camp. When Four Trails campers are in-camp, they follow a similar schedule with offerings tailored to their age group.

7:30 a.m. Rise and Shine

7:40 a.m. Go-Getters: Optional but encouraged, campers can begin their day with a run, walk, yoga, swimming, or other energizing activity.

8:40 a.m. Flag Raising & Morning Reflection: Each village can pick a theme and share its thoughts with the community, followed by a few minutes of quiet reflection.

9:00 a.m. Breakfast: Meals are served family-style, where villages eat together. Meals are an integral part of the camp experience, and we put a special emphasis on our food program.

9:45 a.m. KCISP: KCISP, which stands for Keep Camp In Shape Please, is a time to organize personal belongings and sweep out the cabin before the Lone Inspector arrives. Twice weekly, campers will take part in KCISP-ing common areas of camp.

10:15 a.m. Interest Group 1: These are our daily activity blocks. Campers choose their own Interest Groups based on the activities offered during each Interest Group rotation. Rotations last two to three days in length.

11:15 a.m. Interest Group 2

12:15 Transition Time: Campers wrap up their morning and get ready for lunch.

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. Easy Time: Everyone retires to their bunks for reading, letter writing, and relaxation.

2:45 p.m. Interest Group 3

3:45 p.m. Village Time: Each village meets to spend time together. Activities include the climbing tower, team challenge, waterfront time, arts and crafts, cooking activities – and occasionally a shower!

5:00 p.m. Your Time: Play basketball, swim, make friendship bracelets – camper's choice!

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Night's Doings: Each night brings a different all-camp activity, such as the talent show, camper-leader hunt, capture the flag, scavenger hunts, and more.

8:30 p.m. Evening Reflection: The community comes together to quietly end the day. Villages share their thoughts and enjoy reflection time. *or*

8:30 p.m. Village Insight: Villages gather separately for a group discussion where campers can honestly explore ideas and values.

9:30 p.m. Lights Out

Special Days and Events

Wacky Dinner: Dress in your wackiest outfit for the zaniest night at Merrowvista! Wear bright colors, backward clothing, or something wilder — nothing is too wacky for Wacky Dinner!

Superhero Dinner: Don your cape and mask and unleash your superpowers! Campers can dress up as an existing superhero or create their own as they try to figure out which staff-villain is up to no good.

Enchanted Dinner: The Eating Lodge is transformed into an enchanted realm where all mystical creatures such as elves, goblins, fairies, unicorns, and more are welcome.

Village Overnight Trip: After the first week, villages go for a short hike on the Merrowvista site and camp overnight. They will set up a tent, cook dinner over a campfire, and chat under the stars before going to bed in a cozy tent with village mates.

Four-Fold Tournament: During the final week of camp, Merrowvista creates six teams to enjoy friendly competition, where campers push their Four Folds to learn more about their best selves.



Staying in Touch with Your Campers

2024 AYF Onsite Photo Policy

Summers at Merrowvista provide a rare opportunity for youth in our care to slow down, live simply, and experience community in beautiful, outdoor settings. Campers reconnect with nature and disconnect from smartphones, social media, video games, and other technology by leaving their devices at home.

We understand families appreciate the reassurance of seeing their smiling camper having a wonderful summer. Unfortunately, we have learned from experience it is not possible to provide quality photos of every camper, every day, and that the camera's constant presence during daily activities interferes with the spirit of simple living in a disconnected community.

As always, we seek to find balance between documenting the campers' experiences and honoring the technology-free life we so carefully build as a community each summer.

We will continue to offer free, password-protected access to photos taken at camp. Families will receive SmugMug login information via email once their camper's session begins. They will also receive a printed photo of their camper's cabin group and a link to the summer highlights slideshow at the end of their session.

In-camp photos will be uploaded to the camp [SmugMug](#) each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Due to the remote settings of these experiences, Four Trails trip leaders' primary focus is camper safety and well-being. They cannot provide regular, detailed, or real-time photographs. **Photos from Four Trails trips will be available online when groups have returned to camp.**

Families are encouraged to stay connected with their camper via mailed letters, one-way emails, and care packages. We appreciate your understanding and support for this important, mission-driven shift in our photo policy.

One-Way Email

Merrowvista offers a one-way email service for families to communicate with campers. We print and deliver these emails to campers once a day. We will provide the link to this service once camp begins. You may share this link with family and friends, but please don't share it too widely so we do not overwhelm the system.

Care Packages and Mail

Parents are welcome to send letters, postcards, and care packages with inedible items such as books, cards, games, and stickers. Campers will open care packages in the office under staff supervision. Because we have campers with severe food allergies, **food, candy, and gum are not allowed and will be disposed of if sent in care packages.** This rule is strictly observed for campers' health and safety.

Please address care packages and mail to:

Camp Merrowvista
_____ **Village** (provided on Opening Day)
Attn: Camper Name
147 Canaan Road
Ctr. Tuftonboro, NH 03816

Visitation Policy

We do not have a formal visiting day at camp and discourage individual family visits, because they are disruptive to the camper's experience. Visits pull campers out of their daily routine, and if a camper is feeling homesick, family visits often increase these feelings and/or cause other campers to become homesick too.

Closing Days

Session A Closing Days

July 5: one-week campers

July 19: two- and three-week campers

Session B Closing Days

July 26: one-week campers

August 9: two- and three-week campers

Immediate family members are invited to celebrate the end of camp with their camper at the final fire circle on Closing Day. **Please do not bring pets.** The Closing Circle begins promptly at 11 a.m. ET, and all camper families must depart Merrowvista by 12 p.m. ET. Lunch will not be served on Closing Day.

Merrowvista will share more information about each session's details via email a week before Closing Day. This will include parking information, suggested arrival times, and where each Closing Circle will be located.

Shipping Luggage Home

If your camper is shipping luggage home, AYF staff will strive to send it within two weeks of Closing Day. Shipping and packaging charges will be applied to your credit card on file, in addition to a \$25 handling fee.

Please do not send prepaid shipping labels to camp with your camper. Once the luggage is sent, you will receive an email with the UPS tracking number. The family assumes all responsibility for any damage that occurs during the shipping process. The AYF is not liable for damage or loss.

Release Policy

Campers will not be permitted to leave camp with anyone other than a parent or legal guardian unless we receive written permission from those parents or guardians. AYF policy and state law require written permission listing the names of people with whom the camper may leave. To update these release plans after you have submitted these names, please call the camp offices.



Health at Camp

The health and safety of Merrowvista campers and staff is our highest priority. We maintain a modern Health Center with a registered nurse and assistant health officers in residence, as well as a physician on call. All AYF staff are trained in CPR and first aid.

Merrowvista has made important updates to our health policies and practices for summer 2024. These are highlighted below; please read the entire [2024 Health and Wellness Policies online](#).

Camper Health Update Form

In addition to the required Health Forms due April 1, 2024, all families are required to complete a Camper Health Update form four weeks before arrival at Merrowvista. The Camper Health Update form lets you share any pertinent changes to your camper's medical information/history that have occurred since submitting the Health History Form.

You will receive an email reminder to complete this Camper Health Update on [CampBrain](#) five weeks before your camper's Opening Day. **You must submit this form even if there are no changes to your camper's medical information or history.**

Medication Management

The following important information applies to all daily medications, including prescription, non-prescription, and over the counter oral medications.

Medications are administered after meals and at bedtime. We are not able to accommodate medication times outside of these designated times. If your camper requires medication at another time, please [contact the health team](#) as soon as possible to discuss.

The AYF offers two medication packaging options for campers who will take daily medications while at camp:

1. Multidose packaging (also called blister packaging) prepared by a pharmacy*

This means a pharmacist prepackages a camper's medications by date and time, rather than sending an entire pill bottle or package to camp. For example, the exact doses of all medications a camper takes at breakfast on Aug. 13 are packaged together in one sealed pharmacy pouch.

Families can learn more about multidose packaging and find these services through providers like [PillPack](#) and many CVS and Walgreens pharmacies. We encourage families to ask their pharmacist about [Dispill](#) and other services like this. The pharmacist may ask your insurance company for a vacation override to fill a prescription early or to fill more than a 30-day supply.

***It is important to start this process with your pharmacy as soon as possible (no later than two months prior to camp) to ensure your camper arrives with correctly packaged**

medications.

Multidose Packaging Exemptions:

- Liquid, cream, oral contraceptive, inhaled, and injectable medications. These medications must arrive in their original valid prescription packaging with your camper's name on the label.
- Controlled or schedule II medications (this includes many ADD/ADHD medications).
- Antibiotics prescribed immediately before camp begins that will be taken for a limited time.

2. Medications packaged and prepared by AYF Health Team – \$200 fee

The AYF Health Team can package and prepare a camper's medications for a \$200 fee. Medications must arrive at camp in their original prescription packaging with the camper's name on the label. The service fee will be applied to the camper's account.

Please do not self-package your camper's medications in individual containers or bags – the AYF cannot accept them.

If a camp family is eligible for financial aid and unable to get medications packaged through a pharmacy, they should [contact the Health Team](#) as soon as possible so they can assist.

Please do not send any medication, even over the counter or as-needed medications, in your camper's belongings. **Campers are not allowed to self-administer any medication.** Thank you for your attention to this important policy that helps us reduce the potential risk to your camper and others.

Epi-Pen devices and Inhalers

If your camper is prescribed and EpiPen or rescue inhaler, we require that you bring two devices – your camper will keep one with them, and the other will be kept in the Health Center. You will also need to submit the [AYF Permission to Self-Administer Emergency Medication form](#), signed by the parent/guardian and the camper's healthcare provider.

Behavioral and Mental Health Medications

We request a camper be taking the same medication at the same dose at least three months before arrival at camp to achieve effective therapeutic blood levels and to establish that the appropriate therapeutic effect is obtained. [No changes to the type or dosage of psychotropic medication are allowed within six weeks prior to camp.](#)

Please discuss your camper's medications with their physician now, so that changes can be facilitated within this period. The only exception to this six-week policy is if a camper requires ADD/ADHD medication in an academic setting but does not take the medication during the summer months *and* they have taken a medication holiday from this medication before. Learn more about this updated Medication Management policy in our [2024 Health & Wellness Policies](#).

Immunization/Vaccination Policy

The American Youth Foundation requires Merrowvista campers to be immunized in accordance with the state of New Hampshire camp licensing requirements. Proof of vaccination is required before arrival at camp to finalize the enrollment process.

Medical Review Process

The AYF aims to be inclusive in the enrollment of participants. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate campers with different conditions, strengths, and abilities. Prior to participation in any AYF program, our staff will review camper applications to ensure participants can meet the physical and emotional demands of the program.

Our goal is to include as many participants as possible; however, we are limited in what we can provide in terms of medical care, and we reserve the right to preclude participation based on a condition that we are not able to manage safely.

On occasion, it may be necessary for us to contact you and gather additional information about your child's health or medical history and to consult with our AYF Medical Review Team to assess an applicant's need for accommodation.

Please provide as much detail as possible about your camper's health history. **If a camper is required to leave our program due to a pre-existing health condition which is not fully disclosed on their forms, you may waive your right to a medical refund.** Recently diagnosed conditions do not necessarily preclude a camper from attending camp, and detailed information will help us prepare to set them up for a safe positive camp experience!

Illness and Injury at Camp

If a camper becomes ill or injured during camp, the Health Team will assess the camper and determine if outside care is needed, and families will be notified. If a camper is unable to participate in their camp program for 24 hours or more, they may be required to go home until they are determined well enough to return and participate fully in the program.

Medical Emergencies at Camp

The local hospital and health clinic are within 14 miles of Merrowvista. You will be contacted if there is an injury or illness requiring outside medical assistance. Your camper's Health History form must contain family health insurance information, including a copy of your camper's insurance card. If a camper requires a doctor's visit or medications, the family is responsible for all medical costs.

If a camper becomes ill or injured during the camp program in such a way that they will need to be removed from programming for an extended period, typically 24-48 hours, they may need to depart and go home early. Merrowvista does not have the medical resources to treat severely sick or injured campers on-site if they require extended treatment or monitoring or to a degree that exceeds our capacities. This includes medical concerns pertaining to both physical and mental health.

Non-Medical Emergencies

Parents and guardians should go to ayf.com for immediate information regarding campers and programs. You will be contacted via email as soon as possible with details and information regarding your camper. We will use our limited phone lines to communicate with authorities. Please be patient and we will contact you as soon as possible.

Emergencies at Home

If an emergency arises at home and you need to contact your camper, call camp at 603-539-6607. Office staff will answer phones and direct your call as needed from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. We will check camp voicemail at 10 p.m. ET and at 8:30 a.m. ET the next day.

Behavior and Dismissal Policies

Our goal is for every camper to have a fun, safe, quality summer, and we partner with you to make that happen! A successful experience begins with preparation at home and continues throughout the summer with open communication between families and Merrowvista staff. One of the first steps you can take is completing and submitting all forms by **April 1, 2024**. This not only helps us be better prepared for your camper's arrival, but it provides you with the opportunity to share any tips that will help your child be successful at camp.

Expecting the Unexpected

The AYF makes every reasonable effort to ensure a fun, safe camp experience where campers are encouraged to achieve their personal best. However, we cannot foresee or control every circumstance. Group dynamics, failure to follow instruction, camper misbehavior, inclement weather, and other environmental hazards can create unexpected challenges. Our staff is trained for unexpected situations, and unplanned programmatic elements often serve as the greatest catalyst for teaching life skills.

Unforeseen circumstances can provide campers with a valuable opportunity for critical thinking and problem-solving. Should an incident occur, our priority is camper safety and quality of the overall group experience. Our course of action may include but is not limited to: addressing the incident with individuals involved or the entire village, facilitating village collaboration to determine the next best steps, and/or intentionally adjusting the camp schedule.

For a positive group and individual experience, it is important campers come to Merrowvista with a base level of physical and mental readiness.

We create a community of compassion and respect when we lay out clear expectations for campers and staff, provide opportunities to discuss these expectations, and work to hold each other to them.

If a camper's actions, statements, or attitude negatively affect the community or create issues that compromise safety and fun, Merrowvista staff will intervene. For most issues, we will work with you to create a plan that will help your camper succeed. Camp staff will remain in contact with you and assess next steps. If the issues continue, the camper will be dismissed; certain behaviors will result in immediate dismissal:

Behaviors that result in immediate dismissal include but are not limited to: threat to harm self or others, possession or use of drugs or alcohol, or possession of a weapon.

It is never an easy decision to dismiss a camper from our programs, and we do not ever make such a decision lightly. However, AYF staff must balance what is best for the group and community with the needs of any individual camper, and at times, this leads to the dismissal of a camper.

If a camper's actions, statements, or attitude negatively affect their cabin or the wider AYF community, or if a camper is physically, mentally, socially, or emotionally unable to participate in camp activities, they may be dismissed.

When a camper is dismissed, the family must arrange for their child to be retrieved from camp as soon as possible. The parent/guardian is responsible for any costs associated with the swift removal of their camper from camp and for transportation home.

Tuition, Fees, and Refunds

Full payment is due by April 1, 2024. **Campers showing a balance due after April 1 will not be allowed to attend camp.** To assist families, the AYF offers discounts and need-based financial aid. Please contact Merrowvista for more information at 603-539-6607.

If you must cancel before April 1, any tuition paid (except the \$300 registration fee) will be refunded. After April 1, there is no tuition refund.

If a camper must withdraw prior to the start of camp due to illness or injury, all payments (except the \$300 registration fee) will be returned upon receipt of a written report from a healthcare provider.

There is a minimum \$35 processing fee for each refund.

Withdrawals and Dismissals

For withdrawals during the camp session due to illness or injury, a medical refund will be prorated. There is a minimum \$35 processing fee for each refund.

No refund will be granted if a camper is dismissed or voluntarily withdraws from camp.

In all cases, the family will be responsible for transportation costs incurred.

Additional Resources

Please visit the [AYF website](#) for additional resources and the most up to date information regarding summer 2024.

Visit the [American Camp Association website](#) for helpful tips and research about the camp experience.

See you this summer!



American Youth Foundation
Merrowvista

147 Canaan Road
Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816

Camp Office: 603-539-6607
Camp Office Fax: 603-539-7504
Email: merrowvistacamps@ayf.com

The American Youth Foundation dares people to discover and celebrate the very best in themselves and others, inspires them to explore diverse perspectives and complex challenges, and emboldens them to live courageously, engaging their full capacity.

My own self, at my very best, all the time.