



2026 Merrowvista Camper and Family Handbook

Aspire Nobly, Adventure Daringly, Serve Humbly

American Youth Foundation

Merrowvista | 147 Canaan Road, Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816

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Welcome to Merrowvista

Dear Campers and Families,

We are so excited for your camper join us at Merrowvista for Summer 2026! Here in the hills of New Hampshire, campers discover something hard to find anywhere else: the freedom of a simpler life, lived fully, in the company of people all working together toward something real. Your camper will play, create, and explore while reflecting on their values, asking important questions, and growing in confidence in who they are.

A key part of summer preparation is completing your camper forms. 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 no later than April 1, 2026.

The required [Camper Physical Form](#) must be completed and signed by your camper's healthcare provider. This form confirms your camper has had a physical exam within 12 months of Opening Day and is prepared to participate in the camp program.

If your physician's office is unable to complete the Camper Physical Form by April 1, please submit all other forms and email merrowvistacamps@ayf.com to let us know the date of the physical. Thank you in advance for completing these forms on time so we can prepare for your camper's arrival and make the registration process faster for everyone on Opening Day.

In addition to the required forms due on April 1, we have two optional forms to support a smooth transition to life at Merrowvista for your camper. The first is the Camper Health Update. Here you can document any relevant changes in your camper's health which occur between April 1 and the start of camp.

The second is the Camper Letter to Leader. Here your camper can reflect on their upcoming camp experience and share their interests with their future cabin leader. Our staff review these letters in advance of opening day and use the information provided to ensure the best welcome possible for your camper. We request these forms no later than 4 weeks before arrival.

This handbook contains everything your family needs to prepare for a great summer. If you have questions after reviewing this information, please email or call us.

Thank you for sharing your child with us. We cannot wait for another amazing year! 😊

Our best,

Madelyn Cook

Merrowvista Camp Director

mcook@ayf.com

Merrowvista Contact Information

147 Canaan Road, Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816 | Main Office: (603) 539-6607

merrowvistacamps@ayf.com | Health Team: MVHealth@ayf.com

What's New for Summer 2026

Every summer, we take stock of what we learned and look for ways to make the Merrowvista experience even better. Here is a look at what is new for 2026:

More Flexibility in Medication Management

This year, we are offering two clear pathways for daily medication management, giving your family more options and our Health Team more consistency.

Option one is multidose packaging prepared by a pharmacy — a pharmacist prepackages your camper's medications by date and time so everything is organized and ready to go. Option two is bringing medications in their original prescription packaging, and our Health Team will sort and prepare them at camp.

Both pathways are designed to keep things simple on Opening Day and safe every day of the session. Full details, including information about specific medication types and exemptions, are in the Health section of this handbook. Our complete [2026 Health and Wellness Policies](#) are also available at [ayf.com](#).

If your camper takes daily medications, we encourage you to start the packaging process with your pharmacy now — no later than two months before Opening Day.

New Four Trails Offerings at Merrowvista

We're excited to share updates to our trip offerings for older campers in our Four Trails program. Cycling returns to Merrowvista after a pause following the pandemic, and sea kayaking makes its return for the first time since 2000.

In 2026, cycling components will be part of the Trailblazer and Explorer programs, and a reimagined Voyageur will weave together sea kayaking, backpacking, and cycling into a single expedition. Routes are designed to favor rail trails and scenic rural paths over busy roads. As with all Four Trails experiences, the focus is on community and personal growth, not miles traveled.

Campers participating in Four Trails programs should review the preparation guidance and packing lists in the Four Trails Handbook — the details there make a real difference in having a safe and fulfilling trip.

2026 Merrowvista Dates and Forms

Required by April 1, 2026

- Remainder of 2026 tuition
- Acknowledgement of 2026 Health Policies
- Camper Health History Form (completed by parent or guardian)
- [2026 Camper Physical Form](#) (signed by healthcare provider based on recent exam)
- Immunization Record

If Applicable

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

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

Session Dates and Form Deadlines

Program	Opening Day	Forms Due	Optional Forms Due	Closing Day
Session A: 1-week	Sunday, June 28	April 1: Health History, Physical, Immunization Record	June 1: Camper Health Update, Letter to Leader	Saturday, July 4
Session A: 2-week	Sunday, July 5	April 1: Health History, Physical, Immunization Record	June 8: Camper Health Update, Letter to Leader	Friday, July 17
Session A: 3-week	Sunday, June 28	April 1: Health History, Physical, Immunization Record	June 1: Camper Health Update, Letter to Leader	Friday, July 17
Session B: 1-week	Sunday, July 19	April 1: Health History, Physical, Immunization Record	June 22: Camper Health Update, Letter to Leader	Saturday, July 25
Session B: 2-week	Sunday, July 26	April 1: Health History, Physical, Immunization Record	June 29: Camper Health Update, Letter to Leader	Friday, August 7
Session B: 3-week	Sunday, July 19		June 22: Camper Health Update, Letter to Leader	Friday, August 7

Merrowvista Program Goals and 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 program is built around the following goals.

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 for growth across four complementary facets of life: mental, physical, social, and reverential. 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 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 a 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 guide campers in making connections between program and home, helping them see 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.

By working toward these goals, we believe our campers will:

1. Return home with newly gained confidence in themselves.
2. Be able to talk about who they are and what they can achieve.
3. Feel empowered to strive and develop their own best self.
4. Act in ways consistent with their values.
5. Help create a community where trust, cooperation, and respect are the cornerstones.

Core Values

We believe how we act and interact reflects who we are as a community. At Merrowvista, 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.

The Power of Our Community

At Merrowvista, the diversity of our community is one of our greatest strengths. When young people from different backgrounds, beliefs, and identities live and learn alongside one another, something remarkable happens. Perspectives broaden. Assumptions are gently challenged. Friendships form that would never have been possible anywhere else.

We welcome and celebrate campers, families, volunteers, and staff of all races and ethnicities, religions, ages, backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities, including transgender and gender-expansive individuals. We are actively building a community where everyone belongs, and that work belongs to all of us. Every person who walks through these gates shares in the responsibility of making this place what it is.

We ask that campers and their families come ready to engage with people whose experiences may look very different from their own — with curiosity, kindness, and an open heart.

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 Camp Director 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 Community Responsibilities below, or if they feel physically or emotionally unsafe. We depend on them to help us create this unique community.

Please review the following Community Responsibilities with your camper before 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, and showering. 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 at 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 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. 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 to allow for active movement and play at 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 a camper arrives with a smartphone or other internet-connected device, Merrowvista staff will place it 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 per week for sessions longer than two weeks, 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 at the end of a session can be mailed home, but the family is responsible for shipping costs. We will hold all found items for two weeks following the session; unclaimed items will be donated.

If you are planning to ship luggage, we suggest doing so two weeks before the start of camp to ensure it arrives before your camper. 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 to be saved and make sure your camper knows to set their luggage out to be shipped on Closing Day. The office will send box details to the parent at the end of camp so you can prepare and pay for the shipping labels.

Lice Prevention

We screen all campers for head lice during camp check-in. Please review the [Head Lice Prevention Policy](#) to ensure that your camper is completely free of lice and nits before arrival.

If campers have head lice or nits upon arrival and live within reasonable driving distance, they cannot return until they are lice-free. Campers who arrive via plane or who live more than four hours away 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 checks will allow time to treat before Opening Day. Please check your camper's scalp weekly, preferably after the hair has been washed and is still a bit damp.

Look for: an itchy scalp, small rashes around the hairline or behind the ears, white or tan specks (similar to dandruff) in the hair

If your camper has lice before Opening Day, we strongly encourage you to work with a lice treatment professional to ensure your camper is lice-free when they arrive.

Preventing Homesickness

Feeling a little homesick is one of the most normal things in the world, and at Merrowvista, it is something our staff are well prepared for. We plan the first 48 hours of camp with the adjustment process in mind, helping campers settle in, find their footing, and connect with the community around them.

Families can put many strategies in place at home to help set campers up for a successful transition. The American Camp Association's article "[Homesickness Dos and Don'ts for Parents Preparing for Camp](#)" is an excellent resource, especially for first-time campers or those who tend toward homesickness.

One of the most common — and well-intentioned — mistakes families make is what camp professionals call the Pick-Up Deal: "If you feel homesick, I'll come and get you." We understand the impulse; it comes from love. But these promises tend to undermine a camper's confidence and independence, and they often become self-fulfilling prophecies. Instead, we invite you to express genuine excitement about this adventure, and trust us to help your camper find their stride at Merrowvista.

If your camper is struggling to make the transition to camp, our staff will work with them to set goals, make friends, and navigate the adjustment process. If feelings of homesickness persist, the Camp Director will reach out to you directly and assess next steps together.

Joining a New Community

One of the most powerful things about Merrowvista is the people your camper will meet. Every summer, young people from different cities, backgrounds, and life experiences come together to create something remarkable — a community built on trust, curiosity, and shared adventure.

Before camp begins, we encourage families to have open, positive conversations about what it means to be part of a community that may look, think, or live differently than home. A few ways to start:

- Encourage your camper to approach new people with genuine curiosity. Different backgrounds are what make this community interesting.
- Talk about what it looks and feels like to make someone feel genuinely welcome.
- Share examples from your own life of friendships or experiences that broadened your perspective.
- Brainstorm together how your camper might respond with grace when something feels unfamiliar or surprising.

These conversations do not have to be long. What matters is that your camper arrives ready to show up with an open heart.

Words to Know

If this is your family's first summer at Merrowvista, some of our traditions and language may be new. Here is a quick reference for terms you will hear throughout this handbook and throughout the summer.

Four Folds	AYF's signature whole-person framework: mental, physical, social, and reverential. Activities and reflections throughout the day connect to one or more folds.
Interest Groups	The activity blocks that make up much of each program day — from rock climbing and archery to art and drama. Campers choose from a rotating menu of offerings.
Village	Your camper's home community at Merrowvista. A group of six to twelve campers of similar age, living together and experiencing camp together with their Village Leaders.
Village Leader	Your camper's counselor, a trained, background-checked adult (18+) who lives with the Village, leads daily activities, and builds individual relationships with each camper.
Go-Getters	An optional but encouraged early-morning activity. Campers can start their day with a run, walk, yoga, swimming, or another energizing choice.

KCISP	"Keep Camp In Shape Please" The daily cabin-cleanup time where campers organize their belongings and tidy up before the Lone Inspector arrives.
Easy Time	The afternoon rest period. Campers retire to their bunks for reading, letter writing, and relaxation.
Night's Doings	The evening all-camp activity — games, performances, traditions, scavenger hunts, and surprises. Often a highlight of the day.
Evening Reflection	A quieter close to the day for personal and community reflection.
Village Insight	A Village-level discussion where campers gather separately to honestly explore ideas and values.
Four Trails	Merrowvista's backcountry expedition program, in which older campers embark on multi-day wilderness trips.
Village Overnight Trip	After the first week, villages go for a short hike on the Merrowvista site and camp overnight, cooking dinner over a campfire and sleeping in tents with Village mates.
Four-Fold Tournament	During the final week of camp, Merrowvista creates six teams to enjoy friendly competition, pushing their Four Folds to discover more about their best selves.

Opening Day

Session / Program	Opening Day
Session A: 1- and 3-week	Sunday, June 28
Session A: 2-week	Sunday, July 5
Session B: 1- and 3-week	Sunday, July 19
Session B: 2-week	Sunday, July 26

All families driving to camp must arrive between 1 and 3 p.m. ET.

The first full meal for campers will be at 6 p.m. ET, so we suggest your camper eat something before arriving. Snacks will be available all afternoon.

Airport Travel

Merrowvista offers one-way or round-trip shuttle pickups from Boston Logan International Airport for an additional fee. Staff will collect campers on Opening Day and drop them off on Closing Day. Families can sign up for the shuttle through [CampBrain](#).

Shuttle Transportation	Cost
One-way shuttle (Boston Logan)	\$100
Round-trip shuttle (Boston Logan)	\$200

Please arrange flight arrivals between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. ET. Staff will collect campers on Opening Day and drop them off on Closing Day. If there are any problems, call camp at 603-539-6607.

Campers leaving via Merrowvista transportation will depart directly after the closing ceremony, around 12 p.m. ET. Please arrange all flight departures after 4:30 p.m. ET.

For assistance with travel plans, contact Jamie O'Hagin at johagin@ayf.com to discuss your travel plan.

Before You Arrive

Please inform the Health Team if your camper becomes ill or is diagnosed with an illness or lice in the 10 days before camp. This does not necessarily mean they cannot come as planned, but it is important information for us to have.

On the morning of Opening Day, perform one final lice check.

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

Opening Days are some of our favorite days of the year, and we want your family to feel that way, too. A little advance planning makes the arrival experience smoother for everyone.

Families will park on the A-field to unload their camper's luggage. Staff will greet you and guide you through the check in process. For safety of all, please leave pets at home.

During check-in, you will turn in all your camper's medications. This includes vitamins, supplements, over-the-counter and prescription medications, and anything inhaled, topical, or injectable, such as inhalers or EpiPens.

Merrowvista staff will screen each camper for lice, signs of illness, and take their temperature. Anyone with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher must return home until they are fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.

From there, families will have the opportunity to meet your camper's leader and other staff. Families are welcome to explore the main areas of camp before heading home.

A note on goodbyes: The research on this is consistent, and our experience confirms it — brief, upbeat goodbyes set campers up for faster, easier transitions. Keep the send-off short, and trust your camper to find their footing. Our staff will take it from there.

Life at Camp

Your Camper's Village

Your camper's Village is their home, and their Village mates will be their family. A Village consists of six to twelve campers of similar age and two Leaders. Campers sleep in a cabin with up to five other campers; for younger campers (ages 8 to 10), leaders sleep in the same room. Cabins are rustic, screened spaces with bunk beds 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 building their cabin community. We cannot guarantee cabin placement or bunk requests, but we do take them into consideration. If you have a request for your camper's cabin placement (with or without another camper, top or bottom bunk), please share that with Client Relations Manager Jamie O'Hagin at johagin@ayf.com as soon as possible.

Your Camper's Village Leaders

A Village Leader lives with campers, and campers will get to know many other leaders through 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.

Village Leaders are at least 18 years old. They go through an extensive hiring process, including interviews, three reference checks, and a background check. They receive all training needed for a successful summer before camp starts. All Leaders are certified in CPR and first aid.

Merrowvista Food Program

Food at Merrowvista is about more than nutrition — it is woven into the program itself. We gather at meals as a full community, slow down, and practice the values that define our summer together.

Our Food Program helps campers bring their best to each day by offering healthy, balanced meals and easily accessible snacks. The produce in our menu is extensive, and whenever possible we provide locally grown food, including from our own gardens. We offer healthy beverage options including water, milk, and orange juice. Healthy snacks such as granola bars, sun butter and jelly sandwiches, and fresh fruit are available throughout the day.

Campers help care for the Eating Lodge through table setting, clearing, sweeping, and composting their food scraps to minimize food waste. We begin each meal with a moment of gratitude and eat family style.

Food Allergies and Dietary Needs

Merrowvista's menu does not include tree nuts, and our kitchens do not serve food containing peanuts, peanut butter, or peanut oil. Note that some snacks and desserts may contain trace amounts of peanuts or may have been manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts. Vegetarian, dairy-free, and gluten-free options are available at each meal.

It is essential that we have detailed information regarding food allergies or any special dietary needs your camper may have before camp starts to determine if the Merrowvista Food Program staff can meet your camper's requirements.

Our Food Program Director, Kim Novotny, is available at knovotny@ayf.com to discuss your camper's needs, which foods Merrowvista can provide, and what, if any, food the family may need to provide. Please share this information on the Camper Information form.

Daily Camp Schedule

This is a typical day in the Merrowvista schedule. Most weeks have four or five typical days and two or three special days, providing a balance of structure 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.

Time	Activity
7:30 a.m.	Rise and Shine
7:40 a.m.	Go-Getters
8:40 a.m.	Flag Raising and Morning Reflection
9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:45 a.m.	KCISP
10:15 a.m.	Interest Group 1
11:15 a.m.	Interest Group 2
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Easy Time
2:45 p.m.	Interest Group 3
3:45 p.m.	Interest Group 4
5:00 p.m.	Your Time: Camper's Choice
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 p.m.	Night's Doings
8:30 p.m.	Evening Reflection or Village
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 — elves, goblins, fairies, unicorns, and more — are welcome.

Staying in Touch with Campers

Summers at Merrowvista provide a rare opportunity for young people to slow down, live simply, and experience community in a beautiful outdoor setting. Campers reconnect with nature and step away from smartphones, social media, video games, and other technology.

We understand families appreciate the reassurance of seeing their smiling camper having a wonderful summer. Our approach to photography is designed to balance that need with the spirit of simple, disconnected community life that makes Merrowvista so special.

Onsite Photos

Families will receive free, password-protected access to photos taken at camp through SmugMug. You will receive login information via email once your camper's session begins. Photos are uploaded every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Because Four Trails trip leaders' primary focus is camper safety and well-being, real-time photography from backcountry trips is not possible. Photos from Four Trails trips will be available online once groups have returned to camp.

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 per day. We will provide the link to this service once camp begins. You may share this link with family and friends, but please do not share it too widely so we do not overwhelm the system.

Care Packages and Mail

Families 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 camper health and safety.

Please address care packages and mail to:

Camp Merrowvista
_____ Village (provided on Opening Day)
Attn: [Camper Name]
147 Canaan Road
Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816

Visitation Policy

We do not have a formal visiting day at camp and discourage individual family visits, as they are disruptive to the camper experience. Visits pull campers out of their daily routine, and if a camper is feeling homesick, family visits often increase those feelings or spark them in other campers.

Closing Days

Session / Program	Closing Day
Session A: 1-week	Saturday, July 4
Session A: 2- and 3-week	Friday, July 17
Session B: 1-week	Saturday, July 25
Session B: 2- and 3-week	Friday, August 7

Family members are invited to celebrate the end of camp with their camper at the Closing Circle on Closing Day. Please leave pets at home. The Closing Circle begins promptly at 11:00 a.m. and will finish by 12 p.m., followed by an optional camper family event in the Bahn. Lunch will not be served on Closing Day.

Merrowvista will share more information about each session's Closing Day details via email one 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, Merrowvista staff will assist with mailing boxes or trunks through UPS. Shipping and packaging charges will be applied to the credit card on file. Once the luggage is sent, you will receive an email with the UPS tracking number.

Release Policy

Your camper's safety is our responsibility from the moment they arrive until the moment they leave Merrowvista. Campers may only be released to a parent or legal guardian authorized in writing during the registration process. This is both AYF Policy and New Hampshire state law and we hold it without exception.

If your pick-up plans change after you have submitted your registration, call the camp office at 603-539-6607 and we will help you submit new Authorization for Release.

Health at Camp

Keeping campers healthy and safe is at the heart of everything we do at Merrowvista. Our Health Center is staffed by a registered nurse and Health Officers in residence. A doctor is on call, and all Merrowvista staff are trained in CPR and first aid.

Camper Health Forms

The more we know about your camper's health before they arrive, the better we can prepare for a great summer. All families are required to complete a [Health History Form](#) by April 1. If your camper's medical information changes after you submit the Health History Form, we encourage you to complete the Camper Health Update form four weeks before arrival.

Medication Management

Many campers take daily medication, and our Health Team will safely administer all medications, including prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements. At camp, medications are only administered after meals and at bedtime. If your camper requires medication at another time, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss.

Families should not send common medications like Benadryl, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen with their camper, as the Health Center is well-stocked with these items.

This year we are offering two options for your camper's medications:

Option 1: Multidose Packaging Prepared by a Pharmacy

A pharmacist prepackages a camper's medications by date and time, rather than sending an entire pill bottle to camp. For example, all medications a camper takes at breakfast on a specific date are packaged together in one sealed pharmacy pouch.

Families can learn more about multidose packaging through providers like PillPack and many CVS and Walgreens pharmacies. Ask your pharmacist about Dispill and similar services. 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.

Option 2: Medications Packaged by the Merrowvista Health Team

The Merrowvista Health Team can package and prepare a camper's medications on-site. Medications must arrive at camp in their original prescription packaging with the camper's name on the label. Please do not self-package your camper's medications in individual containers or bags — Merrowvista cannot accept them in that form.

The following medications must arrive at camp in their original valid prescription packaging with the camper's name on the label:

- Liquid, cream, oral contraceptive, inhaled, and injectable medications (such as inhalers or EpiPens)
- Controlled or Schedule II medications (this includes many ADD/ADHD medications)

- Antibiotics prescribed immediately before camp that will be taken for a limited time

Important Reminder

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 except EpiPens and rescue inhalers with a completed permission form on file.

EpiPen Devices and Inhalers

If your camper is prescribed an EpiPen or rescue inhaler, you must bring two devices to camp: your camper will keep one with them, and the other will be stored in the Health Center. You must also submit the [Permission to Self-Administer Emergency Medication Form](#) signed by a parent or guardian and your camper’s healthcare provider.

Behavioral and Mental Health Medications

We want every camper who takes behavioral or mental health medication to have a safe and successful summer, and that starts with some important timing considerations.

We ask that campers arrive with the same medication, at the same dose, that they have been taking for at least three months. This gives enough time to confirm the medication is working well and that your camper is settled and thriving on it. We also ask that no changes be made to the type or dosage of any behavioral or mental health medication within six weeks of Opening Day.

If any medication changes are under consideration, now is the time to work with your camper's physician so that any adjustments can happen well within that window.

One exception: If your camper takes ADD/ADHD medication during the school year but routinely takes a medication holiday over the summer — and has done so before — the six-week rule does not apply.

For full details, please review our [2026 Health and Wellness Policies](#).

Immunization and Vaccination Policy

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

Medical Review Process

We believe camp should be accessible to as many young people as possible, and we put real effort into making that so. We review every camper application with an eye toward inclusion, and our team will make every reasonable effort to accommodate campers with a wide range of conditions, strengths, and abilities.

As part of that process, we may reach out to gather additional information about your camper's health history or connect with our Medical Review Team to think through what support or

accommodations might be needed. When that happens, please know it comes from a genuine desire to set your camper up for success, not to create barriers.

There are some conditions that fall outside what we can safely manage in a camp setting, and in those cases, we may not be able to enroll a camper. Those conversations are never easy, and we approach them with care.

The most important thing you can do is share everything. A recent diagnosis, an ongoing condition, a medication change — all of it helps us prepare and is essential to our ability to safely meet your camper's needs. We can often welcome campers with newly diagnosed conditions; what matters is that we have the full picture.

If a camper is asked to leave due to a health condition that was not disclosed on their forms, families may not be eligible for a medical refund. The more we know, the better we can serve your camper.

Illness, Injury, and Medical Emergencies

We expect your camper to spend the summer healthy, active, and having the time of their life. We also believe in being prepared, and we want you to know what to expect if something comes up.

If your camper becomes ill or injured, our Health Team will assess them promptly. Most campers recover quickly and are back with their cabin group before long. If outside care is needed, we will contact you right away. The local hospital and health clinic are both within 14 miles of Merrowvista.

If a camper is unable to participate in the program for 24 hours or more, we may ask that they return home to recover fully before coming back. Merrowvista does not have the resources to provide extended medical care on-site. This applies to both physical and mental health concerns.

Please make sure your camper's [Health History Form](#) includes your family health plan information and a copy of their insurance card. If a camper requires a doctor's visit or medications, the family is responsible for all associated costs.

Other Emergencies

In case of a local or national emergency, please visit [ayf.com](#) for the most current information about your camper and our programs. We will reach out by email with specific information as it becomes available; our phone lines will be reserved for communication with authorities.

We maintain a comprehensive, layered approach to emergency preparedness. [Learn more online.](#)

If an emergency arises at home and you need to reach your camper, call us at 603-539-6607. Office staff answer phones from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, and we check voicemail at 10 p.m. ET and 8:30 a.m. ET the following morning.

Behavior and Dismissal Policy

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 through open communication between families and Merrowvista staff.

Expecting the Unexpected

Camp is a living, breathing community, and like any community, incidents can take place that create unexpected challenges. Weather changes, group dynamics, camper behavior, and other environmental factors arise and our plans must change. In our experience, those moments are often where the most meaningful growth happens. Our staff are trained to meet the unexpected with creativity and calm, and to turn disruptions into some of the greatest catalysts for teaching life skills.

When an incident occurs, our first priority is always the safety and well-being of the full community. Depending on the situation, our response might involve a conversation with the campers involved, a broader community discussion, or an adjustment to the day's schedule. We handle these moments thoughtfully, and we are good at it.

We do ask that campers arrive ready — physically and emotionally — to engage fully in the program. That readiness makes a real difference, both for your camper and for the cabin community around them.

When a camper's behavior affects the safety or experience of others, our staff will step in. For most situations, we will work directly with you to understand what is happening and build a plan that helps your camper find their footing. Camp staff will remain in contact with you and assess next steps. If a situation cannot be resolved, dismissal may be necessary, and certain behaviors will result in immediate dismissal without a prior warning.

Behaviors That Result in Immediate Dismissal include:

- Threat to harm self or others
- Possession or use of drugs or alcohol
- Possession of a weapon

This list is not exhaustive. The safety and well-being of the full community will always guide our decisions.

It is never easy to determine that a camper should be dismissed, and we know it is a difficult thing for families to hear. Merrowvista staff must balance what is best for the group and community with the needs of the individual camper. If a camper's actions negatively affect their cabin or the wider 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 return home as soon as possible. Families are responsible for any costs associated with removing a camper from camp and for transportation home.

Tuition, Fees, and Refunds

We want every family who wants to be at Merrowvista to find a way to get here. The AYF offers discounts and need-based financial aid — please call us at 603-539-6607 to learn more.

Payment Full tuition is due by April 1, 2026. If you cannot meet this payment deadline, please contact us as soon as possible so we can discuss potential options.

Cancellations and Refunds If you cancel before April 1, all tuition paid — except the \$300 registration fee — will be refunded. After April 1, tuition is nonrefundable.

If your camper needs to withdraw before camp begins due to illness or injury, all payments except the \$300 registration fee will be refunded upon receipt of a written healthcare provider's report. A minimum \$35 processing fee applies to all refunds.

Withdrawals During the Session If a camper needs to leave during the session due to illness or injury, a prorated refund will be issued. In the case of a voluntary withdrawal or dismissal for behavioral concerns, no refund will be issued. In all cases, families are responsible for any transportation costs incurred.

Additional Resources

Please visit ayf.com for additional resources and the most current information regarding Summer 2026.

Visit the American Camp Association website at acacamps.org for helpful tips and research about the camp experience.

As Opening Day approaches, know that Merrowvista is ready for your camper. The trails are waiting, the forest is green, and the community that will form this summer is already beginning. The meals, the conversations, the nights under the stars, the moments of courage and connection — all of it is coming.

Generations of young people have left these hills carrying more confidence, deeper friendships, and a clearer sense of who they are and what they are capable of. This summer, your camper joins that story.

We are grateful and honored to share this experience with your family.

See you in the mountains,

The Merrowvista Team

American Youth Foundation | Merrowvista

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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."