

Camp Fontanelle

Parent/Guardian and Camper Handbook

Summer 2027

Everything you need to know before your camper arrives for camp!

Welcome to Camp Fontanelle!

We are so excited to welcome your child to camp this summer! Our goal is to give every camper a safe, fun, and Christ-centered experience. We can't wait to see what this summer holds!

This handbook has everything you need to prepare for your camper's time with us. Please read it carefully and keep it handy as camp gets closer.

About Camp Fontanelle

Camp Fontanelle is a part of Great Plains Camps Inc. We are affiliated with the United Methodist Church but we welcome campers and families from all denominations as well as those who do not attend church. We are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA), which sets high standards for camper safety and program quality. In 2024, we were proud to be named in Newsweek's America's Best Summer Camps list!

Our Goals Summer camp provides a unique opportunity for children and youth to explore the outdoors, unplug from technology, build lasting friendships with people who may be different from them, try new things, step out of their comfort zone, be challenged to grow personally and in their faith.

- **Belong:** Campers have opportunity to live in a close intentional, Christian community with peers and staff and gain a sense of belonging in a diverse community.
- **Grow:** From day to day and summer to summer campers gain skills and progress in their competency in various activities and in their faith journey.
- **Lead:** As campers get older, we invite them into opportunities to gain leadership skills and learn to serve others in different ways at camp and beyond.
- **Get Outdoors:** We believe kids grow best when they spend real time outdoors. Nature gives them space to stretch their bodies, calm their minds, and reconnect with the world around them. It creates an environment where learning and growth happen naturally, without being forced.

- **Be Unplugged:** Camp Fontanelle is intentionally unplugged. That choice isn't about restriction or nostalgia. It's about creating space for kids to be present, engaged, and fully part of the community around them. Without phones or screens campers learn to be present, build real friendships, and rediscover creativity, curiosity, and joy through face-to-face connections.
- **Be Together:** Camp Fontanelle is built on community. Campers live, play, and worship together – forming friendships that foster belonging, empathy, and lifelong memories. At camp, community isn't left to chance. Cabin groups, shared activities, and consistent counselors create an environment where relationships can deepen over time. Campers learn how to listen, how to speak up, and how to care for the people around them. When kids feel seen and accepted, they are more willing to try new things, speak honestly, and take healthy risks.

Contact Information

Full-Time Staff

Ryan Siver	Director
Amanda Siver	Assistant Director of Operations
Jane Van Horn	Director of Development and Fundraising
Leo Brester	Maintenance Director

Have questions before camp? We are happy to help!

Phone	402-478-4296
Email	fontanelle@greatplainsumc.org
Website	Campfontanelle.com
Facebook	Camp Fontanelle
Instagram	@campfontanelle

Camp's Address

Camp Fontanelle
9677 County Rd 3
Fontanelle, NE 68044

We are located about 3 miles off of Highway 91 if you come by way of Highway 77/275 through Nickerson. There is a large wooden sign on 91 just before the turn through Fontanelle to get to Camp. Coming through Arlington or Fremont on Highway 30 you will turn by the Washington County Fairgrounds on to County Rd 9/St. Paul Rd and then turn left onto County Rd 5, followed by a left onto County Rd 28 which will turn into County Rd 3 and bring you to Camp. **You will travel on gravel roads no matter which direction you come from to get to camp.

Seasonal Summer Staff

- Counseling staff are 18 years of age or older. Junior Counselors are 17 years of age.
- Lead Team members have at least one year of previous camp experience.
- Support Staff can be 16 years of age depending on the position they are filling.
- All counselors and lead team staff complete two weeks of training before camp starts each summer. Training sessions cover working with different age groups and behaviors, First Aid and CPR, facilitating camp activities, dealing with homesickness, and leading Bible studies.
- A health coordinator is on staff to handle medications and any bumps or scrapes.
- All staff and volunteers working with children are certified through Safe Gatherings and have passed a background check.

We follow American Camp Association guidelines for staff to camper ratios based on the age of campers. There are two staff members in each bunkroom and at least 2 staff members with camper groups throughout the day.

Emergency Procedures

Health Emergencies

Our staff is trained in first aid and CPR as well as AED use. We have 3 AEDs on site in various locations. For minor cuts, scrapes, and bug bites, counselors will provide basic first aid. For anything more serious, they will contact the healthcare coordinator. In a true emergency, 911 will be called. Parents will be notified in the event of a call to emergency services or if a serious allergic reaction occurs.

Bad Weather

In the event of severe weather — like thunderstorms or tornadoes — staff will direct everyone to a safe shelter. Tornado shelters at camp include:

- Olson Lodge: Nurse's station and adjoining room.
- Riverview: Basement shelter area
- 7:24 Shelter: Lower Level
- Camping Caves

In the Event of a Missing Camper

Staff will perform an immediate search of nearby areas. If a camper is not found within 10 minutes, camp leadership is notified and a full camp search begins. The camp bell will ring as a reference point to help guide anyone who may be lost. Leadership will determine if parents or law enforcement need to be contacted.

Arrival and Departure Procedures:

Check-In & Check-Out

Check-in and check-out times are specific to your program. You will find those times on the Check-in Information sheet included in your registration packet.

When You Arrive (Check-In)

- A staff member will meet you at the gate and guide you to Olson Lodge.
- Park in one of the available spaces.
- Enter through the double doors at the front of the building.
- Do NOT bring all your luggage inside at first — this keeps things from getting too crowded.
- DO bring any forms you have not yet submitted and any *medications your camper needs.
- After you finish check-in, you can go back to your vehicle to get your luggage and take it to your camper's assigned bunkroom. Staff will be there to help get your camper settled!

***Important Note About Medications:** ALL medications must be given to the health coordinator at check-in. The only exceptions are inhalers or epi-pens that a doctor has advised should stay with the child or their counselor.

When You Pick Up (Check-Out)

- Staff will greet you and direct you to Olson Lodge.
- Sign your camper out at the table just inside the double doors.
- If your camper had medications, pick those up from the health coordinator at the same table.

You are invited to attend a short closing program that begins about 30 minutes before check-out. We hope you can join us!

What NOT to Bring to Camp

To keep camp safe and fun for everyone, please leave the following items at home:

- **Valuables:** Anything you are not willing to lose. Camp Fontanelle cannot be held responsible for missing items. Be sure to check the lost and found before you leave.
- **Food & Drinks:** Soda, snacks, gum, or candy of any kind.
- **Money:** Unless otherwise directed for your specific program.
- **Pets:** We do not have facilities for pets.
- **Personal Electronics:** This includes cell phones, tablets, and other devices.

WARNING: Illegal drugs, alcohol, fireworks, weapons, or anything else illegal or dangerous will result in immediate dismissal from camp.

Camp Rules & Safety

The safety and well-being of every camper is our #1 priority. Here are the key rules every camper will learn during orientation:

- **Stay on the trails!** Camp has poison ivy and stinging nettles.
- **Do not touch wild animals.** Respect their space, and they will respect yours.
- **Use the buddy system.** No one should ever be alone anywhere at camp.
- **Do not get in or on camp vehicles.** Campers are not allowed in vehicles without explicit permission from a counselor.
- **Clean up after yourself.** Help us keep camp nice for everyone.
- **If you hear the giant bell, go to the flagpole outside Riverview immediately.**
- **Listen to your counselors.** Their number one job is to keep you safe.
- **Wear closed-toed shoes.** Unless you are at the pool.

Camper Behavior Expectations

We want camp to be a welcoming and respectful place for everyone. We ask that all campers:

- Treat each other with kindness, speak well of others, keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Respect staff and volunteers: this means following their instructions without arguing.
- Be a positive participant in activities; good sportsmanship, enthusiasm, following rules, playing fair, including everyone.
- Respect other people's property.
- **No bullying:** Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Take good care of creation, camp property, and equipment.

If campers do not meet behavioral expectations the following *process will be followed:

- Counselors will give a verbal warning.
- If the behavior continues the camper will be asked to sit out of the activity for a period of time based on the severity of the behavior.
- Continued negative behavior will result in a conversation with a lead team staff member and potentially longer loss of activity time.
- If changes in behavior do not occur the camper will be referred to a full-time staff member who will call home to have a conversation with a parent/guardian. You will then be asked to talk with your child about their behavior and reinforce the need to meet expectations and follow camp rules.
- If a second phone call is made you will be required to come pick up your child.

*If there is a physical altercation between campers, threats are made to others or themselves, or campers are found with any of the illegal items listed previously, steps in this process will be skipped and the parent/guardian will be called immediately and you will be expected to come pick up your child.

Forms & Permissions

Program Release Form

All campers must have a signed Program Release Form on file. This form covers participation in all Camp Fontanelle activities, both on-site and off-site. By signing, parents and campers agree to assume responsibility for any injuries or damages that may occur while participating in camp programs. This form is completed during the registration process.

Photo & Video Release

As part of the Program Release Form, you will be asked whether Camp Fontanelle may use photos and videos of your child for promotional materials and social media posts.

- If you said YES, no further action is needed.
- If you said NO, please email a photo of your child to asiver@greatplainsumc.org. This helps us identify your child in photos before anything is shared publicly.

Health Forms

Please make sure all health forms are filled out at least one week before your camper arrives. This helps our health coordinator and kitchen staff be fully prepared to meet campers' needs.

How to Submit Forms

- Online through CampBrain campfontanelle.campbrainregistration.com OR
- Download and print a hard copy from campfontanelle.com/parents/

Important: Be Sure to Note

- Any medications your camper takes
- Any allergies
- Any dietary restrictions

If your child's program requires a special release form, please have it completed when you arrive at camp. Getting all forms done ahead of time will make check-in go much faster!

Camper Questionnaire (Optional)

Your camper has the option to fill out a Camper Questionnaire. This helps counselors get to know your child and what they enjoy — so they can make sure your camper has the best week possible!

Parent/Guardian Questionnaire (Optional)

There is also a form just for parents and guardians. This is your chance to share anything important about your camper with their counselors and other staff. It is completely optional, but extremely helpful!

Staying in Touch with Your Camper

Want to send your camper a note while they are at camp?

- Camp Fontanelle uses the Bunk1 system for camper emails. Details about how to use Bunk1 are included in your registration packet.
- You can also drop off mail for campers during check-in to be handed out during the week, or
- You can mail letters to Camper Name, Program Name, Camp Fontanelle, 9677 County Rd 3, Nickerson, NE 68044.

Getting a piece of mail from home can really brighten a camper's day!

Please do not send packages to campers that include food, drinks, or other items that campers are unable to have at camp.

******Campers are not able to call home during the week; with rare exceptions. If you need to contact your camper for an urgent matter, please call the office at 402-478-4296 to speak to a staff member who will be able to relay a message or connect you with your camper.

Helping with Homesickness

It is completely normal for campers to feel homesick. Here are some ways you can help before and during camp:

Before Camp

- Talk with your camper about the fun things they will get to do at camp.
- If your camper has never been to camp before, we encourage you to attend our Open House event in late spring. You and your camper can see where they will be staying, meet some of the staff, and ask questions!

When Writing to Your Camper

The way you write to your camper can make a big difference. Here are a few tips:

- Stay positive and encourage them during their time at camp.
- Share your hopes for what they will experience at camp.
- Try to avoid listing things they may be missing out on at home.
- Try not to focus too much on how much you miss them or how sad you are that they are gone — even though we know it is hard!

We can't wait to welcome your camper! See you this summer.

In Christ, Your Camp Fontanelle Staff

campfontanelle.com | 402-478-4296 | asiver@greatplainsumc.org