



Parent Handbook

Welcome to Netop! We look forward to a “top life experience” filled with personal growth, friendships and lasting memories. This handbook will help parents prepare for the upcoming season. Please note that camp forms are due by **May 15**. All forms are located in your [CampBrain](#) account.

Contents

Parent checklist

Netop philosophy

Arrival & departure

Health care

Communication

Electronics, money & camp store

What to pack

Camper conduct

Parent/child issues

Parent Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure you have completed the planning steps for camp.

_____ Pay final balance by May 15

_____ Submit camp forms by May 15 (found in your [CampBrain](#) account)

- Health history
- Camper information
- Camper incidentals (includes bed kit option)
- Travel confirmation (if arriving by public transportation)

_____ Submit physical exam & immunization history (exam within previous 12 months of camp)

- Upload on CampBrain, or scan/email to: beth@netopsummercamp.com, or mail to: 1617 Hopegate Drive, Maple Glen, PA 19002
- Form typically supplied by physician; i.e. *school/camp/sports "participation" form*
- Alternate form available in your CampBrain account under "Upload Documents"

If your son has a late doctor appointment, please complete/send the form prior to camp.

_____ Submit copy of health insurance card (front & back of card)

_____ Review packing list

_____ Order clothing and supplies from MCO (Maine Camp Outfitters); follow [Camp Store](#) link

- *Required* items include two gray Netop tee shirts and a Netop laundry bag

_____ Review Code of Conduct with camper(s)

The “Four Spokes” Philosophy

Netop’s Four Spokes philosophy encourages well-rounded growth in four areas of life: mental, social, physical and spiritual.

When these “four spokes” – or areas of life – are balanced and strong, a person will live a more complete and satisfying life. This philosophy guides the values, program and day-to-day life at Netop. Campers are encouraged to grow in many ways; for example:

Social – develop empathy, team skills, communication skills, friendships, community service

Physical – improve fitness, develop skills and practice positive sportsmanship

Mental – develop responsibility, leadership, confidence, resourcefulness, creativity, problem solving and judgment

Spiritual – strengthen values, build character, appreciate nature and inspire others

Netop welcomes and respects people of all faiths. The spiritual program includes grace before meals, an informal weekly (non-religious) chapel service and brief evening tent discussions or “reflection”.

Goal Setting: Each camper will be assigned a goal setting counselor. The counselor will assist the camper in developing specific and realistic goals in each of the four areas. Campers will be encouraged to achieve their goals during the camp season and throughout the coming school year. This process establishes a lifelong tool that can benefit the camper well into the future. Parents can play a supportive role in helping to reinforce this developmental growth at home. Counselors reinforce the process with a mid-year letter home to each camper, as a reminder of the goals they set at camp.

Arrival & Departure

Arrival days

The arrival/drop-off time at Netop is between **1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.** on the first day of each session. Netop staff will be on hand to meet, greet and help your son(s) get settled. We request all parents to check in with the nurse at camp. It is best for your stay to be relatively brief as this will enable your son(s) to transition more easily. If your travel plans require a different arrival time, please let us know. The camp address is: 12 Netop Road, Casco, ME 04015. If your plans require an overnight stay, lodging reservations should be made well in advance, as there are many camps in the area.

Departure days (Session I, Mini B, Session II)

Families are invited to enjoy our closing ceremony, which includes session highlights, awards and performances, followed by a buffet lunch. Counselors will be available to assist campers pack and load luggage into vehicles. If your travel plans require an early morning departure, please let us know.

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Parents/guests arrive to camp
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Closing ceremony in Lodge
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch/depart

Mini Camp A (only)

Mini Camp A concludes on a regular camp day, so all campers are in full swing with the camp program. We invite parents to arrive mid-morning and observe activities or take a tour around camp with their son.

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Parents/guests arrive to camp
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Packing, goodbyes & departure

Arrival/departure by plane, train or bus

For campers arriving/departing by public transportation, Portland Maine offers the closest and most convenient access point. Several major airlines fly into Portland and bus/train service is also available. Arrangements to pick up or drop off campers must be made in advance. A fee will apply for transportation to/from Portland, ME or Boston, MA.

Health Care

Your son's health and safety is our top priority. The services of our registered nurse and the use of the camp health center are included in the tuition. Whenever the attention of a physician is required, boys will be taken to a local physician or hospital, as appropriate.

A comprehensive health form is required for each camper. The health form contains the following key parts:

1. Health History – completed online by the parent (in [CampBrain](#))
2. Physical exam form – a separate form supplied by the camper's physician, attesting to a health exam within the 12 months prior to camp. Standard physician sports/camp/school participation forms are acceptable. Alternatively, the physician may sign the American Camp Association form; found [HERE](#).
3. Immunization history – immunization record from physician showing type, date and dose given for each immunization. Note: If your child has not had a pertussis booster (typically given between the ages of 11-13), we recommend that you discuss this with your physician. In addition, please ensure that your child has been immunized against measles.
4. Insurance – Medical insurance coverage must be provided by each camper's family. A copy (*front and back*) of the camper/family health insurance card is requested. All campers must have proof of medical insurance to attend Netop. Any co-pays or doctor fees will be billed to the family. Some local doctors do not accept out-of-state insurance for campers, in which case full payment to the doctor is required and parents may submit a subsequent claim through their insurance provider.

All medical records are confidential. Any special medications or dietary needs should be discussed directly with the camp nurse upon arrival, if possible.

Contacting Parents for Medical Issues: Either the camp director or nurse will contact parents if the camper is taken into a medical facility for evaluation or treatment. Additionally, if a camper runs a fever over 100 degrees F for longer than 8 hours and/or spends the night in our Health Center, the parent(s) will be contacted.

Emergency Contacts: The camp health form includes an area for two emergency contacts. We will make every attempt to notify parents in an emergency. If you will be away from your home and/or office for even a few days during your son's camp session, please notify the camp director in writing regarding your travel plans and itinerary.

Medications: All prescriptions and over-the-counter medications brought or sent to camp must be in the original packaging/bottle, labeled with the physician's instructions, the name of the medication and the dosage. Please repeat these instructions on the camper's health form. All medications and/or vitamins will be held by the camp nurse and will be administered by medical staff at camp.

Health Screening: Within the first 24 hours after arrival to camp, the nurse will conduct a health screen to check for any observable evidence of illness, injury or communicable disease, verify and update health history information to identify any medication, changes in health status or special needs requiring follow up, and review/collect any medications to be dispensed during the camper's stay at camp. Please check your child for head lice before camp and let us know if he has been treated for lice during the months before camp. If head lice are detected in the initial camp screening, a fee up to \$350 may be charged for required treatment.

Inherent Risks: Accidents, injuries, illness and insect bites may occur in the natural course of participation in camp activities, trips, woodworking, etc. The camp stresses safety and preventive measures in all areas of camp operation. Parents should instruct campers to follow camp rules and apply safeguards such as use of sunscreen, bug spray and proper footwear as well as practicing good hygiene, staying hydrated and getting proper rest.

Special Medical Needs: The camper Health Form provides the initial opportunity to communicate special medical concerns that may require attention or care by the camp nurse. We also encourage direct communication with the nurse to help clarify special medical needs, related to conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or other chronic health issues. Netop's approach is to provide routine health care and treatment services through our on-site nurse staff, while engaging local physician support for care or emergencies that require specialized treatment.

ADD/ADHD – An increasing number of children are on medication for ADD/ADHD, depression or other conditions. These medications allow a child to take advantage of all that a school environment has to offer. Camp is no different in this regard, but some prescribing physicians may take a child off medication during the summer. There are pros and cons to this approach and the right decision depends on the child and circumstances. Many times children at camp need their usual dosage or more, given that stimulants, for example, are often metabolized more quickly in warm weather or active children. Camp provides a wide range of great activities, some of which require careful attention to safety and risk management; for example, archery and sailing. If your son is currently on a medication and you are planning a change in that medication any time up to six weeks before camp, please discuss it with us. Working together, we have the best chance to help your child have a safe, happy and memorable time with us.

Communication

Mail: Campers love to get mail. Letters and cards from home are encouraged. Mail will be delivered to campers on a daily basis (except Sunday). The camp mailing address for letters is:

**Netop Summer Camp
12 Netop Road
Casco, ME 04015**

Each camper is required to write a letter home at least once per week. It is very helpful if you send pre-addressed, stamped envelopes to simplify the process.

Email: Messages to campers can be accepted via email to *camper@netopsummercamp.com*. However, campers do not have access to computers and, therefore, cannot reply electronically. We will distribute email messages along with regular mail. We prefer handwritten letters and we ask that any incoming emails be limited to a maximum of 1-2 per week.

Telephone calls: Our policy is that campers will not receive phone calls at camp, unless special arrangements have been made. Some campers have a difficult time adjusting to camp after talking with their relatives or friends on the phone. In case of a family emergency or camper birthday, please contact a Director to arrange a phone conversation with your son. The main number for the camp is 207-627-4510 and Steve Hallowell's cell phone is 215-284-3629. Parents are welcome to call and speak with a Director at any time; even for a brief check-in.

Packages: Please do not send "care packages" or have your child arrive with food, candy or beverages, including energy drink packets. Food attracts animals and bugs and can create a health hazard. Campers receive ample and well-balanced meals and snacks throughout the day. We appreciate your cooperation and ask that you inform friends and relatives about this policy. If there is an essential item that a camper needs (clothing, reading material) please limit these packages to **one** per session. The opening of any package received will be carefully supervised by staff and all food products will be removed.

Electronics, Money & Camp Store

Electronics: Netop is "unplugged". One of the great features about being at camp in the middle of the Maine woods is the opportunity to disconnect from our assorted electronic gadgets. Netop campers stay busy with a wide range of outdoor activities and social interactions. Therefore, **all** electronic devices are to be left at home. This includes: cell phones, personal music players (iPods), radios, e-readers, CD players, laptops, portable video games, smart watches and electronic games. Should campers arrive to camp with electronic devices, we will store these safely in the camp office for the duration of the session.

Money & valuables: In general, we advise against sending cash with your son. The one exception is for "senior" campers (entering school grades 9 & 10). Seniors may want to have a small amount (for example, \$30 per session) of pocket money for special outings such as the Senior Beach Trip. There is no need for campers to have valuable items at camp, including expensive watches. Therefore, we recommend that these items be left at home.

Gratuities: Together with fellow members of the American Camp Association we request that families do not offer tips for staff members. We appreciate your thoughtfulness, but gratuities are not necessary or encouraged. As an alternative, you may wish to consider a gift to the Netop Scholarship Fund.

Camp store: Netop has a small camp store for snacks and beverages. The store is open several times each week. Camp store privileges are included in tuition; there is no separate fee.

What to Pack

The [Packing List](#) gives guidance on how to pack for camp. In general, **try not to over-pack!** There is limited space in the tents and campers are more comfortable – and can keep better track of things – if they have only what they need.

Bedding: Campers sleep on comfortable cots with mattresses. Campers may bring their own bedding or we offer a **Bed Kit Rental** option if you want to lighten your load. This includes a complete bed kit (two sets of sheets, blanket, pillow, mattress pad, laundry bag and bug net for the bed) for a nominal rental fee. Bed kits can be reserved on the Camper Incidentals form (in [CampBrain](#)). A sleeping bag is recommended for camp-outs, but should not be substituted in place of sheets for the regular bed at camp.

Netop apparel: Netop apparel is ordered directly through Maine Camp Outfitters (MCO). You can access MCO's catalog through the "camp store" link on the Netop website or [HERE](#). Or, you can call MCO at 800-560-6090 or 207-348-2459. Note that campers will need at least two gray Netop tee shirts, plus a Netop laundry bag. All items are shipped directly to your home (except international orders are shipped to camp). Please place orders by May 15, if possible.

Laundry service: Each camper changes his clothes daily and bed sheets weekly. Laundry will be sent out weekly for each camper and it will be returned the following day. Please mark your son's name on each item. The camp is not responsible for clothing, equipment and other personal items that are left behind, misplaced or damaged.

Shipping luggage: Camper luggage (camp trunk or duffel) may be shipped to camp via UPS or FedEx. The shipping address is: Camper Name, Netop Summer Camp, 12 Netop Rd., Casco, ME 04015. It should be timed to arrive approximately 2-3 days before the session begins. If you wish to have the luggage shipped home at the end of camp, please send a pre-paid shipping label to: Steve Hallowell, Netop Summer Camp, 12 Netop Rd., Casco, ME 04015. This label should be purchased at the time of your shipment to camp.

Daily Life at Netop

Camper code of conduct: *(Please review at home with your camper.)* Netop is a community where all campers and staff live together in a safe, fun and respectful environment. Each person has a responsibility to contribute in a positive way to the community. We expect behavior that includes respect for others, good sportsmanship, being a good team player, following instructions, respecting the belongings of others and offering encouragement. Behaviors considered unacceptable include bullying, causing another person to be uncomfortable, hitting or fighting, foul or abusive language, destroying property, stealing or tent raids. We expect campers and staff to be helpful and friendly and uphold the Netop ideals to make the experience successful for all. Unacceptable behavior can result in dismissal from camp, without a refund.

Tent assignments: Campers live together by age groups and share most meals together. Tent assignments for campers and counselors are determined just before camp begins. We consider requests, however, we cannot guarantee that your son will be in a certain tent with specific people. In fact, we encourage hometown friends and relatives to branch out whenever possible. Camp provides endless opportunities for friends – new and old – to be together and have fun.

Daily schedule: While each day at Netop can bring something new, here's the flow of a typical camper day.

7:30 a.m.	Reveille/Exercises/Flag raising
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:40 a.m.	Tent clean up
9:00 a.m.	Instructional activity 1
10:00 a.m.	Instructional activity 2
11:00 a.m.	Instructional activity 3
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Rest hour
2:30 p.m.	Afternoon activities/special events/team sports
4:00 p.m.	Open waterfront/free swim
5:30 p.m.	Free time
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Evening activities & programs
9:00 p.m.	Reflection time
9:15 p.m.	Taps/bedtime (seniors have late privileges until 10:00 p.m. most nights)

Note: Campers sign-up for morning activity periods in four-day blocks. Campers will be encouraged to try new things, but they may also decide to repeat activities to build skill.

Parent/Child Issues

Homesickness: Dr. Christopher Thurber defines homesickness as the distress or impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home. These feelings relate to fears of the unknown, fears of failure, fears of loss of loved ones, and overall anxiety. Homesickness is common and it usually manifests in stomachaches, headaches, misbehaving and statements of “disliking camp and missing home”. Generally, it lasts for a short period of time and the camper adjusts to camp by feeling familiar with his surroundings, schedule, friends and counselors. The key to dealing with homesickness is to try and prevent it by preparing your child before camp. Here are a few tips and suggestions:

- Discuss the camp schedule and what camp will be like and give him a chance to voice any concerns he might have.
- Plan sleepovers with friends and relatives to help him get used to being away from home.
- Please do not tell your child that you will “rescue” him from camp if he doesn’t like camp. He will hold onto this thought into his camp session and it could prolong his homesickness.
- Try not to mention how much you will miss your son. Instead, emphasize how proud you are of him and how excited you are about his camp opportunity.
- Send a letter to your child before camp so that he has a letter waiting for him at camp.
- Let your child bring a favorite stuffed animal or family photo so he can feel comfortable in his new surroundings.

If your son sends you the dreaded “I hate camp and I want to come home” letter, please consider the following when writing a letter in return:

- First, don't panic. Your child may simply have expressed those feelings when he wrote the letter several days earlier. By the time you receive the letter, chances are he is already having fun and adjusting well.
- Since camp is an opportunity for your child to grow, mature and gain independence, tell him you love him very much and you have confidence in his ability to cope with his feelings and overcome any anxiety. It is important to be calm, reassuring and consistent.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings by writing him, for example, "you seem scared (or lonely or sad). Have you talked with your counselor about how you are feeling?" Encourage your son to take advantage of all the activities at camp and focus on simple goals he can attain. Design your letter to acknowledge his feelings but move on to questions about what he can accomplish and achieve at camp. Please avoid ending your letters by saying you miss him or what he may be missing at home.
- Do not make promises like, "I'll pick you up from camp next week if you're still unhappy", or, "I'll call you on Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.". These statements will only prolong his homesickness, not reassure him of your love.

Research has shown that 95% of all children miss something about home while away at camp. Even though homesick feelings are common, most kids enjoy themselves tremendously at overnight summer camp. Homesickness, and getting over it, is a normal process that helps children develop independence and self-confidence.

Recommended Readings: Please think of us as a parenting partner. We have a common interest – the growth, safety, and happiness of your son(s). Good communication between campers, counselors, parents and directors is essential. There are many excellent books on parenting and child development. Here are a few books that you may want to read:

- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk, by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
- The Blessing of a Skinned Knee, by Wendy Mogel, Ph.D.
- Raising Cain, by Michael Thompson, Ph.D. and Dan Kindlon, Ph.D.
- The Summer Camp Handbook, by Christopher Thurber, Ph.D. and Jon Malinowski, Ph.D.
- The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness, by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D.
- Get Out of My Life, by Anthony E. Wolf, Ph.D.
- Positive Discipline, by Jane Nelson, Ed.D.
- Homesick & Happy, by Michael Thompson, Ph.D.
- Last Child in the Woods, Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, by Richard Louv
- Bob Ditter articles – www.bobditter.com