



Camp Ondessonk

Volunteer Manual

Last Revised: September 2026

Teaching what matters most since 1959

Camp Ondessonk Mission

Exceptional outdoor and spiritual adventures empowering kids of all ages.

Camp Ondessonk Vision

Inspired by our Catholic tradition and commitment to the growth of people and faith, we will:

- *Operate a world class camp in a spectacular natural environment*
- *Inspire leadership, self-confidence, and lifelong learning*
- *Promote stewardship and appreciation of God's gifts*

Camp Ondessonk Core Values

- *Stewardship of God's gifts*
- *Personal development and leadership*
- *Building community*
- *Adventure and fun*
- *Conscientious use of resources*
- *Honoring traditions and embracing innovation*
- *Respect for all*

Camp Ondessonk Stewardship Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Help me see that my Camp is composed of people like me.

I will make it what it is. It will be friendly if I am. Its cabins will be filled, if I help fill them.

It will do great work if I work; it will make generous gifts that touch people's lives if I am a generous giver. It will bring others into its circle of heritage and tradition if I invite them.

It will be a camp with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.

Therefore, with your help, God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my Camp to be. Amen.

Camp Ondessonk is committed to providing a Catholic, faith-based, fun, safe, educational, and inclusive experience for all campers, CITs, staff, parents, and volunteers. With this in mind, we require volunteers to behave in a mature and responsible way and respect the rights and dignity of others while they are at Camp, participating in Camp-sponsored activities, or representing Camp Ondessonk in any way.

If you are serving in a volunteer position at Camp Ondessonk, you will commit to upholding Catholic values in your public work and acting as a positive role model and mentor to our staff, CITs, and campers. It will be hard work, BUT you can expect to end your experience with a better sense of community, self-value, faith, work ethic, and commitment to others.

Camp Ondessonk Volunteer Code of Ethics

All volunteers are expected to read, understand, and adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

- I promise to strive to meet the mission and vision of Camp Ondessonk, putting the Catholic core values of the organization at the forefront of all that I do as a volunteer.
- I understand that my job is to always protect children. In doing so, I will:
 - a. accept personal responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, including:
 - i. Physical Abuse – striking, shaking
 - ii. Verbal Abuse – humiliation, degradation, threats, profanity
 - iii. Sexual Abuse – including inappropriate touch, displays, acts
 - iv. Mental Abuse – hazing, neglect, manipulation, teasing, bullying
 - b. never leave a camper unsupervised and always follow the “Rule of Three”.
 - c. ensure camper discipline adheres to Camp’s policies, and does not include corporal punishment.
- I promise to be a positive role model for youth at Camp and acknowledge I am a representative of Camp and the Diocese of Belleville to camper families during my off time, both outside of camp and online. In doing so, I will:
 - a. exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity.
 - b. conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teaching of the Catholic Church.
 - c. maintain an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
 - d. show initiative, be responsible, and do things without being asked.
 - e. display a positive attitude in response to stress and change.
 - f. treat campers, CITs, and staff of all races, religions, cultures, and backgrounds with respect, dignity, and consideration.
 - g. refrain from the use of profane or abusive language in the presence of campers and staff, or where campers and staff may hear or see.
 - h. refrain from inappropriate conversations with campers and staff, or in places where campers and staff may hear that include topics such as politics, relationship status, sexual activity, drinking, smoking, etc.
- I promise to be a good volunteer. In doing so, I will:
 - a. support and aid other volunteers and staff when the time and need arises.
 - b. express dissent quietly, thoughtfully, respectfully, and never with campers present.
 - c. respect the possessions and belongings of volunteers, staff, CITs, and campers, as well as the facilities and equipment of Camp Ondessonk.
 - d. take care of myself and recognize my personal needs so I can be the best I can be.
- I promise to make good decisions. In doing so, I will:
 - a. treat with confidentiality and respect the personal information I learn from or about campers, CITs, and staff (subject to the policies on reporting abuse and neglect).
 - b. only smoke, vape, use, or possess any tobacco or e-cigarette product in designated locations at Camp Ondessonk.
 - c. only drink alcoholic beverages at volunteer housing when completely off duty, not in the presence of campers or staff or before going to interact with campers or staff.
 - d. not bring weapons onto Camp property.

I will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, and acknowledgement and anticipation of each staff’s and camper’s unique needs. I will use positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, or criticism. I will make expectations clear and avoid power struggles with staff and campers.

Volunteer Policies & Procedures

Check-In & Check-Out

- On arrival day, you will not be able to access your St. Noel room until 3pm. Please do not put your items in the room prior to this time.
- Before moving into your room, please check-in with the Volunteer Coordinator on the St. Noel Deck.
- The Volunteer Meeting is at 4pm on Sunday in the Basement of St. Noel. We will then head to the Main Area for a group photo at 5:10/5:15pm.
- On your final day, please depart your room no later than 10am.

Dress Code

Volunteers are required to be in uniform (maroon volunteer shirt & shorts/pants that are good condition) for Sunday's photo, inspection, and dinner every night except Friday.

During times when not in uniform, the following dress code standards should be followed:

- All clothing must be laundered regularly and free of excessive holes, rips, and stains. Clothing must also fit appropriately.
- Caps, T-shirts, decals, insignias, etc. which promote tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, cannabis, illegal drugs, profane words, gestures, or symbols are not permitted.

Firearms and Weapons

Outside firearms or weapons are not allowed anywhere on Camp property, including inside vehicles. Volunteers must receive written permission from the Executive Director if you intend to bring a firearm or archery bow & arrow.

Medication

Medications must be kept in a locked location, whether that be in your St. Noel Room, vehicle, or other location. Medications should never be unsecured.

Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are only allowed at St. Noel when completely off-duty and when a volunteer will not be interacting with a camper or summer staff member for the rest of the day. Drinking should not be done in the presence of campers or summer staff. Alcohol containers should be stored in St. Noel rooms or a locked space when people are not consuming alcohol.

Facility Access and Housing

- No pets are allowed at Camp.
- Volunteer residences in St. Noel are off-limits to campers & summer staff, with exceptions to be made and communicated by Camp Administration.
- Volunteers are housed by gender. Married couples will only be housed together if space allows.
- Residences, bathrooms, and shower houses are off-limits to those of the opposite gender, unless maintenance work is required and communicated.
- St. Noel's laundry room & administration offices are restricted to authorized personnel only.
- Smoking is prohibited inside all Camp Ondessonk buildings, including Central.
- Activity Area storage buildings are off-limits without the permission of the Program Director.
- Full-time staff residences are off-limits to anyone without a direct invitation.
- Stables and pastures are off-limits without the permission of the Equestrian Director, Camping Services Director, or Executive Director.
- Volunteers should report facility & maintenance concerns to the Camp Ranger.

Activity Area Restrictions

- Volunteers may participate in activity areas, however they must join a group other than their child's unit, and they must clear the time off with their work area supervisor.
- Use of canoes, boats, rifles, and other activity equipment is to be approved by the Activity Coordinator. Volunteers must follow all safety rules in every activity area.
- Swimming and boating are only allowed during assigned times when a lifeguard is on duty (out of the water and monitoring the activity of swimmers).
- Horseback riding outside of the confines of the Equestrian Program is strictly limited. All requests must be approved by the Equestrian Director.

Volunteer & Camper Interactions

- **Rule of 3** – *Volunteers must never be alone with campers or staff members who are minors. Always follow the Rule of 3. This rule protects you as a volunteer, as well as the minor.*
 - a. Always have a third person, preferably a volunteer or staff member, within the line of sight and earshot if you ever have a need to pull a camper aside to talk to them. This third person, or witness, does not have to be a part of the conversation. Make sure this witness can always see you and the camper. Sometimes talking privately with a camper is necessary, but always be in visual/auditory range of other people.
- Volunteers are required to adhere to the Belleville Diocesan Child Protection Policy, complete annual refresher courses when applicable, and respond to the CANTS email.
- Volunteers are Mandated Reporters, meaning you are legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect (either at Camp, home, or school) to the Camping Services Director. Never make a promise to a child that you won't tell anyone what they are about to tell you. It is your duty to let them know that you are here to help them because you care about them.
- For parents/relatives that are volunteering during the same week your children/relatives are at Camp:
 - a. Please avoid your camper(s) as much as possible, especially during meals. It is disruptive.
 - b. Do not give special privileges to your child(ren) or do anything that makes other campers in the unit feel excluded (i.e. follow the unit around to activities, visiting the unit without permission, etc.).
 - c. If you want to check on the well-being of your camper, ask Administration to do so. Summer camp is a time for them to grow in independence.
 - d. Be aware that such actions can cause your camper, and especially other campers in the unit, to feel homesick, which may ruin their week.

Transportation

- Volunteers required to drive a Camp vehicle must be approved by the Camp Ranger, complete a Camp Driver Form, and possess a valid driver's license.
- Volunteers are not allowed to transport campers or staff in their personal vehicles.
- Volunteers transporting campers or staff in Camp vehicles must be at least 21 years old and follow the "Rule of 3".
- Posted speed limits must always be obeyed.
- Accidents involving Camp vehicles must be immediately reported to the Camp Ranger and the Executive Director. Accidents involving personal vehicles on Camp property must be immediately reported to the Executive Director.
- Camp vehicle keys must be returned to the Camp Ranger or Central immediately after use.
- All passengers must remain seated in a seat while the vehicle is moving. Riding in the back of pick-up trucks or other vehicles not designed for passenger transport is strictly prohibited.
- Vehicle seating limits established by the manufacturer must be obeyed.

Visitors

Volunteers are not allowed to have visitors without approval from the Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator. Anyone not authorized to be at Camp will be asked to leave. Approved visitors that have not completed the necessary background checks must be escorted.

Dining Hall

Dining time is more than just a time to eat and should be viewed as a program. The tone that is set during a meal helps set the tone elsewhere in Camp. The meal should be orderly yet spirited and fun. Food should not be criticized in the presence of the campers. Feedback to full-time staff is welcome.

Volunteers must be on time for meals. Volunteers are expected to set the example, remain seated and follow the flow as set out by the Dining Hall Manager. Announcements will be delivered after the meal.

Permission to be excused from a meal should be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator and are allowed based on position or illness.

Only authorized personnel are allowed in the kitchen. Generally, this includes the Food Service Director, Food Service Assistant, kitchen and dining hall staff, and volunteers assigned to that area.

Spirituality at Camp Ondessonk

- Mass is held at 5:30 pm every Sunday of summer camp. Our summer camp population is made up of campers, staff members, and volunteers communally participating in and contributing to the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of Camp Ondessonk, a Catholic Youth Camp. Attendance at Mass is considered a high priority in this community. All campers, staff, and volunteers are expected to be present unless official duties or sickness prevents attendance.
- Volunteers are encouraged to seize opportunities to make use of spontaneous spiritual reflections: a starlit night, a pause on the all-day exploration, etc.
- Volunteers are to use proper language when dealing with staff, campers, or each other. General rules of morality and religion as taught by the Catholic Church are to be observed. Private lives should never be discussed in front of campers.
- In addition to Mass on Sunday, campers, volunteers, and staff members can attend prayer service in the Chapel on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday before Inspection.

Volunteer Placement

Volunteers will be assigned to sessions and positions that match the individual's skills and experience with the needs of Camp Ondessonk. The Volunteer Coordinator will determine these placements in consultation with the key leadership of Camp Ondessonk. A volunteer may discuss a change in placement with the Volunteer Coordinator. Should a volunteer no longer feel they are needed in their initially assigned area, they should notify the area coordinator; and then talk to the Volunteer Coordinator about other roles that might be needed. Each week, the Volunteer Coordinator will list other areas or tasks that could benefit Camp Ondessonk.

Volunteer Discipline

A volunteer who significantly violates a Camp policy or the Code of Conduct can expect to be disciplined. All violations will be dealt with at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator, Camping Services Director, and, if necessary, the Executive Director. Disciplinary discussions will be documented in writing and kept within the volunteer file.

Volunteer Grievances

Volunteers are encouraged to follow the chain of command when dealing with grievances. Problems or conflicts with another volunteer or a full-time staff member should be taken up with that person first. Honest and open attempts should be made to resolve the conflict. The next step should be to speak with the immediate supervisor of the person with whom the conflict exists. The Volunteer Coordinator is always available for support in resolving conflicts. The Program Director, Camping Services Director, and Executive Director are also available to help mediate conflicts.

Diversity of ideas, opinions, and personal styles are an asset in a large working community. While this diversity is, overall, a positive aspect of the working environment, at times conflict will arise.

Volunteers should remain open to the idea that sometimes conflicts and/or complaints cannot be resolved exactly as expected. The entire Ondessonk community has a responsibility to maintain an open-minded and team-oriented atmosphere. Volunteers are not expected to agree with all policies and procedures, but we ask that volunteers remain supportive of the Camp Ondessonk Administration when decisions are made. The Camp Administration will remain open to all questions, concerns, and feedback from volunteers.

Camper Discipline Policy

All campers must abide by all Camp Ondessonk rules and behavior expectations. These rules are similar to those in schools and fall under the general categories of Courtesy and Respect. When a camper breaks a rule, it is considered an infraction. Each infraction results in an action by a staff member. **Camp Ondessonk forbids corporal (physical) punishment of any kind.**

- **First Infraction:** Educational opportunity – The staff member who witnesses the inappropriate behavior takes the opportunity to explain why the behavior is not appropriate for Camp. This should take place away from other campers to avoid embarrassing the camper (but with the rule of 3 in mind) and always in a calm and supportive manner.
- **Second Infraction:** Verbal warning – If the same or similar behavior happens again, the camper is then warned that their behavior is unacceptable and that they will be sent to the Camper Coordinator if the behavior persists.
- **Third Infraction:** Intervention – The intervening staff member will set up a time to meet with the camper and Camper Coordinator. Do not wait to have this intervention. When necessary, the Camper Coordinator will bring the issue to the Camping Services Director for immediate corrective action, up to and including dismissal from Camp.

Children may NEVER be punished by being forced to do physical labor or exercise (push-ups, moving rocks, etc.) nor by being denied food or Trading Post treats. (A group exercise or service project is different than a forced punishment of only one or a few campers.)

Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, slurs, jokes and other verbal/non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." This conduct is unlawful when 1) submission to it is implicitly or explicitly a condition of an individual's employment; 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct affects the employee's job; 3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's job performance; or 4) it creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Camp Ondessonk will not tolerate such conduct, which is further prohibited by federal law in workplace environments.

To keep Camp Ondessonk free of harassment behavior, the following rights and responsibilities of all Camp staff and volunteer members have been stipulated:

Complaint Procedure – Any employee or volunteer who believes that he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment by a member of the Camp Ondessonk staff should file a written complaint with the Camping Services Director or the Executive Director within 48 hours of the incident, if possible. All reports of sexual harassment should state the nature of the incident(s) and the person(s) involved. Each complaint will be responded to promptly and will be kept confidential. In an urgent situation, reports should be made immediately to the Camping Services Director, a member of the Administrative Staff (male or female), or Executive Director.

The Camp Ondessonk Administration will investigate all reports thoroughly and seriously and will take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the guilty party. No retaliatory action will be taken against an employee who makes an honest, good faith report of sexual harassment.

Camper Incidents – Likewise, the sexual harassment **of campers by campers or by counselors** will not be tolerated. Incidents and/or complaints of verbal harassment, inappropriate touching, or other behaviors should be immediately reported to the admin on duty. Upon investigation, such behavior is grounds for expulsion from the camp program. This form of harassment is on the rise in schools and camps. *Staff will not encourage dating or other romantic relationships between campers or other minors.*

Volunteers should maintain close supervision and good rapport with campers and instruct them to report such incidents immediately. **Follow the “Rule of 3” and do not allow campers to be alone with each other in privacy without proper supervision.** Valid accusations will involve parental and possibly law enforcement involvement. Watch for such inappropriate behaviors, especially among the young adolescents. Campers may be hesitant to complain about the aggressor.

If, after investigating any complaint of harassment or unlawful discrimination, Camp Ondessonk determines that the complaint is not bona fide or that an employee or volunteer has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or who gave the false information.

The Diocese of Belleville and Camp Ondessonk treat complaints of harassment seriously and expect employees to act responsibly in raising these issues, recognizing the sensitivity of such matters for all concerned, and the possible consequences. The Diocese and Camp Ondessonk forbids retaliation against anyone for reporting harassment.

Social Media

Adult-to-Minor interactions at Camp are not over once everyone goes home. Today’s modern, electronic age allows for 24/7/365 opportunities for contact with the entire planet in seconds. This means that your obligations as a Camp Ondessonk ambassador must also demand that same 24/7/365 commitment.

As an organization, we want our constituents - campers, OWLs, staff, volunteers, and parents – to keep Camp in their life for their entire life, year-round. Camp Ondessonk could not sustain itself without the year-round events and fundraisers that require contacting people to help or participate – even our underage staff and campers. Camp Administration utilizes social media for recruitment and dissemination of important information to staff and the wider camp community. It is strongly recommended that volunteers connect with Camp on social media.

Please follow these guidelines for appropriate and safe communications with under-aged staff, campers, and OWLs:

- The Rule of 3 applies to electronic interactions, both at Camp and off-site, and through any form of media. This is meant to protect all parties involved: the minor, the adult, and Camp Ondessonk.
- Emails to minors must have someone copied – preferably a parent/guardian, and a year-round admin. Texts to minors are not acceptable.
- Social media connections and interaction with under-aged staff/campers/OWs should only occur if there is a prior connection away from Camp with the minor and you have parental/guardian permission and inclusion in the communication. Approved social media interactions must be conducted in a group forum or via public pages.
- Social media interaction between staff/volunteers and campers/OWs must be to conduct Camp business only, not social in nature (e.g., Lodge communications).
- The subject matter and topics of online interactions with campers shall be treated with the same care as in-person interactions. Avoid any sensitive topics and report anything to Camp Ondessonk that makes you think the camper may be in danger.
- It is recommended that privacy settings on your personal social media accounts to be only viewable by people you are friends with, to make all your profiles, posts, and pictures private, and to purge your friend lists of underage people who have found you on social media because of your association with Camp Ondessonk.
- Campers/OWs who wish to contact volunteers should be directed to do so via the Camp Office and the Executive Director. Camp Ondessonk will facilitate this communication.
- While cell phone usage in the presence of campers/OWs is strongly discouraged, volunteers are prohibited from taking photos of campers/OWs with their phones, unless permission is given from the Marketing Department. Volunteers who wish to post photos of Camp may do so by sharing Camp Ondessonk social media directly from the Camp page.
- Do not, under any circumstances, post photos of campers to your personal social media accounts, unless you have permission from that camper's guardian and the Marketing Department.

Please follow these guidelines when using social media as a Camp Ondessonk volunteer:

- Camp Ondessonk reserves the right to use volunteers' likenesses online and in other public electronic or print media formats.
- Volunteers may not publicly post negative comments about Camp Ondessonk, the Diocese of Belleville, or the Catholic Church on social media.
- The use of Camp Ondessonk's name and logo on social media, printed material, or merchandise for promotional purposes, must be approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- All public posts to personal social media accounts using Camp Ondessonk's name or referring to Camp Ondessonk must comply with the mission, vision, and values of Camp Ondessonk and the Diocese of Belleville.
- How you conduct yourself on social media – posts, pictures, videos, links, comments, etc. – reflects upon you as a person, as well your consideration as a future candidate for volunteer service at Camp Ondessonk. You are still a Camp Ondessonk volunteer after you go home.
- Camp Ondessonk Volunteers are in the public eye of our campers/OWs and parents, both during the summer and back home in your communities. Volunteers will conduct and portray themselves online in the same manner they do at Camp, as well as in public, in school, at church, with family, etc.

Violation of any of the above policies will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal from volunteer service.