



Camp Ondessonk

Volunteer Manual

revised November 2024

Teaching what matters most since 1959



Camp History & Programs



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 other people into its circle of heritage and tradition, if I invite and bring 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 Volunteer Code of Ethics

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 and staff members to behave in a mature and responsible way and respect the rights and dignity of others while they are at Camp Ondessonk, participating in Camp-sponsored activities, or representing Camp Ondessonk in any way.

If you are 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.

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

- A. 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 protect children at all times. In doing so, I will: accept personal responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, including:
 - Physical Abuse – striking, shaking
 - Verbal Abuse – humiliation, degradation, threats, profanity
 - Sexual Abuse – including inappropriate touch, displays, acts
 - Mental Abuse – hazing, neglect, manipulation, teasing, bullying
 - never leave a camper unsupervised and follow the “Rule of Three” at all times.
- B. 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:
 - exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity.
 - conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teaching of the Catholic Church.
 - maintain an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.
 - show initiative, be responsible, and do things without being asked.
 - display a positive attitude in response to stress and change.
 - treat campers, CITs, and staff of all races, religions, cultures, and backgrounds with respect, dignity, and consideration.
 - refrain from the use of profane or abusive language in the presence of campers or where campers may hear or see.
 - refrain from inappropriate conversations with campers or in places where campers may hear that include topics such as politics, relationship status, sexual activity, drinking, smoking, etc.
- C. I promise to be a good volunteer. In doing so, I will:
 - support and aid other volunteers and staff when the time and need arises.
 - express dissent quietly, thoughtfully, respectfully, and never with campers present.
 - respect the possessions and belongings of volunteers, staff, CITs, and campers, as well as the facilities and equipment of Camp Ondessonk.
 - take care of myself and recognize my personal needs so I can be the best I can be.
- D. I promise to make good decisions. In doing so, I will:
 - 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).
 - only smoke, vape, use, or possess any tobacco or e-cigarette product in designated locations at Camp Ondessonk.
 - only drink alcoholic beverages at volunteer housing, not in the presence of campers or staff or before going to interact with campers or staff.
 - 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

The following is a summary of policies and procedures that all Ondessonk volunteers need to be aware of and are expected to adhere to. Camp Ondessonk's staff and volunteers are entrusted with the lives and welfare of young people. *There is no greater responsibility, nor is there any endeavor potentially more rewarding.* Staff and Volunteers are to remember that they serve, foremost, as role models for these young people. Therefore, **staff and volunteer behavior must be exemplary and professional at all times, both at Camp and off-site, within the wider community (including online).** Furthermore, staff and volunteers must strive to provide a quality camp program that is above all, safe, healthy, and happy.

Volunteer Appearance

The uniform consists of the following:

- A Maroon Volunteer Shirt.
- Shorts or pants that are clean and in good condition.

Volunteers are required to be in uniform on Sunday's photo and dinner. Volunteers should wear their uniform for inspection and dinner every day with the exception of Friday. As a volunteer at Camp Ondessonk, you are expected to be a positive role model for staff and children at all times. 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

Volunteers, staff, campers, and visitors are not allowed to have firearms or weapons anywhere on Camp Ondessonk property, including inside vehicles. Volunteers must receive written permission from the Executive Director if a firearm or archery bow and arrow are going to be brought.

Firearms used for Camp's Riflery program will be stored under lock and key when not in use. Furthermore, ammunition and weapons should be locked separate from one another when stored. The Rifle Range Coordinator is directly responsible for the security of these firearms.

Volunteer Medication

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

Facility Access and Housing

- No pets are ever allowed at camp.
- Volunteer residences in St. Noel are off-limits to campers and summer staff, with exceptions to be made and communicated by the administration.
- Room assignments are finalized by the Volunteer Coordinator. Camp Ondessonk will house volunteers by gender. Occasionally, exceptions can be made for married couples if the space allows, but this is not guaranteed.
- Residences, bathrooms, and shower houses are off-limits to those of the opposite gender, unless maintenance work is required and communicated.
- St. Noel Center's laundry room and administration offices are restricted to authorized personnel only.
- Smoking is prohibited inside buildings, including but not limited to Central and St. Noel.
- Drinking may only be done by volunteers at St. Noel when campers and staff will not be present, ideal times are after dinner. If going to interact with campers later that night a volunteer should not drink.
- Sheds and storage buildings at the various activity sites are off-limits without the permission of the Program Director.
- The private residences of full-time staff that live on camp are off-limits to anyone without a direct invitation.
- The Stables and Pastures are off-limits without the permission of the Equestrian Director, Camping Services Director, or Executive Director.
- Equipment, facilities, or structures that need repair should be reported. All volunteers are responsible for reporting facility and maintenance concerns to the Camp Ranger whenever they become aware of them.

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 cleared through the Activity Director. Volunteers must follow all safety rules in every activity area.
- Swimming and boating are to only be done during assigned times when a lifeguard is on duty. A lifeguard is only considered on-duty if they are out of the water and monitoring the activity of the swimmers.
- Horseback riding outside of the confines of the Equestrian Program will be strictly limited. All requests to do so must be brought to the Equestrian Director.

Visitors

- Volunteers are not allowed to have visitors during the programming week without the approval of the Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator. Anyone not authorized to be at Camp will be asked to leave. Visitors who have not completed the necessary background checks must be escorted around camp.

Transportation

- Volunteers who are required to drive a camp vehicle for their assignment must be approved by the Camp Ranger, complete a Camp Driver Form, complete the online drivers training, and possess a valid driver's license.
- The use of Camp vehicles is to be arranged through the Camp Ranger. No volunteer is free to drive any Camp vehicle without the Camp Ranger's permission.
- Volunteers are not allowed to transport campers or staff in their personal vehicles while Camp is in session.
- All drivers of Camp vehicles are expected to obey posted speed limits.
- Persons transporting campers in camp vehicles must be at least 21 years old.
- Accidents involving Camp vehicles should be immediately reported to the Camp Ranger and the Executive Director. Accidents involving personal vehicles on Camp property should be immediately reported to the Executive Director.
- Camp vehicle keys should 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.
- Vehicles may be loaded only within the passenger seating limits established by the manufacturer.

Volunteer & Camper Interactions

- **Rule of 3** –*Volunteers are never to 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 see you and the camper at all times. Sometimes talking privately with a camper is necessary, but always be in visual/auditory range of other people.
- All Staff are required to complete the Belleville Diocesan Child Protection Policy and attend annual refresher courses when applicable.
- All camp staff and volunteers are Mandated Reporters, which means that by law staff are required to report whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a camper may have been abused or neglected by anyone, either here at camp or at home or school. 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. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect shall be reported to the Camping Services Director.
- To minimize homesickness and provide a full Camp experience to all our campers, we ask parents/relatives of campers to avoid, as much as possible, time spent with their own children. By limiting visits, we hope to minimize disruption to units as they attend activities and eat their meals.
- Parents who are volunteering during the week their children are at camp should not give special privileges to their own children or do anything to make the other campers in the unit feel excluded (i.e. following the unit around to all activities, visiting the unit without permission, etc.). Such actions can cause other campers to feel homesick, which may ruin their week at camp. While we understand the desire to check on the well-being of your child, please keep in mind that summer camp is a time for him/her to grow in independence.

Dining Hall

The dining time is more than just a time to eat and should be seen 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 is a way for us all to continuously improve!

All 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 throughout the entire meal. Announcements will be delivered after the meal. Volunteers must remain in the meal location through the duration of the meal. Permission to be excused from a meal can only be allowed based on position.

Only authorized personnel are allowed in the kitchen. Generally, this includes the Food Service Director, Food Service Assistant, kitchen crew, dining hall manager, CITs and volunteers assigned to that area, as well as full-time employees.

Check-In & Check-Out

- On arrival day, you can access your St. Noel room starting at 3pm. Please do not put your items in the room prior to this time.
- Before moving into your room, please stop by the St. Noel Office to check-in with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- The Volunteer Meeting on Sunday will be at 4pm 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.

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. Designated seating will be marked for volunteers. If needed, transportation to and from the Grotto will be arranged. Please alert the Volunteer Coordinator if you need transportation assistance.
- Volunteers and Staff are encouraged to seize opportunities to make use of spontaneous spiritual reflections: a starlit night, a pause on the all-day exploration, etc.
- Staff and volunteers are to use proper language when dealing with campers or each other. General rules of morality and religion as taught by the Catholic Church are to be observed by members of the staff and volunteers. Private lives of staff and volunteers 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 Grievances

Volunteers are encouraged to follow the chain of command when dealing with grievances. Problems or conflicts with another volunteer or a 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, on the whole, a positive aspect of the working environment, at times conflict will arise.

Volunteers should remain open to the idea that at times not all conflicts can be resolved, and that not all complaints can be dealt with 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. The volunteer voice is a valuable agent of change within the Ondessonk community and will always be respected as such.

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 Placement

Volunteers will be assigned to sessions and positions that match both the individual's gifts 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/director; 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.

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.

In order to keep Camp Ondessonk free of such 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.*

Staff and volunteers should maintain close supervision and good rapport with campers and instruct them to report such incidents immediately. **Furthermore, do not allow campers to be alone with each other in privacy without proper supervision.** We follow the "Rule of Three;" a minor may not be alone with another camp participant in a private setting. 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 Policy and Off-Site Communication with Minors

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. We also as an organization want all our constituents - campers, O.W.L.s, 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:

- *Social media connections and interaction with under-aged staff/campers/O.W.L.s should only be done if there is a prior connection away from Camp with the minor and you have parental/guardian permission and inclusion in the communication.*
- *Just like at Camp, the Rule of Three applies to all in-person and 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 as an organization.*
- *Approved social media interactions with minors must be conducted in a group forum or via public pages.*
- *Social media interaction between staff/volunteers and campers/O.W.L.s 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.*
- *Emails to minors must have someone copied – preferably a parent/guardian, and a year-round admin. Texts to minors are not acceptable.*
- *It would do you well as a staff member or volunteer to change all 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 and O.W.L.s who wish to contact individual staff or volunteers should be directed to do so via the Camp Office and the Executive Director. Camp Ondessonk will facilitate this communication over written letter.*
- *While cell phone usage in the presence of campers and O.W.L.s is strongly discouraged, staff and volunteers are prohibited from taking photos of campers and O.W.L.s with their phones, unless permission is given from the Marketing Department. Staff/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 or O.W.L.s to your personal social media accounts, unless you have permission from that camper/O.W.L.'s guardian and the Marketing Department.*

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

- *Camp Ondessonk reserves the right to use staff and volunteers' likenesses online and in other public electronic or print media formats.*
- *No staff or volunteer may 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 or on any printed material or merchandise for promotional purposes must be approved in writing by the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors.*
- *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, the Camp Ondessonk Staff Code of Ethics, and the teachings of the Catholic Church.*
- *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 employment or volunteer service at Camp Ondessonk. You are still a Camp Ondessonk staff member or volunteer after you go home.*
- *Staff members and volunteers at Camp Ondessonk are in the public eye of our campers, O.W.L.s, and parents, both during the summer at Camp, as well as back home in your communities. Staff and 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 termination of employment or dismissal from volunteer service.***