



# Summer Camp Handbook

*for Parents, Adults, and Campers*

[www.huston.org](http://www.huston.org)  
[rachel@huston.org](mailto:rachel@huston.org)  
(360)-793-0441

# Contents

page 1 - The Camp Huston Program

page 2 - Specific Program Descriptions

page 3 - Camp Huston's Goals

page 4 - Camper Behavior & Discipline

page 5 - Camp Huston Staff

page 6 - Communication and Missing Home

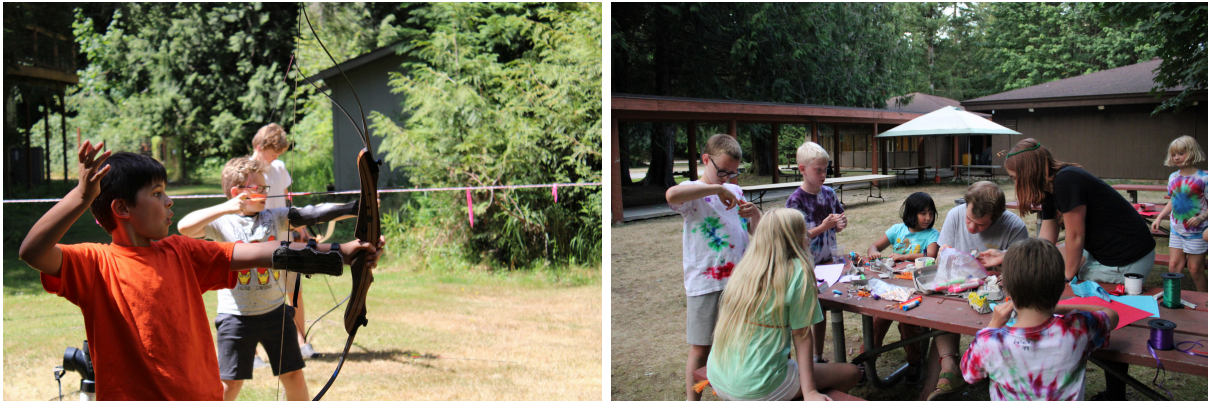
page 7 - Health Form and Medication

page 8 - Daily Schedule

page 9 - Packing List

page 10 - Session Pickup/Drop-off Times

# The Camp Huston Program



At Camp Huston, we run a decentralized camping program. Typically, two cabins of similar ages, their cabin counselors, and one additional leader to form a “Discovery Group”. Campers spend the majority of their time either with their cabin group or their Discovery Group. Camp Huston’s staff are trained to facilitate the development of that group, through the process of “**Experience + Reflection = Learning**” or “E+R=L” . As the week progresses, campers and their Discovery Groups are able to take on greater and greater challenges as they learn to communicate, trust, and work together. We see this the most during teambuilding games and initiatives on the low-ropes course. Outside of the Discovery Group, campers can expect free choice Activity Time each afternoon. Typical choices include swimming in the outdoor heated pool, practicing shooting a bow and arrow at archery, trying an arts and craft activity, or playing an active game such as soccer or basketball. Discovery Groups also take turns hosting meals and cleaning bathrooms, learning that living in community is service-based.

As an outreach program of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, our camp program and values are rooted in the Episcopal faith. Each session, we are joined by a local Episcopal priest as our camp chaplain. Every evening we gather and reflect on our day in Discovery Groups, before joining as one whole community for worship in St John in the Woods Chapel. A different group meets each day with our camp chaplain and has an opportunity to plan the worship service for that evening.

Camp is not about forcing everyone to be happy all the time. Camp is about being present together and learning to overcome challenges. Whether that means completing a difficult activity as a team, finding a way to get along with someone you don’t see eye to eye with, or stepping outside of your comfort zone and trying something new - our staff are here to keep campers safe, and help them learn to solve their own problems.

# Program Descriptions

## **Discovery Camp:**

We believe that the Discovery Group experience is the most important part of camp and the most fun. The process of sharing, learning, and growing together with the other campers and staff can result in experiences which are new and exciting for everyone. During Discovery Camp sessions, you will have the opportunity to go on hikes, cook-out with your group, share in group discussions, and plan some of your group's activities. Each day at camp winds down with a chapel service. You'll also be able to participate in arts and crafts projects, archery, swimming in the outdoor pool, and more! Come with lots of energy, ideas, a positive attitude, and a desire to have fun with others.

## **International Discovery Camp:**

All of the above, plus we're joined for the week by boys from the Rikkyo Episcopal school in Tokyo, Japan. This cultural exchange program has become a longstanding tradition here at Camp Huston. We particularly look forward to "Japan Day" every year—when the Japanese campers facilitate traditional Japanese dancing, games, songs, and calligraphy, followed by a delicious Japanese meal.

## **Mini Camp:**

A four day/three night version of Discovery Camp and a great introduction to summer camp! Mini Discovery Groups spend mornings and afternoons together playing games, hiking the trails, and creating art projects. This is a wonderful opportunity for younger children to experience the magic of summer at Camp Huston.

## **Horse Camp:**

Campers spend each morning during the session with experienced, trained equestrian staff learning riding techniques and developing horse-handling skills. Campers return to Camp Huston for lunch and spend the afternoon and evening enjoying traditional summer camp activities.

# Camp Huston's Goals

Camp Huston's goal is, through God, to facilitate campers learning more about themselves, nature, and others.

We achieve this through the following objectives:

**As a recipient of God's gifts, campers will learn more about themselves by:**

- Developing a positive self-image
- Trying new activities
- Seeing oneself as an important part of a Christian community
- Discovering previously unknown aspects of oneself
- Discovering and appreciating individual gifts and talents

**As a steward of God's creation, campers will learn more about nature by:**

- Learning to take responsibility for behavior that effects the environment
- Developing good judgement that enables safe participation in activities
- Developing and deepening an appreciation of nature and the natural world
- Participating in conservation projects at camp
- Developing respect for the camp grounds

**As a member of a Christian community, the camper will learn more about others by:**

- Participating in camp activities
- Showing an awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others
- Accepting others as they are
- Learning more about walking a Christian life
- Learning to develop trust in self and others
- Cooperating and sharing with others
- Learning to resolve conflicts constructively

# Camper Behavior & Discipline

## Essential functions.

Before coming to camp, please ask yourself: Can my child do the following?

- Sleep in a room with six to eight other people without sleep aids.
- Follow the written camp policies and procedures.
- Follow verbal directions.
- Hike approximately 250 steps uphill on a trail.
- Spend prolonged periods of time working in a group.
- Use the bathroom and clean oneself unassisted.
- Self-calm following an event that causes frustration, sadness, or anger.

Campers with specific dietary needs are expected to manage their own food intake, following an orientation with the food service manager.

## Discipline

Camp staff will guide children through normal day-to-day behavior issues using acceptable techniques such as encouraging campers to talk about their feelings and modelling how to speak and interact with others in a positive manner. If your child cannot participate in an activity in an appropriate manner, staff may ask them to sit out for a minute and breathe. Our staff will not use physical punishment, humiliation, scare tactics, or other controlling measures. If a child's behavior continues to be disruptive after reasonable measures have been made to assist the camper in adjusting the camp setting, the camper will meet with staff to draft a behavior contract. Parents will be notified, as failure to follow the behavior contract will result in dismissal from camp. Camp Huston staff reserve the right to immediately send home a camper from our summer camp programs. Chronic, extreme, or illegal behavior may warrant immediate dismissal.

## Bullying

Bullying of any type is unacceptable at Camp Huston and may result in immediate dismissal from the camp program. Every person has the right to the best possible experience at camp. We ask that you encourage your camper to be a positive influence on other campers, and stress to your camper to talk with a staff member if there is any issue. We train all our staff to recognize and resolve bullying issues.

# Camp Huston Staff

## *Alida Garcia - Executive Director*

Alida Garcia grew up in a small Texas town near San Antonio. She has been involved with camps and programming for over 25 years. Alida has experience with many different program models and has worked at several different camps across the US. She is the oldest of three and enjoys reading, spending time outdoors, team sports, water sports of all kinds, traveling, drawing, music and spending time with her friends, family and the best pooches ever, Maggie & Murphy.



## *Teri McFarlane - Food Service Director*

“The best food ever! She wrote home about it!”

Teri has earned such a strong reputation with our campers and conference guests by providing quality and choice. She’s happy to talk to any camper parent with questions or concerns about dietary needs and food allergies. In their free time, Teri and her husband Tim enjoy going to see live concerts (such as Elton John and Billie Joel), spending time with family, and hanging out with their cats.



## *Chris Miller - Operations Director*

Chris has been at Camp Huston since 2006! Chris worked first as a kitchen assistant and then as a housekeeper. Her efforts behind the scenes have had a huge impact on Summer Camp, whether you knew her or not! Now Chris works full time making sure everything runs smoothly at Camp Huston. Chris is a Girl Scout Leader and enjoys reading and hiking in her spare time. She loves spending time with her husband Shawn and kids Abby and Zach.



## *Rachel Gilliam - Program Director*

Rachel joined Camp Huston in April 2025, but has been involved in summer camp in a variety of ways for most of her life. From attending as a camper in West Virginia, to working as a camp counselor in college and on summer leadership staff in grad school, then eventually working as Program Director for 5 years in Alabama, her love for camp has only grown. In her spare time, she loves to run, hike, and travel!



## *Kim Eichner - Registrar & Office Manager*

Kim has worked in administrative positions for 20 years both in private business and the Episcopal church. She’s also been a retreat leader for her Women’s Retreat, and brought her group out to Huston for 20+ years. She spends her spare time doing yoga and cheering on the Seahawks!



# Communication

**Camper Mail**—Encourage your child to write letters home from camp by including a self-addressed stamped envelope in their luggage. Receiving positive and encouraging notes from you from home helps campers feel secure during their stay with us. Please do not be concerned if you don't hear from your camper right away. Feel free to leave letters with us at check-in for distribution throughout the week. Care packages are accepted, but please limit packages to 1-2 each session. Please do not include any food items due to possibility of food allergies and attracting curious critters to cabins.

**Emails**—Email may be sent to your camper at registrar@houston.org with your camper's full name in the subject box. Email will be delivered that day if received before 11am or the following day if received after 11am. Emails sent the last day of the session will not be delivered.

**Phone calls**—In this time of instant communication, we know it is difficult as a parent to not be in touch directly with your camper while they are here with us. We believe that the camp experience is enhanced when children can unplug from their devices and truly enjoy every moment of their time here. For this reason, cell phones are not allowed at Camp Huston for our campers. Please do not tell your camper they will be able to call you while they are here. Promises like this can increase and worsen feelings of homesickness and cause problems for your camper. If a problem arises for us here at camp, we will be sure to call you right away.

## Missing Home

Though a perfectly normal and understandable feeling, homesickness is unpleasant. It is a *normal reaction* for any of us to feel as a result of being separated from our typical support network. It varies in intensity for campers and even staff. Many campers feel the symptoms of homesickness for the first day or two. For most, these feelings subside. A few campers may experience more prolonged or intense feelings of missing home.

Our staff are trained well to help your camper recognize their homesickness and work through it in an intentional and healthy way. *Typically* it presents itself with sadness, crying, and mild anxiety about being away from family members. If we notice your camper struggling through homesickness beyond this description, we will call to have you assist us in resolving the issue for your child.

The last element of homesickness is your own response as a parent to your child coming to camp. We know you will miss them as much as they will be missing you. It's important to recognize your own feelings and ensure you do not pass on your own anxieties to your camper when they come to camp. For example, instead of saying "I'm going to miss you so much", try something like "I can't wait for you to get home and tell me all the awesome things you do at camp this week." If you have any concerns, please contact Alida Garcia, Executive Director, or Rachel Gilliam, Program Director at 360-793-0441.

# Health Form & Medication

Fill out and turn in all parts of the health & authorization release form online before the beginning of the camp session. This allows our Health Care Provider (HCP) an opportunity to prepare in advance for your camper's care. This form also authorizes emergency medical treatment. Your camper will not be allowed to check in if this release is not signed. This form is newly available online this year, and we ask your patience as we work out the bugs. A physical exam within the past 6 months with a doctor's signature is recommended but not required. During camp, guardians will be contacted in the event of a health concern, illness, or injury that does not progress as expected, or a situation requiring medical treatment outside of camp. Please make a copy of the signed medical form for your records.

All prescription and non-prescription camper medications are collected by our HCP at check-in, for your child's and everyone's safety. **Medications must be in the original containers**, with the original label showing the camper's name and doctor's directions for administration. Pill boxes/organizers are not accepted. Our HCP fully controls medication dispensing in accordance with the doctor's prescription. Be sure to pack enough for the entire camp session. Please have prescription and non-prescription medications such as vitamins, herbal supplements, pain relievers, creams, etc. readily available to hand in to the our HCP at check-in. Campers on psycho-therapeutic medication must be on the prescribed dose for a minimum of three months prior to arrival at camp.

**Covid-19:** Most up-to-date COVID-19 information can be found on our website, [huston.org](http://huston.org).

**We ask for your patience on registration day as we have additional health screening to conduct to ensure the safety of your camper.** These checks are for lice (in the hair), athlete's foot (on the feet), and scabies (on hands and feet), and temperature check for fever.

**Inhalers:** Even if your camper doesn't frequently need their inhaler, please bring it! The environment and activities at camp can affect breathing differently than at home.

**Early dismissal:** In the event a camper must return home early for a medical or behavioral reason; parents or guardians are responsible to pick up the camper immediately upon notification.

**Cancellation:** Cancellations must be received in writing 15 days before the session begins. We will refund your fee, minus the \$75 deposit, if we receive written notice as requested. If you must cancel, please let us know as soon as possible.

# Discovery Camp Daily Schedule

- 7:00am Wake-up
- 7:45am Hosting
- 8:00am Breakfast
- 8:30am Chaplain Time
- 9:30am Cabin Time
- 10:00am Morning Discovery Group Time
- 11:45am Hosting
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 12:45pm Quiet time
- 2:00pm Activity Time
- 4:00pm Snack / Afternoon Discovery Group Time
- 5:45pm Hosting
- 6:00pm Dinner
- 7:00pm Evening Community Time
- 8:30pm Chapel
- 9:00pm Reflection for Older Campers/Younger Campers get ready for bed
- 9:30pm Lights Out for Younger Campers/Older Campers get ready for bed
- 10:00pm Lights out for Older Campers

Our Horse Camp program follows the same schedule as Discovery Camp except campers spend their morning Discovery Group Time with the horses!

## Mini Camp Daily Schedule

- 7:00am Wake Up
- 7:45am Hosting
- 8:00am Breakfast
- 8:30am Chaplain Time
- 9:30am Cabin Time
- 10:00am Morning Discovery Group Time
- 11:45am Hosting
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 12:45pm Quiet Time
- 12:45pm Quiet time
- 2:00pm Activity Time
- 4:00pm Snack / Afternoon Discovery Group Time
- 5:45pm Hosting
- 6:00pm Dinner
- 7:00pm Evening Community Time
- 8:00pm Chapel
- 8:30pm Get Ready For Bed / Lights Out

# Packing List

- warm sleeping bag
- pillow
- sneakers
- hiking boots or extra shoes
- sweater/sweatshirt
- jacket
- rain coat/poncho
- underwear & socks (at least 1 pair for each day at camp)
- shirts
- jeans/long pants
- shorts
- swimsuit
- warm pajamas
- toiletries- towel, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, tissues, shampoo, etc
- flashlight & extra batteries
- sunscreen
- hat
- bug repellent
- water bottle

## Optional Items:

- pen, pre-addressed envelopes, writing paper, stamps
- shower shoes
- sunglasses
- daypack
- bible
- camera
- 100% cotton white tshirt for tie-dye

## Top Tips!

- Label everything with a name tag, laundry pen, or permanent marker.
- Limit your luggage to one duffel bag or suitcase, a laundry bag, and a sleeping bag.
- Pack masks in a plastic bag to make sure they stay clean until used!
- To make your cabin more comfortable we recommend bringing a favorite stuffed animal, pictures, or comfy pillow.
- Good shoes are important for your stay at camp. Closed toe shoes are preferred due to the many hazards.
- Include warm clothing for cool evenings and overnight camp-out.
- It's camp, dress appropriately. Plan on leaving expensive clothing and jewelry at home.

## What to leave at home

**Electronics:** cell phones, tablet, computers, ipads, smart watches, and electronic games etc. are out of place in the camp program. Please plan to leave these items at home.

**Food:** Do not pack or send food! It is not allowed in cabins as it will attract critters to the campers' living area.

**Weapons:** guns, knives, fireworks and other weaponry are strictly prohibited. Please leave pocketknives at home.

**Personal Property:** Personal sports equipment should be left at home. No personal vehicles are allowed into lower camp. The speed limit on camp property is 10mph. Animals are not permitted to stay at camp. Camp Huston does not permit the possession or use of alcohol or drugs.

# Session Pick-Up/Drop-Off

## **Counselor Training**

Begins at 3:00pm on Monday June 22nd

Ends at 1:00pm on Wednesday July 1st

## **Discovery Camp 1**

Begins at 3:00pm on Sunday July 5th

Ends after 10:00am closing service on Saturday July 11th

## **Mini Camp**

Begins at 3:00pm on Monday July 13th

Ends at 5:45pm after dinner on Thursday July 16th (please RSVP to join us for dinner!)

## **Discovery Camp 2**

Begins at 3:00pm on Sunday July 19th

Ends after 10:00am closing service on Saturday July 25th

## **Discovery Camp 3**

Begins at 3:00pm on Sunday August 2nd

Ends after 10:00am closing service on Saturday August 8th

*Check-in is between 3:00 and 4:30 pm.*

On arrival, a staff member will direct you where to park. Campers and parents/guardians will meet the registrar, program director, camp chaplain, and the camp nurse before heading to their cabin group. Staff are ready and available to help throughout the check-in process.