



# Parent Handbook

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## Sonlight Christian Camp

*"Be with kids and show them God"*

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## Why Camp?

### The Value of Camp

Unique in our world, camp offers an environment where kids can explore who they are, explore the great outdoors, be unplugged, be mentored by amazing college students and develop strengths that will be with them a lifetime. Sonlight intentionally focuses on faith and character traits in all aspects of camp.

### Our Mission

*“Be with Kids, and Show Them God.”*

Sonlight is a not-for-profit ministry, celebrating our 46th year of operation. We present the gospel through programs and relationships, lived out in all that we do. We focus on community and teamwork, striving to accept diversity and appreciate each individual as a child of God. We are governed by a Board of Directors. Our goal is to minister to young people in a camping environment based on Christian community.

## About Sonlight

Founded in 1979 by Winston and Mary Marugg, Sonlight is an independent non-denominational faith based youth camp. Our summer focus is on resident youth camps and high adventure programs for kids in 3rd grade through graduated high school seniors.

In fall, winter and spring, Sonlight is available for church or non-profit groups to rent the facility and run their own programs for a week or weekend. Sonlight provides facilities and food service.

**Finance:** Sonlight operates with a balanced budget. Our tuition represents the cost of having a child at camp. We offer a subsidized tier of tuition for our summer camps that is offset by our Campership Fund, acknowledging that families have different financial situations. Sonlight also offers additional camperships to families in need.

**Give Back:** Sonlight accepts donations specifically for:

- Camperships
- The Program Excellence Fund
- The “Give Sonlight to The Next Generation” Endowment Fund
- Sonlight also welcomes undesignated donations to be used where the need is greatest.

Please consider partnering with Sonlight to give Sonlight to kids today through the Campership fund, give Sonlight to kids tomorrow through the Program Excellence Fund, or give Sonlight to the next generation through the Endowment Fund.

## Accreditations

Sonlight is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services, as a residential youth camp in Colorado. Sonlight is accredited by the American Camp Association. We are also proud of our Leave No Trace Accreditation, a program that supports the positive interaction with our natural environment.

## A Typical Week of Summer Camp

Most camps start Sunday afternoon between 4:30 and 5:30pm. Campers have time to move into their cabins, meet their counselors and cabin mates, enjoy a warm cookie in the dining room and check in with healthcare staff.

A typical day starts with prayer circle, breakfast, then worship, a talk from our speaker, small group and quiet time. The rest of the morning and then afternoon allows time for group activities, or “options”, where campers can choose how to spend their time. Crafts, archery, a soccer game, dodgeball, Gaga Ball, 9-square in the air, “Diggler” (mountain scooters), building a fort in the woods, or mountain bikes may be included in the choices. Activities are available as is age appropriate. Group games fill the evening (dodgeball or capture the flag) with plenty of time for a campfire program each night before cabin time.

Meals traditionally are served family style, and all meals are home-cooked. Vegetarian and gluten free options are offered at every meal if requested before camp. Snacks (prepared by the cooks and nutritionally balanced) are available throughout the day. No soda machine or snack machine is available.

Sonlight Camp is licensed by the Health Department.

A day hike is part of each week, with the middle school and high school kids having the opportunity to hike in the South San Juan or Weminuche Wilderness. Older campers often have the opportunity to climb a nearby peak.

## Preparation for Camp

At the time of registration, families will create a login-in for our Parent Dashboard. Upon registration, here you will find camper-specific forms for each camper including a 'What to Bring' list, Health Form, and Physical Form (required every year), Immunization form and Authorization Form. Payment in full, as well as the health and physical forms, is due in the Sonlight office by May 15th.

### Mail and Packages

Sonlight has a daily mail call for campers. You may bring pre-written letters, postcards or small packages to camp on opening day, no postage required. They'll be included in mail call on the day you indicate on the letter or package. You also may send mail thru USPS, please mail in advance so your camper will receive their mail at camp. Address the mail to:

(Camper Name)  
Sonlight Camp  
PO Box 536  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

**\*\*\* Continuing in 2025 :** We HIGHLY encourage letters over packages, if you desire to send a package we request **only 1 package per camper** for the week they are here. This request comes as we don't have the physical space to store the amount of packages we've previously received and it highlights the disparities between campers.

### One-way Email

Sonlight provides a one-way e-mail system for all camp families. E-mails are printed and given to campers during daily mail time. **\*Please note\*** campers **cannot** send return emails. You may access the email service through your Parent Dashboard. Emails are printed once a day and you cannot designate days for emails to be delivered.

### Phones and Phone Calls: Unplugged!

Parents are encouraged to be upbeat and positive about the upcoming camp experience, especially for younger kids. Campers are not allowed to call home unless under the discretion of Camp Leadership for unique situations. Parents are welcome to call the Sonlight office if they have specific concerns about their child. All campers will be expected to turn in any cell- or smart-phones/smart watches at the beginning of camp. Campers will not be allowed to keep any device that is a phone, or has capability to connect to the Internet, or device or service that allows them to connect to parents or caregivers.

### Cabin Buddy Requests

Sonlight welcomes cabin buddy requests, and we do our best to put friends together. For first time campers, we dutifully honor buddy requests. **We do value a healthy, whole community, however, which means meeting new people and appreciating diversity. Therefore, in most circumstances we will not put large groups of campers requesting to be together in the same cabin and reserve the right to not honor cabin buddy requests if we feel it is not beneficial for certain individuals to be placed together.**

### **Bedding**

Campers bring their own sleeping bag or sheets and blankets. Pillows are provided, though many kids prefer their own pillows. Campers should bring their own towels as well.

### **Spending Money**

Sonlight has a small store with t-shirts, sweatshirts, and small items. All proceeds benefit the Sonlight Scholarship Fund. The store is only open on arrival and departure day. Campers do not need spending money during their week at camp.

### **Camp Eligibility**

Sonlight Camp expects campers to be able to live in a fast paced community, **joining in group activities** and scheduled events. Campers are expected to have the ability to manage activities of daily living (getting dressed, feeding themselves, maintaining cleanliness) and get themselves to various activities. Should assistance be needed in these areas, we request that parents notify the Sonlight leadership team of special needs before enrolling the camper.

## **Activities**

Activities provided for each camp are listed on the website. Choose the specific camp your child will be attending, and choose "Activities" in the dropdown on the main page. Activities are designed to be age appropriate.

## **Finishing Camp**

### **Closing Parent Program**

All resident camps close with a short program on departure day. Sessions end in the morning with a light continental breakfast for parents. A slideshow of the week will be shown, and a short wrap-up of our week. All campers will receive a group photo from the week.

### **Lost And Found**

All Lost and Found items will be kept at Sonlight for 2 weeks. After that time, it is donated to a local thrift store. We will do all we can to return items to the proper camper, so please be sure clothing and other important items are well marked. Any shipping fees for returning items are required to be paid by the camper or parent prior to Sonlight mailing them back.

### **Online Evaluations**

Sonlight values feedback from parents and campers so we can continue to improve. After camp, parents will receive a link to an online evaluation form, and we take the feedback seriously. Please complete it soon after your session ends!

## **Money Matters**

A \$150 deposit (\$100 for Junior Camp) is required to register for camp (unless other arrangements are made with the directors). Payment is due in full by May 15th. Payment plans are available; the Sonlight registrar can automatically charge your credit card once a month in the amount you request. Payments may be made online, or you may send a check to camp for payment. The \$150 deposit is non-refundable upon cancellation. No-shows or early departures are non-refundable. Consideration for refunds will be given for COVID positivity (based on testing.)

### **Camperships**

Sonlight offers a Tiered Pricing System. You may choose a subsidized tuition at the time of registration if you need financial assistance to attend camp. Additional partial camperships are need-based and may be available should your circumstances require additional aid. Contact Mary Marugg, Director, to inquire about campership funds. [mary@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:mary@sonlightcamp.org) or the camp landline: 970.264.4379.

## Camp Policies

### Cancellation Policy

Many of our weeks of camp, inevitably, end up with a wait list and most of our campers travel some distance to attend camp and are just waiting for a space to open. In order to provide better chances all-around of filling open spaces our cancellation policy has is defined:

***Should you cancel your registration, your nonrefundable deposit of \$150 will be kept, you are not required to pay any additional fees. If you cancel your registration within 14 days of the start of the camp and we are unable to fill your child's space, there are no refunds. There are no refunds or pro-rated pricing for early departures or late arrivals.***

### Attendance

It is expected that campers remain in the camp program for the duration of their camp. Parents may take campers in specific circumstances if the camp is notified in advance. Campers who drive themselves will turn in their vehicle keys at the beginning of the session and will not be allowed to leave until the close of the session unless written permission is given by a parent.

### Behavior

Sonlight strives to be an environment free from discrimination, violence, intimidation and harassment based on gender, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. Language, behavior and attitudes that intimidate, offend or debilitate campers or staff members are not tolerated.

Sonlight does not tolerate emotional or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse of one person by another. It may be grounds for dismissal from the program. If your camper persistently engages in behavior that is harmful to him/herself or other campers then the Director may notify you during the camp session. If necessary, your child will be sent home at your expense without refund.

### Entrance Screening and Contraband

Upon moving into their cabin, campers will have their belongings screened by the counselor. Contraband includes:

- Cell phones and smart watches
- Any device with the capability to connect to the internet via wifi, phone service or communication system
- Food, including candy and gum → attracts bears, chipmunks, squirrels and other animals
- Any medicines, vitamins, or homeopathic remedies (this is a Colorado state regulation we must comply with for our licensure) The Sonlight healthcare staff will keep and administer medications as prescribed
- Illegal substances, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or vaping inhalers
- Weapons, lighters
- Offensive clothing
- Pets

### Photos and Video of Campers and Staff

Written permission to take camper and staff photos is included on the Authorization Form. Photos will be posted in albums on your Parent Dashboard during the week of camp. We strive to give a general idea of the activities at camp and no guarantee is made for a photo of each child during the week. Additional photos will be loaded, usually, within 3 business days from the end of the session. Photo pages are password-protected. Neither names nor any identifying information are posted on the website. Each camper will be provided with a group photo at the end of the week. All photos are the property of Sonlight Camp, and may be used on the website or in printed material for promotion. No compensation will be made to staff or campers whose photo is used. The slideshow of the week will be posted on our Vimeo.com site.

### **Respect For Personal and Camp Property**

All campers and staff are expected to respect camp property, and the belongings and property of other campers and staff. Destruction or intentional abuse of property may be grounds for immediate dismissal. Campers may bring personal sports equipment to camp with permission from the Director, but all sports equipment must be used within the guidelines for camp sports equipment, and only at times approved by the Director.

### **Weapons Policy**

The use, possession, or carrying of any kind of firearm or weapon on the property of Sonlight Christian Camp is strictly prohibited. Sonlight retains final authority in determining what constitutes a weapon, especially when evaluating potential danger.

Specifically prohibited items include, but are not limited to, knife blades, lasers, nunchucks, shockers, razor blades, brass knuckles, acid, metal pipes, stun guns, BB guns, firearms, pistols, shotguns, rifles, ammunition, explosive devices, fireworks, pyrotechnics, any other instruments capable of inflicting serious injury and/or other common materials used for the purpose of inflicting fear or injury.

### **Drugs and Illegal Substances**

Prescription, over-the-counter medications (with the exception of epi-pens and asthma inhalers) and any homeopathic remedies are turned in with the healthcare staff (to comply with state regulation.) All remedies and medications **MUST** be authorized by a physician on the camper's Physical Form **and be in its original packaging**. Alcohol and other substances are not allowed.

## **Healthcare at Sonlight**

### **Healthcare Staff**

Sonlight provides healthcare staff for all programs. Not all healthcare staff members are RNs, though a supervising RN will oversee all healthcare.

### **Healthcare Facilities**

In addition to a small, simple healthcare facility at Sonlight, Sonlight has access to a clinic, hospital and pharmacy in Pagosa Springs. These supporting health services, including an EMS service, are 30 minutes from Sonlight.

### **Scope of Service**

Healthcare at Sonlight is limited to care of routine illness and injury. We do not have physicians in residence. We do have medical protocols signed by our supervising physician. Sonlight Camp stocks selected over-the-counter medications that are administered per the medical protocols on file from our supervising physician.

### **Medications at Camp**

If your child takes medications on a routine basis, we will administer these during their session at Sonlight. **By Colorado regulation, all medications (prescription, homeopathic, over-the-counter or vitamins) must be provided to Sonlight in the original pharmacy container, listed on the camper's Physical Form and be prescribed to the person we will be administering them to.** Colorado state regulation prohibits campers from keeping their own medications, with the exception of epi-pens and rescue inhalers. Medications will be collected on opening day, when your camper checks in with healthcare staff. ***Please note: all over the counter medications and homeopathic remedies are also subject to this regulation.***

### **Communicable Disease**

Sonlight reserves the right to isolate or delay attendance of a camper who is ill at the time of camp opening, or has been exposed to communicable disease. Campers may have a delayed arrival of one or two days if they are ill.

### **Health Forms and Physical Forms**

Colorado State regulation requires a current health form on file for each camper and staff member. The health form must be filled out anew every year. A Physical Form, with a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant exam is required within 12 months of the camp session for all campers. Health forms are due in the Sonlight office by May 15th unless other arrangements are made.

**Health Information**

Sonlight healthcare staff have access to all health forms. Beyond that, health information is shared with Sonlight staff only on a “need to know” basis.

**Parent Communication Regarding Health Concerns at Camp**

Sonlight healthcare or administrative staff will communicate with parents or guardians any time there is a need for out-of-camp healthcare. We will contact parents /guardians with any concerns we have regarding your child. Licensed by the health department, Sonlight Camp must report COVID positive cases to the state. We will have quarantine / isolation guidance from the state for COVID positive, or COVID exposed individuals. Sonlight Camp will keep parents informed about any COVID issues with your child, to include symptoms and exposures. Sonlight staff do not routinely contact parents for healthcare or first aid managed at Sonlight such as bee stings, scrapes and bumps, minor headaches or sore throats.

**Parent Concerns: Contact the Director**

Should you have any concerns about Sonlight, either pre-camp or post-camp, please feel free to contact our leadership staff:

- Mary Marugg – Director 970.264.4379 (camp landline) or [mary@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:mary@sonlightcamp.org)
- Claire Madera- Program Director 970.264.4379 (camp landline) or [claire@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:claire@sonlightcamp.org)
- Becca Meyer- Registrar 970-403-5491 or [meyer@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:meyer@sonlightcamp.org)

Should you have any concerns of licensing violations or other violations of camper safety, please contact:

Archuleta County Department of Human Services 970-264-2182  
551 Hot Springs Blvd.  
P.O. Box 240  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

Archuleta County Sheriff 970-264-8430  
449 San Juan St.  
P.O. Box 638  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

Colorado Division of Human Services 303-866-5700  
Division of Childcare  
1575 Sherman Street, First Floor Denver, CO 80203

***Thank you for sharing your child(ren) with Sonlight this summer!***