

# Sonlight Parent Handbook | 2018



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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, in our 39th year of operation. We present the gospel through programs and relationships. 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 a non-denominational Christian youth camp. Our summer focus is on resident youth camps and high adventure programs for kids 3rd grade through high school.

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 subsidized tier tuition for our summer camps that is offset by our Scholarship Fund, acknowledging that families have different financial situations. Sonlight also offers additional scholarships to families in need.

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

- Scholarships
- The Program Excellence Fund
- The “Give Sonlight To The Next Generation” Endowment Fund

Please consider partnering with Sonlight to give Sonlight to kids today through the scholarship 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.



# A Typical Week of Summer Camp

Most camps start Sunday afternoon between 4:30 and 5:30pm. Campers have time to move in to 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 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, dodge ball, Gaga Ball, 9-square in the air, “Diggler” (mountain scooters), building a fort in the woods, or the climbing wall may be included in the choices. Group games fill the evening (like dodge ball or capture the flag) with plenty of time for a campfire program each night.

Meals are served family style, and all meals are home-cooked. Vegetarian and gluten free options are offered at every meal if requested. Snacks are available throughout the day. A water bottle is provided for each camper. No soda machine is available.

Dependent on the river flow, middle school and high school campers will go rafting on the Animas River in Durango. Sonlight contracts with a professional rafting company in Durango.

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) 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. Address the mail to:

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

Campers receive some bunk time each day, and counselors will encourage campers to write home. Pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes are suggested.

### One-way E-mail

Sonlight provides a, one-way e-mail system for all camp families. E-mails are printed and given to campers during daily mail call. \*Please note\* campers **cannot** send return e-mails. 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. 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 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.

### **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.

### **Bedding**

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

### **Spending Money**

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

## **Finishing Camp**

### **Closing Parent Program**

All resident camps close with a short program on departure day. Sessions ending in the morning include a light continental breakfast for parents. A slideshow of the week will be shown, and 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 is well marked.

### **Online Parent Evaluation**

Sonlight values parent feedback 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 camp week!

## **Money Matters**

A \$100 deposit 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. A \$50 non-refundable fee is charged for cancellations. No-shows or early departures are non-refundable.

### **Scholarships**

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 scholarships may be available should you need additional financial aid. Contact Sara Tyler, Co-Director, to inquire about those scholarship funds.

# Camp Policies

## 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.

## 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 necessary, you will be notified and your child will be sent home at your expense without refund.

## Entrance Screening and Contraband

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

- Cell phones
- Any device with the capability to connect to the internet
- Food, including candy and gum
- Illegal substances, alcohol and tobacco
- Weapons, lighters
- Offensive clothing
- Music not appropriate for a Christian youth camp

## 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. No guarantee is made for a photo of each child. Photo pages are password protected during the session when campers are at camp. 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 and photos will be available for purchase through your Parent Dashboard. All proceeds go directly to the Sonlight Scholarship Fund.

## 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, nunchuks, 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 and over-the-counter medications (with the exception of epi-pens and asthma inhalers) are turned in with the healthcare staff (to comply with state regulation.) 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 an RN is usually on site.

### **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, and we stock selected over-the-counter medications.

### **Medications at Camp**

If your child takes medications on a routine basis, we will administer these during their session at Sonlight. By Colorado regulation the medications must be provided to Sonlight in the original pharmacy container, 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.

### **Communicable Disease**

Sonlight reserves the right not to enroll 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 has 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. We 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:

Chelsea Poest - Program Director 970.264.4379 or [chelsea@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:chelsea@sonlightcamp.org)

Emrys Tyler – Co-Director 970.264.4379 or [emrys@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:emrys@sonlightcamp.org)

Sara Tyler – Co-Director 970.264.4379 or [sara@sonlightcamp.org](mailto:sara@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's Office  
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 children with Sonlight this summer!

