



Dean & Counselor Handbook

Welcome to Summer at Silver Lake!

We are so excited that you are volunteering your time with us for the week. The impact you have on the conferees' lives can never truly be measured. For the next week, you will become more than just an adult role model; you will become their friend, their counselor/advisor, and their older sibling. You will make sure each young person in your care is safe and encouraged to have a positive, life-changing summer conference experience. (No pressure or anything. 😊)

This handbook will help you become familiar with some of the policies and procedures of Silver Lake Conference Center. Stuff you need to know, even if you didn't know you needed to know it!

If you have any questions about anything in this book, please talk to your dean (if you are a counselor) or Tim or Anne. Have an awesome week and God bless you! We'll be here with you!

Tim & Anne Hughes, Co-Directors

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The Mission of Silver Lake Conference Center

Silver Lake Conference Center, a year-round outdoor ministry of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, is called to covenant in partnership with God and with the churches of the Conference in the work of forming life-sustaining leaders for the Church and world, by offering:

- Experiences of inclusive and nurturing Christian community
- Opportunities to grow and participate as Christ's disciples
- A model of sustainable environmental stewardship of God's world

We worship, learn, play, serve and work together, respecting the right of private judgment. We seek to provide a safe environment of acceptance regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, reflecting our unity in Christ and respecting the faith journeys of all of God's children.

If your personal, religious or political views differ from this mission, we ask that you be respectful of our mission for the week that you are with us.

A General Note

It is all of our jobs to give the kids the best week of their lives. Please, if you have any problems, questions, concerns...anything on your mind, talk to your deans or Tim, or Anne, or our Chaplain. We like to try to handle any problem using three simple steps: 1. prevention; 2. early intervention; and 3. action (not reaction). As a general rule of thumb, if any event occurs that you feel will have parents calling us later, we need to know about it as soon as it happens. All incidents require notification and documentation. This way, we can support and protect you and Silver Lake to the best of our ability.

Role Modeling

This week, you are an important role model in the lives of the young people you are leading, they will look to you for how they are supposed to act and behave throughout the week. This is an awesome power and a huge responsibility. Because of it, you always need to model good manners and behavior, even when you think there is no one around (the kids are always watching 😊). If you are counseling (or deaning) it means someone thinks you have the nature to be a good role model, so don't let them down! We also ask

that you help the staff (deans and summer staff) by helping to, for lack of a better word, control your charges. If someone is trying to get everyone's attention by putting their hand up or by speaking on a microphone, make sure your kids are paying attention, and make sure you are paying attention! It might not seem like a big deal, but if you are talking to someone while you should be listening, then your kids are going to do the same. Isn't role modeling great? 😊

Care of Conferees

Inappropriate Touching Policy

- Staff/Volunteers will never touch, grab, or physically interact with conferees in any inappropriate or threatening manner.
- Staff/Volunteers will not engage in “horseplay” with conferees.
- Staff/Volunteers will maintain appropriate boundaries and recognize their role as an authority figure and role model, not an older sibling.
- Staff/Volunteers will ask before giving a conferee a hug, putting their arm around their shoulder, etc.
- Staff/Volunteers will not allow themselves to be alone with a single conferee in a secluded area or closed room.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Any Silver Lake Staff or Volunteer alleged to have abused or neglected a child will be immediately suspended and removed from the site pending an investigation.

Behavior Challenges

- Staff/Volunteers will redirect conferee behavior in a positive way. (For example: “It would really help me out if you could focus in on our activity, thanks.”)
- Staff/Volunteers may speak to the child separately to ask the child how they can help the child maintain more successful behavior. This will help the child take ownership in the process. The child may have a behavior plan in use at home/school that we can use here. Example: Develop a color card system with the child. The counselors will carry three colored cards with them (various colors representing various levels of warning). They can silently hold up the card so the child is aware that they are out of line, but the

rest of the group is not. One color may even represent “good” behavior to help the child recognize such.

- For continual, minor behavior problems Staff/Volunteers may want to use a 3 Strike system such as Strike 1 (warning), Strike 2 (firm warning), and Strike 3 (they’re out – sit out on one activity).
- Staff/Volunteers will ask for help if they are struggling with conferee behavior or feel overwhelmed.
- Staff/Volunteers will ask for help from the following individuals:
 - Other Counselors
 - Dean
 - Nurse
 - Chaplain
 - Conferee’s Parent (Dean may call—please tell a director if you need to call a parent)
 - Assistant Director
 - Co-Director
- Each of these individuals must be informed of the situation before bringing the child to meet with them.
- If a physical fight should occur, please inform a Director or Assistant Director immediately. Avoid letting a crowd gather. Send somebody to get help from a Dean, Director, or Assistant Director. Do not put yourself in harm’s way to stop a fight.

Wet Beds

Should a conferee wet his or her bedding, or soil it in any other way, please discreetly contact your Resource Aide, who will replace the bedding. We will also take the soiled bedding to our laundry and return the cleaned items as soon as possible.

Homesickness

Homesickness is not uncommon, but it is also not life threatening. There are many things you can do to make your conferees feel welcome. Be certain to learn their names, as well as something unique about them. Talk to them! Encourage them to engage fully in activities, help them take their minds off home. Homesickness is often an indication that there is something good at home to miss; help conferees share and celebrate what is so good at home.

Do not make any promises whatsoever about being able to go home or even call home. This sets you up for a sensitive situation if that promise cannot be honored. In really difficult cases, try to make an hour-by-hour contract to get through the day: “OK, get through dinner and then we’ll talk about it. Alright, now get through worship, etc.” Before you know it, Saturday morning will be here.

Phone Calls Home

We discourage calling home while at Silver Lake. In the case of homesickness, it almost always makes the child feel more homesick to call. Please don’t promise or forbid the conferee to call home. Simply explain (in a reassuring way) that you need to discuss it with the dean and come up with a plan. If there is a problem with a child, the dean, Co-Directors, and nurse will discuss how to best deal with it. If necessary, the dean, Co-Directors, or nurse will first call the parent with any concerns that arise regarding their child.

If you need to make a phone call, you may use the pay phone in the basement of the Cedars, provided that there is not a ceramics class in session. The office phones may be used with permission from the directors or office personnel, but all long distance calls **MUST** be made collect or with a calling card.

Counselor Care of Conferees

Counselors are responsible for knowing where conferees are at all times, especially your cabin of kids. This is especially important during unstructured times and transitions between activities. Large group activities require extra supervision. Mingle with the group and don’t get distracted by other counselors. With your deans, identify high-risk kids—socially awkward, potential victims of bullying or teasing—and make an effort to connect with them and watch out for them. No one is allowed to threaten, scare, or harm another, and conferees should be urged to tell you immediately if anyone tries. Bedtime is high-risk time: it involves taking showers, changing clothes, and lights out. Kids should not be left alone after they “fall asleep.” It’s the counselor’s responsibility to be there, if problems or concerns arise, or un-Silver Lake behavior is likely to be tried. Station yourself within earshot of shower activity, changing, etc. and let conferees know you are there by talking to folks.

Set clear standards of behavior and keep your boundaries clear. If you are engaging in questionable conversation, off-color jokes, language or subject matter, ask yourself this, “Would I want my mom or their mom to hear this conversation?” If you hear something of concern from your conferees, ask follow-up questions and pass on what you’ve learned to your dean.

You must report behavioral incidents, problem situations, or problem adult contact immediately. There are incident report forms in the summer office that are submitted to the Co-Directors.

Health and Safety

Medication/Health Center/Ticks

Medication for the campers is dispensed by the nurse before breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks at the Health Center or as otherwise arranged by the nurse. Please have a counselor accompany conferees to the Health Center for their medications. Adults must check in their medications with the nurse if they are staying in a room with anyone under the age of 18.

If any person gets hurt, please send them with a buddy and/or a counselor to the Health Center. If the nurse is not at the Health Center, there is a sign at the Health Center that will tell you where he/she is. If you cannot locate the nurse, please ask a summer staff member with a radio to call the nurse for you. If there is a problem at night, use your judgment. If it’s not an emergency, try to wait till morning. The nurse needs her sleep too! You have first aid kits/bandaids, etc. in your building/cabin group, and can manage the minor needs with the resources provided, and let the nurse know at med times if there are any health issues that need to be noted or watched.

If you or a conferee find a tick, please go to the Health Center and let the nurse remove it. If you know the proper way of removing a tick yourself, stop by the Health Center anyway just to let the nurse make a note of it. We send out “tick letters” to parents notifying them of the symptoms of Lyme disease.

Emergency Procedures

Contacting Staff In An Emergency

If the emergency is life threatening, please call 911 IMMEDIATELY (from SLCC phones **dial 9-911**). After you make this call or if it is non-life threatening, contact SLCC staff by phone or radio or go to the Summer Office or the Main Office:

- During the day, please call the summer office at 4331.
- If no one answers, call the main office at 5526.
- The nurse's office number is 4336.
- The night emergency line is 4335.

All of these numbers are posted by the phones in your living area or building. Please call the night emergency numbers only for true emergencies.

To contact staff immediately, find a staff member with a radio or go to the Summer Office. If no one is there to help you, please use the radio located to the right of the office assistant's desk.

- To operate it, press and hold the button on the left side of the radio as you talk.
- If no one is responding, check to see if the big knob on top is set to 1 (turn the knob all the way to the left) and turn the smaller knob (volume) all the way to the right.

Major Crisis: Explosion, Multiple Victims, Fire, Evacuation needed

- Call 911 (from SLCC phones **dial 9-911**)
- **Car horn** or **bell ringing** continuously
- Staff will let you know what to do and what you can do to help.

Lost Swimmer

- Your main job is to keep everyone (conferees and yourself) calm, cool, and collected. Keep their focus away from the water area.
- Do not panic! Do not increase panic by running, yelling, or speeding in vehicles. Be a role model so this event can be handled safely and quickly.

Accident or Injury

Give immediate first aid to victim. Send someone to call the nurse.

Do not call 911 unless the injury is life threatening: severe bleeding, or requiring CPR or Rescue Breathing.

Contact Director/Office or anyone with a radio to get Nurse/Director who will determine if injury will require EMTs and/or emergency transport.

Thunder Storms

Every now and then, big, dark, angry clouds like to come into town here. If severe thunderstorms do rear their ugly head, listen for a **car horn** or **bell ringing continuously**.

- If you hear the bell ringing continuously, or hear thunder or see lightening, please take shelter immediately.
- Move to the closest building. This may mean any one of the three waterfront buildings, if your group is down the hill. It is OK to take shelter at the nearest building even if it is not where your conference is staying for the week.
- All groups in cabins or near the Social Hall go IMMEDIATELY to the Social Hall. Summer Staff will be responsible for the safety of the Social Hall. They will not allow anyone to leave the building for any reason until it is safe. Do not send people out to secure cabins; wet sleeping bags can be dealt with later. Counselors and Deans should assist the Summer Staff in maintaining a safe and calm atmosphere by leading songs and playing games until the storm passes.
- Stay out of the shower and away from water.
- Unplug computers and modems.
- Phones should be used for emergency purposes only.

When the storm has passed, the Admin Team will make the decision to let people leave buildings.

If a storm hits at night and/or there is a lot of wind, stay in your building or cabin.

Tornado

In the event of a severe weather condition, like tornados, everyone onsite will take refuge in the basements of the Glen and Cedars. In extreme danger (e.g., you can see the tornado on the other side of the ball field) people will be moved to the basement of the Pines and the crawl space below the Cedars' basement. Like any time of crisis, the Summer Staff will be relying on you to help keep everyone calm and safe.

Downed Power Line

- Stay at least 20 feet away.
- Do not try to move it.
- Keep others away.
- Call Site Manager or ask a staff person to do so.
- They will access the need to call 911 or repair service.

- If power line is in a public area, stay by it until others find you, then send for the Site Manager; if it is in a remote location, leave and find the Site Manager.

Rabid Animals

- If you suspect an animal to be rabid (any mammal), stay at least 20 feet away.
- Notify the Director on duty immediately.
- If you are in a public area, wait until others come; if in a remote area, go find help.

Lost Person

If you suspect that someone (conferee, counselor or dean) is lost, please search anyplace your group might be at the time. We have had “lost” people who were simply taking a nap in their room. If you cannot find the person, notify the Director on duty IMMEDIATELY. Staff will be called upon and will start to search the camp from top to bottom. Staff will instruct you, but more than likely we will ask you to continue with your normal programming. The Director on Duty will determine if and when the police are called and will contact the child’s family if necessary.

Administration: General Rules

Forms & Paperwork

All paperwork must be returned to the Summer Office by Sunday morning before lunch. This includes but is not limited to: Conference Daily Schedules, Bunk Lists, Counselor Lists, Volunteer Applications, Voluntary Disclosure Forms, Health Forms. Everyone on site is required to have a current Health Form, even grown-ups. Health Forms expire 3 years from the date of the doctor’s signature.

Maintenance & Housekeeping Requests

If you find something broken around camp, please alert the SLCC staff by filling out a Maintenance Request Form (MRF). If your request is more housekeeping in nature, please fill out a Housekeeping Request Form (HRF). Both forms are available in the summer office. Please return them to the summer office.

Offices

These spaces are for staff and volunteer staff only, and we ask that conferees do not enter. The summer office contains mailboxes where deans and counselors can retrieve messages and faxes, as well as weather reports.

Parking, Driving/Walking On The Roads

We ask that you walk, not drive around camp throughout the week. Please park your car in the parking lot, not near your building during the week. Please walk up and down the hill unless you have a medical condition. We have golf carts for those with mobility challenges. We are ultimately looking out for the safety of the entire community. When you are walking around the roads in camp, please move to the right side of the road when you see a camp vehicle and stop until it has passed you.

Signing In and Out

Everyone on site (counselors, deans, and staff) is required to sign in and out when they are leaving site. You do not need the staff's permission to leave; that is up to the Deans of individual conferences. However, in case of emergency, we would like to know who is on site and who is not. The sign out book is located in the Main Office at the Health and Welcome Center. Please sign back in once you return to the site.

Conservation

As stewards of God's creation, it is our responsibility to assure that we are using our natural resources wisely and that we reduce waste as much as possible. To this end, we seek to conserve paper and paper products (towels, plates, cups), water, electricity, and food. We also recycle metal, plastic, paper, and glass, as well as redeemable cans. The offices have paper receptacles, and soda can bins can be found by the Summer Office and in winterized buildings. Please encourage conferees to take only what they need and use all that they take. Please shut off all lights if you are the last to leave a room or building. Every little bit helps!

Pranks

We ask that conferences do not participate in any pranks against a summer staff member, and vice versa. Absolutely no malicious, or “spirit breaking,” pranks, or those that single out an individual, will be tolerated. Any “helpful” pranks need to be approved by a Director.

Smoking

If you are under the age of 18, you may not smoke at Silver Lake. If you are 18 or older and you do smoke, you must go off Silver Lake property to smoke. Smoking is not allowed on Silver Lake property.

Daily Schedule and Program Planning

Offsite Trips

If you are taking your conference off site at any point during your week stay with us, make sure we know as soon as possible! Permission slips must be filled out by the parents of each conferee or counselor under the age of 18 before going offsite. In addition, you need to file a plan for your trip each day with the summer office. The plan includes where you are being dropped off, where you are going, and where you are being picked up. If you use a bus, it will also contain the bus company’s phone number. The Summer Office assistant can get you the required forms. We need to be able to account for all the children in our care for the week, even if they are not on site with us.

Deans’ Meeting

The Deans of the conferences will meet a half-hour before lunch each day to discuss scheduling and other issues important to the community. The meeting may be moved to after dinner if an offsite conference is in session, so as to include that Dean.

Dining Hall Information

Here at Silver Lake, we have some expectations about how to act in the Dining Hall:

- There needs to be at least one counselor per table.

- We ask that everyone take hats off during grace and for the duration of the meal.
- Deans and Counselors should supervise their tables. Make sure conferees eat something at every meal. Make sure that nobody is being wasteful or intentionally messy.
- We meter water consumption to comply with the D.E.P. We must not waste water. Please help us save water in any way possible; it is the right thing to do.
- If anyone in your conference has a special diet, they need to tell the Kitchen Staff by Sunday night so that we can make sure they get what they need.
- If conferees do not like what is being served, we have several other options. Just ask a Kitchen Staff person and they will be glad to help.
- After breakfast, the Chaplain will lead a brief morning devotion. After lunch and after dinner, a conference will lead singing. Dessert is served after singing. **Meals are 30 minutes long. The morning devotion and after meal singing will begin 30 minutes from the start of the meal. Please discourage shouting, chanting, or singing during the meals.

Programs

Please send one counselor for every eight conferees to all programs provided by Silver Lake Staff. We need your help in leading the activity and engaging the conferees. If your group does not plan to attend any scheduled program activity—from ceramics to night hikes—or if you are going to be late, please notify the Program/Resource Staff as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made.

Quiet Time

Each day after lunch, each conference is required to observe 45-60 minutes of quiet time. Some conferences refer to this as in-cabin time. Generally, conferees are expected to be in their respective bunkrooms, engaging in a restful activity (alone) that does not disturb others. Counselors are expected to remain with their conferees in bunkrooms or cabins.

Use of the Social Hall

If, at the deans' meeting, you arrange to use the Social Hall for a group activity that is not part of an all-camp program (worship, presentation, etc.) it is your responsibility to break down and set up any tables and chairs that you have had to move in the course of

programming. Staff may be available to help with this, but the ultimate responsibility falls to the group using the space.

Worship

All camp worship is held nightly, usually at 7:30 pm.

The location will be posted daily on the chalkboard outside of the Summer Office. We have two wonderful outdoor chapels that help create a sacred atmosphere for worship. We ask that counselors help their conferees remain quiet and respectful on the way to, and during, worship time. Please remove all hats during worship. Under normal circumstances, worship should last for about 30 minutes. If your worship service will be longer than 30 minutes, be sure to let your fellow deans and counselors know so that they can adjust their night programming accordingly.

Staff Show and Slide Show

There are two camp-wide events held in the Social Hall each week:

- Staff Presentation (Tuesday 8:00 PM): This program begins with a short talk about Missions Day and typically lasts 40 minutes. Conferences will be dismissed one at a time to go to snacks when the Staff Presentation is over. Your conference is welcome to stay and dance with the staff or leave and go to your own program. No additional staff-led activities are offered on Tuesday night.
- Slide Show (Friday 8:00 PM): This program lasts approximately 20 minutes.

Please let the younger conferences sit in the front, closest to the stage, and leave an aisle through the center of the audience.

Campfires & Marshmallow Roasting

Campfires are a high point of any camping experience, and s'mores make it just that much better! We are able to provide materials for s'mores as a snack replacement during one campfire for each conference. Please arrange this with the Resource Coordinator.

We encourage conferees to roast their own marshmallows, but discourage the "flaming projectile" method of roasting. Additional programming for your campfire is available to be led by member of the Summer Staff. Please arrange this with the Resource Coordinator ahead of time.

Please help your conferees observe safe behavior around the campfire area and be certain to listen to the ground rules explained by the staff person leading the fire. All night activities, including campfires, **MUST** be finished by 9:30 PM.

In Cabin/Lights Out Time and Noise Curfew

There is an all-camp noise curfew of 10:00 pm out of respect for the entire Silver Lake community and our neighbors. All activities must cease by this hour. Camp-wide, it is expected that lights will be out by 11:00 pm, including summer staff.

In-Cabin Time: the time when a group is required to be in their assigned sleeping areas. This should be a half-hour before Lights Out Time.

Lights Out Time: a step closer to sleep with the shutting off of all lights.

Recommended times for lights out vary by age group as follows:

4 th – 6 th	9:30 pm Lights out
7 th – 8 th	10:00 pm Lights out
9 th – 10 th	10:30 pm Lights out
10 th – 12 th	11:00 pm Lights out

Silver Lake Site Map

