



Virtual Volunteer Handbook 2020

Welcome to Summer at Silver Lake!

This is a new thing! We never imagined that a global pandemic would force us to cancel in-person summer camp, but here we are. We are so excited that you are volunteering your time this summer, especially given that we have had to change everything!

The impact that you will have on the Silver Lake At Home Program and in the lives of our participants can never truly be measured. You have the opportunity this year to really live out the Silver Lake ministry by bringing it way beyond the border of Low Road.

This handbook is your guideline to the At Home program and will help you navigate the new world of Zoom calls and Internet interactions.

If you have questions about any of the policies and procedures in this book, please let us know. As we learn from our experiences, we want to make sure our writing policies are reflecting the best practices. Please help us to make our program safer and more fulfilling.

Again, thank you for walking with us down this strange new path. We literally couldn't do this without you.

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Program Director

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Executive Director

Table of Contents

The Mission of Silver Lake Conference Center.....	4
The Benefits of Attending Silver Lake.....	4
Silver Lake At Home Program Philosophy and Objectives.....	5
Expectations for Volunteer Conduct.....	6
Behavior Management.....	7
Child Abuse Reporting.....	9
Reporting.....	10
Emergency Procedures.....	10
Non-Life-Threatening.....	12
Injury or Illness.....	12
Allergic Reaction or Asthma.....	12
Severe Weather.....	13
Human Threat.....	14
Chemical or Gas Leak.....	14
Life-Threatening.....	15
Injury or Illness.....	15
Allergic Reaction or Asthma.....	16

The Mission of Silver Lake Conference Center

Silver Lake Conference Center, a year-round outdoor ministry of the Southern New England 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 time that you are with us.

The Benefits of Attending Silver Lake

At Silver Lake, we strive to provide all campers (inclusive of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, or ability) an experience of God's love, an experience of being loved for exactly who they are. Campers will explore their faith, both what they believe and how they live out that belief. Campers will unplug from the demands of modern life and engage in intentional Christian community, making lifelong friends and practicing how to handle conflict in a way that strengthens relationships rather than damaging them. Campers spend time outside being active, engaging with Creation, and will take age-appropriate risks in a safe environment, from trying a new food to climbing the ropes course. Each conference will explore a specific theme, from justice issues to peacemaking to teamwork. When campers leave after a week at Silver Lake, they go home prepared to bring God's love out into the world with them. Parents report finding their campers to be more respectful, more empathic, and more concerned about their impact in the world. We hear over and over again from our campers: "At Silver Lake, I can be my true self."

2020 Silver Lake At Home Program Philosophy and Objectives

Silver Lake is committed to providing an opportunity to encounter God's love in creation, a chance to be seen and loved for exactly who you are. We deeply value the experience of each individual who participates in a Silver Lake program and want to ensure positive outcomes for all.

For 2020, Silver Lake At Home will focus on the four Silver Lake "Loves": Love God; Love Your Neighbor; Love Yourself; and Love Creation. This four-week program has a number of options to allow our families to customize an experience that best fits their needs.

Cabin Groups:

The goal of the Cabin Group program is to give children and youth an opportunity for social interaction and connection with peers. This is an opportunity to meet God in each other. Above all, this time should be fun and positive. Other objectives include exploring faith issues and making connections with a trusted older person.

After a time when most of your campers have spent months attending school online, be aware of Zoom fatigue. Keep the sessions to the half-hour mark. Keep your demeanor upbeat and excited. If an activity is not working, try something else. If the campers are really invested in an activity, consider returning to it at a future session.

High School Virtual Conferences:

The goal of the high school virtual conferences is to provide teenagers with a positive, interactive experience that allows them to investigate a topic of interest to them. Many teenagers care deeply about the injustices they see in the world, but feel powerless to make a difference. This is an opportunity for them to take agency through faith. We want to provide connection to peers and role models and give them tools to use their faith to address the injustices they see in the world around them. This is leadership development.

Again, be aware of Zoom fatigue. Keep live interactions upbeat and enthusiastic. That doesn't mean you have to shy away from heavy topics; just keep an eye out for signs of disengagement. Try something different if interest is flagging.

Add-on Activities:

The goal of the Add-on Activities is to give our wider Silver Lake community an opportunity to engage with our mission and program. These events should be no longer than 1 hour. We expect to have a wide age range in participants. The main objective is to provide a positive encounter with Silver Lake. Stay upbeat and positive.

Expectations for Volunteer Conduct

Hosting a video call over the Internet is a different experience than working with young people in person for a week at camp. Here are some things to keep in mind as you prepare for your video call.

All Silver Lake video calls will be recorded. This is for your protection as well as for the protection of the conferees. Any volunteer or staff member found to have turned off the recording feature will not be allowed to continue to participate in the program.

Get dressed. Even though you may be leading this call from home, you are representing Silver Lake. Put on pants! If you have a shirt that says Silver Lake, please wear it.

Be aware of your surroundings. Our preference is for you to have a wall behind you so that no one will be walking by in the background. Be aware of the other sounds in your space.

Join the call 5 minutes early. All calls will have at least 2 Silver Lake volunteers/staff members. Use this time to check in with your partner and make sure you are on the same page. Discuss who will be in charge of the technical aspects of the call and who will focus on program (this can change throughout the call). Determine who will take which role in an emergency (see Emergency Procedures, p. 10).

Arrive prepared. If you are using other apps, such as Menti or Kahoot, make sure they are open and ready to go. Make sure the call settings are correct and that you have access to the controls you will need (i.e., screen sharing).

Arrive excited! This is going to be fun! Your enthusiasm will be contagious.

Be aware that you are likely to be overheard by parents or other people in the home of the participants. Keep your language and topics of conversation camp appropriate, and be sure to address inappropriate language or topics with your participants.

Be aware of the possibility of “Zoom bombing.” We are doing everything possible to ensure only the people invited to the call are able to access it, but there is always the possibility of an unauthorized user joining. Familiarize yourself with how to remove a participant from the call, and don’t hesitate to use the feature when needed.

Maintain appropriate boundaries with your conferees. They do not need to know all the details of your personal life. Redirect questions: “That’s not a camp appropriate conversation.” Discourage the sharing of “deep, dark secrets.”

Do not reach out to under-age participants on social media. Do not accept friend requests from under-age participants.

Follow the rule of 3. Do not put yourself in a situation where you are one-on-one with an under-age participant.

Behavior Management

As a philosophy, Silver Lake prefers to reward good behavior rather than punish bad behavior. Catch your conferees doing something good and call it out. Give them as much positive attention as possible.

In the event that you need to correct a conferee’s behavior, keep your language and tone positive. First attempt to redirect the behavior toward a positive goal; rather than saying, “Don’t run,” say, “Please walk.”

At Silver Lake, we teach about covenants, both as a part of learning about the Christian faith and as a part of developing a healthy community. Laying out clear expectations in a covenant will help to set a standard of behavior in your group.

The participants of Silver Lake virtual programming have been asked to agree to the following Behavioral Covenant:

This is a Silver Lake event, and we expect that you will follow Silver Lake rules while you participate here. Please remember to Love God, Love Your Neighbor, Love Yourself, and Love Creation.

In the context of a video gathering, this means:

- I will respect other people's ideas and values- even if they are different from my own.
- I will not promote language or images that diminish; harm; exclude; or minimize any individual or group based on race; ethnicity; gender; gender expression; faith; sexual orientation; economic status; family structure; physical or mental ability; or appearance.
- I will show respect and kindness to other campers and staff.
- I understand that any behavior that could harm (physically or emotionally) a camper or staff member; or which is disrespectful; is unacceptable.
- I will not threaten or bully others.

In addition to this general Behavioral Covenant, each group will generate its own covenant in its first meeting. This does not need to take a lot of time, but is an important way to get conferee input on what kind of behavior they would like to see from peers and what is important to them to help them feel safe.

If a conferee is acting in a way inconsistent with either covenant, remind them of what they agreed to. Pointing back to the covenant is often enough to remind conferees of how they should behave.

If the conferee continues to behave poorly, give them a warning, telling them that their behavior is not acceptable and if they continue, they will be removed from the video call. It is never okay to yell at a conferee.

If a conferee persists in behavior that is majorly disruptive to the group or is harmful to someone, remove them from the video call.

In the event that you have to remove a participant, you will need to notify the Program Director and complete an Incident Report. You may be asked to follow up with the family, along with the Program Director, to explain why you removed the conferee.

Child Abuse Reporting

Even though we are not interacting with our campers in person, we still have a moral and legal responsibility to keep them safe. The year-round staff at Silver Lake are considered mandated reporters of child abuse suspicion. There are five types of child abuse: neglect, verbal, sexual, physical, and emotional/spiritual.

Our expectation is that you report any suspicion of child abuse to us so that we can report to the state. You do not need to have proof; you only need to suspect. Believe the camper and relay the story. Do not agree to keep secrets. You can say that you will keep things confidential, which means you will only tell the people who need to know.

All virtual volunteers must read and sign the Child Abuse Prevention section on the Virtual Volunteer Paperwork form. They also must complete the online Safe Camp training modules (every two years).

Some things to keep in mind that are different about online programs:

You will have a window into their home. You will see their surroundings, and you may see or hear the people they live with. Keep in mind that poverty is not the same thing as abuse. A messy or dirty house does not necessarily mean the child is abused or neglected. Crying or yelling in the background is also not an immediate indication of abuse. Keep in mind that you don't have the full context of what is going on in their house (for example: screaming toddlers are a normal thing, not cause for alarm).

If you see or hear something that makes you suspect abuse, report it to the Program Director immediately. You will need to fill out an incident report. We will not be able to share with you the results of your report due to confidentiality. In the event that we do make a report to the state, we often don't hear anything about follow-up, either.

Reporting

Good communication is vital to the success of any program, but especially to a new program like Silver Lake At Home.

At the end of each video call, the virtual volunteer will complete the Daily Activity Log, noting how the call went, what worked well, and any areas of concern. The Program Director will follow up with the volunteer if there are any questions or concerns.

All incidents require an Incident Report. Generally, anything that a parent might call camp about requires an Incident Report. Examples include, but are not limited to: behavior issues on the call; suspicion or witness of bullying; child abuse suspicion; injury or illness. If you are not sure whether you should fill out an Incident Report, ask the Program Director.

You will be given access to the Daily Activity Log and Incident Reports before the beginning of your program.

Emergency Procedures for Online Programs

As with all camp programs, there are some risks involved in our online programming, and we want you to be prepared for any emergencies that come.

These procedures address what to do if an emergency arises during a live video call. All Silver Lake live video calls will have at least two trained staff members (Virtual Volunteers) on the call. Before the call, the staff members will determine who will handle emergency response and who will handle crowd control. That way, if an emergency occurs, you know what your role is.

There are two types of emergencies that may occur: life-threatening and non-life-threatening. The basic steps for responding to each kind of emergency will be the same; there may be differences in details depending on the nature of the emergency.

Communication

In an emergency situation, use a calm voice with campers so that you don't increase their fear or panic. Talk calmly with your co-staff member and contact the Program

Director if needed. Any emergencies must be reported to Silver Lake staff using an Incident Report Form and recorded on the Daily Activity Log.

Roles

In a situation with two staff members, one will respond to the emergency and one will manage the other campers on the call.

Responder:

1. Determine whether 911 needs to be called immediately.
2. Ask the camper if there is a trusted adult in the home. Encourage the camper to get the adult to help.
3. If there is no adult in the home, or if the camper cannot get the adult, and it is a non-life-threatening situation, contact the Program Director, who will attempt to contact the camper's guardians to inform them of the situation.
4. The Responder will keep their attention on the camper dealing with the emergency, offering reassurance and support as able.

Manager:

1. The Manager will mute the mics of all the campers and explain that there is an emergency situation going on, and the activity has to stop for the moment.
2. The Manager will keep focused on the campers not involved in the emergency, keep them calm, and give them instructions.
3. If the Manager feels the need to pull the campers into a breakout room, they will call the Program Director, who will join the call so that the Responder is not left alone with the conferee having the emergency. Breakout rooms will be recorded as part of the call.
4. If it becomes necessary to remove the campers from the call, the Manager will explain that and handle that process.

After the emergency, both staff members will debrief with the Program Director, as well as complete the required paperwork. Staff members may be asked to follow up with campers, or the Program Director may follow up.

Non-life-threatening Emergencies

Injury or Illness

Examples of injuries or illness may include: sprains, strains, or a broken bone; minor burns; minor cuts; minor animal bites; sore throats and coughs; ear infections; fever or flu symptoms.

If you observe signs or symptoms of a non-life-threatening illness or injury during a video call:

1. Encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
2. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, contact the Program Director, who will call the guardian.
3. If you are qualified to do so, you may talk the camper through some basic self-care steps (I.e., apply pressure to a bleeding cut) while you wait for further instruction from the Program Director.
4. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Allergic Reaction or Asthma

Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives, swelling, breathing problems, throat closure or a fall in blood pressure (life-threatening anaphylaxis). Allergic reactions can be triggered by food, drugs, or insect stings.

Asthma is a condition in which the airway swells and may become obstructed. Conferees who have been diagnosed with asthma will have a rescue inhaler to be used in this situation. An asthma attack can become life-threatening if the conferee is not able to access their inhaler.

If you observe signs of an allergic reaction or asthma attack during a video call:

1. Encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
2. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, contact the Program Director, who will call the guardian.
3. While you are waiting for further instruction, ask the camper about their allergies/asthma and typical responses.
4. Ask if the camper has an EpiPen or inhaler, if they can get it, and if they know how to use it.

5. If the camper begins to show signs of anaphylaxis or cannot breathe, treat the situation as a life-threatening emergency.
6. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Severe Weather

Severe weather can include thunderstorms, very high winds, tornado warning, tropical storm events, or flooding. Be aware that thunderstorms can be very isolated events; the weather where you are may be very different than the weather where your campers are. You can make a habit of comparing the weather in everyone's location so that you are aware of different conditions.

If severe weather begins to present a danger to one or more campers on a video call:

1. Encourage the affected campers to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
2. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, contact the Program Director, who will call the guardians.
3. While you are waiting for further instruction from the Program Director, ask the affected campers if they know what their family's plan is for severe weather. Ask them where the safest place in the house is.
4. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Human Threat

Possible human threats include: break-in by an unknown, or known, person or people; aggressive or potentially violent behavior near the home that has the potential to spill into the home; aggressive or potentially violent behavior within the home.

If you become aware of a human threat in or near a camper's home while on a video call:

1. Encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
2. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, contact the Program Director, who will call the guardian.
3. While you wait for further instruction from the Program Director, talk to the camper in a calming, reassuring manner.

4. Monitor the situation for escalation. If the incident becomes life-threatening, call 911 and follow the procedure for a life-threatening incident.
5. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Fire

Common causes of fire in the home are cooking, smoking, appliances, and candles.

If you become aware of a fire in a camper's home while on a video call:

1. Ask the camper about the nature and severity of the fire. Use calm and direct questions.
2. If it is determined to be a major fire, treat as a life-threatening incident.
3. If the fire is minor, encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
4. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, contact the Program Director, who will call the guardian.
5. While you wait for further instruction from the Program Director, talk to the camper in a calming, reassuring manner.
6. Monitor the situation for escalation. If the fire becomes life-threatening, call 911 and follow the procedure for a life-threatening incident.
7. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Chemical or Gas Leak

Chemical or gas leaks in the home are uncommon but can become life-threatening. Those who live in homes with propane, liquid natural gas, or heating oil should know the signs of a leak.

If you become aware of a chemical or gas leak in a camper's home while you are on a video call:

1. Ask the camper about the nature and severity of the leak. Use calm and direct questions.
2. If it is determined to be a major leak, treat as a life-threatening incident.
3. If the leak is minor, encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
4. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, contact the Program Director, who will call the guardian.

5. While you wait for further instruction from the Program Director, talk to the camper in a calming, reassuring manner.
6. Monitor the situation for escalation. If the leak becomes life-threatening, call 911 and follow the procedure for a life-threatening incident.
7. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Life-Threatening Emergencies

In a life-threatening emergency, time is of the essence. You must alert EMS (call 911) as quickly as possible. You will be given a roster of the campers on your video call that will include their guardians' names, address, and phone numbers. Have this list handy every time you are on a call so that you can find the information quickly in an emergency.

Injury or Illness

Examples of life-threatening injuries or illness may include: loss of consciousness; difficulty breathing; serious injury such as a head injury; heart attack; stroke; high fever; heat stroke; serious burns; seizures; exposure to toxic chemicals; sudden, severe headache and/or loss of vision; serious cuts or severe bleeding; poisoning; intoxication, overdose, or attempted suicide.

If you observe a life-threatening illness or injury in a camper while on a video call:

1. Call 911. Stay on the line with the dispatcher and provide as much information as possible.
2. If the Responder is still on the phone with 911 after the Manager has removed the other campers from the video call, the Manager should contact the Program Director.
3. Encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
4. Continue to offer calm reassurance to the camper until more help arrives.
5. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.

Allergic Reaction or Asthma

An allergic reaction becomes life-threatening when anaphylaxis occurs. Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis include: skin reactions, including hives and itching and flushed or pale skin; low blood pressure (hypotension); constriction of your airways

and a swollen tongue or throat, which can cause wheezing and trouble breathing; a weak and rapid pulse; nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; dizziness or fainting; a sense of impending doom.

An asthma attack becomes life-threatening when the conferee cannot breathe well enough to speak.

If you observe signs of anaphylaxis or a severe asthma attack in a camper during a video call:

1. If the camper is able to talk, ask about their allergies, reactions, if they have an EpiPen or inhaler.
2. Encourage the affected camper to get a trusted adult in the house, following the basic protocol above.
3. If an adult is not available, or slow to respond, call 911. Stay on the line with the dispatcher and provide as much information as possible.
4. If the Responder is still on the phone with 911 after the Manager has removed the other campers from the video call, the Manager should contact the Program Director.
5. Continue to offer calm reassurance to the camper until more help arrives.
7. Debrief, complete Daily Activity Log, complete Incident Report.