

**2026**

# SUMMER CAMP

**Ages 6-12**



## Parent Manual



**Questions?**

Visit

[www.freedom-center.com](http://www.freedom-center.com)

Or email

[fccamps@gmu.edu](mailto:fccamps@gmu.edu)

[www.freedom-center.com](http://www.freedom-center.com)

**FREEDOM**  
Aquatic & Fitness Center™

# Welcome!

Thank you for choosing The Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center for keeping your camper active this summer! Our staff is committed to providing your child a safe environment, caring and experienced camp counselors, and fun-filled dynamic days.

Following is information intended to enhance your family's experiences at summer camp.

*Camp Freedom is exempt from licensure as a child day program under applicable state regulations and is not licensed by the state. While exempt, Camp Freedom follows established health, safety, and operational standards, including George Mason University's internal youth program policies. This notice is provided to inform all parents and guardians.*

Please take the time to read this manual carefully and contact us if you have any additional questions or concerns.

## How to Reach Us!

Customer Service Desk

**703.993.8444**

Camp Email Address

**fccamps@gmu.edu**

## Contents

Staffing .....	3	Medication.....	9
Camper Checklist.....	4	Illness .....	10
Camp Schedule.....	5	Discipline.....	11
Swimming Procedures.....	6	Administration.....	12
Daily Check-in/Check Out .....	7-8	General Policies .....	14
Extended Camp Hours .....	9		

# The Freedom Summer Camp Crew

*“Unity is strength...When there is team work and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved,”*

**Mattie Stepanek**

The Freedom Staff Family is more than a seasonal summer crew. The unique aspect of our staff is what makes our camp an experience for all campers throughout the summer. Each counselor is strategically hired then scheduled with the appropriate group to ensure his/her strengths are being put to work. Our staff and our program is one of a kind and will ensure a summer your camper will never forget. Our team of counselors are ready to make a lasting impact and treasured memories over the short camp season.

Our staff is committed to providing your camper a safe environment, caring and experienced camp counselors, and fun-filled dynamic days.

We hire those with a passion to PLAY! Each counselor on FAFC’s summer camp staff is a well-trained, enthusiastic and motivating individual. Several summer counselors have been with us for one or more seasons and may have even been a previous camper!



## Staffing Ratios

6-8 years 1:8

9 -12 years 1:10



# What to Bring for Camp Camper's Checklist

*Please be sure to label EVERYTHING with your camper's name.*

- ▶ Backpack to store personal items
  - ▶ Water bottle
  - ▶ Sunscreen
  - ▶ Small lunch box with lunch, snacks and water bottle—if attending full day.
- NO REFRIGERATION OR MICROWAVE IS AVAILABLE.**
- Campers are NOT permitted to use vending machines during camp hours. Machines are available for use before and after sign in/out.
- ▶ Appropriate summer attire: shorts, light weighted shirts, socks, sneakers, and/or specified clothing appropriate to the camp's activities.
  - ▶ Please no halter-tops, Crocs, open-toed shoes or "Wheelite" shoes.
  - ▶ Campers should bring a swimsuit and towel each day.
  - ▶ Campers may bring swim goggles (Masks covering the face are not permitted)
  - ▶ Campers may bring a book if they prefer down time during morning/evening care

## What NOT to Bring to Camp

We are an unplugged camp program to ensure all campers are truly receiving all of the benefits of the program. PLEASE do not send camper with any electronic items (i.e. Nintendo D.S., music players, cell phones) Cell phones will be confiscated if used while at camp. Campers are not permitted to use cell phones for music, photography or games. For the safety of all campers, please be sure to discuss this with your camper and ensure they understand the importance of this policy.

## Lost & Found

Lost & Found will be collected each day and on display during sign out. Items are donated every two weeks if not claimed. Please be sure you and your camper are checking daily for items that have not made it home.

# Qualifying Skills

The following skills are necessary for successful program participation. All camp enrollees must meet or exceed these standards with minimal assistance.

- Actively participate in half-day program (or length of camp)
- Consistently participate in appropriate staffing ratios
- Separate from parent with little or no difficulty
- Follow and accept directions and structure as necessary
- Respect others and their property
- Take turns and share in cooperative manner
- Ability to communicate with staff
- Be able to toilet independently
- Be able to dress independently

**We recommend  
younger campers packing  
a change of clothes!**

# Camp Schedule

## Sample Schedule for Camp Freedom

8:30 – 10:00 am	Campers break into groups for name games and team building activities
10:00 – 11:00 am	Outdoor recreational activity
11:00 – 11:30 am	Snack
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Outdoor recreational activity
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Indoor arts and crafts activity
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Free Swim
3:00 – 3:45 pm	Snack
3:45 – 4:30 pm	Recreational activity & sign out

# Swimming Procedures

Prior to pool time, campers will be grouped with counselors for the appropriate locker room. Campers will change for the pool together within one locker bay inside the locker room and supervised by camp counselors at all times. If your camper would prefer to change independently in a restroom stall, please email the camp director at [fccamps@gmu.edu](mailto:fccamps@gmu.edu) or bring a note at sign in. Campers may also request to change in a restroom stall to their counselor. Counselors will then follow up to have a note placed on file.

Full-Day campers will have the opportunity to go swimming throughout the camp week. Proper swimming gear is required each day. Swim testing is done every Monday to ensure counselors are aware of your camper's swimming abilities. The swim test will be optional; however, if camper decides against the test or is not successful in completion he/she will receive an armband and an X on his/her hand. This will ensure child stays in leisure pool and not go down slide. Campers are recommended to keep the armband on throughout the week, if possible. **The supervised swim tests consists of swimming one lap in lane line without any assistance from lifeguard, lane line or wall and tread water for one minute.**

Campers will not be permitted to shower after pool time unless required by parent/physician. A note on file will be required in order to allow camper to shower. Campers will leave pool 15 minutes early if shower is required.

Camp registration requires parents/guardian to acknowledge swimming ability for camper. Descriptions are as follows:

- **Non-Swimmer:** unable to swim, needs to be with counselor at all times.
- **Beginner/Intermediate:** able to swim length of pool, tread water and be supervised from the side.
- **Experienced Swimmer:** able to swim in all areas of the pool, history in swim teams, lessons etc.

**Swim tests must be completed each week.**

**Campers must pass swim test and be at least 48" in height to utilize the slide.**



# Daily Check-In/Check Out

Each morning and afternoon, your camper(s) must be signed in and out by the parent/guardian or other adult authorized on the Emergency Information Form. **No exceptions.** In order to ensure camper's safety, authorized adult, including parents, will be required to show form of identification at checkout...**every day!**

**Please note:** Without written notice, we cannot allow any adult not on the list to pick up your child. Nor can we deny an authorized adult from picking up your child. At any time, you may add or delete names by giving changes, in writing, to the Head Counselor or emailing [fccamps@gmu.edu](mailto:fccamps@gmu.edu). Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center is not responsible for communicating child pick-up among any authorized adults. The responsibility remains among those individuals.



## Attendance

If a camper is not going to attend camp on a particular day, please notify the camp in advance or by 9:00am through email at [fccamps@gmu.edu](mailto:fccamps@gmu.edu). There are no make ups/refunds for missed camp days.

## Early Dismissal

When possible, parents are required to inform a Head Counselor, in writing, the morning of the day, a camper will be picked up early. If picking up child before 3:00 pm, please report to the front lobby. A staff member will notify the Head Counselor and find the location of your child. Please allocate at least 15-20 minutes for the early pick up process.

## Late Pick-up Policy

If you are running late picking up a child from camp, please contact the Customer Service Desk, 703-993-8444. It is important that you speak with a representative and indicate the following – child's name, the specific camp your child attends, location (particularly off-site camps), and how long you will be delayed. **\*Please do not leave a voicemail.\***

If the adult picking up is late, we will make every attempt to reach all parent/guardians and emergency contacts through the information provided at registration. However, in accordance with licensing regulations, if we are unable to contact someone by 5:00 pm, your child will be considered abandoned and will be turned over to the Prince William County Police Department/ Social Services.

### Please note:

A set fee of \$30 per camper will be charged for ALL camps, when children are picked up later than camp dismissal time. For repeated offenses, Freedom Center staff reserves the right to dismiss your child from the Extended Care hours of full day camps.

# Extended Camp Hours

Camp Freedom offers optional extended care to support your family's schedule.

## Extended care hours:

- **Morning:** 6:30 - 8:30 AM
- **Afternoon:** 4:30 - 6:30 PM

Extended care provides a supervised, more relaxed environment for campers before and after the core camp day. During this time, campers may participate in a variety of low-structured, camper-choice activities such as:

- Board games
- Arts and crafts
- Movies
- Snack time
- Social time with peers

Campers will be grouped with others in the program and may include a range of ages.

## Please note:

- Extended care is **not included** in the base camp fee
- Extended care must be **selected and added during registration prior to the camp week**
- We are **unable to accommodate daily drop-ins or last-minute additions**

*Extended care hours have been updated from previous camp seasons.*

# Medication

Medication must be given to the Camp Directors or the Head Counselor – **children may not carry their own medicine.** We prefer that your child only takes medications that are necessary while in our care. If possible, please try to schedule doses while child is home. Depending on the medication, the main office may keep the medicine on file throughout the day. However, other medications will be distributed each morning to the camper's counselor.

If your child requires prescription or non-prescription medication during the course of camp, you will be required to fill out a medical authorization form.

The form will be available:

- during sign in,
- on the website, or
- ask the Head Counselor.

Medicine must be sent in original container with the current prescription label attached. No outdated medicines will be accepted. The label must contain the child's name, medication name, the dosage and time to be given. The required medication form must be on file and completed.

# Sunscreen Policy

Any use of sunscreen requires written parent authorization on the Authorization for Sunscreen Form.

Children nine years of age and older may administer their own sunscreen if supervised. Please take the time to apply sunscreen and teach camper how to apply prior to the camp day. Campers are encouraged throughout the day to reapply and supervise the process, assist as needed.

Sunscreen must be in the original container labeled with the child's name.

## Illness

The Freedom Center does not have the accommodations necessary to provide care for children who are ill. Please do not send child if they are not well enough to participate in all camp activities. For everyone's safety and well-being, we cannot allow children with contagious or communicable disease to attend camp.

Please keep your child at home if any of the following symptoms develop. Child must be free of symptoms for 24 hours or physician decides child can return to camp. If the camper is sent home with any of the symptoms, they must wait a full 24 hours without fever or fever reducing medication before returning to the camp program.

- Diarrhea
- Severe coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes (may be signs of Hepatitis)
- Tears, redness of eyelids with discharge (pink eye)
- Mouth sores
- Fever of 100 degrees or above
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat/trouble swallowing
- Infected skin patches
- Headache and/or stiff neck
- Vomiting
- Severe itching of body or scalp

**If contacted, camper must be picked-up within one hour.**

Should your child become ill while in our care, we will contact you as soon as possible. Please pick up your child within one hour of notification. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the person(s) listed on your child's Emergency Form. In the event of a serious illness or accident, we will call EMS and your child will be transported to the nearest hospital.

If your child is diagnosed with allergies, please specify on camp registration in order to avoid any irritants. The Freedom Center will make every effort to accommodate your child.

# Discipline

Please encourage your camper to discuss any negative behavior, received from another camper, with a counselor or other staff member. The following are examples of unacceptable behavior that will not be tolerated and will cause disciplinary action to be taken:

- Discrimination
  - Under GMU's Policy 1201, any reports of discrimination will be reported to GMU's Office of Access, Compliance, and Community
- Hitting/fighting/causing physical harm
- Profanity/disrespect to staff or other campers
- Possessing weapons/drugs/tobacco
- Temper tantrums
- Verbal assault
- Refusal to cooperate
- Stealing
- Leaving facility grounds
- Sexual misconduct
- Violation of rules and policies
- Biting/spitting
- Bullying

Our goal is to provide each child with the skills necessary to solve conflicts in a manner that is appropriate and with regard to others' feelings. We seek cooperative and effective solutions by using techniques listed below. Physical force or abusive language is never used.

- Teach ground rules
- Offer realistic choices
- Clarify expectations
- Offer a positive role model
- Encourage problem solving
- Be willing to start over
- Negotiate
- Use time out effectively
- Redirect child's attention
- Be consistent
- Rearrange environment
- Offer assistance
- Establish eye contact
- Avoid threats
- Establish mutual respect
- Provide encouragement

Disciplinary action, when required, will be documented. Depending on the severity of the offense, staff will take the following steps:

1. Counselor will talk with child
2. Counselor or Head Counselor will speak with parents and immediately dismiss the camper from the program if deemed necessary. If not, staff and parents will discuss disciplinary action required.
3. A Camp Director will meet with camper and speak with parent.
4. A Camp Director will meet with parents. Dismissal may be considered.

# Administration

## Balance Payments

Those opting to pay via an initial deposit will be invoiced for the remaining payments. The balance for each camp must be submitted no later than the Monday the week before the camp is scheduled to start, failure to do so may result in the camper being removed from the camp and loss of the deposit. A reminder email will be sent prior to the invoice due date.

**Please note:** We will not make reminder calls prior to camp start date. Emails will be sent.

## Refund/Transfer Policies

Participant-initiated transfers and refunds must be requested at least 14 days prior to the camp session for which the transfer/refund is being requested.

The charge to the customer for ALL approved customer-initiated transfer/refunds is \$50 for EACH full day camp session, \$25 for Partial Day camp session.

**Please note:** This is an administrative fee, charged to all customers regardless of reason for transfer/refund to help cover the costs of transaction processing and lost revenues due to camp spaces left unfilled.

If a medical emergency occurs during camp, or within 5 business days before the start of camp, a doctor's written verification will be needed to be eligible to receive a prorated refund. We must receive this request within 24 hours of camp absence if the camp has already started. Requests received after the camp session ends will not be granted. Submit your refund or transfer request in writing to the Camp Director by fax, email or drop off.

Check refunds require 4-6 weeks for processing. The Commonwealth of Virginia requires submission of the payee's Social Security number to issue a check refund. Payments originally paid by check or cash may be refunded on a credit card or posted to the customer's Freedom Center account. Original check payments require a 30-day waiting period (to allow the check to clear the bank) prior to posting a refund on a credit card or to the customer's Freedom Center account.

**Please note:** Freedom Center will not process a check amount refund less than \$20.00.

## Records

For your child's safety, parents are required to submit the online Emergency Information form. Please note this is a separate link from the registration information. Submission of these accurate and up to date forms ensures that in the event of an emergency, staff has all the necessary numbers to notify the proper individual. If any emergency contact/ health information changes throughout camp, please update all records as necessary. Submit any changes in writing to Camp Staff by fax, email or drop off.

## Child Care Verification/Tax Information

The Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center issues receipts for all deposits and payments for camps upon request. If documentation of payments for childcare expenses, tax purposes, or reimbursements is required, please contact the Camp Staff. **The Freedom Center does not routinely issue a year-end statement of child care expenses.** The Freedom Center's Tax ID number is: 54-0836354.



# General Policies

## Confidentiality

The Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center Camps respect the rights of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding health, behavioral, and developmental records and information concerning their child. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic ethical policy at all Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center Camps.

## Custodial Parent Policy

Parents/guardians working through custodial agreements, must be sure to communicate to the Head Counselor or Camp Director about updates. Updates on paperwork may only be made by the designated parent/guardian who registered the camper. If there is a court order limiting contact or information, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent/guardian to provide the camp with an official copy of the court order. Parent/guardians that may be listed on the paperwork but did not complete the registration, are not permitted to receive any registration information or update paperwork with a court order.

## Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Employees who suspect a child is a victim of child abuse/neglect are required to report the matter immediately to the Camp Director. The Director shall document, in writing, all facts of the situation. The Director or counselor will report any suspicions to the Department of Social Services and when appropriate, inform the parents.

## Drugs and Alcohol-Free Zone

All staff, campers and camp families/guardians are prohibited from being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on campus. Camp staff will contact the George Mason Police Department if a parent/guardian is attempting to sign out a camper while under the influence.

## Inclement Weather Policy

### Extreme Heat

The camp admin team monitors the temperature throughout the day for all camp locations. However, if the temperature is warm but still safe to remain outside, camp schedules will continue as normal. Please help by reminding campers that warm weather is expected in the summer. If any schedules are altered due to extreme heat, notifications will be online. Camp groups will have more rest periods and water breaks if it is safe to continue with outdoor activities.

### Predicted Code Red Air Quality

The camp admin team monitors the air quality readings hourly (or more as needed) and will adjust the camp schedule as needed. If the air quality reaches a Code Red, campers schedules may alter and outdoor activities are limited or removed.

# Camp Notes

# **FREEDOM**

*Aquatic & Fitness Center™*

**On the Science & Technology Campus of  
George Mason University**



**Any questions?!**

**Email us!**

**[fccamps@gmu.edu](mailto:fccamps@gmu.edu)**



**10900 University Boulevard, Manassas, VA 20110  
703.993.8444**