

MSSM STEM Summer Camp

Frequently Asked Questions

Version 11/15/2021

Camp Summary:

Four weeks, campers attend 1-2 weeks.

June 26th-July 2nd – Boys (ages 10-13)

July 3rd-July 9th – Boys (ages 11-14)

July 10th-July 16th – Girls (ages 11-14)

July 17th-July 23rd – Girls (ages 10-13)

Four daily STEM Classes

Classes are announced in April. They are limited to about 15 people per class each year. There are two sessions of two different classes. Campers pick their top 10 preferences and we place them according to their camp registration date. Some past classes have included: Calculus, CSI, Art & Science, Astronomy, Robotics, Programming, 3D Printing, Minecraft, Popsicle Stick Bridge Building, Model Rockets, Catapults, Healthy Forrest, Rube Goldberg Machines, Ceramics, Sports Science, and many more.

Traditional Summer Camp Activities

We do not have a lake, canoeing classes, boating, archery, sport competitions, overnight hiking field trips. We have a campfire a few nights, a large indoor swimming pool, we do camp family skits, and songs, and eat S'mores. Other afternoon evening activities include tie dye, bracelet making, cooking, board games, rock climbing (at UMPI), Virtual Reality, Monster Night*, mega waterslide, theme days*, Gaga pit, and many more.

** Some activities will be explained more later.*

Campers

We usually have about 100 overnight campers and 10-20 day campers per week. We can hold up to 120 campers per week, but we are packed in.

Staff

We have 30 seasonal staff and about 5 administrative members. The youngest are 15-year-old Mentors who are often ex-campers. Then there are Counselors who are at least 18 years old and often in their 20s. Finally, we have the adult

instructors who are usually educators from around Maine, though sometimes they come from all over the US! The 5 administrative staff include Summer Programs Director, Ryan McDonald (4 years as director, one as instructor), Tracy Moore as Administrative Assistant, Matt Bartlett as Residential Director (7 years with camp), a season Academic Director, and a seasonal Camp Assistant.

This year we are developing a leadership position for 14 –year-old campers who will be given some low level responsibilities for their camp families. Though not a paid position, they will get to stay up later than the campers and have some other rewards. They will also get leadership experience and we can watch them in case they apply to work for camp the following summer.

History of Camp

We started in 1997 and are proud to be celebrating our 25th year of keeping kids academically stimulated during the summer. Loring AFB was in Limestone from 1947 to 1994. When it closed the town went from 20,000 people to 2,000. The previous Limestone Community School building was now empty and became our dorm. The academic building was the old LCS high school. Now MSSM and LCS share the building. The school opened in 1995 graduating its first class in '96, and the camp opened the following year in 1997.

Is my child ready?

That's hard to say. We have about 1-2 students leave each week who get here and just don't like being away from home or mom and dad. It's not ideal for this to be their first week-long stay away from home. Do they want to come home from sleepovers just minutes away? Have they stayed with grandparents for more than a few nights? It's a question only you can answer. It helps to not say things like "I am going to miss you while you are away at camp." That makes them feel like they are doing something wrong. Try, "You are going to have so much fun, I can't wait to hear about all your adventures after camp."

Registration:

Medications:

We prefer "blister packs" where meds are pre-packed and clearly marked, but we can handle pill bottles if the pharmacy is not able to accommodate that. We have a very experienced Director Health Services who is also an RN. She can talk to you before camp if your camper has special needs with medication. We are a peanut free campus during the summer.

Dietary

We can accommodate most any dietary needs including gluten free, vegetarian, lactose intolerant, etc. The one area that is more difficult for us is to serve full meals outside of the regular meal times. We have had campers on medications that makes them not hungry during meal times and then very hungry during breaks or snack times. It is possible, but difficult and there will be speedbumps.

Behavioral Issues

We give 2-3 warnings before calling the parents. We do not tolerate bullying and will immediately investigate incidents and take action. Our camp brings in quiet, introverted types who may not speak up for themselves. If your camper mentions it, please contact us immediately at mssmsummercamp@mssm.org. We have also had a few incidents of campers arguing about politics. We discourage this and our staff will not engage.

See Discipline Section below.

Special Needs

We have ramps and elevators everywhere in both buildings. Apart from any mechanical issues, someone in a wheelchair can get to all parts of both buildings. Some outdoor activities may be troublesome, but all classes and indoor activities have ramps.

Health Forms

We are hoping to reduce the number of forms we have and make more as web forms, but they are all done in the interest of safety for your camper. If we have an urgent medical issue, we don't need to be flipping through a file cabinet looking for the medical records.

Affording Camp:

Tuition for one week of camp is now \$800 a week for overnight campers, \$450 a week for day campers, and we have a special rate for the Limestone Community School students of \$300 for them to come as day campers.

We have financial aid available to those that qualify, here is the income chart from 2021, it's taken from state guidelines:

	Family Maximum Income Guideline	
Family Size (Including Adults)	Yearly Income	Monthly Income
1	23,606	1,968
2	31,894	2,658
3	40,182	3,349
4	48,470	4,040
5	56,758	4,730
6	65,046	5,421
7	73,334	6,112
8	81,622	81,622
	For each additional family member add:	
	8,288	691

There are also scholarships available after March, but very few, if any, full scholarships. If you receive financial aid, we may be able to find an additional scholarship, but it won't pay for everything. We give any full scholarships we have to first time campers.

Finally, we have some other special discounts:

- \$50 off, early bird, for registering before March 15th. That means paying the \$100 non-refundable deposit and then we will apply the discount.
- \$50 off each **sibling** attending camp.
- \$100 off campers staying **two weeks**. There are some special extra activities for two week campers.
- The above discounts can only have one with either financial aid or a scholarship.

You can receive no more than 2 discounts combined.

For example, Financial Aid plus 1 such as partial scholarship, Early Bird, Sibling, two weeks, etc. The only exception is the Refer-a-Friend which. Discounts will be applied weekly by the camp administration; they have no cash value if you cancel your session.

- *The only exception to that rule* is for the **Refer-a-Friend discount**. If your camper has been to camp before and you refer a new non-sibling camper who pays the \$100 non-refundable deposit, you will get \$100 off. You can do this up to 6 times per week. That would mean referring 6 new campers per week who each pay the \$100 non-refundable deposit. This can be combined with either Financial Aid or a scholarship, but it cannot pay for 100% of the tuition.

Getting Ready for Camp:

Packing List

[Summer Camp Past Newsletters](#)

Schedule:

The schedule will be determined later in the spring. Here is a general overview without specific times.

Wake up, get ready, breakfast

Classes start around 8:30 – 8:45

3 morning class with a long outside break

Lunch

4th class, then “chill time” which includes a snack

2-hour long activity periods, dinner, quiet time, evening activity, snack

Shower time, in wing, bedtime, lights out

Expectations:

Coming Soon

Discipline Policy / Procedure

Coming Soon

Health, Food, Safety:

Homesick

Each week we have 1-2 campers that either really want to go home or actually do. This is not the camp for everyone and we know that. Please don't say things to your first time camper such as "We are really going to miss you." Though well-intended, it makes the child feel like they are abandoning them or did something wrong. We suggest "I can't wait to hear about all the fun you will have when you get back." We can only process partial refunds if the camper leaves by Monday. We are usually unable to transport campers as our driving age staff are not able to leave during camp.

Food / Snacks:

Campers get three meals a day in our dining hall as well as 2-3 snack times throughout the day. There are also random ice cream treats (and equivalents for lactose intolerant campers) as well as other treats for those staying two weeks. We ask that parents do not send many treats with campers because we have to confiscate anything with peanuts or anything made in a facility with peanuts. We return the snacks on the last day of camp as they are leaving or getting on the bus.

Facilities:

The MSSM STEM Summer Camp uses the **dorm and academic building of Maine School of Science and Mathematics**. The dormitory has X rooms and several adults that live on the wings year round. There are very few singles, some doubles, some triples, and few quads. There's a lower lounge, kitchen, dorm office, mailroom, and gym. The wings have alarmed locking doors on both the internal and external exits. Campers are locked and alarmed in the wings each evening. The doors lock from the outside, but people inside can leave in an emergency. Opening the door will set off an alarm.

There is a laundry facility which takes a card that can be purchased. There are also vending machines on site. Wings have full bathrooms in the hall and campers sign up for shower times. Wings are opened in the mornings and locked at night. Staff will check on the campers before locking the wing doors.

To/From/At Camp:

Check in / Check Out / Bus:

Check-in is on each Sunday and goes from 2 PM to 4 PM. It will be in the dorm gym so please park between the buildings. There will be a large sign directing you to the entrance. It is difficult for us to accommodate campers checking in before 2 PM.

Check-out is on the Saturday at the end of the week, or two weeks. It is in the same location as check in, but goes from 9 AM to 11 AM. It's possible to check out campers earlier than 9AM, but slightly problematic after 11. A staff member will call to confirm who is coming to get the camper before Saturday.

Bus: We hire school buses from MSAD1 to drop off kids on Saturdays from Houlton to South Portland, Maine Mall. It stays the night and returns along the same route leaving the mall parking lot at 8AM and arriving at camp in the early afternoon. The cost is \$30 each way and reservations open for it in late winter. Assuming Covid restrictions are lifted by then, they stop for lunch and several bathroom breaks.

Past stops have included:

Lewiston, Augusta Civic Center, Palmyra Walmart, Orono, and Houlton





Phoning / Emailing Campers:

Mobile phones are prohibited at camp this summer for campers. We will not confiscate them unless they are being used in class or outside of the room. We will also not drop everything we are doing to scour the entire building to help find a lost phone. We encourage campers to not have phones and definitely not tablets. We attract quiet and often shy campers who might prefer to stay in their rooms and not meet people.

Parents can call the dorm office (207-325-3796) after dinner during quiet time (exact times TBD) and campers can either talk then or we can give them one of our work phones to call back. Parents can email campers at mssmcampers@mssm.org and the messages will be printed and given to the campers after dinner.

Visits:

During non-Covid camp sessions, parents are allowed and encouraged to visit camp and eat a meal with their campers. During the '21 season we allowed only a very few parents to visit and they ate outside with their camper at picnic tables. Please just contact us in advance to let us know. If we are still in a Covid-restricted summer camp season, we won't be able to allow visitors.

Dress Codes:

We don't have a specific dress code, but we ask that campers do not wearing anything offense (which includes political these days) nor too revealing. If it's something you are allowed to wear around the house, then it should be fine here.

Penguin Club:

The Penguin Club is a new idea to recognize and reward longtime returning campers. We currently give a 5-year award, but the PC will recognize those that have stayed more weeks than others. The details are still being worked out.

Penguin Leader:

This is another new idea designed to give some 14-year old campers some leadership experience. For this year we will handpick a few and ask if they are interested. There is no financial reward, but we will be watching them more closely to see if they would be good mentors for the following year. It does not guarantee them a position the next year, but it certainly bumps them closer to the front of the line. PLs will participate in all camp activities as other campers, but will occasionally have some minor duties within the camp family. It could include things like making sure all campers are present, lounges are clean, etc. They will be able to stay up later a few times per week and have a special pizza party with the staff.