



BR Guide

WHAT EVERY BR FAMILY SHOULD KNOW!

This guide will introduce you to BR programs and traditions and help you get organized for the busy time ahead. It should also eliminate some of the anxiety both parents and campers sometimes feel in anticipation of their first time preparing for summer camp. It will leave you excited about the unique experiences camp can provide.

Camp is going to be an exceptional time for your camper. She will meet new people, learn new things, be independent and have a blast! Be sure to talk about all the positive aspects of camp and prepare for the time away together. Campers should read this guide with you, be involved in packing and choosing items for the BR experience.

The BR staff are here to help you. If you have questions while preparing for camp, do not hesitate to contact us. Once your camper is at camp, remember that our most important job is to ensure that she is safe and having fun. To do that, we need to focus on leading and supervising the program. It is a very busy time for all of us. If you call the office you may have to leave a message, however, we will return your call ASAP because we care about your camper and her family at home!

Important Reminder:

All camper forms are due by May 1st and final tuition payments are due by June 1st.

- **Camper Health History** must be completed online in the registration portal.
- **Camper Physical Form** must be completed by a physician and uploaded to the registration portal. Physical Forms can also be emailed to the office.
- **About Me & About My Camper Form** is helpful but optional. It can be completed online. There is a parent section and a camper section.
- **Medical or Dietary Concerns** Please call or email the office a minimum of 4 weeks prior to your session's start date if you have any concerns. We will discuss and make a plan with you before your camper's arrival.

Table of Contents

CAMP INFORMATION	1	CAMP POLICIES	15
PROGRAM & BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS	2	MEDICAL CARE	17
INCOMING DAY	4	TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP	21
CAMPER PICK-UP DAY	5	HORSEBACK RIDING PROGRAM	22
STARTER SESSION INFORMATION	6	NEW IN 2025	23
MAP TO CAMP	7	AFTERNOON PROGRAM	24
ACCOMMODATIONS NEAR CAMP	8	FOOD SERVICE	25
CABIN PLACEMENTS	8	PREPARING FOR CAMP	26
THINGS TO BRING & CLOTHING LIST	9	FAQ's	28
COMMUNICATING WITH CAMP	11	STAFF & CIT PROGRAM	29
CAMPER CONDUCT	14		

CAMP INFORMATION

MOTTO:

Be Safe & Have Fun!

MISSION:

At Black River Farm and Ranch, we empower young women through horsemanship and camp experiences by cultivating courage, confidence, and independence. Our mission is to inspire resilience, leadership, and decision-making skills, both in the saddle and in life. We encourage girls to discover their strengths, passions, and unique abilities in a supportive community.

SADDLE UP FOR SUCCESS AT BR:

- Have fun & be safe!
- Older girls help the younger girls
- Kindness counts
- Leave everything a bit better than you found it

HISTORY OF THE BR:

Since childhood, Lois Donovan “Mrs. D” had a dream that she would have a place where girls could come to learn to ride and to be around horses and farm animals. Her dream became a reality in 1962 when Mr. & Mrs. D purchased an old potato farm in Croswell, MI. They chose the location because it was within driving distance from the Detroit area and still secluded from the hustle and bustle of the city.

That summer Black River Farm and Ranch opened its doors. The D’s had managed in a very short time to build two cabins and a dining hall (what we now know as Silver City). The first two cabin names were Pioneers and Trailblazers. That first year the BR had 16 campers, 4 staff members, and 7 horses.

When Mr. D became ill in 2000, he asked his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. C, to help manage the camp. When Mr. D passed away that same year, Mrs. D and the C’s ran the camp together. Eventually, Mrs. D did less of the daily management of the BR but continued to love her time at the ranch with her family and the BR girls. The camp that she worked so hard to create was truly her pride and joy. Mrs. D passed away in 2015.

Today the C’s and their children proudly manage and operate the BR together. Mr. C oversees the grounds and maintenance, while his daughters manage the program and its staff. This third generation of women is working hard to honor their grandmother’s traditions and maintain her vision of the ideal horse camp for girls.

For more than a half-century, the BR has expanded and improved its program and facilities while holding on to the traditions and values that make it so special. Our staff continues to pass on the joy of camping and horsemanship to girls and our camp program continues to evolve.

Black River is:

- Licensed by the State of Michigan
- Inspected by the Sanilac County Health Department
- Accredited by the Certified Horsemanship Association
- Accredited by The American Camping Association

Program Overview & Behavior Expectations

About BR's Summer Camp Program:

The BR is an all-girls residential summer camp. Our program is designed to provide a safe environment where girls can engage in outdoor activities with friends, disconnect from technology, become confident horsewomen, and enjoy camp activities.

The equine program at BR is open to all levels of riders. Whether you're a beginner eager to learn the basics of riding or an experienced horsewoman, our program provides a supportive, non-competitive environment.

Program Overview:

- The summer camp program at BR welcomes girls aged 6-16 who have a passion for horsemanship, a desire to cultivate courage, confidence, independence, and a willingness to engage in free play and exploration.
- In addition to horseback riding, campers spend extensive time outdoors, engage in outdoor camp activities, traverse rough and uneven terrain, swim and participate in aquatics activities, play various sports, use bows and arrows in archery, engage with farm animals, participate in campfires and cookouts, live and eat in a large-group communal setting with many other campers and staff, and have daily free choice periods in which campers choose an activity and then attend that activity without direct supervision from staff.
- BR has certain important safety rules, including the following:
 - Campers should be able to safely mount, dismount, and ride a horse while maintaining control of the horse and performing basic riding maneuvers.
 - Campers must follow all safety rules and other instructions provided by staff members. These instructions may be conveyed orally, in writing, and sometimes using hand signals while riding.
 - For the health and safety of the rider and horse, riders must weigh under 250 pounds.
- Each camper should be able to safely participate in the BR program and follow BR's key safety policies with or without reasonable modifications. If a camper has a disability or condition that requires reasonable modifications, please inform BR of your child's needs before the season begins to ensure that BR is prepared to address your child's needs. To request reasonable modifications, please see BR's Reasonable Modifications Policy.

Behavior Expectations:

- General
 - Integrity, Respect, and Responsibility: We expect all participants to conduct themselves with integrity, showing respect for fellow campers, camp staff, and animals. This includes taking responsibility for personal actions, showing kindness and empathy towards others, and approaching challenges with a positive and resilient attitude. Additionally, participants are encouraged to actively engage in unsupervised play and exploration, embracing opportunities for personal growth and leadership development.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS continued...

- Safety: Prioritize the safety and well-being of oneself and others, following all camp rules and guidelines.
- Try New Things: Campers should have a willingness to try, fail, seek help, persist, and help others.
- **Cabin - Group Living & Bathrooms** – Group living requires everyone to work together to create a positive community where campers can build friendships, foster personal growth and social development. Here are the behavior expectations:
 - Respect: Treat cabin mates and their belongings with kindness and consideration.
 - Communication: Listen attentively and communicate openly and respectfully with cabin mates and staff, expressing thoughts and feelings constructively.
 - Conflict Resolution: Resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively, seeking assistance from staff when needed to find amicable solutions.
 - Cooperation: Work together to maintain a clean and organized living space, sharing cabin responsibilities.
 - Personal Responsibility: Take ownership of personal belongings and space, keeping them tidy and in good condition.
 - Quiet Hours: Respect designated rest times and bedtimes to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for rest and relaxation.
- **Free Time** - During free time, it's important for campers to navigate their free time with responsibility and thoughtfulness. Here are the behavior expectations:
 - Independence: Move between activities safely on your own.
 - Responsibility: Prioritize the safety and well-being of oneself and others by following camp rules during free time. Seek assistance from a staff member if necessary.
 - Time Management: Manage your time effectively to ensure you can participate in the activities you're interested in.
 - Respect Others' Choices: Respect the choices of fellow campers, understanding that everyone may have different preferences for activities.
 - Communication: Communicate respectfully with other campers and staff when coordinating activities or sharing equipment. Use clear and polite language to express your preferences and needs.
 - Cooperation: Work collaboratively with others during group activities, demonstrating teamwork and cooperation.
- **Barn & Animals** - When it comes to behavior around horses and animals at camp, safety and respect are paramount. Here are some behavior expectations:
 - Respect for Animals: Treat all animals with kindness, patience, and respect. Avoid behaviors that could startle or distress them and rough or aggressive behavior.
 - Awareness: Be mindful of the environment and surroundings when around horses. Pay attention to an animal's behaviors so that you can react in a safe and responsible way.
 - Safety First: Always prioritize safety when interacting with horses, following all camp rules and guidelines for horse handling and riding.
 - Listening to Instructions: Listen carefully to instructions from camp staff and instructors regarding horse and animal care, handling, and riding techniques.



INCOMING DAY IS SUNDAY

Check-in times will be assigned between 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

This day is an exciting day to drop your camper off, see where she will be living, and meet her counselors. However, we need everyone to follow the same procedures.

Drop-off Procedure:

- Check-in times will be assigned in advance by cabin. A sign for your car's windshield with your camper's name, cabin, and assigned check-in time will be emailed to you the week before camp. Should anything change about check-in, we will contact all families via email.
- Please do not arrive more than a few minutes early. There will be a small holding area for cars that arrive before their scheduled check-in time.
- Check-in and arrival health screenings will take place in your car via a drive-thru style.
- Once you have completed the check-in process, you will drive back to the cabins in an orderly fashion, following the direction of camp staff in the parking lot and by the cities.
 - It is important that everyone follows the BR traffic rules especially driving 5 mph.
- Parents will be able to exit the car to unload luggage and hug campers goodbye but will not be allowed in the bunkhouses or to walk around camp.
- Bunks will be chosen by a popsicle stick lottery. If campers need a bottom bunk for a specific reason please call or email in advance.
- Parents will be able to meet the cabin staff outside the cabin at drop-off.
- New BR families will have the chance to tour camp before check-in starts. We will contact those families individually the week before the session starts.
- You will have an opportunity to drop mail to be delivered to your camper. Please see the mail/packages section for more information.
- Parents, we begin our safety orientations right after check-in ends. If you think you will be arriving after your check-in window please contact the office and let us know.

What you need to know for Check-in:

- ***Campers cannot be checked into camp without a completed health history & physical. Both are due by May 1st.***

- **Bring All Medications to Check-in** – Prescription and over-the-counter medication must be with you at check-in. We cannot dispense medication that is not in compliance with state regulations. Please refer to the Medication Section of the BR Guide if you are bringing medication to camp. Inhalers, epi-pens, sample packs, and any other medications that are removed from pharmacy packaging need dosing instructions. Keep pharmacy packaging or obtain a prescription from your doctor.

Medication must be brought to Check-in:

- In original container
- Labeled with dosage
- Labeled with camper name
- In a zipped baggie

- **Head Lice** - To help us keep everyone clear before arriving at camp please check your camper for head lice two weeks before the session and then again, the day before arrival. For more information on our head lice policy and how to's, refer to the Medical Care Section. You must do a **head lice check before you arrive.**

Please read the BR Policies for Families Visiting Camp if you plan to bring children or guests. Please do not bring any pets.

CAMPER PICK-UP DAY

SATURDAY

Pick-up times will be assigned between 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

** Exception: Starter Camp/Session 1 pick-up times are different**

Camp has concluded with a horse show since 1962. The horse show is a mix of old and new traditions that allows campers to demonstrate the skills they've learned.

- Families will be given an arrival and riding time the Wednesday prior to the show.
 - 10:00 AM Group A will start riding.
 - 10:20 AM Group B will start riding.
 - 10:40 AM The Halftime Show will start.
 - All campers will participate in the Halftime Show, please make sure you're on time to watch the halftime show.
 - 11:05 AM Group C will start riding.
 - 11:25 AM Group D will start riding.
- Camper's riding in Group A and B will be released to their parents after the halftime show. Camper's riding in Group C and D will be released to their parents after they finish their horse show.
- Luggage pick-up at the cities: Once you have watched your camper ride and have checked her out, you will drive to her cabin to pick up her luggage. This has been a huge success in eliminating lost and found. However, all vehicles will be required to drive very slowly and carefully to ensure the safety of cars and pedestrians moving around camp at the same time.
 - Remember bags will not come home as neatly as they arrived. You may have more items to claim like laundry bags and towels. Before you leave camp ask your camper to look and make sure she has everything.

Before the Show:

- Please arrive on time for your assigned window. Campers will start the riding demonstration on time and cannot repeat the performance. Please allow yourself time to park and walk to the riding area.
- There is a short walk to the riding ring. We can transport family members who need assistance to the show ring.
- If you would like to sit during the show you may bring a chair to set up at the horseshow ring.
- Campers will not be able to leave the barn area to say hello before or during the show.

Check-out procedures:

- Check-out will be in the Central Park area as you walk down to your camper's show from 10 AM to 10:45 AM.
- A parent or authorized person must be at check-out to sign out your camper.
- **All Medications** are picked up at check-out.
- **Cash, Check or Venmo** can be used to pay Treat Store bills. We do not accept Credit Cards for Treat Store accounts.

Please read the BR Policies for Families Visiting Camp if you plan to bring children or guests. Please do not bring any pets.

STARTER CAMP SESSION INFORMATION

INCOMING DAY

- Check-in will be the same as the procedures for all sessions.
- Things to Bring List – this list is a recommendation for a one-week session, please adjust for your shortened stay.
- Mail - Due to the short stay at camp it is important to mail letters before the girls arrive or drop off some letters during check-in. You can bring cards, letters, or packages labeled with the date for delivery to check-in, we will deliver them on the assigned day. See the Mail & Packages sections.
- Our daily schedule and activities are the same as any other session. However, some activities may be scheduled because there are a lot of new campers.

PICK UP & RIDING DEMO

Pick-up times will be assigned between 1:30 and 3:00 pm on Wednesday

Starter camp will be the same as the procedures for all sessions only the times are different to allow for morning riding lessons. Emails with your campers' specific riding time will be sent out the Tuesday before their demonstration. Please look over the pick-up procedure for all sessions.



BR Policies for Families Visiting Camp:

Parents are responsible for all children (non-campers) they bring with them. Please supervise these guests carefully. The playground and the small animals' area require extra supervision. The waterfront, trampoline area and tree climbing are off-limits to guests.

Please do not bring any pets.

Please know that BR has many dogs on the property. These dogs live here and may be running around. Guest may not bring pets to the ranch as it presents a liability.

MAP TO CAMP



Directions from Port Huron, MI to Black River Farm and Ranch:

1. I-94 to Port Huron, exit 275 to the right.
2. Follow signs for Lexington.
3. Take a left (north) at the first light onto M25 or Lakeshore (same road).
4. Continue north through Port Huron heading towards Lexington.
5. Take a left (west) at the first stoplight in Lexington onto M90 or Peck Road (same road). Travel 3 miles.
6. Take a left (south) onto Wildcat Road. Travel 1 mile.
7. Take a right (west) onto Sheridan Line Road.
8. Travel approx. 1.5 miles straight ahead until you arrive at the BR.

More directions are available on the website.

Important Message for GPS users: Please be aware if you are using a GPS navigation system it may give you directions that take you to Sheridan Line Rd but on the other side of the river. You cannot access the BR from Black River Road. The BR is on the East Side of the Black River. If you are misdirected go to the intersection of Croswell Rd. & Sheridan Line Rd. Then head west on Sheridan Line Road. This has been better in recent years, but some GPS users have had better luck using 5100 for the street address.

Staff is not available to answer the phone in the office on incoming and horse show days to help with directions. Please keep these directions handy when you are driving to camp.

ACCOMMODATIONS NEAR CAMP

Parents driving from around the Thumb Area can easily make the round trip to camp in one day. For visitors traveling from out of the area who wish to stay locally, there are a handful of great Inns and B&B's in Lexington. Reservations should be made in advance since availability is very limited during the summer. The Croswell-Lexington Chamber of Commerce is also a helpful resource.

Hotels near Camp:

Lakeview Hills Hotel & Golf
6560 E. Peck Rd. Lexington, MI 48450
Phone: 810-359-7333
www.lakeviewhills.com

The Cadillac House – Inn
5502 Main St, Lexington, MI, 48450
Email: reception@thecadillachouse.com
<https://thecadillachouse.com/>

Port Huron, MI is a 30–40-minute drive to BR and has a greater selection of chain hotels.

CABIN PLACEMENTS

	The BR has 3 bunkhouses called cities. There are four 8-12 person cabins inside each bunkhouse. All the cabins in the bunkhouse share bathroom facilities
<u>City Name</u> <i>Cabin Name</i>	
<u>Virginia City</u>	Campers are assigned to cabins based on age, grade, and cabin requests. The ages in each cabin will depend on the session. We start with the youngest and work our way up. <u>Campers will not necessarily move up a cabin every year.</u> During their years at BR they may go up, stay the same, or go down, but whatever cabin they are in it will be with other girls their age or grade. Cabin requests must be submitted by June 1 st to be taken into consideration.
Trailblazers Wranglers	
Settlers Drovers	Once cabin assignments have been sent out we are unable to make changes.
<u>Carson City</u>	We do not guarantee cabin requests. We do our best to accommodate all mutual cabin requests (maximum of 2 requests). Cabin requests must be within 2 years of age or 1 grade apart to be accommodated. As campers get older this range will narrow. Our ability to accommodate a request of differently aged/ grade campers will change based on the makeup of the session. We aim to keep final year campers, who are 15 before June 1 st in a cabin together because they have some unique experiences that are only offered to campers in their final summer. Feel free to not request anyone. Meeting new people is the best way to experience camp!
Rangers Rustlers	
Prospectors Homesteaders	
<u>Dodge City</u>	We have each camper's best interest in mind and are committed to providing a positive camp experience. Cabin placement is just one part of the camp experience. Campers will have the opportunity to meet new friends in their riding group and during activities.
Buckaroos Pioneers	
Roughriders Golddiggers	

THINGS TO BRING AND CLOTHING LIST:

Required Items:

- 1. Riding Helmet** - ASTM/ SEI certified (*available at BR for purchase or rental the day of arrival*)
- 2. Riding Boots** - Western or English boots designed for riding. We recommend a slip-on western boot.
- 3. Soft soled sneakers** for vaulting.

THIS LIST IS BASED ON A 1 WEEK STAY

** These are only suggestions.*

You know your camper and she may need more or less of the suggested quantities.

CLOTHING

Riding Wear:

- 7 pr. tall socks for boots
- 7 T-shirts or tops for riding
- 4 pr. jeans or pants for riding

Non-Barn Wear:

- 7 pr. underwear
- 4-7 pajamas
- 5 pr. shorts
- 7 T-shirts or tops
- 1 disposable outfit for messy games
- 2 sweatshirts
- 1 long sleeve T-shirt
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 raincoat or poncho
- Hat for sun protection
- 1 pr. sneakers
- 1 pr. flip flops or sandals
- Optional- rain boots
- Casual dress outfit for "dress up dinner"

MISCELLANEOUS

- 1 large laundry bag
- 1 pool towel
- 1 flashlight
- Camera (optional)
- Stationery, stamps, pens
- Pre-addressed stamped envelopes

TOILETRIES (Please label clearly)

- 1 toiletry carry bag/box to bring to the bathroom
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- 1 drinking cup
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Comb or brush
- Bug Spray
- Sunscreen
- Tissues

LINENS

- 1 pillow
- 2 pillowcases
- 1 light blanket
- 1 sleeping bag
- 2 twin flat sheets * 2 sets are suggested in case
- 2 twin fitted sheets a change is necessary.
- 1 mattress pad, optional
- 4 bath towels
- 2 washcloths

DO NOT PACK MEDICATION: It must be turned in at check-in.

NOT PERMITTED

- Cell phones or any device with gaming or cellular capabilities. i.e. No smartphones, smartwatches, or tablets with or without SIM cards.
- Food, Candy, Pets, Specialty Sporting Equip, Weapons, Tobacco, E-Cigs, Vapes, Drugs, Alcohol

Items that are not permitted will be taken to the office and returned at check-out. Campers will be asked to turn them in the first night and after that, if items are discovered it will be considered a violation of the conduct code.

Black River Farm and Ranch reserves the right to search a camper's belongings when a staff member has reason to suspect, or has knowledge of, contraband or potentially harmful material. Please review the Camp Policies section for further information.

LABELING BELONGINGS

Please ensure that your camper's name (first and last) is on everything she brings to camp - clothing, shoes, towels, sports equipment, sleeping bags, cameras, flashlights, etc. Use either a permanent marker or name tapes.

We love: Mabel's Labels - <https://mabelslabels.com> Select Black River under fundraising and help us buy labels for camp equipment.

LUGGAGE

Trunks, suitcases, and duffel bags are acceptable for packing your camper's belongings. Please pack everything into bags and label it with your camper's name. Please allow extra room for her to be able to repack her belongings on the last day into the same bags, belongings will return home less organized than when your camper arrived. Please avoid having loose items and limit the number of bags you bring.

Each camper will have a set of 5 cubbies for storing clothes and bathroom items. The cubie dimensions are 15"wide and 11.5" tall.

There is room under the bed to store your suitcase/duffel or a storage container. It is 9.5" from the floor to the bed rail. We also can store trunks or large suitcases in the bunkhouse storage rooms.

EXPENSIVE GEAR

Expensive clothing, cameras, and musical instruments are brought to camp at parent's and camper's own risk. We suggest that you arrange insurance coverage on a "Floater Policy" for any costly items. The camp, though taking all reasonable precautions, cannot be held responsible for loss, damage, or theft of any camper's belongings in transit or while at camp. Personal sports equipment is not necessary at camp except for a riding helmet, attire, and boots. All other sports equipment is not permitted at BR unless special arrangements have been made to store it for appropriate use.

LAUNDRY SERVICE

Laundry service is only provided for campers staying for multiple sessions. Camp laundry is completed by an outside contracted service and will be billed to your Treat Store account. This service includes washing, drying, folding, and returning all articles to camp the next day. Please do not send any clothing that requires delicate laundering as they may not stand up to camp laundering.

LOST AND FOUND

Due to the group living experience, the fast-paced nature of camp, and the frequent changing of clothes for different activities, clothing and personal belongings will be misplaced. Every activity area has a "lost and found bin" and clothing is regularly collected by our staff and distributed back to the appropriate persons. Every effort is made to ensure campers go home with everything they came with, but this is often not possible.

LOST AND FOUND continued...

Greater emphasis on routines, cabin cleanliness, and camper responsibilities have reduced this problem, and we will continue to fight the battle of missing socks, towels, and t-shirts, however, while reasonable care is taken by the camp to keep track of camper clothing, the nature of group living and the rugged active lifestyle at camp makes it certain that clothing **WILL BE LOST OR DAMAGED**. Parents, please expect this loss and send items that are disposable if possible. The camp **CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE** for the loss, disappearance, or damage of campers' clothing or belongings.

Clothing and personal belongings (that are labeled) found at camp after camper's leave will be collected, laundered, and sent to your home within two weeks of the end of the camp season. The items will include a receipt for the shipping fees which we ask that you repay. Your understanding in this matter is appreciated. Items that go unclaimed will be donated to charity at the end of the summer. Labeling your items and contacting us ASAP will result in the best chance of us locating and returning your items.

SPENDING MONEY

Spending money is not needed at camp. The camp will not be responsible for the loss of money or valuables not brought to the office for safekeeping.

COMMUNICATING WITH CAMP

MAIL

Communication between parents and their children is an important part of camp. Who doesn't love getting mail? Campers are encouraged to write to parents but not required.

Occasionally letters from camp may seem sad, which may concern you. Parents are encouraged to remember that most campers have a settling-in period to camp or may have brief moments of missing home. This, while upsetting, can be a natural part of camp for some children. Many campers, even those that attend each summer, may experience homesickness. Most temporarily unhappy campers bounce back within an hour of mailing the letter and we encourage parents to recognize this. If there is something contained in your child's letter that is of concern to you and you wish to follow up, please call the camp office, we are more than happy to check in on your camper.

Mail is dropped off and picked up in Croswell every business day. Mail between Detroit and camp can take 2 to 4 days to reach its destination. Parents are encouraged to write to their children before their arrival at camp to ensure they receive a letter within the first day or two. You can also drop off a few letters for us to deliver on check-in day.

MAIL continued...

Our camp mailing address is:

Black River Farm and Ranch
Camper's First & Last Name
Cabin Name
5040 Sheridan Line Rd.
Croswell, MI 48422

Please include your campers' cabin name on all mail. We will label any packages sent before assignments are given.

We recommend that you send pre-addressed envelopes with your child. Although helpful for all ages, younger campers particularly benefit from this. We try and check outgoing mail, but often cannot tell who it is going to and who it is from if the address is incomplete. Provide envelopes or labels for yourselves, grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, and anyone else you want your child to write to throughout the session. Campers do get busy with activities and forget to write – busy having fun is good! We encourage them to write home but do not force them.

MAIL DROP ON CHECK-IN DAY

You can drop off a few letters for your camper at check-in, just label them with the camper's name, cabin, and the date you would like them to be delivered.

We will not accept boxes, gift bags, and unsealed bags. They are cumbersome and get separated in the mailroom. We have a very small area to store mail. Please keep drop-offs to small or large envelopes. Items must be packaged and sealed as if they were being delivered by the postal service.

PACKAGES

Packages are distributed daily. If service is late in the day, the delivery may not happen until the next day. We do not deliver any mail or email on Sundays.

Please limit care packages larger than an envelope to once or twice a session. **Please do not include food or candy.** If food is sent campers must consume it when it's received because it cannot be taken back to the cabin. We ask that they share with the cabin or camp, but what cannot be consumed must be thrown away at that meal.

All the main couriers deliver to the camp, including FedEx and UPS.

EMAIL

We have contracted with a camp email service called Bunk1. Emails will be downloaded once a day and delivered to your camper at mealtimes. Although email is quick and efficient there is no substitute for a handwritten letter or card! Campers love handwritten letters and cards.

There is a fee for the email service. The fees charged help cover the cost of the service.

Please go to the BR webpage for a link to Bunk1. You will need the code supplied to you in a separate handout to access the email service. Once you register you can continue to use your account information each year. This email account is different than the BR's online registration account.

TELEPHONE

It is a strict camp policy that campers may not call home or receive telephone calls at camp. In addition to being disruptive to the daily routine, our experience has shown that telephone conversations, however well-intentioned, tend to bring sadness, tears, and homesickness. The only exception is in the event of a family emergency. Concerned parents of first-time campers are welcome to call and find out how their child is doing, but continual updates take time away from our staff's primary focus. We want our counselors to focus their time and energy relating directly with their campers. We will always notify you if we feel there are issues you should be aware of.

Contacting us after office hours:

In case of an emergency, you can reach BR after hours on the Leadership Line. It is a phone that a Program Director carries after office hours. Please call the office and listen to the voice mailbox prompts to give you the emergency information. This line is for emergency use only and we will only return calls about urgent issues regarding campers currently at camp.

Contact information for Black River Farm and Ranch:

Camp Address: 5040 Sheridan Line Road Croswell, MI 48422

Phone: 810-679-2505

Fax: 810-679-3188

Email: info@blackriverfarmandranch.com

Website: www.Blackriverfarmandranch.com

CAMPER CONDUCT

The general behavior of campers and staff is expected to be in keeping with the ideals upon which BR was founded. Our mandate includes protecting campers and staff from verbal, mental, sexual, and physical abuse from anyone. Any behavior that compromises the well-being of any child is not tolerated. Our policies are designed to reinforce these ideals and campers must adhere to the following “Code of Behavior”:

- Bullying and teasing of other campers is NOT permitted.
- Swearing is an inappropriate way to communicate and not acceptable.
- All campers must remain in their cabins from camper bedtime until scheduled wake up.
- Campers will attend all scheduled activities.
- Campers are expected to contribute to the cabin community and do what they can to make everyone feel welcome, comfortable, and included.
- Respect for all camp equipment, facilities, and property is required of all campers.
- Respect for all the horses and other animals is required of all campers.
- Respect for each other’s property and belongings is a common courtesy and also required.
- Staff should be used to help resolve any issues or problems.
- Respect and abide by the No Food policy in the bunkhouse.
- Campers may not possess, consume or be under the influence of any drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products. Smoking and vaping are not permitted on campgrounds, by anyone.
- Firearms and weapons are not permitted at camp.

Campers who do not respect this code shall receive a warning, after which, if the behavior does not improve, parents will be notified. If the camper continues to be a disruption to camp and the enjoyment of camp by others, she may be asked to leave.

Campers who breach our policy regarding drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping, or weapons will be asked to leave camp immediately.

Black River Farm and Ranch reserves the right to dismiss any camper from camp whose conduct proves to be detrimental to the welfare of others.

Dismissal from camp due to camper conduct will not receive a refund of any fees.

Black River Farm & Ranch is an invitation-only camp; poor conduct could result in not being allowed back at camp.

CAMP POLICIES

BAGGAGE SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Black River Farm and Ranch is committed to creating a safe environment for all campers, staff, and visitors. For this reason, there may be times when a search of a camper's living space or possessions may be warranted. A staff member who has reason to suspect, or has knowledge of, contraband or potentially harmful material will present his or her concerns to the acting director, who will decide whether a search should be conducted. When a search is undertaken, at least one senior staff member and one other staff member must be present. When appropriate, an effort is made to include the camper whose living space or possessions are being searched for. A search of a camper's possessions, when warranted, may include such items as backpacks, suitcases, duffel bags, and trunks. If a weapon or controlled drug is located during a search, or discovered in any other fashion on camp property, the director may be required to notify the police. Possession of contraband or potentially harmful material may also result in disciplinary consequences, up to and including dismissal.

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY

- A \$50 non-refundable admin fee will be collected on all cancelled reservations.
- All deposits and tuition are fully refundable until March 31st.
- Starting April 1st deposits are no longer refundable.
- After June 1st deposits and tuition are non-refundable. Deposit and tuition payments may be transferred to a new session in the current season if available.
- Within two weeks of the session's start date, deposits and tuition monies are not refundable or transferable.
- Medical cancellation with a physician's note made before starting a session can be transferred to another session if available or payments can be rolled over to the next season.
- Campers who arrive late, leave early, or are dismissed from camp are not eligible for a refund or an adjusted tuition price.
- BR reserves the right to dismiss, without refund, any camper whose influence is not good for the camp. Please review the camper code of conduct and policies in the BR Guide.

FIRE SAFETY

As a safety precaution, we must limit the number of electrical devices and appliances campers bring to camp. Hair dryers, flat irons, and other hair styling devices can only be used in the bathrooms.

Finally, the buildings at camp are also equipped with a centrally monitored fire safety system linked directly to 911 and the alarm company. These fire alarms are not to be played with. Pulling the fire alarm as a prank is a cause for automatic dismissal.

EMERGENCY CONTACT POLICY

In the event of an incident or medical emergency at camp concerning your child we will try to contact you in the following order:

1. One or both parents at home, work, or cell.
2. The person listed as an emergency contact. These individuals should be different from the parents/guardians.

We will make every effort to contact you or your alternate contact person, but if we are unable to reach you, the Camp Director will act on your behalf. If we are contacting you and it is NOT an emergency (i.e. behavioral concerns, medical updates) we will leave a message or call again. Please don't be alarmed if you see our phone number on your call display or hear our voices on your answering machine. Sometimes phone calls are made for non-emergency issues.

LEAVING CAMP

Campers may not leave camp without permission from the Camp Director. Special arrangements may be made in the event of an emergency. Fees will not be adjusted for any time spent away from camp during the session.

Campers leaving camp must have a guardian pick them up and sign them out when leaving camp. Sign-in/out will take place in the office during designated times and non-campers will not be allowed on camp property during a session for the safety of all campers.

VISITORS

Our camp entrance and grounds are monitored by video, security personnel and staff 24 hours a day. Unauthorized visits are not permitted. Please, be sure all family and friends are aware of this policy. It is for our campers' and staff's safety. All visitors must sign in at the office.

For first-time campers, appointments can be made to tour the camp during the summer, prior to your session. Please call the office to arrange.

NO FOOD POLICY

Black River Farm and Ranch has a no food in the cabins policy for all campers. Prior to this policy, food caused significant problems including attraction of bugs and animals in the cabin, allergy concerns, and cabin cleanliness.

In addition to three meals a day (all you can eat!), campers receive a daily mid-afternoon snack at pool treats, and optional afternoon and bedtime treats at the Treat Store. Do not send or bring food of any kind. Your camper does not need extra snacks. We request that parents support this important policy.

TREAT STORE & GENERAL STORE POLICIES

The BR has a Treat Store and General Store on the property. It has items for sale such as: snacks, drinks, t-shirts, sweatshirts, novelty items, travel-size toiletries, and more.

The Treat Store is open twice a day, during Free Time and after Night Activity. We limit the campers to 1 food item and 1 drink item per visit.

The General Store is open twice a week during sessions. During check-in, you will be asked if your camper can shop in the General Store during their stay. We do not put a spending limit on the campers. Please talk with your camper before their arrival if you want to set limitations.

The General Store will also be open on Horse Show Day so you can shop with your camper. You are also able to place an order online: <http://blackrivergeneralstore.com/>. Items can be shipped, picked up during check-in, or delivered as a care package while your camper is attending a session.

Each camper has an account in the Treat Store/General Store, and they charge items as they go. Campers are responsible for making the choices as to what they can have when they are in the store. Accounts are paid in full with cash or check during check out. Therefore, campers must practice making choices and being responsible. If you have certain rules you would like her to follow, please go over those with her on incoming day.

MEDICAL CARE

PERSONNEL

The BR Health Center is staffed around the clock by Certified Health Officers. Our camp doctor is located one mile from camp. We use Port Huron Hospitals, sometimes Sandusky Hospital.

Please know that the staff at Black River Farm and Ranch is not trained to deal with severe medical or behavioral issues. For your camper's safety, you must call the camp office prior to camp to discuss any medical or behavioral issues that may require special attention to ensure that we will be able to properly care for her.

MEDICATION

All medications (prescriptions, inhalers, allergy serums, vitamins, and OTC medicine) must be brought with you to check-in and given to our camp Health Director. Medications taken daily must be supplied in adequate quantities. All medication must be provided in its original bottle or package and have proper dosage instructions - our infirmary staff cannot dispense it otherwise. Please put all medicines in a zippered baggie or container labeled with the camper's first and last name.

***Inhalers** need dosing instructions – keep the pharmacy packaging. *

Any medication brought to camp must be kept in the Infirmary. The only exception to this rule applies to campers who have medications that require immediate, possibly life-saving dispensing, including asthma inhalers and Epi-pens. These campers must bring a “hip pack” or other means to enable them to carry their meds at all times on their person.

MEDICATION continued...

If your child is on medication that requires strict observance, any breach of which would have serious health consequences, you must discuss the details with the Health Directors before arrival.

MEDICATION DISPENSED IN THE INFIRMARY

Our Infirmary stocks OTC (over the counter) medications and remedies. The healthcare staff has standing orders from the Camp Physician which direct the use of these medications for common or routine health problems.

Please review the health history form for a list of medications we stock and dispense. These are the only medications the Infirmary can dispense other than medication brought from home. We are authorized to use the brand name or generic versions of these medications. You may provide different medications that you would like us to administer.

HEALTH FORMS

The camper Health Forms must be fully completed every year (this complies with the State of Michigan and ACA regulations). **These forms are due by May 1st.**

Your copy of the **Camp Physical Form** must be completed by a doctor. If you need an extension due to the timing of the physical please let us know when we can expect to receive it. At a minimum, it must be received 1 month in advance. We ask you to keep a copy for your records, just in case.

Camper Health History is to be completed online in the registration portal. Immunization history and health insurance information are required.

Campers cannot be checked into camp without a completed health history & physical.

CAMPER ILLNESS AND NOTIFYING PARENTS

Campers with routine complaints can go to the Infirmary to be checked after breakfast, lunch, or dinner every day during Infirmary hours. Campers with mild fever, upset stomach, or persistent colds will be admitted to the Infirmary to rest and recuperate. When the camper rests and returns to activity, we do not normally advise parents.

However, parents will be notified (via telephone) by the attending Health Officer regarding the health of a camper in the following circumstances:

- The camper is transported off camp property for special diagnostic tests/services (i.e. x-rays, dental appointments) or therapeutic management of injuries/illness requiring emergency treatment (i.e. Doctor's Office, Hospital & dental emergencies).
- If the camper is admitted to the Infirmary overnight or a protracted illness is evident.

In any of the situations listed above, if the parent cannot be contacted initially, attempts will continue to be made to notify parents/emergency contacts of the clinical situation (refer to our Emergency Policy for further details).

CAMPER ILLNESS AND NOTIFYING PARENTS continued...

Campers must be sent home for contagious issues such as:

- Lice
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye or pinkeye)
- Illnesses, rashes, viruses, etc. that are contagious and require a 48-hour quarantine or longer.

Campers can return to camp when well as long as their doctor and our camp doctor feel it is safe for them to return to the program. To return to camp they must have a doctor's note allowing them to return to the program.

HEAD LICE POLICY

Head lice has been present in schools, camps, and workplaces across the U.S. This is a national issue that is discussed and addressed at length at several American Camp Association conferences because self-contained communities like camps are especially vulnerable and must be vigilant to control this problem.

Head lice do not spread disease, nor does their presence mean that your child is unclean. Head lice are not living in your home, on your furniture or in your bedding, or on your pets. Without blood from your head, head lice can only live 24-48 hours. They need your head to live, colonize and lay eggs. Head lice are greyish white in color and are about the size of a sesame seed. They are wingless insects and DO NOT fly or jump. They are usually passed through direct head-to-head contact. They are usually seen around the ears, nape of the neck, and the crown of the head. They vary in color, often described as yellowish-brown or caramel. Nits are attached firmly to the hair shaft like glue and do not move easily like dandruff. Eggs and nits are not easily removed and must be carefully combed out with a fine-toothed comb. More information is available on the CDC's website.

Black River has a no nits no lice policy. Any evidence of head lice, live insects, or eggs (nits) will cause the camper to be sent home for treatment. Parents will be contacted to pick up and treat the camper. All campers and staff in the same cabin group will be screened to prevent the spread of head lice. Parents will be notified via email before campers are picked up.

To prevent the spread of head lice when present parents should discuss with their camper the importance of:

1. Discuss with children how lice are spread (head-to-head contact and sharing of personal items).
2. Teach kids not to share personal grooming items, hair decorations, clips, headbands, hats, helmets, or clothing.
3. Encourage kids to use their own pillows, blankets, etc.

Before arriving at camp check your camper for head lice at least twice

- **Two weeks before the session**
- **The day before your arrival**

How to do a Lice Check

1. Use a strong light or go outside in bright light.
2. Combing hair while it's wet is more effective.

HEAD LICE POLICY continued...

3. Lice are hard to spot. Look for tiny white or black specks (eggs or nits) stuck on the hair shaft. Head lice are small, wingless bugs.
4. Please be aware! Checking for lice before arrival at camp is NOT always a guarantee, as there is a 3 to 7-day period of gestation during which the nits are invisible.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Black River Farm and Ranch requires that campers have health insurance. Please upload a copy of the insurance card to the registration portal.

Campers who do not have health insurance will need to contact the office before arriving at camp.

DENTIST AND ORTHODONTIST PRE-CAMP VISIT

A visit to the dentist or orthodontist before camp to take care of last-minute fillings and avoid teeth troubles during the session is advised. Please make sure braces and retainers are in good shape. In most cases, the orthodontist in Port Huron will only do temporary work to make your camper comfortable until she returns home to see her own orthodontist. Note, as well, that the dentists and orthodontists in Port Huron require payment that will be charged back to your account.

SUN SAFETY

We instruct our staff to encourage their campers (and themselves) to apply sunscreen before leaving the cabin each morning and reapply as required. Please help teach younger campers how to apply sunscreen themselves. Staff can help campers if needed.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Our staff monitors the personal hygiene of campers; however, we cannot supervise campers in the shower. We ask campers to shower and wash their hair a minimum of 2 times a week and brush their teeth twice a day. These are habits kids learn at home so, if you know we may have issues with hygiene, or if you have different expectations, please discuss them with your camper before camp and with camp staff upon arrival. We can help girls brush their hair, put in braids or ponytails if needed or asked.

TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP

If you are wondering how your child will spend her day at camp, here is a schedule of a camper's typical day. The day begins at flagpole followed by breakfast and riding activities (riding lessons, ground lessons, barn chores, small animals, and vaulting), lunch -delicious food (mmmm), rest time (ahhh). Then, afternoon activities (barn, pool, boats, crafts, field activities, trampolines, ropes course, trail rides) dinner (yum), the day finishes with an evening program (skits, games, treasure hunts, talent show, etc.) and treat store before sleepy campers return to their cabins for bedtime.

8:00 am	Flag Raising
8:05 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Riding & Barn Activities Begin
10:30 am	Riding lessons switch with Barn Activities
12:00 pm	Rest & Refresh
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:20 pm	Rest Period
2:00 pm	Free Time
4:30 pm	Activities end – Cabin Time Begins
5:30 pm	Rinse & Rest
6:00 pm	Flag Lowering & Dinner
7:30 pm	Night Activity
8:30 pm	Treat Store
9 -10 pm	Bedtime - depends on age

***In 2025 we updated the daily schedule. ***

Mealtimes for lunch and dinner have been pushed back, and we've broken up our rest hour into three periods throughout the day. These changes will allow for campers to move smoothly through their activities and leaves more room for new programing.

HORSEBACK RIDING PROGRAM

The mission of our riding program is to provide a safe and fun atmosphere where girls can learn horsemanship and riding skills. Skills will be taught at whatever pace the camper is comfortable. At BR, we are focused on riding in a balance seat and working towards subtlety and finesse in our riding and horse handling. One of the unique challenges to riders is that they must adapt to riding many different horses, and they move up in riding levels, they also move to re difficult horses. This opportunity is very different from riding the same lesson horses each week.

Goals of the Horse Program:

1. To teach girls to be knowledgeable horsewomen
2. To teach girls to be skilled riders
3. To foster the love and appreciation of animals

STAFFING

Our Equine Manager must have the following training, experience, and qualifications: CHA certification as a riding instructor, previous experience as a riding instructor for at least 30 weeks, and a minimum of 6 years' experience riding and caring for horses.

Riding instructors must have the following training, experience, and qualifications: CHA certification (or the equivalent) as a riding instructor and previous experience as an assistant riding instructor or a minimum of 3 years' experience riding and caring for horses.

Assistant Riding Instructors must have a minimum of 1 year of experience riding and caring for horses.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The riding program begins at 8:00 each morning except Sunday and the last Saturday of each session. Riding groups will have a lesson from 9:00 am until 10:15 am or 10:30 am until 11:45 am. The groups will alternate time slots each day. Opposite the group's lesson, they have Vaulting and Horse Talk (a ground lesson about horses), as well as, either Small Animals, Barn Chores, Natural Horsemanship, or a lunging lesson.

Groups will be taught a set curriculum based on their skill level. The group will move through the skills at a pace that is safe yet challenging for the riders. The pace will be set by the average rider in the group. We try to keep a balance in each group that allows the lessons to be beneficial to all riders. This allows riders to continue to have fun and learn without instructor pressure to advance. It is intended to be a fun, stress-free environment.

Every effort is made to give the riders who are struggling the opportunity to get extra coaching in their lessons and additional practice time at instructional riding in the afternoon. If a rider is not comfortable advancing they are always given the choice to move to a lower group. However, if we feel that there is a safety issue we may move them to a different group. More advanced riders will be challenged in different ways, including more challenging horses and drills. If they demonstrate the competency of the skills taught in their group on a variety of horses, they may be offered the choice of switching groups.

RIDING GROUP PLACEMENT

First-Year campers will be placed in a group based on the questionnaire filled out. Please remember when filling out the questionnaire that it is always easier for kids to be moved up instead of down. All campers will be passively evaluated on the first day of riding and they will be given levels. If necessary, they will then be reassigned to a new group based on the new level.

Throughout the session, riding levels continue to be reassessed to ensure campers are placed in the appropriate riding group for their skill level and personal goals. Camper's riding skills will be verified and documented by an instructor at the end of a session to determine their initial group placement for the following year. At check-out, parents will receive a riding session review sheet that details what skills their camper improved upon during the session and what skills they can continue working on in order to progress through our riding program.

Returning campers may choose any group up to the skill level that was verified the previous season. They will also be re-evaluated on the first day and may be moved based on the re-evaluation. If a camper returns the following year a much better rider than the previous year, they will have the opportunity to move up levels after the initial placement.

If at any time a camper feels like she is not progressing as quickly as she would like to she can ask the instructor what skills need to be mastered so that she can move up. She can also attend additional instructional riding time in the afternoon.

The Equine Manager will decide what riding level is appropriate. We will not place a camper in a riding group that we believe to be beyond her capabilities. This is for the safety of the camper.

NEW IN 2025

LEADER-IN-TRAINING PROGRAM

We're excited to introduce our new Leader-in-Training (LIT) Program, designed specifically for our 15-year-old campers in their final year of eligibility. This program aims to educate and empower them to become confident, effective leaders—both at Black River and beyond. Through engaging, hands-on activities, campers will explore different leadership and communication styles, develop decision-making skills, practice giving and receiving feedback, and experience personal growth. The program also helps campers build meaningful connections with peers and mentors they may work alongside on our Staff.

SKILLS TIME

To foster connection with the natural world while building confidence, teamwork, and practical outdoor skills. During this cabin-based activity time, campers will engage in hands-on experiences that teach them how to interact respectfully and knowledgeably with the outdoors. Campers will work together, deepening their bond as a cabin while gaining a sense of self-reliance, environmental stewardship, and appreciation for nature's rhythms. The skills that will be learned are:

- Gardening
- Plant Identification
- Navigation
- Water Purification
- Fire Building

See page 21 for an updated daily schedule

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Afternoon activities are open during “free time” 2:00 – 4:30 pm daily. All activities will be staffed, and campers can move from one activity to another. Afternoon activities may be more scheduled during starter camp.

SWIMMING in the pool during free time is an option every day (weather permitting). The pool is staffed by certified lifeguards.

BOATING Kayaks, peddle boats, and paddleboards in Lake Lorely are great fun. The Lake is staffed by certified lifeguards.

CRAFTS are always a hit! The Craft Barn has a different craft every day, from beads and lanyards to macramé and shoe charms. It is a great place to be creative and meet new people.

SMALL ANIMALS are provided for the campers to gain knowledge through direct experience with the small animals. The animals may be handled with supervision. Staff and campers must remain aware that the animals are not toys and must be treated with care and respect. The small animals’ area is open during free time in the afternoons, during the mornings when scheduled or when supervised by a staff member.

ARCHERY is a great way for girls to learn precision and discipline. Girls learn the equipment, safety, and techniques used in archery.

FIELD ACTIVITIES

Trampolines are a fun way to exercise and unwind. They are open in their free time or whenever a staff person is present. Soccer, volleyball, tennis, basketball, softball, and any other games we can think up are played during free time. Nature walks and activities are also a fun way to get involved and enjoy the outdoors.

BARN ACTIVITIES

Trail rides are offered daily. Each camper will be offered at least one trail ride a week.

Halter class is a great way for girls to learn about caring for horses. Each day the class learns a new lesson about routine care and first aid for the horse. On the last day, they show their horse to the judges who decide who has taken the best care of their horse. That person wins the Halter Class.

Vaulting is used to increase rider confidence, balance, and rhythm. It is often compared to gymnastics or ballet on horseback. Vaulting Club in the afternoon is optional.

Free riding is supervised riding without instruction. Campers can come to play games, practice what they learned in class, or just relax in the saddle.

Instructional riding Campers are invited to ride with instructors in an afternoon lesson. Instructional lessons are offered to help kids improve on the skills they are trying to master in class.

FOOD SERVICE

OUR MENU

We are proud of our long-standing reputation for great camp food, and we work hard to make sure there is an option for everyone. Please review the camp menu online and contact us with any questions. Please contact us at least 4 weeks before your session starts so that we can answer any questions and ensure we can accommodate your camper.

CAMPERS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL DIETS

Our mission is to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all campers. Therefore, we want to be sure we have all the details and information regarding your child's food allergy before the start of camp. This information should be provided in writing from your doctor on the Camp Physical Form and included in the Camper Health History. We need to know what causes the response, what type of response has occurred in the past, symptoms, and any treatment/prevention strategies. A FARE form with a photo of your camper is necessary for campers with serious food allergies.

We provide a vegetarian option and non-dairy milk. Campers can request gluten-free substitutions in advance. We do not prepare substitutions until requested in an effort to save on food waste.

Parents should obtain and review a copy of the menu from our camp website for the time that your camper will be attending camp. After reviewing the menu, discuss any concerns of potential allergens with the Food Service Manager by contacting the office. If accommodation is required a plan must be in place a minimum of two weeks before you arrive at camp. This plan will be shared with our kitchen and health care staff, as well as your camper's counselors.

SAMPLE MENU

**The full menu is available on our website*

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
French Toast Hard Boiled Eggs Yogurt Cold Cereal Fruit Fruit Juice Milk & Non-Dairy Milk	Breakfast Sandwiches English Muffins, Eggs, Sausage & Cheese Oatmeal Cold Cereal Bananas Fruit Juice Milk & Non-Dairy Milk	Blueberry Muffins Scrambled Eggs Bacon Yogurt Cold Cereal Fruit Fruit Juice Milk & Non-Dairy Milk	Pancakes Hard-Boiled Eggs Oatmeal Cold Cereal Bananas Fruit Juice Milk & Non-Dairy Milk	Coffee Cake Scrambled Eggs Sausage Yogurt Cold Cereal Fruit Fruit Juice Milk & Non-Dairy Milk
Tomato Soup Grilled Cheese Sandwiches Egg Salad Chips Fresh Veggie & Dip AJ's Snicker Salad	Tacos Black Bean & Beef Toppings Veggies Sliced Oranges	Garlic Chicken Sandwich Fish Sandwich White Bean Pasta Salad Chips Fresh Veggie & Dip	Picnic Lunch Cheese Sandwich Turkey Sandwich or PB&J Chips Veggies With Dip Apples Cookies	Soup Calzones (Cheese / Cheese & Pepperoni) Cottage Cheese Tuna Salad Carrots & Dip Peaches
Cheese Pizza Pepperoni Pizza Veggie Pizza Mixed Vegetables Green Salad	Cookout Burger or Veggie Burger Deviled Eggs Fruit Salad Chips Cookies	Ravioli Roasted Vegetables Bread Sticks Ceaser Salad Apple Crisp	Chicken or Veggie Nugget Mashed Potatoes Gravy Steamed Vegetable Biscuit Cupcakes	Spaghetti Chicken & Eggplant Parm Steamed Vegetable Caesar Salad Garlic Breadsticks Texas Sheet Cake
Milk available at breakfast and dinner includes cow's milk and plain soy or almond milk. Gluten-Free items are available upon request. GF bread, salad dressing, tortillas, and pasta items available when like items are served as the main course. These items must be requested to prevent food waste. All dietary allergies & concerns must be discussed with the food service manager 4 weeks before your arrival. Please contact the food manager with questions.				

PREPARING FOR CAMP

Black River Farm and Ranch is A LOT of FUN!!! However, for some first-time campers, spending time away from home is a major step.

“The cornerstone of homesickness prevention is parents’ attitudes. When parents express confidence, optimism, and a positive attitude about camp, children follow their lead. It’s normal for children to ask, in the months prior to opening day, “What if I feel homesick at camp?” Sadly, many well-intentioned parents provide an answer that virtually guarantees intense homesickness. “If you feel homesick,” they say, “I’ll come and get you.” This is what camp professionals regrettably refer to as “The Pick-Up Deal.”

The tragedy of “The Pick-Up Deal” is how it undermines children’s confidence in themselves and gives them something about which to be preoccupied. When you think about it, the subtext of the promise “If you feel homesick, I’ll come and get you” is basically “I have so little confidence in your ability to cope with these feelings that I think the only solution is for me to come and rescue you.” In *The Secret Ingredients of Summer Camp Success*, you’ll learn the best way to respond to children’s questions and concerns about staying at camp. You’ll also learn the best ways to reply to a homesick letter, the best homesickness preparation tips, and the best ways to provide parenting from afar.”

Chris Thurber www.CampSpirit.com 2008

Resources to help parents and campers prepared for camp:

- *Notes from the Camp Bunk: A Guide for First-Time Campers from a Camper* by Eden Martin
- *Homesick and Happy: How Time Away from Parents Can Help a Child Grow* by Michael Thompson
- *The Summer Camp Handbook – Everything You Need to Find, Choose and Get Ready for Overnight Camp – and Skip the Homesickness* by Christopher Thurber and Jon Malinowski.

The key to success is preparation! Here are some suggestions to help your camper adjust to the camp experience:

- **Start early preparing your child for the idea of being away from home.** Find out what her expectations are and what seems a bit scary. Teach coping strategies for when she is away. Provide reassurance and encouragement. Ensure you are not projecting your anxiety on them.
- **Stress the positive aspects of the upcoming session.** Remember, children learn about coping skills related to separation from home through experiences such as summer camp.
- **Practice Away from Home Skills**, such as letter writing, talking with other adults, hugging a teddy bear at night, and using a flashlight. Nothing builds confidence and teaches a child how to cope with time away from home better than...(you guessed it)...time away from home. That weekend at your folks’ will do wonders for her ability to adjust. If possible, have her practice spending the night away from home with no phone contact in smaller increments of time.

- **Allow your child time to adjust to the new situation.** The first letter or two you receive (which may have been written the very first evening) may sound hesitant about the camp experience. We find that campers are quickly consumed by the activities and opportunities and forget their first- and second-day worries.
- **Send your child mail.** Mail is delivered daily, and it is very exciting for campers to receive a letter or postcard from home. Be positive in your message. For example: try not to mention how lonesome you are without them, instead write about how exciting camp must be.
- **Don't make a "pick-up deal."** Instilling confidence in your camper is important. If they feel that you believe in them and their ability to enjoy camp they're less likely to feel homesick.
- **Pack for camp together.** Allow your camper to help pack her own things. Campers need to have a perceived level of control when entering into a new situation. Simple things like picking out her clothes and going to the store to buy soap and goodies for camp can help her feel comfortable with the transition.
- **Double-check the opening and closing dates and times.** Start camp off on a smooth note by arriving on time and on the right day. Use a wall calendar in the months prior to opening day to make an exciting count-down to the big day.

These ideas are gathered from many different sources including the teachings of Bob Ditter and Chris Thurber both talented psychologists who specialize in children and camping.

TIPS FOR CAMPERS

- Talk to your parents and friends about camp. Share your ideas about what you expect from camp and ask them about their experiences at camp.
- Help pack your things for camp. Make sure you remember everything on the list.
- Label all your belongings; it's the best way to avoid losing things. Leave expensive things at home.
- Leave your electronics at home. Not only are they not allowed at camp... it's time to unplug, make new friends, and enjoy nature.
- Tell your parents you will be fine. Sometimes parents worry a lot. Remember to give them a big hug on the first day of camp and remind them that you will write.
- Pack some pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes, along with paper and pens. Parents and family love to get mail and the more you write, the more you'll get back. Put all your stationery stuff in a zippered bag so it stays together.
- Visit the camp website, Facebook page, and Instagram. You may find the answers to your questions and connect other campers.

FAQ's

- What time do the kids get up? Just in time to get to the flagpole on time! Usually around 7:30 am.
- Can I see pictures of my camper while she is at camp? Yes, we post pictures on social media occasionally. We also post pictures on our web-based email and picture service, Bunk1, that you can log into. See the flyer in your mailing for login information.
- Do you have visiting days? No, we do not have visiting days at the BR. Due to the length of our sessions we do not feel it necessary to have visiting days in the middle of a session. Also, many campers come from a great distance, and it would not be possible for their parents to visit, but mostly parents visiting contributes to or creates homesickness.
- May my camper make or receive a telephone call? No, the girls may not call you and you may not talk with them during their stay. You may check with the office staff if you have concerns about your camper. They will be happy to talk with you about your daughter.
- May my camper bring her cell phone to camp? No, they are not permitted. Devices with Wi-Fi, cellular data, video, or gaming capabilities are not permitted at camp. We are focused on connecting with real people and experiences.
- Do you have laundry facilities? No, please send enough clothes to last your camper's entire stay.
- Does my daughter need riding boots? Yes. We suggest a slip-on western riding boot (cowboy boot), but there are many different types of riding boots available. We do require a flat-soled riding boot with at least a one-inch heel. These requirements have been made for your child's safety.
- Does my camper need a riding helmet? Riding helmets are a must. They are to be worn while riding. You may bring your own, you can rent or purchase one upon check-in. All helmets sold or rented are ASTM & SEI certified, as this is what we suggest you bring. Bike helmet are not acceptable.
- Does my camper need money while she is there? No, she will have an account to charge anything that she needs or wants. You pay her account when you check out. Black River does not accept credit cards. Cash, check or Venmo only.
- What government authority supervises camps? The State of Michigan licenses the BR and we are inspected and approved by the Michigan Health Department. We are also an accredited camp by the American Camping Association and the Certified Horsemanship Association.
- Is there camp security? BR is accessible by only one road, at which a security guard is on post nightly, the guard also makes hourly rounds the of the camp to ensure every person's safety. Each bunkhouse is equipped with a phone system that can dial 911 in an emergency.

STAFF & CIT PROGRAM

A camp is only as good as its staff, and BR has the best! Most of our staff were BR campers who have come through our training program. They know the BR's mission, camp activities, are excellent horsewomen, enjoy working with children, and most of all, know what it is like to be a camper and how important the role of a counselor is.

A position on our staff is earned and not everyone is offered a job. The girls are evaluated in cabin and riding during their final summer by the counselors to help us decide if they are ready for a position on our staff. Anyone who feels they are not ready is welcome to return as a camper for another summer.

BR staff gain skills to be successful in college and beyond, such as: independent living, leadership, responsibility, and communication. Working as a staff member at BR is worth putting at the top of your resume or experience list for college applications.

Staff requirements for BR: Counselors

- 18 years of age by June 1st of the season for which you are hired.
- Must attend or have graduated from college or university.
- Experience with children.
- Experience with horses or a certification in a specialized activity.
- You must complete an application and interview to be considered for the position or, your evaluations as an AC will be considered your interview.
- Expected commitment – Full Summer

Assistant Counselors

- 17 years of age by June 1st of the season for which you are hired.
- Must attend or have graduated from high school.
- You must have completed our CIT program successfully.
- Your evaluations as a CIT will be considered in your interview.
- Expected commitment – Minimum of 4 weeks.

Counselors in Training or CIT

- 16 years of age by June 1st of the season for which you are hired.
- Must attend or have graduated from high school.
- You must have completed your time as a camper at Black River successfully.
- Your evaluations as a last year camper will be considered your interview.
- Expected commitment – Minimum of 3 weeks.

Being on Staff at Black River is a special opportunity and can only be extended to those campers who prove to be ready for the position. It is a serious job that requires responsibility, quick thinking, a positive personality, willingness to lead, horsemanship, and desire to learn.