

**ELIOT INSTITUTE**  
**CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAM GUIDELINES**  
**(July 2024)**

**Programs and Staff Ratios:**

These are the possible age divisions for campers under age 18. (Grade levels for summer camp are based on the grade they will enter in the fall.) Every group of children must have at least two staff members. Beyond that, Eliot requires the following staff to minor ratios at all Eliot camps during supervised morning program time.

1. Under 3 years old: 1 staff member for every 3 children. Lead staff members must be at least 18 years old. Assistant staff members must be at least 14 years old.
2. Littles (Preschool Age, 3 - 5 years old) and Elementary Age (In Grade K-5, typically age 5 – 10): 1 staff member for every 5 children. Lead staff members must be at least 18 years old. Assistant staff members must be at least 14 years old.
3. MAGS - Middle-School Age Group - Grade 6 - 8 (typically age 11-13): 1 staff member for every 6 children. All staff members must be at least 18 years old.
4. Youth - Grade 9 - 12 (typically age 14-17): 1 staff member for every 8 youth. All staff members must be at least 25 years old.
5. For large camps, these age groupings may be split into more groups, for instance "Lower Elementary" and "Upper Elementary," per the discretion of the Children's Program Director. For smaller camps, groups may be combined. Ensure that the staffing ratios are appropriate for the younger children. If we have only one child in a category, followed by an age gap, then older children, one adult may be assigned to the young child, but they will be co-located with the larger group of children.
6. The linked [chart](#) provides assistance for camp leadership to determine the number of staff necessary.
7. Other chaperoned activities:
  - a. For youth late nights and overnights, two adults age 25 or older must be present at all times. We do not require background checks for these individuals.
  - b. For MAGS special events and late nights, two adults must be present at all times. We do not require background checks for these individuals.
  - c. Chaperoning adults attend at the discretion of and involvement with the Youth Advisor, MAG Lead, and/or Children's Program Director; and may attend a pre-event chaperone meeting.

**Background Checks:**

Eliot's Health and Safety Committee has requested that all camp staff who work closely with children and youth have a criminal background check performed. All those working in the youth and children's morning programs, as well as all Waterfront Staff are in this group, as well as the Deans and the Board Representative. The Eliot Registrar is in charge of running these background checks, which are valid for two years. All information provided is strictly confidential. Should a prior incident crop up as a result of the search, the staff member will be notified by the Registrar. The Registrar will open a discussion with the potential camp staffer, the Dean, and the Board Representative to determine an appropriate course of action. The safety of our children and youth will be of paramount importance, with consideration made to each staffer's specific circumstances and privacy.

Background checks for US residents are run via a company running national background checks for employers. The process for Canadian residents differs, and camp staff must deal directly with -the

Canadian RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) or to their local area police detachment to request a criminal background check. This may be an RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) or a local area police department.

For anyone who works or volunteers for another organization that requires a background check, staff may provide proof of a current background check in lieu of this process.

### **Sexual Abuse Training**

Starting in 2024, our insurance may require all staff members who work with minors to participate in an online sexual abuse awareness training.

### **Reporting Suspected Misconduct to Eliot Leadership and to Seabeck Conference Center:**

Eliot staff members are expected to report to the Deans or Board Representative, any unsafe behavior, violations of behavioral expectations, poor adult boundaries, and any possible child abuse or other ways minors are in danger including use of illegal substances or substances restricted to adults and suicidal thoughts. At their discretion, the Deans or Board Representative will share this information with the Children's Program Director or Youth Advisor. In case of child abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct, the Board Representative will report to child welfare services and to the Executive Director of the Seabeck Conference Center. The report to child welfare services should go to the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, & Family (<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/safety/report-abuse>) by calling 1-888-713-6115, which is the reporting hotline established by the State for Kitsap & Pierce counties. A parent or guardian will also be provided the report, unless they are suspected of being the perpetrator.

### **Method of communicating this policy to parents, guardians, and sponsors at every camp.**

The Vulnerable Camper Protection Policy (VCPP) is included in the "Eliot Survival Guide" which is distributed electronically to all campers at every camp. A written copy of the VCPP will be provided to any camper upon request.

### **Supervision Outside of Structured Program Hours:**

After the morning session, children are the responsibility of parents, guardians or sponsors. In practical terms this means that children under age 7 should always be with a responsible caretaker. Parents, guardians or sponsors may hire a babysitter (check with youth), or swap childcare. But, since this is a family camp, we urge them to take advantage of all the things they can do with their children.

While many children are able to function independently at camp, they are still the responsibility of parents, guardians or sponsors; it is up to these individuals to set limits and/or grant freedoms to the children in their care in accordance with their level of maturity. These adults are also responsible for monitoring behavior of children in their care, even if they allow the children to be independent on the Seabeck campus.

For children of all ages, it is the responsibility of parents, guardians and sponsors to mediate any issues that arise with the children in their care. It is not the responsibility of camp staff to resolve behavior issues that occur outside of the morning program, with the exception of serious violations of camp rules, which will be addressed by the Board Representative, as needed.

Children and youth under age 18 who have demonstrated a need for supervision, according to the sole discretion of the Board Representative, should always be with a responsible adult or guardian 18 years of age or older.

### **Specific Rules for Children and Youth**

1. Youth and children's curfew is 11pm, unless set earlier by parents or program staff. Youth may stay out for youth activities until 1 a.m. provided they are in a designated youth area and have two adults, age 25 or over, present. After curfew, children and youth should be in their sleeping quarters or with a parent or sponsor.
2. Children and youth must obtain permission from a parent or sponsor whenever leaving the Conference Center grounds, including trips to the General Store, Pizza Parlor, or Espresso Stand across the street.
3. Parents and sponsors are responsible for their children/youth following the morning program and through the balance of the day, especially around the playground equipment and the waterfront. Parents and sponsors are expected to know the whereabouts of their children/youth at all times.
4. Cooperative childcare is encouraged, or parents may hire a youth.
5. Skateboards, scooters, riding toys, guns, squirt guns, and similar toys are not allowed in camp

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

1. Snack. Food allergies and special dietary needs should be explained on your child's medical information form, as well as information about specific medications or medical conditions that staff should be aware of. The Children's Program Director will share information as needed with teachers and take dietary needs into account when planning the morning snack. We serve age appropriate snacks during the morning program and in particular, take care to avoid choking hazards for children under four. If you are the parent of an infant or toddler, please let the baby care givers know what type of snack your child may be ready for. Please label all containers brought into the baby room.
2. We also ask that toddlers not bring toys with small pieces or coins to the classroom.
3. Playground. Children of all ages enjoy the playground equipment and several classes may be using playground areas in the morning. Parents are responsible for supervising their young child on the playground any time after the morning program.
4. Child protection and safety. A first-aid kit is available at the Inn and in each classroom area. Any children playing near the swimming area need close supervision by a parent. The Lifeguard is not responsible for children playing in or near the sandy shore.

### **BRIDGING CEREMONIES**

When a MAG is "bridged" to Youth, they are still classified as MAGS at that camp and other camps that year as long as they're still in middle school.

When a Youth is "bridged" from Youth to Young Adult they are still classified as a youth at that camp and any other camp that year as long as they are still in high school.

### **YOUTH OVERNIGHT ("SLEEPOVER")**

**TIME/DAY:** The youth sleepover has been a tradition at Eliot camps for many years. Most camps now hold this event on the next to the last night of camp. This ensures chaperones and youth who will be driving home are not sleep deprived. It also allows the program a closure day and assistance in cleaning up the youth area.

**CHAPERONES:** The youth themselves should assist in recruiting responsible adults (25 years & over) for overnight supervision shifts. The Youth Advisor must be satisfied that adequate supervision is provided before they give final approval for the overnight.

### **GUIDELINES**

- The chaperones will remain present and awake during their shift.
- Campers are not permitted to share bedding -- one body per sleeping bag.
- Campers are not permitted to leave the designated area during the night unless accompanied by a chaperone. (Define designated area. For example: Pines meeting room and outdoors near the front of Pines.)
- Let sleeping youth lie. (Those who are asleep should not be disturbed)
- Excessive use of caffeine or other stimulants, especially after midnight, is discouraged.
- Normal curfew and noise expectations apply.