5 April 2023

Dear Family Member of a Mathworks Camper,

**Welcome to Math Camp!** We are excited to have your child in our Junior Summer Math Camp (JSMC) in a few weeks. We know that this is an exciting (and sometimes nerve-wracking) time for a family, and that this may be the first time your child has been away from home for such a long time. Please rest assured that our entire camp faculty and staff are committed to making the JSMC a great experience that will prepare your child for future challenges in whatever area they choose to pursue.

We wanted to share some information that will help everyone learn more about what to expect in camp, and also help establish a unique learning community where everyone works together. In the following pages you will find our daily camp schedule, information about what to bring, and general expectations for campers – and their families – that help us create a supportive camp community that is welcoming and nurturing for every camper.

In writing this document we addressed you, the family of the soon-to-be JSMC camper, but the information in this document is for the family and the camper alike, and we hope you will review it together.

At the end of this document you will find a link to a short online form where both camper and family will acknowledge that you have read the entire document and understand the camp expectations. This form also provides a space where you can ask questions of Mathworks staff so that you have all the information you need.

We thank you for your attention to the information and expectations outlined here, and we look forward to meeting you and your child. Most importantly, we thank you for the hard work you have done as a parent or guardian to help your child develop their love of mathematics and their commitment to hard work. We are impressed every year with the students who apply for our camps; the fact that your child has been invited to attend points to the great work that both you and your child have already done, and we hope to build on this even more during the summer.

Sincerely,

Max Warshauer

max@txstate.edu
CAMPER AND FAMILY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When you (the camper) and your family have read this document, please go to https://www.txst.edu/mathworks/camps/Forms-and-Dorm-Information/Camp-Expectation-Acknowledgement.html and complete the form, indicating that you have read and understood the camp expectations. The form contains a space where you can ask questions of Mathworks faculty and staff.

Please note that both the camper and a family member must complete the acknowledgment form together before the camper can be checked in to camp.

We look forward to seeing you in camp this summer!
OUR MISSION

Our goal is to provide an experience that will enrich your child academically by:

- Helping them understand mathematical ideas deeply
- Building powerful thinking habits, including asking questions, learning from mistakes, and following the flow of ideas
- Enhancing individual and collaborative problem-solving skills
- Deepening their curiosity about advanced mathematics and its applications
- Developing background and skills for mathematical and scientific research
- Building confidence in their readiness for college and for future leadership in mathematics, science, engineering, technology, education, business, and public service

We also hope to develop broader intellectual and personal strengths, including:

- A sense of belonging to a vibrant and supportive learning community
- Appreciation and care for a camp community that brings together students from a variety of different geographic, social, and economic backgrounds
- Curiosity and empathy for different ideas and perspectives
- A desire to learn from one’s peers, and to support one’s peers in their learning
- Appreciation for the gifts and dedication of the counselors, staff, campus support personnel, faculty, and benefactors who help make our camp possible
- Independence and confidence in one’s ability to have a physically, emotionally, and socially healthy lifestyle away from home, and the wisdom to ask for help when needed
- A desire to use what we’ve learned to make the world a better place for those around us

We want to support your child and your family in participating in camp in ways that will help us achieve these benefits for your child as well as for all their peers. In this document we try to outline our expectations for your child’s participation in camp and how everyone contributes to making math camp such a unique learning environment. We welcome any questions you may have about this document; please do not hesitate to contact us at mathworks@txstate.edu if we can help clarify any of the expectations discussed here.
JSXCM DAILY SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>TO</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>BREAKFAST</td>
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<td>8:00</td>
<td>11:50</td>
<td>Morning Class (with Dr. Chase, Dr. Curtin, or Dr. Shen)</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
<td>12:50</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<td>1:00</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Problem Session (with JSMC Counselors)</td>
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<td>2:00</td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>RECREATION TIME</td>
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<td>5:00</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>DINNER</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Study Group (with JSMC Counselors)</td>
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<td>9:00</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>SOCIAL TIME IN DORMITORY</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
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<td>BEDTIME – LIGHTS OUT</td>
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FRIDAY: Schedule from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM is the same as Monday through Thursday. At 2:00 PM campers have a short break. At 4:00 PM we have a Colloquium for the camp, followed by a picnic at 5:15 PM at San Marcos City Park.

SATURDAY: On Saturday we have an excursion for the camp from mid-morning to late afternoon. All meals on Saturday are provided by Mathworks.

SUNDAY: On Sunday morning and afternoon, campers have unstructured time for study, recreation, or social activities. Campers may attend church services locally if they so choose. At 5:00 PM, we resume the Monday-to-Thursday camp schedule, with dinner followed by a study group session.

During the week, good times for families to contact campers are during lunch, during recreation time in the afternoons, during dinner, or after study group before lights-out.
CAMP POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Full participation in camp

Every part of the camp program – including both academic and non-academic activities – is designed to build a tight-knit camp community and contribute to your child’s learning and personal growth. Campers are expected to attend all classes, problem sessions, study groups, and colloquia unless an illness or other personal emergency prevents them from participating.

During the weekend in the middle of the camp we will have fun recreational activities for the campers. We strive to choose activities that will be fun, engaging, and memorable for all campers, and we expect all campers to participate in these activities unless they are unable to do so for documented safety reasons. If a camper needs to miss an activity due to a safety concern, illness, or injury, we will designate a counselor to remain in the dormitory and provide supervision.

Because each day of camp includes activities that enrich our campers and strengthen the camp community, we strongly discourage campers planning to leave camp to participate in other activities at any time during the program. Our policy is that if a camper needs to leave camp for part of the weekend due to an outside commitment, this must be arranged at least 48 hours in advance with Mathworks staff, with the camper checking out with our Director-in-Residence upon departure and checking back in upon arrival. Except for emergencies, campers are not permitted to check out of camp between 5:00 PM on Sunday and 5:00 PM on Friday. Our aim is to ensure the continuity of the camp community and provide the best overall learning and social experience for your child.
Expectations for campers

We do our utmost to make sure that every camper has an enjoyable experience in camp, has plenty of opportunities to learn and grow, feels connected to the camp community and other campers, and feels safe on our campus. To support this, we have a few expectations for campers’ behavior while they are at camp. We keep this list short because we want camp to feel like a fun, college-preparatory summer experience and not like school, and because we want to give our campers the chance to develop independence and good judgment. However, the following items are important in building a cohesive and nurturing camp community.

1. Except in cases of illness or emergency, campers should attend all camp events unless these events are designated as optional. Events for all campers include classes, study groups, colloquia, and weekend trips. Please be on time for things; late arrivals can force everybody to wait, and may take away from everybody’s opportunity to enjoy an experience or activity together.

2. At the beginning of the camp, campers will be assigned to study groups, typically of four students each. We intentionally organize study groups so that they incorporate students from different backgrounds. **Our camp is most successful when students form healthy, supportive teams with their study groups and enjoy learning from each other.** This can be difficult for students – they are working on challenging problems, and groupwork in school does not always teach students to work together and communicate well. Additionally, students are sometimes used to being recognized for what they can do individually, so they might feel pressure to impress us with what they can do on their own. Our counselors are trained to help campers develop collaborative learning skills and supportive group dynamics. We ask your camper to help by listening openly to other students’ ideas, sharing constructive feedback, and letting others know when they’ve done a great job.

3. We find that campers’ prior experiences in school (and with competition math and standardized testing) often teach some assumptions that don’t work well in camp: that mistakes should be avoided, that not finishing a problem is a personal failure, and that being smart means being able to finish a problem quickly. An important goal of our first few days is to help students learn that their “job” is to learn, explore, and enjoy mathematics, not to produce the greatest possible number of correct solutions to problems. We ask campers to be patient with
themselves and their peers, and focus on going deep on what they are learning rather than going fast.

4. One of the great joys of camp is the chance to interact with people with different experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives. While some students will know some of their peers in the program from other events, some will arrive at camp not having prior relationships with any of our other campers. Our goal is for every camper to build meaningful and healthy social relationships that will last long after the program. The campers who contribute most to our community are those who are proactive about making friends, intentionally include students who may be lonely, and make other campers feel welcome and valued for who they are. We do not tolerate behavior that adds to the exclusion or isolation of campers, such as bullying or spreading personal rumors.

5. One goal of our program is for students to learn how to live independently away from home. We want students to learn to manage some situations on their own, but also recognize when they need the help or advice of a counselor or adult. We have a team of over 20 counselors, faculty, and staff available to help students navigate some of the challenging feelings they might experience in camp – homesickness, social isolation, struggle with the mathematics, the difficulty of conflict with peers. We hope your camper will communicate any issues with us, either in their journal or simply by pulling us aside to chat. Our general approach is to try to equip campers with the tools and support to address difficulties they are facing. For example, if two roommates have a conflict over the noise or light level in their dorm room, we will generally try to help them negotiate a compromise rather than intervene on behalf of either roommate.

6. San Marcos has a city-wide 11:00 PM curfew for minors under the age of 18. To comply with this rule and help all our campers get the sleep they need, we have all campers return to their rooms with lights out and electronic devices put away by 10:00 PM.

7. If a camper has anyone other than their roommate in their dorm room, the door to the room is required to be open at a 90-degree angle.

8. It is our responsibility to keep the dorm clean. While Texas State’s custodial staff will periodically service restrooms and common areas, the dorm kitchen sees
frequent use and can get messy. Campers (by study group) will periodically be assigned responsibility for cleaning the kitchen and common areas (excluding restrooms), regardless of their own personal use. We expect everyone to pitch in by throwing away trash and cleaning up spills. Campers will be expected to thoroughly clean and sweep their dorm rooms during move-out.

9. Our Directors-in-Residence (DIRs) are members of the camp faculty who have authority to mediate conflicts between campers and/or counselors, set schedules for activities, direct campers and counselors to assist with logistical tasks, and ensure the safety of all camp participants. Campers should comply with any safety instructions the DIRs provide, and notify the DIRs of any concerns.

We reserve the right to send a camper home if our faculty finds them to have engaged in any behavior that is illegal, unsafe, or threatening to the camp community. Examples of behavior that will result in automatic withdrawal from camp include:

- Possession or use of any substances that are illegal for minors, including alcohol, tobacco, vapes, and recreational drugs
- Any physical violence or self-harm
- Any threats of physical violence toward other campers; any expression of intention to hurt oneself
- Theft of other campers’ money or personal belongings
- Sexual conduct of any kind, including sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Bullying or ostracization of other campers
- Mistreatment of other campers on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, or background
Contacting your child during camp

We understand that many families want to hear from their children during camp. We ask that you limit non-emergency phone contact with your child to hours when they are not in class; see the camp schedule provided.

If you would like to mail something to your child, you may send it to [your child’s full name], care of Mathworks, ASB South 110, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666. Please be sure to provide your child’s full name on the package.

If you have an emergency inquiry or otherwise cannot reach your child, please first try contacting your child’s counselor; we will provide contact information at the beginning of camp. If this does not work, you may contact Mathworks by phone at (512) 245-3439 or by e-mail at mathworks@txstate.edu. If leaving a voice or e-mail message, please include the full name of your child. We will provide an update at our earliest opportunity. We thank you for your patience: our counselors and staff are usually busy managing the camp and cannot always respond immediately to non-emergency inquiries, and we normally avoid interrupting students during classes and other organized activities.

We find that usually, when families have difficulty contacting their children during camp, it is because our campers are having a great time and don’t want to take their focus away from the mathematics they are working on or social time with their friends. Please have a talk with your child before camp to establish shared expectations about frequency of phone contact during the program.

Visiting your child at camp

We generally discourage spontaneous visits from campers’ families; while we understand families’ concern for campers and aim to be transparent about what your children are doing and learning, having adults enter our camp dormitory or pick up children without proper documentation creates safety issues that can be difficult for our staff to navigate.

Occasionally, some campers do experience homesickness during camp, and for families who can come to San Marcos, a quick visit (for example, to take your child out for dinner) can provide some comfort. However, please also give us the opportunity to help your child learn to manage these feelings by making sure they have good social support in camp and activities that keep them happily occupied. If regular family visits
are needed to alleviate a camper’s homesickness, this may be an indication that the child is not yet ready for a camp of this duration and intensity.

If you do want to arrange a short visit with your child, please contact the Mathworks staff at least 48 hours in advance, and we will help you schedule a visit. Please note that we strongly discourage campers from missing academic activities, such as classes and study groups. The best time for a visit is between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM during the week, or during weekend mornings and afternoons.

If you come to the dormitory to meet or pick up your child, you are expected to check in with a Director-in-Residence or a counselor and remain in the common area. One of our counselors will be happy to find your child for you.

Finally, please note that any camper who leaves camp, even for a short time, must check out with our Director-in-Residence upon departure and check back in on arrival. This is essential for our efforts to ensure everybody’s safety.

Medical and other emergencies

Sending your child to camp requires that you authorize Texas State University to provide medical care in the case of an emergency. If your child needs emergency treatment, we will notify you as soon as possible. We ask that your child have a copy or photo of their insurance card with them in case there is a need for medical treatment for any reason. We are not liable for any medical costs incurred during camp. If your child has an acute need for mental health treatment, we will contact you and request that you pick up your child and seek appropriate assistance. Members of the camp staff are not mental health professionals and are not qualified to provide mental health care.
WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

Our campers will live in a dormitory within comfortable walking distance of all buildings where students will have classes, meals, and recreational activities. The dorm has separate wings for girls and boys, and has a shared restroom with showers on each wing. The dormitory also has a spacious common area where campers can socialize, and a small kitchen where they can prepare meals or snacks if they wish.

Campers usually eat most of their meals in the campus dining hall, and the cost of breakfast, lunch, and dinner for each day of camp is included in tuition.

When packing clothes, please note that San Marcos tends to be hot for most of the summer; daily high temperatures average around 95°F during June.

Each camper should bring:

- Enough clothing to last for approximately 7–10 days. Our dormitory is equipped with washers and dryers that campers can use free of charge, but there can be competition for the machines at peak times.
- Appropriate bedding (sheets, blankets, pillow) for an extra-long twin-size bed
- Warm clothes in case the air conditioning in the dormitory runs cold
- A jacket and/or umbrella for rainy days
- Two pairs of shoes, including at least one pair of athletic shoes
- Swimwear
- Reusable water bottle
- Flashlight
- A towel
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- High-efficiency (HE) laundry detergent
- Dryer sheets
- Laundry bag or collapsible laundry hamper
- Clothes hangers
- A shower bucket with toiletries and shower shoes
- Personal items (glasses, contact lens case, soap, deodorant)
- A debit card to cover incidental expenses
- Laptop computer
- Mobile device and charger
- Power strip or surge protector
• Personal medications
• Combination lock to secure personal items in your room

**Items that are recommended but not required:**

• Musical instruments
• Athletic gear
• Board and card games

**Items that campers are not permitted to bring:**

• Drugs and alcohol, including vapes
• Weapons
• Bicycles
• Skateboards
• Automobiles
• Televisions
• Valuables and irreplaceable personal items (strongly discouraged)
• Extra cash, other than what you will keep on your person

As a general rule, if an item would not be permitted in a school building (for example, because it is distracting, age-inappropriate, or unsafe), please do not permit your child to bring it to camp.