

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Friendship, Community, Growth, Pride and Fun!



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WELCOME TO CAMP AKEELA

We are excited that you have chosen to (re)join our camp family. This handbook will help you prepare for camp. It's updated each year; families of new and returning campers are encouraged to read it carefully.

There are many ways that we try to strengthen the Akeela community. We create an environment that encourages kindness, friendship, participation and acceptance--and we send clear and congruent messages to our campers and their families. To accomplish our goals, we need the support of both campers and their parents. The easiest and most important way that you, as parents and guardians, can help to foster the Akeela community is by adhering to our rules and policies and ensuring that your camper understands them as well. We thank you in advance for your assistance.

Please contact us anytime with questions or concerns.

Yours in camping,

Debbie and Eric Sasson
Camp Directors



TRAVELING TO CAMP

One of our required camp forms will ask you to indicate how your camper is getting to and from camp. Here are some details about your travel options this summer.

Chartered Buses to Camp

When possible, we recommend having your child travel to camp on our chartered coach buses.

Counselors and senior staff ride the buses and we carefully assign seating to help campers get to know each other. There is no additional transportation charge for taking the bus to camp.



Camp Bus from New York

Akeela staff members will meet and greet you at 10:30am in the Super Stop & Shop parking lot at 610 White Plains Road (Rte 119) in Tarrytown, NY. The bus will leave at 11 a.m.

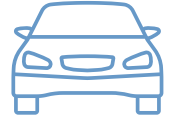
Camp Bus from Boston

Please meet our staff members at 1 p.m. at the Northbound McDonald's Rest Area on Route 128 in Lexington, MA. The bus will leave at 1:30 p.m.

Important: Rest Area is accessible from Route 128 Northbound only, near Exit 46. The GPS address for the McDonald's is 690 Marrett Road in Lexington.

Parent Drop-Off

Families who prefer to bring their children to camp by car should plan to arrive between 2:00 and 2:30 p.m.



Our staff will be prepared to help your child make a smooth transition into camp. Please assist us with this process by planning to stay at camp only long enough to see your camper's cabin and say a quick goodbye to your child. We promise that this will make your separation much easier for everyone!

[Directions to camp are available on our website.](#) Please take our advice and use these directions as navigation systems will not give you good directions to camp!

Pick-Up At Logan Airport

Campers traveling by air have two arrival options:

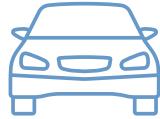
- Arrive at Logan Airport in Boston before and as close to 1 p.m. as possible on the first day of camp. Akeela staff members will meet campers at the airport and take them to camp by van.
- Arrive into Boston the night before. Parents can then either bring their children to the camp bus in Lexington at 1 p.m. or meet up with Akeela staff members at a predetermined time and location in Boston Logan airport.



Please check with our office before making any flight reservations

TRAVELING HOME FROM CAMP & VISITING DAY

Camper Pick-Up / Visiting Day



The last day of each camp session is both camper pick-up day and visiting day at Camp Akeela. Everyone is invited to join us at camp that morning, and we especially encourage first-time Akeela families to participate, if possible.

Please plan to arrive between 9:30 - 10 a.m. on the last day of your child's session. You will have a chance to tour camp, enjoy your camper's favorite activities and get a taste of our camp spirit. Of course, parents will also meet their children's counselors and friends. We will serve a great buffet lunch and then families depart in the early afternoon. More information about visiting day will be sent out during the summer.

NO PETS ARE ALLOWED IN CAMP ON VISITING DAY. We appreciate your understanding.

Chartered Buses from Camp



Camp Bus to New York

We offer return transportation to Westchester County, NY (for a fee of \$150). The destination is the Super Stop & Shop parking lot at 610 White Plains Road (Rte 119) in Tarrytown, NY. The bus typically arrives in Tarrytown between 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Camp Bus to Boston Logan Airport

We offer return transportation to Boston Logan Airport (for a fee of \$150). Please note that there is not a return bus to Lexington, so the airport drop-off is the best option for those flying out of Boston and those families who live in New England but are unable to pick their camper up at camp. This bus typically arrives at Logan Airport between 10 - 11 a.m.

IMPORTANT:

Due to the unpredictability of air travel (airlines reducing and changing flight options, delayed & canceled flights due to summer storms, etc.), **we are no longer able to accommodate campers flying home alone.** Instead, we require that each camper is met at Boston Logan Airport by an adult who either flies home with them or takes responsibility for getting them to their departing flight.

This decision was made solely for the safety and wellbeing of our campers. We understand this presents an additional burden for families and hope that everyone understands our decision. Please reach out to Eric if you have any questions or concerns, or if we can help work through logistics with you. Thank you.



PACKING LIST

The list below details the clothing and equipment needed at camp. This is only a suggested guide. Substitutions can be made for individual preferences and age appropriateness. Campers do not need more than what's recommended and storage space is limited. Please do not overpack!

Clothing

- ☐ 1 white or grey Akeela t-shirt
(Required, find at [The Camp Spot](#))
- ☐ 12 additional t-shirts
- ☐ 4 long-sleeved t-shirts
- ☐ 4 pair pants (sweatpants, jeans, etc.)
- ☐ 8 pair shorts
- ☐ 2 sweatshirts (1 hooded)
- ☐ 2 pair sneakers
- ☐ 14 pair underwear
- ☐ 14 pair athletic socks
- ☐ 2 pair pajamas (e.g. 1 short and 1 long)
- ☐ 3-4 bathing suits: designed for active water programs (no string ties on girls' suits)
- ☐ 1 fleece jacket or heavyweight jacket
- ☐ 1 rain jacket or hooded poncho

Toiletries

- ☐ Shampoo/Conditioner
- ☐ Soap or body wash
- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Hair brush or comb
- ☐ 2 washcloths
- ☐ 2 bath/pool towels
- ☐ 1 bottle insect repellent
- ☐ 1 bottle sunscreen
- ☐ 1 pair of shower sandals (optional)
- ☐ 1 shower caddy

All items brought to camp must be clearly marked with the camper's name. We highly recommend the peel-and-stick washable labels from [Label Daddy](#). (Using this link, 25% of your order will be donated to [CampLauncher!](#))



Other REQUIRED Items

- ☐ 1 comforter or 3 cot-sized wool blankets
(VT can be cold at night!)
- ☐ 4 cot-sized or twin sheets (2 flat & 2 fitted)
- ☐ 2-3 bath towels
- ☐ 2 swim/beach towels
- ☐ Pre-addressed, stamped envelopes with stationery
- ☐ 1 pillow with 2 cases
- ☐ 1 pair rain boots
- ☐ 1 pair flip flops/sandals/Crocs
- ☐ 2 hats with brim
- ☐ 1 sleeping bag (**Required for our In-Camp Overnight program**)
- ☐ 1 flashlight
- ☐ 2 water bottles or canteens (**Important**)
- ☐ 1 bottle insect repellent
- ☐ 1 pair of hiking shoes (*or sturdy sneakers; please break in before camp*)
- ☐ 1 bottle sunscreen
- ☐ 1 small backpack (*an Akeela backpack will be provided to all first-time campers*)

Other OPTIONAL Items

- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Music player (without screen content; *see our electronics policy*)
- ☐ Baseball glove
- ☐ Musical instrument
- ☐ Tennis racquet
- ☐ Fishing rod
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Crazy Creek chair (or similar)
- ☐ White t-shirt for tie-dying

SHIPPING BAGS TO CAMP

Unpacking our campers is a vital part of how we welcome them to Akeela. Except for our overseas campers, we require that all trunks/duffels arrive at camp at least 3 days prior to the start of your child's session. Below are three options:

ShipCamps

We highly recommend sending your camper's bags through ShipCamps. They partner with FedEx for great door-to-door service at the lowest rates that we've found. They also provide ready-to-use labels, real time online tracking, and excellent camp-specific customer service.

UPS/FedEx/USPS

If you choose not to use ShipCamps, you can send your bags via USPS, UPS or FedEx. You'll find the best pricing using their "Ground" services. Please make sure to get an estimated date of delivery so that bags arrive at camp at least 3 days before your camp session.

Drop Off Bags at Camp

Families who live close enough are welcome to drive their campers' belongings to Akeela. Because we unpack and set up cabins ahead of time, camper bags must arrive at least 3 days before the camp session. Please let us know if you plan to drop off your child's baggage.

Getting Bags Home from Camp

Space is very limited on our buses for the return trip home and is dependent on number of campers/passengers. As such, please contract return service with Ship Camps. If we think we can get your bags under the bus after all, we'll let you know in advance and you won't be charged by ShipCamps. If you are picking your child up at camp at the end of the session, we will have their bags ready to put in your car that morning.

A Note About Types of Bags

As a reminder, campers do not "live out of their bags" while at camp; prior to their arrival, we unpack their belongings into shelves/cubbies and under-bed storage boxes. For that reason, we don't require a specific type of luggage. If you have bags on hand that work for your family, feel free to use those! But if you're purchasing camp baggage, we recommend getting two "soft trunks". These are essentially large duffel bags. (Pro tip: don't get bags longer than 44", as they'll often incur additional shipping fees.)

We do NOT recommend traditional hard-sided camp trunks, nor any bags that have wheels.



CAMP CLOTHING & LAUNDRY



Purchasing Camp Clothing

CampSpot is our official camp supplier. To see our page on CampSpot, simply type Akeela where it asks for Camp Name on [their home page](#). There is lots of great Akeela gear in our camp store, but only the basic logo'd lightweight cotton t-shirt is required.

Laundry

Laundry will go out weekly and be returned the following day in individual color coded laundry bags provided by camp. Please remember, laundry is done by a commercial laundry, and expensive/fancy clothes are not appropriate or necessary for camp.

Prohibited Items

Each camper is provided with a cubby and an under bed container to store his/her belongings. Please do not send extra storage containers or drawer units, as there is no space for these. We appreciate your understanding.

Also, please do not send or allow your camper to bring any of the following items to camp:

- Any type of toy gun (including foam, water, dart)
- Knives or any other type of weapon (including Swiss Army or Boy Scout types)
- Any type of tobacco product, drugs or alcohol
- Pets or any other animals
- Any devices that don't comply with [our electronics policy](#).

COMMUNICATION

Camper Mail

Campers eagerly await incoming mail at camp. A few days without a card or letter can be upsetting, especially for younger campers. We strongly advise parents to send one letter several days before the start of the camp session. Please avoid writing letters that dwell on events at home. Write positively about your child's camp experiences.

Mail Home

We do not force our campers to write letters home but will encourage them to do so. For many of our campers, the process of writing can be stressful. Parents can call or email us anytime and we are happy to provide you with an update. When your camper does send you a letter, please remember that mail often takes around 5 days to get to you as our local post office is a bit slower than others. Because of this delay, a sad letter home may be quite old and the issues addressed in that letter may no longer be relevant. Call to confirm this with us and trust that we will give you an honest and UP TO DATE report!

Email

Parents can send email to their child at camp through the Companion app (or the Staff & Parent Log In link on our website). Emails will be printed once each day and delivered with the campers' regular mail. We are not equipped at camp to receive an enormous amount of email. Therefore, **we request that incoming email be limited to parents only and that parents write no more than once per day.** Learn how to download the Companion app at right.

Regular Updates

To keep you current with all that's going on at camp, we will regularly update your feed on the Companion app and the parent-only sections of our website. Updates will include photos, videos, and news from camp. **NOTE:** While we do our best to post daily news and photos, camp is in rural Vermont and we do not have access to the best internet service. This makes uploading large numbers of photos difficult. Please bear with us!

Please address camper mail as follows:



Camper Name
Cabin Number * (we'll send to you)
Camp Akeela
One Thoreau Way
Thetford Center, VT 05075



CAMPANION

Companion App

Companion is the mobile app we're using to share your child's camp experience with you this summer. Through Companion, you will receive a personalized stream of content featuring photos and news. It's also the easiest way to complete your camp forms.

To get started with Companion:

- [Download the Companion app.](#)
- (If that link doesn't work for you, find the [Android version here](#) or the [Apple iOs version here.](#))
- Login to the app using your Camper Account login and password
- Navigate to Forms and submit those that are incomplete
- Upload a reference photo of your child

Package Policy

In an effort to reduce unnecessary competition among campers and pressure on parents to send packages, **Camp Akeela has a NO PACKAGE POLICY.**

Campers may receive flat envelopes only, up to 11×14 inches in size. Larger packages will not be delivered; this includes Priority, FedEx and Express Mail boxes. They will instead be stored in our office for you to give to your child at the end of camp.

Food of any kind (including drink mixes, candy, gum, etc.) may not be sent and will be discarded. Please share this information with relatives and friends.

If you need to send appropriate camp items (clothing, replacement items, etc.) please call our camp office to let us know a package is coming.

Birthday Packages: Birthdays are very special at camp. Birthday packages can be sent to camp, addressed to “[Your Child’s Name], Attention: Office Manager.” Label the package “Birthday Present” and call in advance to let us know its coming. Our office staff will decide with your child’s head counselor and cabin counselors the best time to give the presents—when they wake up, at their cabin birthday party, etc. Thank you for your cooperation.



Camper Phone Calls

Parents may elect to schedule one (1) phone call with their child during the camp session.

(If your child has a birthday at camp, you will be able to schedule an additional phone call on that day.) In families where parents are living separately, each parent will have an opportunity to schedule a phone call.



We know from experience that phone calls can often be difficult for both campers and parents—happy campers can “fall apart” on hearing a parent’s voice and then go off to resume having fun with their friends, leaving parents worried. Please don’t feel obligated to schedule a call. As in other areas of camp, we believe in doing what’s best for each camper. In some cases, that may include NOT speaking to their parents while at camp.

Timing of Calls: Campers and parents must wait until the fifth day of the session before talking with each other. This will allow campers to better acclimate to camp life.

Scheduling Calls: Calls can be scheduled through the [Family Log In link](#) on our website. You will see the dates and times that your child is available and then schedule a mutually convenient time to talk. Your child will call you from our office at the scheduled time. Once the camp session begins, call scheduling will be accessible through the [Family Log In link](#).

Last minute scheduling changes due to weather or special events occasionally result in missed camper phone appointments. We appreciate your understanding and will do our very best to reschedule another call as soon as possible.

Time Limit: All calls are limited to ten minutes. We trust we will have your understanding when an office staff member reminds your child that another camper is waiting to talk with their parents.

A Note About Phone Calls

As parents, we know that you may feel anxious and concerned about your child's well-being and happiness at camp. It's natural to want to help your child and to want to be certain that they are happy. With that in mind, some parents unintentionally start to "interview for the negative". That is, they ask questions in a way that suggests an assumption that things are not going well. **We find that it is far more helpful to keep your conversation positive.** It's important to act as a cheerleader for your child's successes. They will follow your lead and proudly share all of their accomplishments.

If there is something bothering them, they will tell you as long as you let them know that you're curious about how things are going. You might want to ask open-ended questions. Instead of, "Is anyone being mean to you?" try, "How are others treating you?" Instead of, "Do you like any of the activities?" try, "What's your favorite activity?"

Please remember that children often worry about their parents when they are away, just like you worry about your children! It's helpful to reassure them that your family is happy and safe. Instead of saying, "We're so lonely without you here," try, "We think of you all the time and imagine you having so much fun at camp!"



We commit to keeping you informed about any and all concerns we have about your child's successes and struggles at camp. We understand that the children who attend Akeela often have trouble expressing themselves; we will let you know and ask for your help if we are at all worried about your child. We believe in being partners with you. It is always our intention to be open and honest with you about our experience with your child. If you have a call scheduled with your camper, please don't hesitate to check in with us ahead of time to see how they are doing and what you might expect to hear on the call.

Lastly, please note that your child's cabin counselors are not available to speak with you directly. Instead, you'll be communicating with his/her head counselor, or with a camp director. See next page for more information.



PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

48-Hour Update From Staff (New Campers)

If this is your child's first summer at Akeela, you will receive a call from a senior staff member within the first 48 hours of camp. These calls are typically made at the the end of the first full day of camp (the day AFTER Opening Day.) We'll let you know how your child is adjusting and help make sure that you are at ease. Be aware that we have many calls to make on four phone lines. We may not reach you until late in the evening.

Calling Camp

We believe strongly in partnership and open lines of communication with parents. We regularly call parents to share information and ask for advice. You can expect to hear from your camper's head counselor at least a couple of times during the camp session. You may also call the camp office any time to leave us a message about your child. Please be aware that we are with campers and staff during the day and will typically return phone calls in the evenings. Also, while Debbie and Eric are always available to you, most camper-related calls will be returned by one of our excellent head counselors. *(As a reminder, head counselors are not your child's in-bunk cabin counselors; they are more experienced senior staff members who oversee several bunks at Akeela.)*

Special Situations

If an emergency or special situation necessitates immediate contact between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., please call and speak with our office staff. During the evening hours of 6 - 11 p.m., please call the main camp number and leave a message. The camp answering machine is checked regularly during that time period. After 11 p.m., the camp directors can be reached for emergency purposes using an emergency extension available to you when you call the main camp number: 802-333-4843. *Please do not use that extension unless there is a true emergency.*

Communication After Camp

Part of the reason for our commitment to partnering with parents is that it contributes to the ways in which campers can continue to grow and learn, even after the summer ends. Each family will receive a written summary of your in-season conversations with their child's head counselor. In addition, we are always happy to speak to or provide written communication with any professionals or schools who might inquire about how your child did at Akeela.

Our goal for our campers is that they develop lasting friendships at camp. To facilitate those relationships, we will distribute a contact list for each camp session, so that your child can keep in touch with friends. The list contains mailing addresses and parent emails. (If you prefer to have your child use a personal email address, please pass that along to his or her friends after camp. Likewise, if you do not want to have your family's information shared with the other children in our community, let us know before the end of your child's session.)

Communication With Counselors

Campers often ask us for their counselors' contact information. We ask that our staff members not share their personal email addresses with campers. We also ask that they do not "friend" a camper on Facebook or other social media. We do this in an effort to protect their privacy and because we believe that, as a parent, it is your right to monitor communication between your child and any adults in their life. If your child would like to write to his/her/their counselor, you can send those notes to us via email and we will forward them to the Akeela staff member. Let us know if you have any questions or concerns about this policy.

HEALTHCARE



We are fortunate to have a wonderful medical staff working hard to provide the best camper and staff medical care and to be responsive to parent inquiries and concerns.

Medications Administration

We want our campers to be as successful as possible at Akeela. If your child takes medication during the school year, we feel that it is imperative that he/she maintains the same routines at camp. If you have any questions or concerns about this camp policy, please contact us as soon as possible.

All medications, prescription or “over the counter,” must be kept in the Health Center. Children are not allowed to administer their own medication without prior approval from our medical staff.

Over-The-Counter Medications

Our Health Center stocks basic over-the-counter drugs including the following partial list of items we stock in the Health Center. Please do not send any of these items with your camper:

FIRST AID

Ace wraps or any type of band-aids, Bacitracin and/or any type of antibiotic ointment

EYES/EARS/NOSE

Visine, Clear Eyes, swimmer's ear drops, wax removal ear drops, saline spray

GI HEALTH

Tums, Mylanta, Chewable Imodium, Lactaid, Fiber Pills, Metamucil

ALLERGY

Claritin, Zyrtec, Benadryl (pills and liquid)

PAIN MEDICATION/ MUSCLE RELIEF/ ANTI-NAUSEA

Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen (pills and liquid), Aleve, Midol, Mineral Ice, Dramamine

COUGH/COLD

Sudafed, Robitussin, Robutussin DM, Delsym, Cough drops, Chloraseptic, non-pseudo nasal decongestant

CREAMS/LOTIONS/SPRAYS

Benadryl, Lotrimin Ultra, Calamine, Caladryl, Hydrocortisone 1%, Gold Bond, Athlete's Foot Cream and Spray, Aloe Gel Sunburn Cream

New for 2026

ALL daily medications require a doctor's order through CampMeds - even medications that are “over the counter” - this will help ensure that the correct dosage is being given at the correct time to your camper.

Medical Charges

The camp tuition covers all medical services provided in camp. All medical bills from providers outside of camp will be processed by the provider through your health insurer. Any applicable payments or copays will be charged to the credit card that you provide to the camp for this purpose. If your camper requires prescription medication during camp, we will provide the pharmacy with your medical insurance information. Any deductibles or out-of-pocket costs greater than \$20 will be charged to your credit card.

**Please note that
we CANNOT
accept medication
on opening day!**

CampMeds (REQUIRED)

In our ongoing commitment to meet the needs of our campers as well comply with strict state regulations, we will again be working with CampMeds, a pre-packaging medication program.

We expect 100% participation in CampMeds from families with campers who will take daily medication at camp. (If your camper does not take daily medication, you do not need to register with CampMeds.)

Our policy and procedure for dispensing and administering medicine requires camp families to have ALL of your child's daily medicine dispensed by CampMeds and sent to camp prior to their arrival.

CampMeds will fill virtually any medication taken daily:

- Prescription medications, including pills, liquids, inhalers and creams
- Controlled substance prescriptions
- Non prescription (over-the-counter) medication
- Vitamins and supplements

NOTE: If your child uses an inhaler or epipen, please send two: one for us to keep in the health center and one to go out of camp on trips.

If there is a specific brand that you require for your child, send it **IN ADVANCE** to CampMeds so they can **pack it for you**. You'll need to do that in the early spring—please do not wait until May or June! In addition, please remind the doctor who writes the prescription to do so with as much detail as possible. For example, if a physician writes a prescription as “2 times a day”, it will be given at breakfast and dinner. If there are specific times when a medication should be given, it needs to be written as such on the prescription. Please call us or CampMeds if you have any questions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Debbie.

You will find details about how to enroll in CampMeds, along with an FAQ, on your family's online Forms Dashboard ([accessible through the Family Log In.](#)) If you have any questions about CampMeds, you can reach them at 954-577-0025 and campmeds.com.

Communication About Health Issues

We understand the importance of keeping you informed about health issues affecting your child. Our medical staff follow the guidelines below and respond to you as quickly as time allows.

- We generally will not contact you if your child is seen in the Health Center for routine problems, i.e. minor skin abrasions, headache, cold, etc.
- If your child is taken to the doctor's office, put on antibiotics or kept in the Health Center overnight, a member of our nursing staff will call you that day or evening. The phone numbers you provide on your child's Health/Emergency Form will be used to contact you. Unless your child has a medical emergency, the health center staff will generally not leave a message on an answering machine. Such messages can often be misinterpreted and be unnecessarily alarming.
- If your child has a medical emergency, we will contact you immediately by phone.



Other Health Concerns

Lyme Disease

All of us who live in the Northeast have a heightened concern and awareness of Lyme disease. We are most happy to report that Akeela is in a “low risk” area for Lyme. Nevertheless, rest assured that our health care staff are well aware of the symptoms, tests and medications for Lyme and will be most vigilant in their routine checks. We have partnered with Ivy Oaks Analytics who are treating our property for ticks and mosquitos as well as poison ivy. For more information, visit ivyoaksanalytics.com.

Communicable Disease

If your child has been exposed to any communicable disease within three weeks of camp, please notify the camp immediately. Children may not attend camp until they have recovered. Our health center staff completes a thorough health screening of each child before they are allowed to join our camp community.

Head Lice

Have your child inspected for the presence of head lice three weeks prior to departure and again immediately before camp begins. If your child had head lice or was exposed to it (family member, friend, schoolmate, etc.) within four weeks of their arrival to camp, please notify us.

Orthodonture

If orthodontic problem occurs at camp, we will notify you. With your concurrence (most times home orthodontists want to be consulted as well), we will take your child to a local orthodontist to resolve the problems and keep your child comfortable at camp. We are unable to provide ongoing orthodontic care.

Eyeglasses

If your child wears eyeglasses, we ask that you send an extra pair to us for safekeeping in our Health Center in case the first pair are lost or broken.



SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS

One of the most important parts of our job at camp is to keep everyone healthy, in every sense of the word. Camp Akeela prides itself on providing top-notch support and training to our staff to ensure the best summer possible for our campers. Safety is always our number one priority. Our counseling staff constantly monitors how campers are feeling emotionally and our nurses do a wonderful job of making sure everyone is physically well.

CampSafe

Our staff are carefully vetted through a process that includes background checks, reference checks, and interviews. For the third year in a row now, we are using the **CampSafe training program**, a rigorous abuse prevention curriculum designed by the Center For Child Counseling.

CampSafe is a proactive approach to child safety which will help support our zero tolerance policy for abuse of any kind--physical, emotional or sexual. The training provides all of our staff with sexual abuse prevention training. Before arriving at camp, each staff member will be required to complete this online course. We will also reinforce the training, in person, as part of our staff orientation at camp in mid-June.

For more information, you can [visit the The Center For Child Counseling website](#) to learn more about CampSafe. They also provide tips for parents on how to talk with your children about personal safety before they head off to camp, how to recognize signs of sexual abuse, and how to respond helpfully to your child if you have any concerns.

Communal Living

In addition to this important conversation with your camper, we also encourage you to talk to them about what they can expect from living 24/7 in a communal (bunk) setting. For many of our campers, camp provides a new opportunity to learn how to respectfully share space with peers. Please help your child understand that living at camp means that there will be other people in the bunk changing (before/after a shower or swimming, into pajamas, etc.) It's to be expected that they will see the naked body of a peer while at camp. You may want to preview this with your child, both to normalize it for them and to help them plan ways to dress and undress in a way that is respectful of other campers in their cabin.

We truly believe that going to camp is an amazing opportunity for children of all ages to learn how to live in a safe space in community. These are skills that will be helpful in college and beyond as well!



HEALTHY EATING



Part of staying healthy is making good choices about what, when and how much we eat! Some of us struggle with this more than others, but we are all better off when we pay attention to the type of energy with which we're fueling our bodies. Here are some ways in which we've worked with our chefs to make our camp food healthier:

- We serve juice at breakfast and lemonade once a week at cook-out. Otherwise, campers are encouraged to drink water or milk.
- We serve a "sweet dessert" after one meal each day - typically dinner. Some afternoon snacks are also sweet treats, such as ice cream, while others are more savory, such as pretzels or chips.
- Our chefs make almost everything we eat from scratch, which means there is less sugar and fewer preservatives in our food.
- Our salad bar is filled with fresh vegetables and a variety of protein options.
- A bowl of fruit is available to campers throughout the day.
- We aim to keep our dining hall calm and relatively quiet, allowing for a less chaotic environment that is more conducive to conversation and slower eating.

Encouraging campers to make healthy food choices is not always easy and, at Akeela, we've made the philosophical choice not to make food a battle. This means that if a camper does not want to try the meal that's being served and prefers to eat plain pasta, a hamburger, hotdog or PB&J (choices at every lunch & dinner), we will not argue with her. Likewise, if a camper wants more food at lunch, we'll encourage him to try a salad but will not prevent him from having seconds of the main course.

Cooking for a community of over 200 people does not allow for individualized meal-planning or some of the foods you may make for your family. While we try to buy local produce, we are unable to source organic food. Moreover, cooking for such a large number of people, many of whom have "particular" tastes, means that we need to keep our menu items relatively simple and pleasing to a wide palate! We know that this means there are a lot of carbohydrates on the menu, which makes portion-control important for those campers who are sensitive to weight-gain. If this is the case with your child, please have a conversation with them to discuss ways in which they may be successful. It is also helpful for our nurses to know that this is a concern.

Our counselors sit with their bunks for every meal which enables them to keep track of any campers who are not eating enough or who are making less healthy choices. They are then able to communicate with the nurses about their concerns. While we model healthy eating and encourage campers to make better choices, we also cannot strictly dictate what a child eats. We want to partner with you to help your child stay healthy in every way at camp and we hope you understand that for the 3 weeks your camper is with us, they may not eat the same way they do at home!

ELECTRONICS POLICY



One of the ways we provide positive experiences for our campers is by limiting electronics in our camp environment, thereby encouraging our campers to socialize through traditional camp activities. We thank you for your cooperation with and support of these policies.

Any item that makes phone calls, accesses the internet, or has screen content of any kind (games, videos, etc.) is not permitted at camp. Examples of permitted and not permitted electronics:

Permitted Electronics

- ✓ Mp3 Player without game/video content
- ✓ E-Reader without game/video content
- ✓ Digital or Disposable Camera

Prohibited Electronics

- ✗ Cell phone
- ✗ iPad or other tablet
- ✗ Handheld video game system
- ✗ Apple Watch (or any “smart” watch)
- ✗ Laptop/computer
- ✗ DVD player
- ✗ Video camera
- ✗ Any electronic device with games/cellular/video content

A few audio devices that DO comply with our policy:

- Mighty Vibe - Allows you to take Spotify or Amazon Music playlists to camp
- Fyrfly Player - Allows you to take Spotify or Amazon Music playlists to camp
- AGPTEK A02 MP3 Player - Recommended by camp friends
- Sony NWE394 Walkman MP3 Player - Traditional mp3 player for music & audio files

This [article on the Best MP3 Players for Kids](#) might be helpful!

Notes

- We recognize that most digital cameras have the ability to record videos. We ask campers and staff to refrain from taking videos inside of the dorm rooms.
- Camp is not responsible for replacing electronic devices brought to camp, which may be damaged or lost.
- Any prohibited items that are brought to camp will be collected and held by camp until the end of the session.

HOMESICKNESS PREVENTION

Most campers attending overnight camp feel some anxiety about being away from home. In fact, we believe that managing and overcoming homesickness is an integral part of the camp experience. Camp is the best place for young people to learn coping skills, gain independence and enhance their self-esteem. Adapting to camp life, with the help of a caring and attentive camp staff, is a challenge that helps young people develop those important life skills.

We have many years of experience helping children through homesickness and will specifically train our staff to assist campers in their transition to camp. We also recommend that parents take the following steps before camp to minimize their child's anxiety:

TALK ABOUT WHAT TO EXPECT

Use the camp brochure, website and mailings to talk about what camp will be like. Go over the daily schedule, the bunk setup, camp activities and who your child can turn to when they need help at camp. In addition, we invite you and your camper to join us at camp in early June so that your camper can see his/her cabin, meet some of our staff, have lunch with our chef and meet some of his/her bunk-mates! (If this in-person Open House event is cancelled for COVID safety purposes, we will host a virtual orientation event instead!)

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

Campers who have not spent significant time away from home should "practice" by having sleep-overs before camp. Extended family is great, but staying at a friend's house is even better. Talk to your child afterwards to debrief the experience.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Parents who talk about how much they are going to miss their children actually create more anxiety and a heightened sense of homesickness. While it may be hard for you to see them go, remember that camp is a wonderful gift that you are giving your child, one that will help him/her grow and develop as a person, and have a GREAT time!

AVOID THIS MISTAKE!

Whatever you do, please don't tell your child: "If you don't like it, I'll come get you." Promises like this set your child up for failure and make our job much more difficult. Most importantly, they deny your child the opportunity to develop the resilience, pride and sense of independence that come from working through something that is difficult.

LET US HELP

Campers can always email us (directors@campakeela.com) with questions or concerns about coming to camp. The more comfortable they feel with us and our staff before arriving, the easier it will be for them to adjust to camp life.

SUCCESS AT AKEELA

Through our thorough application process and our extended conversations with all of our camp families, we do our best to ensure that each camper is a good “fit” for our camp community. However, children respond to new environments in different ways, and we occasionally determine that camp is no longer the best place for a certain camper. Before this decision is made, the camper’s parents will be engaged in problem-solving discussions. After all other possibilities are exhausted, a camper may be asked to leave our community. Parents must make arrangements to pick up their child at that time. No refunds will be granted.

This decision is always a last resort. Most importantly, we want all of our campers to leave Akeela feeling great about themselves. In cases of early departures, we will make sure that campers recognize the successes they had during their stay at camp--and we hope that parents will be equally committed to emphasizing the positive.



CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

One of the unique and wonderful things about Camp Akeela is the type of campers and families that choose Akeela as their summer home. We pride ourselves on being a warm, open and accepting camp community. We love the fact that our campers are so welcoming to new campers, whether they be 9 or 17 years old. Our goal is maintain this culture as our camp family evolves from year to year.

Of course, whenever people live together in a tight-knit community, some interpersonal issues will arise. We train our staff to recognize and effectively deal with any inappropriate behaviors, in order to maintain an emotionally safe environment where every camper can experience camp life to the fullest. We quickly and directly address any incidents of meanness, excluding or bullying so that our campers and their families know this type of behavior is unacceptable at Akeela.

As you know, most--if not all--of our campers have been on the receiving end of bullying behaviors at school or other youth programs. At Akeela, things are different; campers and staff feel truly accepted and embraced by their peers. We feel strongly that every camper must be protected from behaviors that disrupt their ability to have a successful summer in a safe environment.

Any behavior deemed by the camp directors to be inappropriate and/or unmanageable may result in any or all of the following:

- Meeting directly with the counselor, head counselor and/or camp directors to discuss behavior
- Missing out on programs or events at camp
- A telephone call home to the parent/guardian to discuss behavior
- Dismissal from the camp program

We ask all campers and parents to sign the following Camper Code of Conduct. It is one of the forms you'll find in our online forms dashboard.

As an Akeela Camper I will:

- Show respect to other Campers, and treat them as well as I would like to be treated.
- Respect the rights and beliefs of others, and treat others with courtesy and consideration.
- Communicate in an appropriate manner, which means I must not use foul language or gestures, harsh words or harsh tone of voice.
- Communicate directly with another camper if a problem arises, rather than talking to others and spreading rumors.
- Conduct myself responsibly. I understand that unwelcome teasing or other unkind behaviors are not allowed.
- Refrain from deliberately causing bodily harm to others. I understand that pushing, kicking, hitting or fighting are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Respect the property of others; which includes not stealing, damaging property, making graffiti or vandalism.
- Be fully responsible for my actions and understand that irresponsible behavior will result in disciplinary action or dismissal from camp.
- Know and follow the rules of camp.
- Let an adult know if someone is teasing or bullying me. (Reporting is confidential.)
- Let an adult know if I witness someone else being bullied. (Reporting is confidential.)
- Let an adult know if someone is making me feel unsafe. (Reporting is confidential.)

I also agree to attend (or watch a recording of) the pre-camp behavioral expectations meeting hosted by the Akeela directors in the spring.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES & TRIPS

Overnight Camp-Out

Every Akeela camper will have an opportunity to enjoy an overnight camping experience with their bunkmates and counselors. They'll make amazing memories (and delicious s'mores!) at our ICON (In-Camp Overnight) Site, which provides all the benefits of a camping trip without having to leave camp property! There is no additional charge for these overnights.

Grade Trips

Our oldest age groups at Akeela go on a special day trip towards the end of their camp session:

- 9th Graders* (going into 10th) - Weirs Beach, on Lake Winnepesaukee in Laconia, NH
- 10th Graders* (going into 11th) - Burlington and the Ben & Jerry's factory

* NOTE: Occasionally, in order to keep friends and bunkmates together, we will assign a camper to a trip that doesn't exactly match with their school grade.



Grade Trip Spending Money

Generally speaking, our campers have no use for money at camp. When campers are on trips, camp pays all expenses: transportation, admissions, food, etc. However, campers finishing 9th and 10th grades do like to have some extra money on their special grade trips (described at left) for purchasing snacks, gift shop memorabilia, etc.

In order to simplify the process and to keep amounts reasonable, all families in these two age groups will be charged \$50 for "trip spending money". This charge will appear on your invoice, to be paid with camp tuition. We will keep the money in our safe and distribute it to campers on their trips. Any unused money will be returned to the child on the final day of camp.



TOUR CAMP!

Saturday, June 6
or
Sunday, June 7



For those families who live in the Northeast and would like to visit camp before their camper's first summer with us, we will be offering tours of Akeela on June 6th and June 7th.

Please email directors@campakeela.com if you're interested in a tour of camp that weekend.