

Frequently Asked Questions

Here's a list of the most common questions (and answers) that parents ask about summer camp at Kon-O-Kwee:

Q: How does my camper get into the same cabin as his/her friend?

A: Simply fill out the "Cabin Mate Request" line under "Camp Information" when completing your son or daughter's camp registration form; there is space provided for up to two cabin-mate requests. Honored requests are reciprocal: Camper A requests Camper B & Camper B requests Camper A as well. One unique feature of Camp Kon-O-Kwee is that we never have more than 8 campers in a cabin, resulting in smaller group sizes. Small Groups = Big Friendships!

Q: What do we do about medication?

A: Page two of the required Medical Form requires all prescribed and over the counter medications and supplements to be documented. During camper drop off our Medical Staff are stationed at Kramer Hall to accept all medications. Our Medical Staff, comprised of both doctors and nurses who are on site at all times, distribute any all medications to both campers and staff at breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime in addition to accommodating any prescribed dosage schedules.

Q: Are we allowed to send care packages?

A: Yes! Campers love to receive care packages and it's a good way for parents to give their son or daughter a metaphorical hug while being apart for a short period of time. We do require that care packages be handled responsibly. The best thing to do is to eliminate all food items from care packages: stickers, hats, bandanas, water-bottles, yo-yo's, bracelets, extra sunscreen, etc. are all fantastic care package item ideas. If food items are sent, they are placed in your camper's Village Box in Kramer Hall that may be accessed once a day. Our camp is in the woods - we wouldn't want it any other way, but we do want our wildlife to remain in the wild and be observed from a distance. Ants, mice, skunks, squirrels, raccoons, etc. are all fun to look at, but not cool to have in your camper's cabin. If you do send food items, please go easy on candy and leave the pop at home. Our campers get three square meals each day with lots of options and an evening snack; empty calories and excess sugar is not something that combines well with a quality camp experience.

Q: Is my child allowed to call home if they wish?

A: The answer is no in 99.9% of the time. Homesickness is common and it's normal; almost every camper and every staff member misses home in varying degrees at

some point in their life. Most of the time the situation escalates with a call home. Kon-O-Kwee staff have a very specific plan to approach and help campers cope with homesickness starting with a philosophy that homesickness can be avoided or diminished when there is a family atmosphere within the cabin. Calls home are always facilitated by a camp staff member, either a Village Director or a full-time camp professional. In most cases a “head’s up” call is made first, without the camper’s knowledge, so that no surprises are presented later on. After all coping mechanisms and other resources have been exhausted, and with the parents explicit permission, a phone call is arranged between camper and parent to explore options. Gaining a new level of personal independence and personal accomplishment is a valuable boon for Kon-O-Kwee campers.

Q: Are we allowed to visit our son(s)/daughter(s) at anytime during the week to see them?

A: For reasons explored in the response to the question about phone calls, visits from family during a camper’s week or session are highly discouraged. With that said, we cannot keep any camper from a legal guardian. If parents insist on a visit, we simply ask that it be arranged in advance so that we can be prepared, consider the activity schedule, and remain respectful to other campers who do not have family stopping by to visit.

Q: Do we receive a price break if we are YMCA members?

A: Yes. All listed camp prices include a non-Y member fee. Proof of YMCA membership qualifies for \$25 off the cost of camp.

Q: Am I able to call and check on my child during his/her week or session?

A: Yes. For reasons explained in the previous questions about visits and phone calls, direct communication during your son or daughter’s stay at camp is usually discouraged. If, however, it is consistent with the wishes of the parents, phone calls can certainly be arranged. Most parents wondering how their child is doing at camp are happy to have staff investigate and report back to them... this is a very common strategy and one we are happy to accommodate.

Q: What type of items should I send with my child?

A: Bedding, along with enough clothing and personal care items for the duration of your camper’s week or session, sunscreen, insect repellent, closed-toed shoes, flip-flops and flashlight all make the short list. Please check out the lists titled “What-to-Bring Packing Lists” under the [Helpful Links](#) Section of Summer Camp Central on ycamps.org for program-specific packing lists. Nights and mornings can get chilly even during summer time; don’t forget a sweatshirt or a light jacket.

Q: What is different about going to Deer Valley (Teen Wilderness Program)?

A: Being enrolled in the Teen Wilderness program is very different from a week or a session at Kon-O-Kwee. Everything - including your shelter, your food, your personal hygiene practices, and your recreation activities - is more rustic, requires more time, and is more deliberate than what you experienced at Kon-O-Kwee. You'll sleep in gender-specific "addys" (3-sided Adirondack shelters), you'll bathe in Deer Valley Lake, use the "scotty" to do your business, and you'll enjoy your meals cooked over the fire at your Wilderness Pavilion for eight days. You select your activities such as kayaking, swimming, hiking, crafting, climbing, rappelling, nature journaling, and plunging into the turquoise blue waters of Big Spring all atop Mount Davis, the highest point in Pennsylvania. Teen campers return to Kon-O-Kwee reporting fond memories and friendships developed in the beauty of nature and cooperation of group living.

Q: Does my camper need any money?

A: Any camper enrolled in a Kon-O-Kwee Program does not need to have any cash with them. That said, Expa & Lora campers do encounter the snack bar at Moraine State Park when they go on their canoe trip and Vagabond backpackers spend a day in Ohiopyle, PA where they often choose to purchase snacks and meals after a long time on the trail eating backpacking food. All meals and snacks are provided by Kon-O-Kwee; it's not necessary for them to have cash, but it's not a bad idea for Expa & Lora campers to bring \$5 for the snack bar while Vagabond & SuperVagabond campers tend to have \$10 - \$20 for Ohiopyle.

Q: What is needed for the Theme Weeks?

A: Costumes, clothing, decorations, and any props that support the theme of the week are highly encouraged. The theme always culminates at the Wednesday night PARTY when all campers and staff arrive in costume.

Q: When do I need to have the medical forms completed?

A: Please submit the completed medical forms at least two weeks prior to your campers first day of camp.

Q: If my child has had a physical within the last year, is it still good or do I have to have another one?

A: Physicals that have been administered within one year of your child's arrival to camp are accepted.

Q: Do I have to have the doctor complete another medical form or may I use the one from last year?

A: We do require that you complete a new medical form each year. We have switched to a more simplified, user-friendly form and must have each camper up to date.

Q: Can my son/daughter bring his/her cell phones, portable video games, and mp3 players to camp with them?

A: Cell phones are absolutely not permitted on camp. Even counselors must turn their phones into Village Directors and may only use them during off-duty hours. Being a contributing member of the camp community means being present in body, but also in mind. Having a break from the distraction and reliance of cell phones can be a wonderful thing. Other electronics are strongly discouraged and camp assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items. If electronics are brought to camp they may not, under any circumstances, leave the cabin at any time.

More to come... Please call Zach directly at [724.758.6238](tel:724.758.6238) x263 for any questions regarding Kon-O-Kwee Summer Camp.