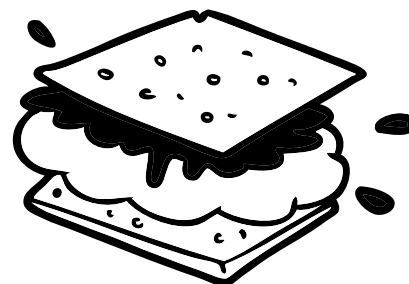




# Camper Family Guide

Welcome, camper families! Whether this is your first experience with Skye Farm or you've got a bunch of experienced campers in your family already, we want to provide you with the information you need as you prepare for camp. If you can't find what you're looking for in this guide, contact our office at (518) 494-7170 and we'll happily get back to you with answers to your questions!



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## Our Goals for Our Campers

In addition to having fun and staying safe, here are our main goals for our campers:

1. Campers will develop skills in creating and nurturing positive and long-lasting relationships with peers, family, and community.
2. Campers will learn about creation care and grow in appreciation of the world around them.
3. Campers will build healthy self esteem through hands-on learning and positive reinforcement.
4. Campers will grow in personal faith through Christian hospitality and community.

## Directions to Camp

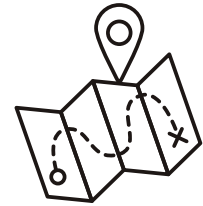
Skye Farm is located off Exit 24 of the Northway (I-87.) Turn left onto East Schroon River Road and follow the brown & orange signs down the dirt road to main camp or up the hill to our retreat lodges. To navigate with GPS:

To reach Kessler Hall for Check-In and Check-Out, use this address:

**89 Sherman Lake Road  
Warrensburg, NY 12885**

To reach the office, health lodge, and dining hall, use this address:

**87 Sherman Lake Road  
Warrensburg, NY 12885**



**\*\*Important Update for 2023:** During Summer 2023 the south-bound exit and entrance ramps for Exit 24 will be closed for bridge construction. If you're heading to camp from the north we encourage you to get off at Exit 25 and take Schroon River Road down to Route 11.

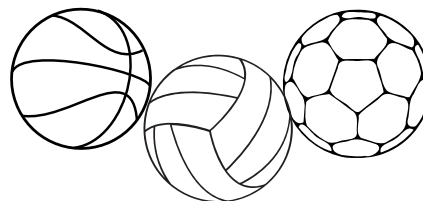


## Activities to Get Excited About

You've seen the description for your camper's chosen program, but what all will they be getting up to at camp? Here are some classic camp activities going on at Skye Farm in any given week of the summer:

- Swimming
  - Campers take a swim test at the start of their program. Our Waterfront Director (Water Safety Instructor certified) will assess which section of our waterfront on Sherman Lake your camper can safely swim in; Shallow (less than 2ft deep,) Intermediate (less than 4ft deep,) or Deep (only accessible to swimmers who are comfortable in water over their head, can tread water, and can safely swim the distance of this section without struggling.)
  - After swim tests, campers are free to enjoy lifeguard-supervised swim times for the rest of their time at camp!
- Boating
  - A classic Skye Farm activity is exploring the lake in one of our Peace Canoes! These large voyager canoes can hold a whole cabin worth of campers who work together to paddle, with a lifeguard steering and leading the adventure.
  - Water-focused programs may also try kayaking & canoeing in two-person canoes, with lessons on paddling and boat safety from a lifeguard.
- Archery & Slingshot (campers ages 8+ learn with certified archery instructors)

- Ballfield Games
  - Capture-the-flag, wacky tag, parachute games-- we have all kinds of fun!
  - Gaga Ball: One of our most popular activities, gaga is something of a cross between four-square and dodgeball, with the ball staying at knee level or below.
  - 9-Square: Imagine a hybrid between four-square and volleyball-- it's super fun!
- All-Camp Campfires, Worship, Trivia, and Talent Shows!
- Small-Group Campfires & Bible Study
- Arts & Crafts (including tie-dye!)
- Nature Exploration & Hikes
- Scavenger hunts, hikes to "the Castle," & all kinds of opportunities to learn about our beautiful corner of the Adirondacks!
- Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, & Frisbee
- Cookout Meals
- Downtime Games, Storytelling, & Songs
- Wagon Rides



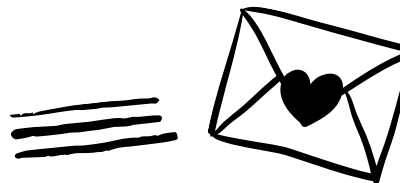
Campers' schedules may be full of fun activities like the ones above, but we also make sure to schedule in time for the rest and care they need to have a great week, including rest time after lunch, dedicated time for showers and tidying cabin spaces, and evening routines with campers' cabin family groups.

## Staying Connected with Your Camper

To contact your camper directly while they're at camp, you have two major options:

1. Bunk1! Bunk1 is a service that allows for families to send "bunk notes" online to be delivered to campers and allows families to see pictures from camp each day.
2. Send a letter in the mail! We deliver camper mail daily, and receiving a letter, card, or postcard can be pretty exciting. Due to the slow nature of snail mail, we recommend mailing letters early in the week or even before your child has left for camp to ensure that they arrive in time. If you choose to send multiple letters ahead of time, we can space out the delivery so that your camper is receiving letters all throughout the week. If your camper wants to write a letter to you, we will help them put it in an envelope and send it to you! You can also send some pre-addressed envelopes with them if you wish. Letters sent to campers can be addressed to:

Camper's Name / Program  
 Skye Farm Camp  
 1884 East Schroon River Rd  
 Warrensburg, NY 12885



Please do not send packages. If you decide that you need to send your child a package, please contact our office to make arrangements.

Parents and guardians may also call the Skye Farm office at (518) 494-7170 during the week to talk to staff about how their camper is doing or to talk to their camper directly. Generally, we advise that families not rely on this too much, as we do want to encourage campers to strengthen their independence and build relationships with their counselors and fellow campers. For a camper who may be missing home, hearing a parent's voice on the phone may be helpful, but we also find that it often simply makes them miss home more, and hinders their ability to make it through the week. In cases like these, we will discuss with you what you think is the best way to help your child feel comfortable and have a fun week at camp.

Visits to the site by parents/guardians, families, and friends are welcome during check-in and check-out. Additional visits are rare and must be arranged through the office.

## Missing Home

As we tell our campers, it's normal and okay to miss home, because that means you have a pretty awesome home to go back to at the end of the week! Counselors and staff are trained to notice signs that a camper may be missing home, even if they're not speaking up about it.

We have many strategies for making campers feel more comfortable at camp that we regularly employ.

- We fill our days with as many fun activities as possible, to engage campers' minds and keep them from feeling lonely or focusing too much on missing home.
- When a camper is struggling to have fun because they're missing home, we may encourage them to think about the exciting things they're doing at camp and write about them in letters to their family.
- We make sure they feel comfortable talking with their counselor or another staff member about how they're feeling, we help them make friends with other campers, and we make sure they're eating enough and getting enough sleep.
- If we notice that your camper is struggling because they're missing home, we'll call you to let you know and to have a conversation about what might help them. Are they used to sleeping close to a night light? Is there something in their daily routine that we can replicate to make them feel more comfortable? We'll work with you to help them feel more comfortable and have an awesome week.

Sometimes, a camper isn't quite ready to be at camp for the whole week, and that's okay. Campers can still have positive experiences at camp, even if spending multiple nights away from home is something they're really not comfortable with yet. If a camper is asking to go home and our attempts to help them feel comfortable have not worked, we'll talk with the parents and discuss options for an early pick-up.

## Preparing Your Camper to be Away From Home

You can help your camper prepare to be away at camp and diminish the effects of missing home! Here are some things to consider:

- Make sure your child is involved in the decision to go to camp. If they help pick their program and buy into the idea of going to camp, they are far less likely to feel like you're sending them away or feel like they're being "forced" to be at camp.
- Talk with your camper about ways to stay connected while you're apart. Send them with the supplies they need to write you letters or bunk notes, or have them keep a camp journal to share with you when they get home. Practice writing letters to friends or relatives with them so they feel comfortable doing so at camp.
- Describe to your camper what you're going to do on Friday when you pick them up. Are you going to go out to dinner after check-out? Have a game night? Eat ice cream and tell camp stories? Giving them something concrete to look forward to on Friday can be helpful.
- Carefully consider what updates you're sending your camper during the week. Big news from home can throw a camper off, especially when you aren't right there with them to help them process it.
- If your child hasn't been away from home before, consider trying a practice run before they go to camp where they spend the weekend with grandparents or other family.
- If this is your child's first time at camp and they'd like to see the site before they arrive for camp, we can arrange a time for your family to walk around, meet some staff, see the cabins, etc. If visiting the site isn't an option for you, have them explore our website and social media for pictures and more information about camp.
- Avoid talking about camp or the time apart in anxious or ambivalent ways (i.e. "I hope you'll be okay there," "Your dog is really going to miss you while you're gone, I hope I have time to walk him," etc.) Try instead to express optimism and excitement about the new experience. If you are anxious about being separated from your child, discuss it with other parents or adults, not with your child.
- For younger kids, use a calendar to show when they'll be at camp. Understanding their time at camp as a specific period and not an eternity can be helpful.

## Medical Care

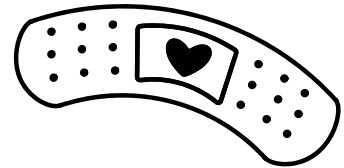
Skye Farm has a registered nurse on staff to provide care for campers and staff, and staff are certified in wilderness first aid and CPR. Campers who take any sort of medication regularly will take their meds at the health lodge under the supervision of the RN. At check-in you will have the opportunity to meet the nurse, discuss any health concerns, and hand all medication (both prescription and over the counter) in their original containers over to the nurse. Epi-pens will be kept with the camper's counselor, out of reach of the other campers but available in case of emergency. If your child has any medical concerns you'd like to discuss in advance of their week at camp, you can call the office at (518) 494-7170 to be put in contact with the camp nurse.



## Illness & Injuries at Camp

Counselors carry first aid kits with basic supplies at all times, and are certified in first aid and CPR. Any injury or illness, no matter how minor, is reported to the nurse to be followed up on if necessary. The health lodge is equipped with more extensive supplies and has bunks and a private bathroom available for campers who may need to spend the night or stay away from other campers. The nurse will contact the parents/guardians of campers who have experienced notable injuries or illnesses at camp. If a camper needs to go home or see their doctor, arrangements will be made for an early pick-up.

In the case of a serious injury or illness, a camper may be brought to the Warrensburg Health Center (less than 20 minutes away) by senior staff members, or an ambulance may be called. Parents/guardians are notified as quickly as possible. These kinds of injury and illness are very rare at Skye Farm, but we have careful plans in place and any emergency medical situations are handled by the nurse and by our most experienced staff.



## Special Dietary Needs

The Skye Farm kitchen staff has a Special Diet Cook dedicated to providing campers with the most delicious week possible, regardless of what foods they can and cannot eat. Food safety is of the utmost importance, and special care is taken to ensure that campers with food allergies receive meals that are safe. The Special Diet Cook works with campers one-on-one to make sure that they know what's safe for them, they feel comfortable asking questions, and they get enough to eat.

Please be detailed on your child's health forms when describing any food allergies and/or intolerances. Even if your child has not had a reaction in a long time, we'd like to know about any reactions to food, especially if they're anaphylactic. Epi-pens will be kept with the camper's counselor and will be supervised by the camp nurse.

If your child has a dietary restriction and relies on certain foods to make sure they get the nutrition they need, please let us know. We may be able to provide the foods ourselves, or may be able to safely store the food and serve it to your child as necessary. If you indicate on health forms that your child has a food allergy, the Special Diet Cook or the camp nurse may reach out to discuss the severity of the allergy so that we can adequately prepare.

Please note that campers are not allowed to have food with them in their cabins. Any food brought to camp must be properly stored by the Food Service Manager, and will be returned to the camper at the end of the week.

## Trying New Foods at Camp



If your child is a picky eater, has difficulty with foods of certain textures, etc, it can be helpful to make note of this on your child's health form so we can let the kitchen staff know to be ready to help them get enough to eat. At camp we encourage campers to try new things, and many picky eaters go home loving foods they'd never tried or liked before! With that being said, we will always make sure campers get enough to eat, even if that means getting them some food that's in their comfort zone.

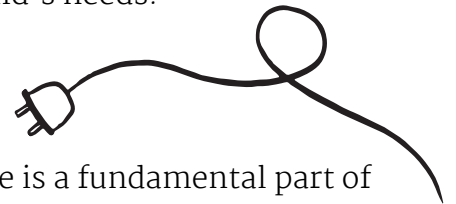
At any meal, campers have the option of getting a bowl of cereal or a piece of fresh fruit. At lunch and dinner, campers have the option of getting a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. If these supplements don't work for a particular camper, the kitchen staff will work with them one-on-one to find an alternative that works for them.

Please note that campers are not allowed to have food with them in their cabins. Any food brought to camp must be properly stored by the Food Service Manager, and will be returned to the camper at the end of the week.

## Accessibility

Camp is a great place for kids with all kinds of abilities and learning styles to have fun and grow. We understand that some elements of our environment may be challenging for certain campers. We are happy to work with campers and their families on a case by case basis to help them have a fun-filled and safe week at camp. Call our office at (518) 494-7170 to have a conversation about how we can address your child's needs.

## Phones & Other Devices



We firmly believe that unplugging and spending time in nature is a fundamental part of an awesome camp experience. Giving kids some space from the devices that control their lives allows them to make better connections with fellow campers and staff. Dr. Jake Sorenson, a camp researcher and founder of Sacred Playgrounds' Effective Camp Project, identifies being "unplugged" as one of the five fundamental characteristics of the Christian summer camp experience. Dr. Sorenson found that only 8% of campers say it was "often difficult" to be without devices at camp. While many campers may be reluctant to leave their phone behind at the beginning of the week, once they're in the camp environment and having fun with new friends it no longer feels like such a big deal.

We understand that concerns about campers leaving phones behind sometimes come from parents & guardians' concerns and not the camper's. For parents and guardians who are used to being able to text their child anytime to check in, giving up that connection during a week at camp can be stressful. That is why we offer other ways to connect and receive updates about your camper while they're at camp (see page 3.)

Parents and guardians are also welcome to call our office (518) 494-7170 during the week to talk to staff about how their camper is doing or to talk to their camper directly. We will contact you if there is an emergency or particular concern about your camper (illness, homesickness, behavior concern, etc.)

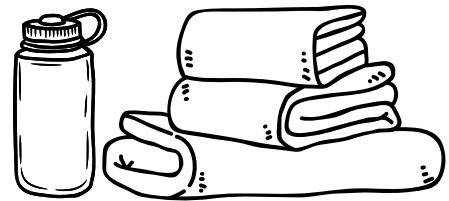
If a camper does come to camp with a phone or other device, we will collect the device and lock it in the office for safe-keeping for the duration of the program.

## Lost & Found Items

Due to the size of our site and the number of campers that come through in a summer, we find that many lost items are found but not claimed. We do our best to collect lost & found items and get them back to campers before the end of the week, and set out remaining items at check-out for families to double check before they leave. So what can you do? Label everything.

Items that most commonly get lost at camp include:

- water bottles
- towels
- sweatshirts / jackets



Labeling these items means we can get them back to your camper before they go home. You may also want to consider refraining from sending brand new, expensive, or special favorite items with your camper.

If you realize your camper has lost something important after you have returned home, give our office a call at (518) 494-7170 and we'll check our lost and found and mail it to you.

## A Camp Experience for All Faith Backgrounds

Our campers come from a wide range of faith backgrounds, and many don't have any experience with Christian faith at all. Camp is a place where we get to learn from one another, and our different experiences make that possible.

Our staff is trained to facilitate conversations about faith in ways that don't exclude campers without prior knowledge of the Bible or Christian teachings. We will never pressure campers to make faith-related commitments or participate in faith-related activities that make them uncomfortable. More information about the faith foundation of Skye Farm can be found on our website: [skyefarmcamp.org](http://skyefarmcamp.org)

If your camper enjoys their experience with faith at camp and would like to attend a church, we can help you connect with a pastor or youth pastor in your area!