



Camp Kekoka Parent Guide

Dear Camper and Family,

We believe that every child deserves a moment in the sun, a chance to learn, a special time to grow, and a special time to make friends and become a better person. At Camp Kekoka, the core values of YMCA living-caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility shape the best moments of childhood into unforgettable memories. Campers come to camp to have fun. Having fun means making friends, being part of a group and feeling liked, respected, and appreciated.

At Camp Kekoka, we believe children, through their participation at camp, have opportunities to gain a sense of self-worth, and are able to share, assume responsibility and cooperate effectively with others. We believe this process must include opportunities for children to think and make decisions. In this context, participation in camp cannot help but give a child the sense of competence, which is certainly equated with a feeling of confidence.

The relationship between campers and staff is perhaps the most important building block to the successful camp experience. Camp Kekoka counselors are warm, understanding, and friendly. The counselors are fun, loving, mature and sincere in their desire to provide each child with a safe and enjoyable camp session.

Spirituality is a natural part of each day's camp adventure. At Camp Kekoka, we strive to be inclusive and respectful of each child's beliefs, while practicing the principles of Christian living. Blessings at meals are a part of the daily routine, as are our daily devotions in each cabin lead by staff.

At Camp Kekoka, we are extremely excited about your interest in us and will do everything possible to provide the finest camp experience for your child.

Sincerely,

Cassie Leichthy
Branch Executive/Camp Director
YMCA Camp Kekoka

Important Information

**YMCA Camp Kekoka
P. O. Box 580
Kilmarnock, VA 22482**

**(804) 435-0223 (September – May)
(804) 435-3616 (June – August)**

(804) 435-2227 Fax

www.peninsulaymca.org

Email: campkekoka@peninsulaymca.org

Contact: Cassie Leichty, Branch Executive/Camp Director

Opening Day – Sunday, 3:00 pm

Closing Day – Friday, 11:00 am

Packing for Camp

We ask where possible that campers use a large duffel bag or a Rubbermaid container with the height of 8.5 inches for packing. Duffel bags and Rubbermaid containers will fit under the camper's bed. Place a list of items packed inside of the duffel bag so that counselors can help campers maintain their possessions. All luggage-accompanying campers by plane or bus will be handled at no charge. Items sent ahead should be shipped UPS. The shipping address is 1809 Harris Drive, Kilmarnock, VA. 22482. When received, items are delivered to the cottage prior to the camper's arrival. We recommend ordering return shipment tags ahead to avoid delays in getting trunks home. UPS will not ship trunks home unless there is a direct request to them from parents. UPS can be reached at 1-800-742-5877.

What To Bring To Camp

Bedding: Campers will stay in cottages with single size bunk beds

Single sheets (campers wishing to use a sleeping bag must also have a fitted sheet on the bed)
1-blanket or sleeping bag
1-pillow and pillowcase
Towels/wash cloths

Clothing for 6 days to include:

Sweatshirt
Raincoat
Shirts
Shorts
Underclothing
2-Swimsuits
Old clothes
Long pants
Tennis or closed toed shoes
Water shoes (bay and pool activities)

Additional Suggestions:

Water Bottle
Laundry bag
Toiletry articles and something to carry back and forth to the bath house
Stationery/stamps
Small flashlight
Sunscreen
Bug Repellant

Optional Items

Talent show items
Jellyfish pants (neoprene/nylon pants; inexpensive wind pants with elastic around the ankles)
Disposable Camera
Books, comics or magazines
Rainy day games, cards

What Not To Bring

iPods/Game boys

Jewelry

Cellular phones, Radios

Knives

Illegal drugs/Alcohol

Valuables

Cash (unless in Teen Camp)

Firearms

Food/candy (Some campers experience food allergies. Please do not include food items in care packages.)

Camp Kekoka is not responsible for lost money or electronics that are in the camper's possession.

Opening Day

When you arrive, you and your camper(s) will be greeted at the front gate by a staff member wearing a Camp Kekoka staff shirt. This staff member will confirm your cottage assignment and direct you its location.

After entering the front gate please proceed to the dining hall for check in. You will need to bring you confirmation as well as any prescribed medication.

After checking in you will be free to move your camper into his or her cottage. There will be staff available to help with this process. Your cottage counselor will be in your cottage to meet and welcome you to Camp.

All parents will need to be off camp property by 5:00 p.m.

Closing Day

Parents/guardians should plan to pick up their child at 11:00 am.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) must provide a Photo ID in order to pick up their camper. This policy is for the protection of all of our campers. If someone other than a parent or guardian is picking up your camper we must have prior written permission as well as a photo id.

Each cottage counselor will have sign out sheets. Each camper must be signed out by an authorized adult with their cottage counselor. Their counselor will sign out campers leaving on plane/bus transportation. This policy is for the protection of all of our campers.

If your camper has prescription medication, please stop by the Dining Hall to pick up that medication.

Typical Daily Schedule

7:30 am	Rise and Shine
8:00 am	Breakfast
8:45 am	Character Development
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Morning Activity
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Rest Period
2:30 pm – 5:30 pm	Afternoon Activity
6:00 pm	Supper
6:45 pm – 7:45 pm	After Supper Activity
8:00 pm – 9:15 pm	Evening Program
9:30 pm – 10:00 pm	Cabin Time/Devotions
10:00 pm	Lights Out

- Evening programs and lights out may be adjusted for youngest or oldest camper groups
- Campers have a rotating schedule. The schedules alternate so that children will have the opportunity to be involved in both land and water activities.

Cottage Assignments

Campers are assigned to cottages by age and grade level. Cottage assignments will be given upon arrival. Mutual requests from campers within the same year of age are honored with the approval of the Camp Director (**limited to one friend**). A greeter at the camp gate will notify you of your campers' cottage assignment upon arrival at camp. The Camp Director reserves the right to determine final cottage mate placement.

Meals

Appealing and nutritious meals are prepared under the careful supervision of our trained dietary staff and satisfy the hearty appetites of campers and staff. A variety of fresh fruit, cereal, hot breakfasts and vegetables are offered every day. A main entree, vegetable, salad, bread, and dessert are typical lunch and dinner meals. Foot-long hot dogs, smiley fries and cookout nights are the campers' favorites. Special dietary needs should be indicated to our camp director. The Camp Kekoka Dining Hall is inspected by the Virginia Health Department and maintains a permit to operate a restaurant.

Lost and Found

Camp Kekoka is not responsible for any items lost while your camper is at camp. It is very important that campers clearly label all belongings with their name. We suggest using a permanent marker. Campers will be able to view found items on a daily basis in the dining hall. Parents are encouraged to also view these items on closing day.

The shipping of found items after the camper's departure may be arranged at the expense of the owner.

Discipline

Camp rules are designed to enhance the happiness and safety of all campers. The Camp Director will contact parents to let them know if there is an on-going behavior problem. Children who do not demonstrate appropriate behavior, in the judgment of the director, will be sent home from camp. Early dismissal from camp will not warrant the refund of fees.

Visitation/Phone Calls

Camp Kekoka **does not** have a visitation day, although letters and e-mails are welcomed and encouraged! Parents are also invited to inspect the facilities and meet the staff on Opening and Closing Days.

Due to the volume of campers, Camp Kekoka does not permit campers to make or receive phone calls. (Especially when campers are homesick, we have found that calls from home disrupt the camper's adjustment to camp life.) If an emergency situation arises at home, we ask that parents contact one of the Camp Directors. Directors will gladly assist you and your camper in every situation!

Camper Mail

There is a large volume of mail at Camp Kekoka. We encourage families and friends to write and we ask that every mailed item be labeled with the camper's name and cottage name. Be aware that because of our rural location at times the mail is not timely.

Campers can receive one way emails from Bunk1.com. Please see the attached sheet for more information Email is printed and delivered daily at lunchtime along with the regular mail. We ask that you put the campers name and cottage name in the subject line. Please no electronic cards or attachments.

Campers will not be able to send emails from camp.

Spending Money

Campers may wish to bring money to spend at the camp store. This money will be logged at time of entry to the camp and held at the camp store to be used to purchase camp items. All refunds will be made a check out time. Campers should not have money in their cabin. Camp Kekoka is not responsible for any lost or stolen money.

Health Center/Medications

Campers check-in all prescribed medications with Health Center staff upon arrival to camp. All medications must be in the original container. No medications are allowed in cottages (with the exception of inhalers for some asthmatics and epi pens). The Health Center can not accept over the counter medications, only medications prescribed by a doctor will be accepted.

The Health Center is staffed and open 24 hours a day to handle medical situations. In the event that a camper spends the night in the Health Center or there is a serious situation, parents will be called. Cottage counselors observe campers daily for cleanliness, cuts, sunburn, insect bites, etc.

To ensure good health and the ability to participate in normal camp activities, the enclosed health form must be completed by parents and a medical doctor, and returned to Camp Kekoka by July 8th. The doctor's signature verifies that he/she has examined your child within the past two years; substitute forms or incomplete forms are not admissible.

At the end of the session, remaining prescription medications need to be picked up at the health center. All prescription medications and/or hospital care during camp are billed to parents. General medications and first aid materials are provided at no cost. Accident insurance is not included in the camp fee.

First Time Campers/Homesickness

Homesickness is common at all ages and is a natural response to being separated from loved ones and a normal routine at home. Parents, siblings, grandparents, and friends all are affected by homesickness, also known as separation anxiety. Parents can help their camper adjust to camp by following simple steps outlined in an American Camping Association publication, written by University of California Psychologist Chris Thurber:

- Encourage your child's independence throughout the year. Practice separations; a sleepover at a friend's house can simulate the camp environment.
- Involve your child in the process of choosing a camp. The more that the child embraces the decision, the more comfortable the child will feel at camp.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.
- Reach an agreement ahead of time regarding phone calls home. If your child's camp has a no phone calls policy, honor it.
- Send a note or care package ahead of time to arrive the first day of camp. Acknowledge, in a positive way, that you will miss your child. For example, you can say "I am going to miss you, but I know that you will have a good time at camp."
- Don't bribe. Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's new-found confidence and independence.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal.
- When a "rescue call" comes from the child, offer calm reassurance and put the time frame into perspective. Avoid the temptation to take the child home early.
- Talk candidly with the Camp Director to obtain his/her perspective on your child's adjustment.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.
- Trust your instincts. While most incidents of homesickness will pass in a day or two, Thurber's research shows that approximately 7 percent of the cases are severe. If your child is not eating or sleeping because of anxiety or depression, it is time to go home. However, don't make your child feel like a failure if their stay at camp is cut short. Focus on the positive and encourage your child to try camp again next year.

The Camp Kekoka staff is well trained to help campers adjust to camp by immediately involving them in goal setting, team building and fun activities.

Weather Related Emergency

Camp Kekoka staff will carefully monitor and track all weather systems.

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