Celebrating Our 76th Summer!

Skylake

2020 Parent Handbook

american CAMP association ACCREDITED

Skylake Yosemite Camp

since 1945

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2020 Contact Information

Office Phone: (559) 642-3720 • **Office Fax:** (559) 642-3395

Office Hours: *Winter Office Hours* Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Summer Office Hours Monday - Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Camp Mailing Address: 37976 Road 222, #25 • Wishon, CA 93669

Emails: Owner/Co-Director: Jeff Portnoy - Jeff@Skylake.com
Co-Director: Adrienne Portnoy-Durgin - Adrienne@Skylake.com
Administrative Director: Jessica Portnoy Sonka - Jessica@Skylake.com
P.M. Director: Paul LaSpada - Paul@Skylake.com

2020 Calendar

Session A June 21 to July 4*
Session B July 5 to July 18
Session C July 19 to Aug 1
Session D Aug 2 to Aug 15

*Special Notice Regarding July 4th

THERE IS NO CLOSING CEREMONY FOR SESSION A

Bass Lake hosts a fireworks display on July 4th that attracts large crowds. Skylake's typical closing day ceremony **is not compatible** with the crowds that form at the lake early in the day. ***Therefore:***

- ***There will be NO closing ceremony for Session A.***
- ***We ask that ALL campers going home on 7/4/20, return home BY BUS.***
- ***Buses will depart camp at 9:30 a.m.***
- ***Parents needing to pick up their children, the gates open at 10:00 a.m.***
- ***This is a NO visitor day for our four week campers.*** *We can arrange for phone calls for any campers wanting to call home that day.*

We appreciate your understanding in dealing with this unique weekend.

Opening & Closing Days of Camp

All Skylake sessions commence on Sunday and conclude on Saturday. Skylake offers bus service on both opening and closing days to both the San Francisco Bay Area and to Los Angeles. We also provide pick up and drop off at the Fresno Airport.

Opening Day

The camp gates open at 12:30 p.m. on each opening day and the buses start to arrive around 1 p.m. Campers are then greeted and escorted to the campfire circle and find their cabin assignments. They are quickly busy with camp tours, health checks, swim checks and team building games. These first couple of hours of a cabin group are critical in forming a cohesive group.

We ask parents to spend enough time in camp to meet their child's counselor and then say good bye. The last day of camp is much better suited for a parent camp tour or chatting with the counselors.

Closing Day Arrangements

Parents are invited to the closing day ceremony of each camp session ***(with the exception for Session A. Please see the special notice on previous page.)*** Gates open at 9:30 a.m. and the closing ceremony starts at 10 a.m. Immediately following, a light brunch is served.

Buses load at 11:30 a.m. and depart at 12 noon. Camp is then closed to all outside guests.

Buses to Los Angeles arrive about 5 p.m. Arrival time of the buses for Emeryville and Palo Alto depend on routing. Up-to-date arrival times are communicated by email and on-line newsletter. Any questions, please call the office.

Traveling to Camp

Traveling by Charter Bus to camp with other campers and the counselors is a great start to their summer adventure. It is easier to connect and they are more inclined to make friends right away. Thus, before even reaching camp, they have bonded with their peers, met the counselors and are much more comfortable when they arrive.

We strongly advise that ALL CAMPERS arrive in camp BY BUS.

Parents must login to their account and make travel selections. Arrangements are made EARLY with the Charter Bus Company. So please double check your registration information is correct. If you have any difficulty or questions please call the office.

Buses have bathrooms on board, but do not carry potable water. Campers should bring adequate provisions for the 4 hour bus ride. Cell phones *(or any device capable of accessing the Internet)* are NOT permitted on the bus.

Sadly, Orange Belt Stages no longer provides Charter Bus service. After 20 years of faithful service, and our families getting very accustomed to what bus to look for, we will be transitioning to a new company. ***We are in the process of selecting a new carrier and will let you know as soon as we make this determination.***

Los Angeles Buses

Arrive and depart from:
West L.A. Federal Building
11000 Wilshire Blvd #1000
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(*Adjacent to the 405 freeway)*

Loading area is in the parking lot at the back of the building. Buses load at 7:30 a.m. and depart by 8 a.m.

DON'T park in reserved parking or allow dogs out. The building may be closed, but the parking lot rules still apply. Security guards have issued citations in the past.

San Francisco Bay Area Buses

Emeryville - Boat launch parking lot located on Powell St. *Immediately opposite the Hong Kong East Ocean Seafood Restaurant, 3199 Powell St., Emeryville, 94608.* It's about 1 mile west of Hwy. 880, just East of Bay Bridge.

Palo Alto (Page Mill Park'N Ride) at the intersection of Page Mill Rd. and Hwy. 280. Parking lot is on the southwest corner of the intersection, adjacent to freeway.

Departure time varies between 8 and 9 a.m. *(depending on the number of campers traveling.)* Exact time of departure will be sent one week prior to travel date.

Driving Directions

If you are driving, Skylake is about 4.5 hours from Los Angeles and 4 hours from San Francisco. We are located almost precisely in the center of the state, at the 3,600 foot level of the Sierras. Camp is a one-hour drive from Fresno. The nearest town is Oakhurst.

From Los Angeles, exit Highway 99 at Fresno onto Highway 41.

From the San Francisco Bay Area, exit Highway 99 at Madera, follow the signs to Highway 145, then turn left onto Highway 41.

Once you're on Highway 41, the easiest way to camp is through the town of Oakhurst. *(Skylake is only 15 minutes from Oakhurst.)* ***Please follow the fail-safe, turn-by-turn instructions below.*** *Many online or G.P.S. directions to Skylake are faulty. Most importantly,* ***do NOT leave Highway 41 until AFTER you have passed through Oakhurst****. There are some G.P.S. services that have you exit Highway 41 onto Road 220 -* ***PLEASE DO NOT DO THAT.*** *Although that potential route is 5 minutes faster, you have a 10 times more likely of a chance of getting very lost.*

- **Proceed through Oakhurst on Highway 41**
- **Turn right on Bass Lake Road/Road 222-large sign points the way**
- **Proceed on Bass Lake Road for 3.4 miles, up over a ridge and down to lake basin**
- **Turn right onto Road 222/South Shore Road for 0.3 miles -** ***look carefully for this turn!***
- **Turn right to "STAY" on Road 222/South Shore Road**
- **Bass Lake will appear on your left side after 1/2 mile, camp is 3.5 miles further**
- **Look for Skylake Sign at driveway on the right; proceed up the driveway to camp**

Camp is not visible from the road, we are on a knoll above the lake. The docks are directly below camp and you will pass those just before reaching the Skylake driveway.

37976 Road 222
Wishon CA 93669

Coordinates:
37 degrees 18" 12,17" N
119 degrees 32'28,35"W

Airport Arrivals & Departures

Fresno International Airport is located approximately one hour from Skylake. Skylake staff will pick up campers on opening days and escort campers on closing days to and from the airport at no charge. We ask that all arriving campers schedule their arrivals as close to noon as is possible. Campers departing camp should schedule their departure flights no later than 1 p.m. If special arrangements need to be made during a session for trips to and from the airport there is a $100 transportation charge each way.

Bass Lake Accommodations

For those parents who wish to stay in the area either prior to dropping off or picking up their campers we suggest making reservations at one of the following locations. *This is a resort area so please book your rooms very early.*

SIERRA SKY RANCH
sierraskyranch.com
(559) 683-8040
New personal favorite
15 minutes from camp

CHÂTEAU DU SUREAU
chateaudusureau.com
(559) 683-6860
A Relais & Châteaux,
world class accommodation.

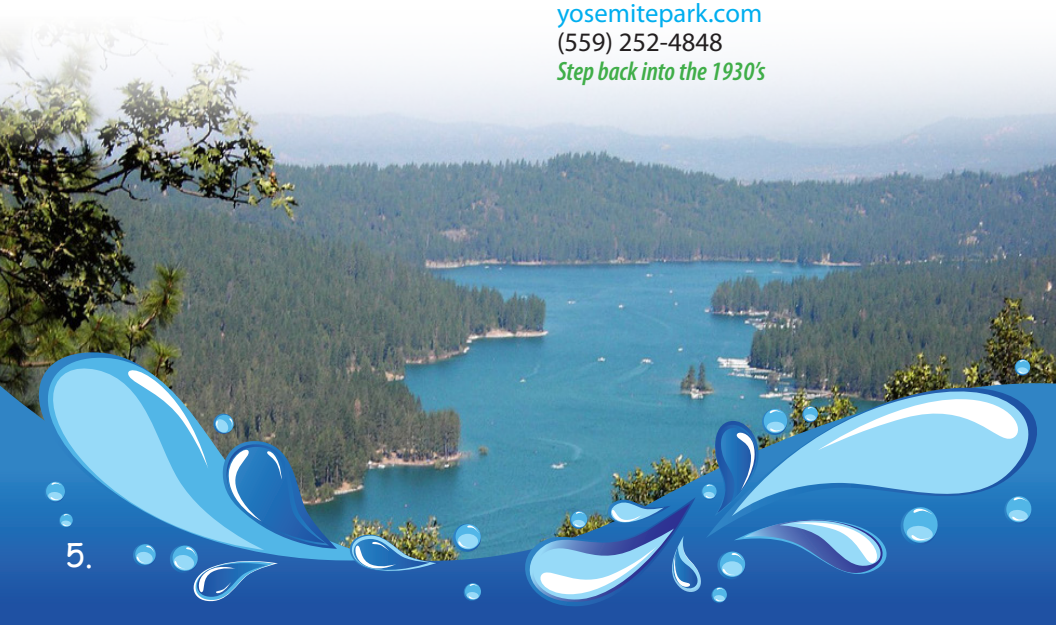
YOSEMITE GATEWAY INN
yosemitegatewayinn.com
Oakhurst
(800) 545-5462
The best motel in Oakhurst

TENAYA LODGE
tenayalodge.com
(800) 635-5807
A full service large hotel

NARROW GAUGE INN
narrowguageinn.com
Fish Camp
(559) 683-7720
3 miles from Yosemite Park

PINE'S RESORT
basslake.com
(800) 350-7463
Close to camp, but over priced

WAWONA HOTEL
yosemitepark.com
(559) 252-4848
Step back into the 1930's



Clothing & Equipment List

This list is complete and covers everything necessary for camp. Please help your camper pack, know what goes in their trunks, and help us keep Skylake safe and fun. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of any item do not hesitate to call us.

Bunk Bedding:

- 1 Flat Twin Sheet *(optional)*
- 1 Sleeping Bag
- 1 Pillow

Camp Casual:

- 1-2 Pajamas
- 1 Pair of Running/Athletic Shoes
- 1 Pair of Sandals with Back Strap *(such as Tevas or Chacos)*
- 1 Pair of Flip Flops
- 5 Pairs of Socks
- 10 Pairs of Underwear
- 4-5 Pairs of Shorts
- 1 Pair of Jeans *(2 pairs if horseback riding)*
- 8 T-shirts or Light Tops
- 1 Sweatshirt or Jacket
- 1 Set of Party Clothes *(equivalent of nice school clothes)*
- Hat or Visor *(for sun protection)*

Bass Lake Swim Gear:

- 2 Swimsuits *(NO itsy bitsy, teeny weeny)*
- 2 Beach Towels
- Sandals *(with heel strap - required for swim trail)*
- Sun Screen *(NON-AEROSOL)*

Shower House & Personal Needs:

- 2 Bath Towels
- Soap, Shampoo, Toothpaste, & Toothbrush
- Bug Repellent *(NON-AEROSOL)*

Miscellaneous:

- Laundry Bag *(with name on it & closure ability)*
- Books
- Stationary, Pens & Address List
- Camera *(NO smartphone cameras)*
- Water Bottle
- Flashlight
- Small Daypack
- Boots *(optional for horseback riding)*

Senior Village and CILT Campers are required to bring hiking shoes with a strong sole and proper ankle support.

Campers desirous of going on a **backpack trip or day hike** should bring **solid day-walking shoes** *(ie: Merrill, Hi-Tech, Keen)*. All backpack equipment will be provided.

Skylake provides all athletic equipment!
So there is no need to bring anything from home. *(ie: balls, gloves, bats, helmets, tennis racquets, etc. are all provided)*

Please help us keep Skylake safe by NOT packing ANY products in aerosol cans.
Sunscreen has become very popular in aerosol cans. However, they are extremely dangerous and not appropriate for a camp environment.

Sleeping Bags & Footlockers

Our cabins are open air and the evenings can get chilly. Sleeping bags are the easiest way to provide bedding. Many campers choose to bring a flat sheet for the mattress and sleep with the sleeping bag unzipped. This is more comfortable than being in a sleeping bag every night.

Campers that desire to go on overnight trips out of camp, can simply take the sleeping bag with them without having to bring additional bedding. "Sleep-over" type sleeping bags are not adequate, but there is no need for a 0 degree rated mummy bag. The most appropriate multi use bag would be tapered and have a lower limit temperature rating of 20 degrees.

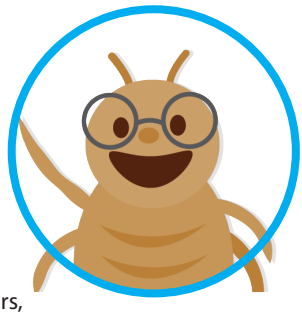
In the past, Skylake recommended a footlocker as the best form of luggage. However, with so many campers coming to camp for the shorter two-week sessions, a soft duffle bag is very manageable. Campers coming for the longer four-week stay may still prefer the footlocker as it offers easier access to personal belongings. The cabins do not really offer much in the way of hanging space and no drawers are provided.

Camper Showering

Many campers come to camp concerned and worried about the facilities and the procedures for taking showers. Here are the guidelines of what Skylake does to insure privacy.

1. Stall showers are all individual stalls with privacy curtains.
2. Girls and boys have seperate shower locations at the camp.
3. Supervisory staff is stationed outside of each shower house during all scheduled shower hours. *Campers are only allowed into the shower area when a shower stall is available.*
4. Campers are assigned shower houses based on age.
   - Younger campers (ages 7-11) are assigned to their respective lower division shower house.
   - Older Campers (ages 12-16) are assigned to the upper division shower house.
5. A simple procedure for privacy is to hang the drying towel on the hooks outside the shower stall. After the camper showers, they can easily grab their towel, dry off in the stall and then head back to their cabin to change. *(If the camper prefers, they are welcome to bring a change of clothes to hang on the hook outside the shower stall and change in their stall after showering.)*

Head Lice



We perform a lice inspection on all the campers when they arrive (as part of their "health hut visit") and we also make sure to sanitize all of the cabins between sessions. However, last summer, head lice returned as a challenge for us. Four campers arrived on opening day of their session with head lice and although they were quickly detected on our initial screening, an enormous amount of Skylake staff time was required to control the situation. Thankfully we had zero spread to other campers, but it did give us some anxiety.

We really need an extra effort on your part before sending your child to camp. **Please start thorough scalp inspections starting one week before your camp session begins.** Prescription shampoo is the best for this situation and is **always best handled before a camper arrives**. We reserve the right to send children home if we discover head lice.

Laundry

All campers should have a closeable laundry bag that is clearly identifiable with the campers full name. All clothes should have either nametags or names written on each piece of clothing.

Every week, the camper's laundry is collected and taken to a commercial laundry in Oakhurst with a **24 hour turnaround time**. The girls' laundry goes out on Wednesdays and the boys' laundry goes out on Thursdays. Each individual campers laundry is washed and dried in its own machine. However, all of an individual's laundry is washed together. Lights and darks are **NOT** separated. It is not recommended to send fancy clothes to camp - there is little or no chance they will return in the same condition as they arrived.

Occasionally a laundry bag is misplaced and never found. If that happens to your camper, Skylake will reimburse to a maximum of $200 for lost clothes.

Camp Visits

There are no scheduled times for camp visits for campers that are only at Skylake for two weeks. It may seem very long to you as a parent, but to the campers they are just getting into the flow of camp at the one week point, and visits are not helpful. Visiting days in camp are also very disruptive to the camp program. Campers attending Skylake for only two weeks have only one weekend in camp. That weekend is very busy with a "special event" day, an evening camp party, and a really nice reflective day on Sunday. There just is not adequate time in a two week schedule for parents visiting the campers.

Campers that are attending Skylake for four weeks may have parents visit on the Saturday of our session breaks. *(CILT I's are out of camp on their backpack trip during session breaks and therefore not available for visits.)* The gates normally open on each closing day at 9:30 a.m. and this is when visiting parents may arrive. If a parent does choose to take their child out of camp on this visiting opportunity there are a few procedures we ask you to follow:

1. Please come to the office prior to leaving camp and officially sign your child out of camp.
2. Campers are only permitted to leave with their own parents. There are no exceptions to this policy.
3. Campers are required to return to camp no later than 5 p.m.
4. We also ask in consideration of the other campers that do not have family members visiting that campers and parents do not return to camp with treats for special friends. It is unfair to the other children who are remaining in camp without visitors. What this means is *"please do not go to Millers and pick up milk shakes for the chosen few."*
5. ***Please remember that on July 4th visits cannot be accommodated this year.***

Mail TO Campers

Campers very much look forward to letters from home.

Mail should be addressed to:

Campers' First and Last Name
Skylake Yosemite Camp
37976 Road 222, #25
Wishon, CA 93669

Campers love to receive mail from home. Letters are more fun than e-mails. All parents should really try to send regular letters or cards from home. This is particularly important the first couple of days. Mailing a letter on Saturday before the campers head for camp is a really good start.

Mail FROM Campers

"RULES OF THUMB"

1. ***The unhappy camper writes home three times a day.***
2. ***The happy camper never writes home.***

Writing a letter is like homework to some of the campers, they really just don't like to do it. Skylake does require all campers to write a postcard home on the Thursday of their first week in camp.

If you want your children to write, make it really simple for them by sending prepared envelopes that are already stamped and addressed home. Please also make sure your child knows that the office will happily provide paper, envelopes and stamps free of charge.

E-Mails to Campers

We offer a **one-way** email system where Parents may send emails to their campers. The email system is accessed through your online **"Camp in Touch"** account.

We prefer parents view email as a quick way to correspond on important time sensitive matters (such as transportation plans). We encourage handwritten letters for the more warm and fuzzy stuff. Our daily cut off on email is 11 a.m. All email received **after** that time is delivered the following day. Emails received on the day a camper is scheduled to go home will not be delivered in time for their departure. Please plan accordingly.

A significant element of the camp experience is developing independence for both the parent and the child. ***Please give consideration to how much news from home is too much news.*** Skylake provides the ability to send 5 emails per week. You don't need to send that many, but the option is there.

In those situations where the children live in separate households or the campers have relatives desirous of sending an email, they can be sent directly to either ***registration@skylake.com*** or ***jeff@skylake.com*** and they will be delivered with all of the other emails. ***Please be sure to place the camper's name the subject of these emails.***

Phone Call Policy

Parents may always call camp if they have a concern and your child's counselor or the head counselor will return your call. The normal time to return phone calls is after dinner at approximately 6:45 to 7:00. It is very difficult for the cabin counselors to make or receive phone calls during the day.

Campers as a general rule are not permitted to talk over the telephone. Years of history has proved that the "no phone call policy" reduces homesickness. This is a policy, it is not a rule carved in stone. There are limited situations where a phone call will be determined to be useful and it will be arranged. However, with history as our guide, a phone call with a camper who is having homesickness issues is usually the quickest ticket home.

The Head Counselors are normally available during the day. The Skylake office is open six days a week from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m.

**On Sundays the office phones are not covered, however the phones are regularly screened for messages and any real emergencies will be responded to.*

Care Packages

The sending of fun care packages to kids at camp is an old tradition. It is a tradition we very much would like to retain. Many camps have eliminated the practice entirely, and every other camp *(to our knowledge)* that still allows packages, prohibits all food and candy. We find that sad. The joy of a package from home is unbelievable. However, the abuse of the practice mandates that certain rules be implemented. Your help and understanding in this matter is most appreciated.

Here are the simple rules:

1. Campers may receive only **ONE package per week** during their stay at camp.
2. The package can be **NO LARGER** than a normal sized shoebox or the standard medium sized "Flat Rate USPS box."
3. Siblings should receive their own individual packages.
4. Packages that exceed the size requirement or the single package per week requirement ***will sadly be returned to sender.*** Please communicate this policy to grandparents and other relatives. ***We do not enjoy returning packages of love.***
5. Emergency packages for clothes or other essentials items can be arranged by calling the office.

6. Please be conservative in your food choices, and **DO NOT** send any peanut products.

Daily Newsletters

The camp directors write a daily newsletter designed to give you a feel of what is happening in camp that day. Included in the daily articles will be mention of the trips taking place, special day activities, prominent awards, weather, menus and other special events.

Everyone is advised to become familiar with our **"Parents Log-in"** procedure so you will be able to access the daily photos and newsletters.

The Parents Log-in is located under the "Parents" link on the www.Skylake.com website.

On-Line Posting of Camper Photographs

In recent years the posting of camper photographs online has become very popular. We post between 50 to 150 photos everyday. We attempt to get a wide cross section of the campers and activities, but cannot guarantee every camper's smiling face will appear in the daily photos. Some children run to the camera, while others shy away. After day six or seven, if you do not see your child in any photos, please give us a call and every effort will be made to get their smiling face posted.

Please remember that some days we have no photographer available and on those occasions there will be no new photos posted. However, all photos that do get posted will remain available for the entire summer. You should be able to download photos daily. If you are desirous of purchasing photos from our service provider, the system will allow additional credits to be purchased after the summer sessions have concluded.

The posting of daily photographs is one of the more challenging issues to balance while trying to allow a child space to grow and still provide parents a sense of comfort by seeing their child in a safe and happy environment. Therefore we make every effort to take the daily photos in an inconspicuous manner. Normally, the photographs are taken in a rapid succesion with little or no posing. We feel the less intrusion into the daily routine the better. Although you certainly would love to see many daily photographs of your camper, that would be very interupptive of the daily routine. Please bear with us as we attempt to maneuver through this delicate balance. This is a core value issue with the camp.

Health Program

Skylake has a Health Hut that is staffed 24 hours a day. The camp nurse handles medication distribution, treats all minor cuts and scratches, and makes referrals to the local Doctor when it is deemed advisable.

All campers are required to have a current Physician's Report stating them to be in good health and free from a communicable disease. Upon arrival and at least once thereafter your camper will be checked by our camp nurse.

Whenever a camper is taken to the Doctor's office in Oakhurst, *or spends the night in the infirmary*, you will be notified. In the event of any visit that requires follow up or clearly is more than an incidental visit you will be immediately called for consultation.

Health History Form

This is the most important piece of information we obtain from parents and guardians. The information in this form alerts us to everything from allergies to current medical conditions to emergency contacts and health insurance details. This is an online form, found in your Parent Account, under Forms & Documents. It should only take 10 minutes to complete. You can complete this form at your leisure and hit "Save For Later" if you don't have the time to fill out in its entirety. At the end of the Health History, it's important to electronically sign the form and hit "Submit Health Form". *You can still go back and make changes, even after "submitting" the form.* This form provides our Nurse and your camper's counselor with vital information about your child. The Medical Health History also serves as our Medical Authorization to treat your child.

Medical Authorization to Treat

Part of the online Health History form, and is very important to complete. Any necessary medical care for your camper could be delayed because of the need to contact you first. This form will be available under the **"Parent"** link on **skylake.com** on **March 15th.** Please be sure to sign and date this form. Parents of returning campers are requested to read and update the form as well.

Medications

All medications brought to camp must be in their original containers and must be turned in to the infirmary during the initial health check. Campers are not permitted to retain any medications, including over the counter medications, in their cabins. The only exceptions are inhalers and EpiPens.

Health & Accident Insurance

Skylake carries liability insurance but does not carry day to day health insurance for the campers. Campers' individual insurance will be used for all illnesses or injuries that require treatment by a Doctor. Any required co-pays or costs of medications will be advanced by Skylake and then billed to the campers' trading post account.

Homesickness & Separation Anxiety

First time separation anxiety is a real issue, not only for the camper but also for parents. We understand this and treat it very seriously. The most important thing to recognize is that it is totally normal, that it is an important element in maturity and learning to live apart from parents, and that a camp environment is about the best place on earth to experience this growth experience.

A camp environment is a special place where love and support is everywhere. Camp provides the same type of love and support that a family does, but this time, without a parent present. It is this absence of a parent that gives a child the understanding that they are an Individual, capable of solving and dealing with issues without always needing a parent present. There is no greater skill we can assist a child in identifying within themselves than this realization of self power.

There are a number of tried and true concepts in dealing with homesickness, both before your child comes to camp and once they are here.

1. Do not be afraid of the topic. It should be openly discussed.
2. Communicate with the child that the fear and anxiety is perfectly normal.
3. Communicate that there will be other children at camp with the same type of concerns.
4. Make sure the child knows that the camp staff have dealt with this type of issue and are trained to assist the child through any difficulties they may experience.
5. Jeff and Adrienne are available to speak with your child before they come to camp so they know there Is someone at camp that knows them and is ready to personally greet them when they arrive.
6. Please **DO NOT** make a deal with your child that "if you don't like it, I will come get you." The first time a child is unhappy, they may hold you to that promise, and you will be left without any options. You can promise that if there are any problems you will be working with the Directors and the counselors to make sure the child is happy.
7. You should discuss the topic long enough that your child becomes comfortable with the concept and is ready for the challenge.
8. If you cannot get your child comfortable with the concept of being away from home, your child may not be ready for camp yet.

Skylake is a home to 210 campers each session. Each session, approximately 25-40 of the campers are experiencing sleep away camp for the first time. In the first few days of a session it is very common to deal with three to as many as ten campers that are experiencing some level of homesickness. You should also be aware that homesickness is not limited to "first-time campers."

Skylake employs a number of techniques to assist children over the hump in getting comfortable at camp. Most of the time, the solution is relatively simple; we aim to keep the child busy and engaged. Homesickness is most prevalent during those times in the day when camp slows down and at bedtime.

If it's a case of ongoing homesickness *(and after we've worked with the camper for a few days with not much success)* we may call the parents for assistance in looking for other possible solutions that could be helpful. Parents will of course be contacted immediately if we have significant concerns.

During the course of an entire summer only one or two campers normally go home due to homesickness. We will work very hard to get a child to succeed in this incredible step in life; it is too valuable to give up on too easily. However, we will never keep a child in camp where it is evident they are so unhappy that success appears very unlikely.

Cabin Grouping

One of the main experiences children have at a resident camp is developing friendships outside of their neighborhood, school or religious organization. Attending a residential camp enables children to develop these skills especially if they are separated from close friends. Our cabins have eight bunks. One is for the counselor and one is possibly reserved for a CILT. This leaves only 6 or 7 campers per cabin creating a perfectly sized family type unit and is one of the important elements of Skylake magic.

Considerable time and effort goes into setting up the cabin groups. Our four step process is as follows:

The 1st step will be to work towards making sure that *no new camper is isolated in a cabin of only returning campers*. This is a **critical goal** and is the reason we are unable to promise anything beyond a single cabin request.

The 2nd step is to honor all cabin requests where one camper has selected another camper, and that other camper reciprocates with the same request. (ie: Camper "A" selects camper "B" and camper "B" also has to select camper "A")

The 3rd step is to determine if a camper has made a "DO NOT" request. This type of request will be honored to the best of our ability first and foremost. Because this type of request complicates the assignment process, no further requests can be guaranteed. Sometimes it's necessary to share this information with the other families in the "do not" request, but we will not do so without speaking with you first.

The 4th step is that all additional requests will be reviewed and honored to the best of our ability. *We try to limit too many friends bunked together, so not to dominate a single cabin.*

Cabin Grouping continued

Skylake is divided into villages. Campers who have completed 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades are "Chipmunks" and "Chickadees." Campers who have completed 4th and 5th grades are "Bobcats" and "Warblers." Campers who have completed 6th and 7th grades are "Bears" and "Tanagers." Campers who have completed 8th grade are "Seniors." Campers cannot be assigned outside of their grade appropriate village.

The Camper In Leadership Training (CILT) program accepts four-week campers that have completed 9th grade as a CILT I. If the camper is successful in that program, they are eligible to return the following summer as a CILT II.

We attempt to make everyone happy, but there are many issues to consider. Some age groups may only have two available cabins. Our flexibility in cabin assignments then becomes limited. Although there are issues of parents and children having difficulty not being assigned to a cabin with a particular friend, the exact opposite can occur when too many children from the same city or school are assigned together.

If you have a major concern over cabin assignments, please be sure to send an email to the office that will be filed with your camper's registration. That way, when the cabin assignments are made *(and again when the counselors are reviewing all of the paperwork for campers assigned to their cabin)* everyone wil be alerted to any potential issues.

Allergies & Special Diets

The Skylake kitchen produces almost 1,000 meals a day. It is very difficult to accommodate significant dietary restrictions; however, we will do our best. Skylake can accommodate vegan, vegetarian and gluten free diets so long as the campers are flexible in their choices. Skylake offers gluten free breads, pasta, cereals, and dairy-free milk alternatives.

Peanut allergies have become more of a concern recently. Skylake does serve peanut butter. It is normally served in individual containers. Skylake also serves a dessert, "Choco Taco" that has a peanut topping. Skylake will not knowingly serve any other peanuts or peanut product. We would also ask that parents refrain from sending peanut products in packages sent to campers.

Trading Post

The Trading Post is open to the campers most afternoons immediately after lunch. Candy bars, snacks, limited toiletry items, etc. are available to the campers. Skylake also sells t-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, hats, and other logo items. Campers do not have to purchase any item of clothing. However, they are extremely popular and many campers want to make multiple purchases. Unless camp receives written authorization, the maximum number of apparel purchases is three items. Because Skylake prefers to only sell high quality items, this can get expensive for sweatshirts and sweatpants when campers often want one of each. Please discuss this with your camper as to whether that is acceptable or not. We sell these items for very little over wholesale but they can still be costly.

A $125.00 deposit is included for all campers at the time of registration. We attempt to control the spending of the children, but sometimes that is difficult to monitor. Please advise your camper in advance that what they purchase from the Trading Post is charged to their account. All Trading Post accounts will be balanced soon after your camper departs and the card on file will be debited or credited after you receive a full statement.

Life Jackets

All campers are required to wear life jackets while participating in any boating or water activity that takes place away from the Skylake docks. In addition, those campers in either the Chickadee or Chipmunk villages must wear life jackets at all times except when participating in a swimming instruction activity or special events and competitions.

Restriction on Activities

Many of the activities at Skylake can be physically challenging and many activities *(such as horseback riding)* carry inherent risks. Skylake prides itself on doing everything in the safest manner possible. However, if you or your child are apprehensive about an activity and do not wish to participate, please feel free to indicate that on the parent's confidential form. The website includes a complete listing of our activities for review.

Yosemite Day Trips

Skylake uses 8 and 10 passenger vans to transport campers to Yosemite. On average, we send vans to the Valley two or three days a week (normally two vans at a time). All campers going to Yosemite will eat breakfast and then return to their cabins to get water bottles and comfortable walking shoes. There are a number of different itineraries for these day trips. Some of the trips involve significant hikes, while others are more of a scenic tour. All campers desirous of going to Yosemite are guaranteed an opportunity. Campers should be aware that on any day they are scheduled to go to Yosemite, they must in fact go or risk not having an additional opportunity.

Length of the Lake Eligibility

One of Skylakes oldest traditions **and** a major camper accomplishment, is the "length of the lake" swim event. Sadly, it is not possible to accommodate every camper that wants to participate. Only 10 swimmers at a time can be safely accompanied on each of the two events. These two events occur the last week of Sessions B and D.

1. **First priority** is given to our 4 week campers with the most years at Skylake. Next priority goes to our 2 week campers with the most years at Skylake.
2. Campers who have successfully completed the event in years' past are **not eligible** *unless* there are available openings.
3. **Chipmunks and Chickadees** are **not eligible** for this event.

Senior & CILT Trips to Millers Landing

If your camper is in the Senior or CILT village, they will be able to go to "Miller's General Store" on a weekly basis. Campers normally access Millers by canoe, and should not bring anymore than $15 for each possible visit. The most popular purchase tends to be a burger and milk shake. ***Campers must consume all purchases prior to returning to camp and are not permitted to make purchases for other campers.***

CILT II Program

The popularity of the CILT II program required us to make a ***significant adjustment in the program structure*** in 2018. We determined that if the program was going to succeed and also make it available to as many campers as we could, the program length needed to be reduced from 4 weeks to 2 weeks. The number of campers that were enrolling was preventing us from pairing up a CILT II with a young camper cabin, and the training opportunities were being lost.

Faced with the decision of either telling some campers there was no space, or reducing the program to 2 weeks, we chose the shorter program. This allows all of the eligible campers desirous of returning, the opportunity to return, ***but*** for a shorter period of time. If after the initial enrollment period ends, and it's determined we have space available, some campers may be offered the option of an additional 2 weeks. The structure will be evaluated each year based on the number of applicants.

The program will be further enhanced by treating all CILT II's under the same policies and expectations that the staff is required to adhere to. This includes prohibition of tattoos, no body piercings, maintaining proper dress code requirements and passing a drug & alcohol test.

Daily Schedule

7:30 am . . . Reveille
7:45 am . . . Morning Flag
(Sign ups, Announcements & Roll Call)
8:00 am . . . Breakfast & Cabin Clean Up
9:00 am . . . First Activity
10:00 am . . . Second Activity Period
11:00 am . . . Third Activity Period
12:15 pm . . . Lunch
1:15 pm . . . Siesta *(in, on, or around your bunk)*
2:30 pm . . . Cabin Group Activity ***on Major Days***
Swim Call/Land Activities ***on Minor Days***
4:30 pm . . . Shower Hour & Shasta Call
5:45 pm . . . Flag Retreat
6:00 pm . . . Dinner & Songs
7:00 pm . . . Twilight Sports
8:00 pm . . . Campfire
9:15 pm . . . Taps & *CILT Activities*

Daily Schedule Continued

Skylake uses a very unique system for the camper's morning activities. Campers sign up for morning activities one week at a time, for those activities that occur on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. At the end of the first week, the campers select new activities for the following week, again for Monday, Wednesday and Friday. These days at Skylake are what are referred to as **"Major Days."**

"Minor Days" at Skylake are Tuesdays and Thursdays. The three morning activity periods on these two days, every week are open enrollments. The campers can go to any activity they desire. It is a day in camp that counselors create many new activities that are not normally part of the daily routine. Activities such as modern dance, yoga, Bob Dylan day on Guitar, Cargo Net, entire morning canoe trips to distant shores, and an endless list that is constantly changing are offered on Minor Days. The morning flag announcements are when the campers discover what will be new and different for that day. Most of the normal "major day" activities are also available on "minor days."

Attendance at all activities is mandatory.

Campers are not permitted to be in their cabins during morning activities.

Skylake Code of Conduct

Summer camps should be idyllic, both emotionally and physically. This is the goal at Skylake. In large groups such as camp, there are behavioral norms that need to be followed. Young people are growing, experimenting, trying on different types of behavior to find out who they are. Skylake encourages that. However, behavior that interferes with the rights of others to enjoy camp goes across the personal line of freedom. In such situations, our code of conduct becomes very important.

The basic Skylake Code of Conduct outlines that it is every camper's responsibility to show respect for the other campers, the staff, camper and staff property, and the history and traditions of Skylake. A camper that is having difficulty with these words will be spoken to and if the situation requires, we will call home. Skylake does not tolerate any form of abusive or inappropriate behavior.

Intolerance by words or actions relating to religion, national identity, race, sexual preference or gender identity against any individual, camper, or staff member may result in a camper being sent home.

A continued point of emphasis will be to reduce the amount of abusive and profane language that seems to becoming more prevalent. This will be a significant topic during staff training this year and staff will be instructed on how to deal with campers that do not understand the "negative" power of words. All parents are requested to discuss this topic with their child.

Dress Code

We like to maintain a low-key approach to dress code issues. Camp is pretty casual, and therefore there is a certain laxness to what the campers are wearing. However, our teens and tweens sometimes push the limit of acceptability. Our standards are applied equally to both boys and girls. The most common concern with boys is wearing their swimsuit too low. The biggest concern with the girls is wearing small string bikinis or clothing that is too tight or doesn't provide enough coverage.

Drugs, Alcohol & Other Prohibited Items

In both 2018 and 2019, campers were sent home for violating Skylake policies regarding drugs and/or related conduct. The violation was marijuana smoking in 2018 and vaping in 2019. In both instances the campers were sent home and the impact on others in camp was significant. During the campers first night in camp the rules are discussed and campers are given the opportunity to rid themselves of anything that is inappropriate without consequences. After that, any discovery means an immediate trip home.

Campers are also reminded that pets, weapons of any sort, and private vehicles are not permitted at camp.

Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

Skylake believes campers should be 100% free of cell phones and electronic devices that access the internet. Camp starts from the moment the camper gets on the bus. We ask that your child leave these items at home and not bring these items with them. We will mail home any phone or device that makes its way to camp.

Special arrangements can be made for campers that will be **traveling by air** and may need their cell phone. Please call the office to make such arrangements.

Campers will need to bring an alarm clock, music playing device and/or camera. A cell phone is not permitted for any of those purposes in camp.

Cancellation

If you need to cancel, please inform us as soon as possible. This helps meet the needs of campers on the wait list and save you in cancellation fees.

Prior to January 1st - $100 cancellation fee
January 1st to March 15th - $250 cancellation fee
After March 15th: 20% of tuition cancellation fee
After June 1st: NO refunds

Cancellations for documented camper injury or illness (after deadline dates above) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Historically we have never charged a cancellation fee of a camper who is cutting back from a four-week session to two weeks. We have the same "informal" policy when a child cancels *but a sibling is still attending*. We would like to always continue with these policies. Your help in deciding as early as you can and informing us would be very much appreciated.

Payment of Tuition

At the time of enrollment, you selected to pay either by installments or with a single payment. Those families that selected "Installment" will have the credit card on file billed on January 15th, March 1st, and April 15th. Those families that chose to pay with a single payment will have their cards billed on April 1st.

Gratuities

There is a **NO gratuity policy at Skylake**. Staff is not expecting one and your assistance in not offering one would be appreciated. A kind letter directly to a staff member or the staff as a whole *(after your camper has returned home)* is always appreciated. This also helps us in evaluating a counselor's performance for potential rehiring.

Contact between Campers & Staff After Camp

The bond that develops between campers and staff presents some difficult questions for what happens after camp is over. ***What (if any) contact should be allowed?***

Skylake has a **"NO CONTACT RULE."** Without the counselor receiving **prior approval** from you as the parent, there should be no phone calls, letters, text messages or emails sent or received. Staff members are aware they must contact parents before communicating with a camper.

In regards to **Facebook and any other social media, there is ABSOLUTELY no contact allowed and is strictly prohibited**. The staff is instructed to NOT send or accept any "friend requests" from any campers on their social media accounts. This is a strict Skylake rule and is not subject to parent approval. We ask your cooperation in supporting this. Skylake will not rehire any staff member that violates this rule.

Emergency Procedures

Our world continues to get more complicated. The likelihood of anything cataclysmic occurring while your child is at camp is minimal, but rest assured we are ready for any potential situation.

The most critical element is communication. For our day-to-day communications, we actively use our on-line newsletter and this will also be our primary source for communicating any emergency information.

We also have a an ***instant phone call alert system.*** In event of an emergency, Skylake will record a message and immediately send to ***all contact phone numbers provided*** any vital information that needs to be communicated.

We also have the ability to send an instant text message alerts. ***However, this is not automatically implemented, the system requires parents to sign up for the service.*** **Text the word "Skylake" to 292929.** You will then be officially signed up to receive text alerts from Skylake**.**

FIRES & SMOKE

In recent years. the National Forests have experienced a number of fires along with excess smoke. Our location on Bass Lake gives us a measure of protection from fire due to the lake forming a significant barrier to our west. In addition, because we are in a designated recreational area, there are regular preventative controlled burns and significant tree thinning efforts. In the event we are required to evacuate, we have a multi-phase plan that covers multiple scenarios with full communication with the parents. We are confident we would be able to safely and calmly return all campers to their homes.

In 2018 we experienced a unique condition in camp of high smoke levels due to nearby fires. We believe this was due to a unique set of circumstances. It is not likely that we will experience that situation again. However, we have purchased air conditioning units for the dining room so we will have a comfortable place to spend more time if we were to encounter such a situation again. Because smoke conditions change so rapidly, we do not envision closing due to smoke in the area unless ordered to do so by a government agency.

Early Bird Procedure 2021

Important Dates to Remember

- ***Enrollment for returning campers begins on September 1, 2020.***
- ***Priority Enrollment ends on October 31, 2020.***
- ***Enrolling during the priority period guarantees a camper the same session as the camper attends in 2020. We cannot accommodate session changes or additional sessions until after October 31st.*** *(You may make the requests when applying but will be put on a wait list until the end of the priority enrollment period.)*
- ***PLEASE MAKE NOTE - the girl's side of camp is always almost 100% sold out by the end of the priority enrollment period. For girls, you cannot allow the October 31st date to pass without getting enrolled or you risk not having space available.***

Camp Administration

JEFFREY PORTNOY, Owner/Co-Director is in residence at camp at all times. He can be reached either by email ***Jeff@Skylake.com*** or (559) 642-3720. *Do not hesitate to call him with any camp concerns.*

ADRIENNE PORTNOY DURGIN, **Co-Director** is available at all times to receive your questions or inquires. She can be reached at: ***Adrienne@Skylake.com*** or (559) 642-3720

JESSICA PORTNOY SONKA, Administrative Director
Billing, buses or administrative issues should be directed to Jessica. She can be reached at: ***Jessica@Skylake.com*** or (559) 642-3720.

PAUL LASPADA, P.M. Director ***Paul@Skylake.com***

Skylake Yosemite Camp operates pursuant to a Special Use Permit from The USFS. In the spirit of all laws, Skylake proudly does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, national origin, gender or gender identity or on any other basis that fails to properly respect all people.

Skylake Yosemite Camp

since 1945

CORE VALUES

Skylake is an inclusive community that welcomes and accepts campers and staff from all cultures, genders, races and religions. Hatred, bigotry, misogyny or any other form of prejudice of any kind will never be tolerated.

Everyday, Skylake strives for campers and staff to benefit and grow from this inclusive community by sharing an outdoor living experience together. The activity structure, cabin structure, meal structure and small group focus at Skylake is all geared towards the development of mental, social, emotional and physical health of every staff member and camper. Skylake is motivated by the goal that every individual shall leave here stronger and more confident.

Skylake is fortunate to be located in the Sierra National Forest adjacent to Bass Lake. While at camp, every opportunity will be taken to make staff and campers aware of the natural beauty of the outdoor environment and foster an everlasting appreciation of nature. From their experiences at Skylake, campers and staff should develop a desire to protect our natural environment.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity, privilege and joy of caring for your children at Skylake. Please do not hesitate to contact us during the summer.

Jeff, Adrienne, Jessica and Paul

Celebrating our 76th Summer!

Skylake Yosemite Camp

since 1945

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