

St Seraphim Orthodox Youth Camp

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR PARENTS

Personal effects

Each item of personal gear **MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED** with the child's name, and should be packed in a case or rucksack which should also be clearly marked.

Experience has shown that **ALL** the essential items listed above are needed. The camp will provide any essential items which are found to be missing (such as sunhats) and the cost of this will be borne by the parents

Pocket money

There will be some opportunity to spend money during camp, such as buying ice-creams, stamps, postcards etc. However, children should not be sent with large amounts of money (£10–£15 should be ample). Please note that the camp can accept no responsibility for money and valuables.

Prohibited items

Children are strongly discouraged from bringing ipods/mp3 players and other electronic devices. Those who do will have to abide by the rules regarding their use and are reminded that the camp's insurance does not cover breakages of personal effects. Smoking and consumption of alcohol are strictly prohibited.

Please do not allow your children to bring sweets or snacks with them, and please refrain from sending any in the post.

Medicines

All prescribed medicines together with their dosage and other details must be entered on the medical questionnaire. The medicines **MUST** be handed in to the camp nurse who will administer them as prescribed. The camp is well stocked with over-the-counter analgesics (such as Calpol), antihistamine, diarrhea and other similar preparations, so please do not send your child with his/her own complete medicine cabinet! Even if you are sure that these would be used responsibly by your own child, the same can't be guaranteed of his/her tent mates. If your child uses a particular non-prescribed medicine occasionally, please record this (and the occasion it is needed) on the medical questionnaire. The medicine must be handed in along with all the other prescribed drugs and will be administered if/when the need arises.



Please don't worry that the medicine might be refused for a 'trivial' ailment, such as a slight headache or period pain (as sometimes happens in schools) and be tempted to furnish your child with his/her own supply.

We will always let your child take his/her normal over-the-counter preparation if there is a signed record of it on the medical questionnaire. If the nurse has any concerns, she will make contact with you to clarify.

There is a dispensing chemist nearby, as well as GP surgery and a dental practice, all of which the camp can use.

Mobile phones and contact with home

As stated elsewhere, we do not allow the children to possess or use mobile phones for the duration of the camp. The children are asked to hand in their mobiles at the beginning of camp for safe-keeping until camp is over. There are many reasons for this, not least the fact that charging a number of mobile phones puts a considerable strain on our limited electrical supply. All the camp staff have mobile phones so your child will always be able to phone you, **BUT ONLY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**. We strongly discourage parents from phoning the staff mobiles unless, of course, there is a genuine emergency or an urgent message to be passed. In recent years a lot of time was taken up in talking to parents on the telephone over quite trivial matters. On the other hand, all children are encouraged to write home at least once and it is a source of great disappointment to them if they do not receive any letters from home. This sort of contact, although less instant, is far more preferable. By the same token, we discourage visits from home, (except for a special occasion such as a child's birthday during camp) as it is impossible to accommodate everyone's family and many children, particularly the younger ones, are likely to be very upset when *they* are not being visited. The camp is of a limited duration, and past experience has shown that visits from home can destabilize the whole camp community.

Homesickness

Homesickness, where this occurs, is frequently exacerbated by regular telephone conversations with parents at home. This is particularly true when these telephone conversations take place in the evening, a time when home can be missed most acutely. Please, allow us to take the lead in contacting you in the event of severe homesickness, as we will undoubtedly do. We would ask you **NOT** to telephone/text your child — especially as bedtime approaches — and ask him/her whether they are missing home too much. Time and time again we have seen happy, settled campers instantly develop a number of distressing ailments and generally dissolve into a flood of unwarranted misery as a result of such conversations. We will **always** contact you if we feel that your child is not settling, is unwell or consistently unhappy, but as the camp is only 12 days in duration, we really feel it in your children's best interest to get on with enjoying all that camp has to offer and not make soul-searching telephone calls home. Your child will tell you that time in camp goes very quickly.

Discipline

St Seraphim Orthodox Youth Camp is a church organisation and certain standards of behaviour are expected. All campers are assumed to be practising Orthodox Christians, and attendance of morning and evening prayers, weekly services, lessons, discussions etc is non-negotiable. In addition, sanctions (such as missed treats or extra chores) will be imposed in cases of **persistent** rudeness — particularly swearing— disobedience, violent or reckless treatment of people and property or bullying. It goes without saying that possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs is absolutely forbidden, and the camp will adopt a policy of 'zero tolerance' in dealing with this matter. Likewise, campers — even those over 16 years of age — may not smoke while they are in camp. Any camper found to be flouting this rule after the initial warning is unlikely to be permitted to remain in camp. In rare circumstances, the camp administration reserves the right to ask a disruptive or recidivist camper to leave the camp. In this case, we would telephone you to make the necessary arrangements.

Having said all this, we run the camp as a Christian community where everyone, irrespective of their age or background, is treated equally and every member's contribution is valued. We do not operate complicated hierarchies or have regulations for their own sake. Most rules are motivated by considerations of safety and well-being of everyone on site.



Please, be frank about any behavioral issues your child might have. This will not stigmatize him/her in the eyes of the leaders, but will enable us to make better provision for his/her needs. Concealing such information will only disadvantage your child; the issues are most likely to surface anyway, but without prior warning, we might not recognize them for what they are and respond appropriately.

Above all, our aim is to ensure that your children have a safe and enjoyable camp experience, but one which will also nurture their faith and integrate them more fully into the life of the Church. We expect and depend on your cooperation in achieving this.