

The Camper's Guide to Pok-O



Introduction

Welcome to the 123rd summer at Pok-O! This guide is designed to introduce you to camp, answer some questions that might be on your mind, and give you an idea of what to expect after you arrive. If you are a returning camper, a lot of this information will be familiar to you, but please still take a few moments to review this guide before your arrival!

Before jumping into the specifics, you may be asking...

Why spend your summer at Pok-O? What's it all about?

You can read camp's mission statement below, but at its best, camp is a place where you can experience the outdoors and try new things: whether it be hiking a high peak, learning to sail, swinging a blacksmith's hammer, making a bowl on a pottery wheel, or jumping off a high dive for the first time.



Pok-O-MacCready Mission

Grounded in a century of tradition, Pok-O-MacCready fosters personal growth by empowering campers to achieve independence, create lifelong friendships, and develop a deep appreciation of the natural world, in the Adirondacks and beyond.



It's also a place where you meet new people and learn how to live with others, how to be part of a larger community, and how to develop deep and lasting friendships.

Camp may be a special place, but not every day will be perfect. You will have things you like and things you don't. Moments of joy and moments of frustration. Part of camp is learning how to adapt and being a part of a community that will share these moments with you.

How do you get the most out of this summer?

Lean in, try new things, ask for help when you need it, and...embrace the fun!



Pok-O Community Values

Pok-O's community values define what we mean by "Pok-O Spirit." Everyone at camp, whether they are campers or staff, is expected to use these values as a guide for their words and their actions. Keeping these values in mind leads to a positive experience this summer for everyone!

Respect

Pok-O is a **safe and inclusive** camp. We expect everyone to practice respect: towards themselves, others, our camp, and the environment. **This means treating people well**, helping to keep our cabins and the areas we use clean and cared for, and doing our part to care for the environment.

Growth

Camp is a place where trying new things and learning from mistakes is encouraged. **Embrace new challenges** while you are here. You don't have to be perfect...or get something right on the first try.

Altruism

At camp we are a small community that depends on one another. The choices we make each day have an impact on the people around us. **Be kind, help others in need, lend a hand!** Camp is all about creating a positive and supportive place for everyone.

Authenticity

Be honest and accepting. **Allow each person to be themselves** and to fully experience the joy of a community without judgment.

Simplicity

One of the best parts of camp is experiencing life without our phones and computers and other devices. It's about spending time with friends, in nature, having new experiences, and **creating memories that will last a lifetime.**



Expectations and Rules

The rules below are among the most important at camp. Some rules are designed to keep everyone physically safe. Others are about demonstrating altruism and respect. The rules below apply both while on camp property *and* off camp during trips.

Rules to Keep Everyone Safe

- A counselor should know where you are at ALL times. Never leave a class, section, or activity without letting a counselor know.
- Campers cannot enter their cabins without a counselor in section. If you are the first back after classes end, you will need to wait outside until a counselor arrives. This means you cannot go back to your cabin between classes.
- **Campers are never allowed at a waterfront without an adult present.** That includes the swim docks, boat docks, or anywhere along the shoreline.
- Campers may not climb on or under buildings or climb trees.
- Everyone should wear shoes outside of their cabin at ALL times!

Rules that Foster Respect and Altruism

Camp is our home away from home each summer. Everyone has a right to respect and privacy and to feel safe and included at camp.

- Be respectful of others' personal space and their property:
 - Ask before entering someone else's cabin.
 - Do not take, use, or borrow items without permission.
 - Give campers privacy when they are changing or in the bathroom or shower.
 - Never touch another person without their permission.
- Be mindful of your language and speak respectfully to others. Profanity and derogatory language are NOT permitted.
- Respect camp property. Never write on a cabin wall without permission from your counselor. NO ONE should ever write on *any* other surface, including your bunk bed.
- Don't litter. This includes throwing fruit peels on the path. If you see litter around camp, even if it's not yours, pitch in, pick it up and throw it away!

The First Days of Camp

Your first days at Pok-O will include an orientation and a tour of camp. During orientation, you will learn camp rules and expectations; where cabins, the dining hall, and activity areas are located; emergency procedures like fire drills and what to do if there is a thunderstorm; as well as who to talk to if you are feeling sick or need help with something. While every camper will learn the ropes over the first few days of camp, there are a few things that are helpful to know (or remember) before you arrive.

Camp Map

The map below is a great introduction to our campus. If you are ever unsure about where something is located, just ask another camper or one of your counselors for help. You can explore an interactive version of this map at: www.pokomac.com/explore-summer-camp/



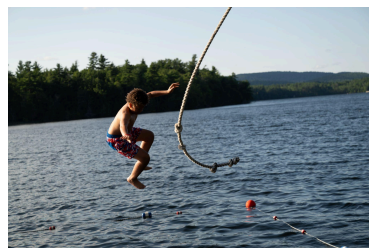
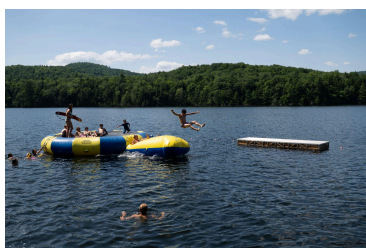
Orientation Days

The first few days of camp you can expect to spend time getting to know your counselor and section head and the campers in your section, as well as how to get around camp and who to talk to if you need something.

DAY ONE: When you arrive, you will have a lice check with the camp nurse and then will head to your cabin to unpack and meet other campers. Once you are settled, you can join counselors for games or activities in section. After everyone has arrived, you will learn the most important camp rules and where things are located.

DAY TWO: This day is all about getting ready for camp fun. You will learn about classes at our Activity Fair and sign up for your favorites, take a swim test, and do a health check with our nurse. If you are going to take horseback riding, you will complete a riding test as well.

Over the rest of the first week, you can expect to jump into all things camp: big games and events, section activities, classes, hikes, swimming, and boating. Keep in mind, at camp you don't HAVE to jump in right away. It can feel like "everyone" is doing something, but at any given moment, there are actually a lot of people just watching the fun and that's okay too.



About Swim Tests and the Waterfront

At Pok-O, we love spending time on Long Pond. We have sailing, paddleboards, canoes, kayaks, a high dive, a rope swing, a water trampoline and lots of other fun activities on the water. To use these areas safely, we have to test every camper's swimming ability and teach everyone the rules, including how to use the buddy system and how to sign in and out during swimming and boating.

Don't stress about your swim test. You will be asked to swim laps if you are able. If you are still working on your endurance or are just learning, we have swim classes and will help you build skills so you can be comfortable and safe in the water. You will need to pass the swim test in order to take sailing or boating classes. If you don't pass on the first try, don't worry! You will get additional chances to re-test during the summer.



A Note about Your Counselors

Your counselors may act silly and wild during activities and events, but their job is to help campers feel safe and happy. They can help you understand camp, interact with new people, get things you need, find your stuff, help you when you feel great...and when you might be having a bad day.

A Note about Your Cabinmates

At camp, you might share a cabin with up to eight other campers. Meeting so many new people and making friends is one of the best parts of camp.

That said, it's pretty normal to feel frustrated with each other at some point over the summer. If you are feeling this way, talk to your counselor or section head. They can help you figure out how to work through it and move forward.



If You Need Something

If you forget to bring something essential to camp, don't worry! Tell a counselor and they will help you get what you need. We also have two stores at camp: Trading Post and JeanMart.

At Trading Post, you can get essential items such as stamps, shampoo, a toothbrush, a flashlight, or a laundry bag. At JeanMart, you can purchase camp apparel and other Pok-O themed items including t-shirts, sweatshirts, blankets, and water bottles. JeanMart is open on Visiting Day and a few other times during each camp session. Your section head will let you know when it is open.

You do NOT need money to purchase items from these stores. Instead, your parents will set a limit on how much you can spend. This is called your Blue Boar account and you will use it to purchase items if needed.

The Daily Schedule

The daily schedule can change a bit based on whether there is a special event planned or if it is a weekend, but the schedule below is typical for most days. You can also see a program schedule that outlines activities planned for the whole summer (a copy of the program schedule is included in the same mailing as this guide).

DAILY SCHEDULE		
TIME	Upper Camp: Camp MacCready	Lower Camp: Camp Pok-O-Moonshine
7:00 AM	Wake Up	
7:15 AM	Horsemasters / Polar Bear Dip	
7:30 AM	Inspection/Health Hours	Breakfast
8:30 AM	Breakfast	Inspection/Health Hours
9:20 AM	Period 1 Classes	Period 1 Classes
10:40 AM	Period 2 Classes	Period 2 Classes
12:00 PM	Period 3 Classes	Lunch
1:20 PM	Lunch	Rest Hour (12:50 - 2 PM)
2:10 PM	Rest Hour	Period 4 Classes
3:30 PM	Period 5 Classes	Period 5 Classes
4:50 PM	Free Swim/Health Hours	Dinner
5:45 PM	Dinner	Free Swim/Health Hours
6:30 PM	Evening Horsemasters	Section Activity or All-Camp Event
7:15 PM	Section Activity or All-Camp Event	
Evening	Nights Meds / Evening Snack	
	Lights Out Lodge / Pioneer: 8:45 PM Intermediate: 9:00 PM Senior / Highlander: 9:30 - 9:45 PM CIT/ADV: 10 PM	

Privacy and Time to Yourself

Camp is busy and has a ton of “on-the-go” activities, but everyone needs some time to themselves to rest or reset. We have a Rest Hour every day. You can also choose to spend quiet time in section during Free Swim. If you ever feel overwhelmed in an activity or class or in your cabin, or if you need additional privacy, talk to your counselor. There are always places to sit quietly or find privacy and still be supervised.

Meals

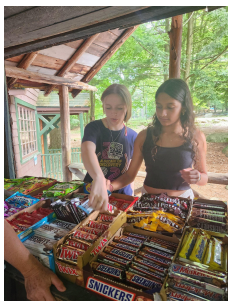
At Pok-O, we eat three meals a day and have snacks available in the dining hall between meals. We sit at assigned tables with campers of all ages and we all pitch in and take turns serving the meal or clearing the dishes. We also take turns sweeping.

Meals can be pretty busy so we have a few rules to make them enjoyable for everyone:



- Ask your counselor for permission to get up from the table. Only one person should be up from the table at a time.
- Use your manners! Ask for food politely, listen quietly during announcements, and push in your chairs at the end of the meal.
- At Pok-O, we eat “family-style.” Pass food around the table so everyone gets a serving before you go back for more.
- If you take the last of something, refill it in the kitchen.
- Make an effort to limit food waste and take only what you can eat. You can always come back for seconds if you’re still hungry.

If you have an allergy or a dietary restriction, there will always be a meal option for you that meets these needs. If you’re having trouble finding food you like, there are additional choices available. At breakfast, there is a yogurt and cereal bar. At lunch and dinner, there is a salad and leftovers bar. And...there’s always peanut or sunbutter and jelly.



Candy Store

Candy Store is a favorite event at camp. About once a week, everyone can pick out two items from the store. This happens on a surprise basis and is a cause for riotous joy in the dining hall. One important thing to remember: Just don’t ask about Candy Store or when it will happen!

Wilderness and Off-Camp Trips

At Pok-O, getting out into nature and experiencing the Adirondacks is an important part of the camp experience. We offer trips that are designed for a range of ages and abilities, so even if you have never hiked, camped, or climbed before, there are lots of opportunities to get out into the woods this summer.

During each camp session, we have one All-Camp Trip. You can expect to go on a short hike or boating trip on this day. You might also go on trips with your section such as a hike up one of our four local mountains: Bare, Rattlesnake, Sugarloaf, or Pok-O-Moonshine. If you hike all of them in one summer, you can earn your Pok-O Patch!

For all other trips, the choice of whether to sign up is yours. We offer several different trips each week. Some are designed for beginners and are open to everyone. Others require that you have previous experience.

There are lots of opportunities to build skills so if your goal is to hike a more difficult mountain, let the Wilderness staff know. They can help you pick trips to meet your goals.

Trips are a great way to build skills and experience nature, but they are also excellent opportunities to demonstrate Pok-O values, especially: Respect, Altruism, and Growth. One way we celebrate campers who demonstrate these values is by awarding “trip points.”



Trip points are awarded based on your development of wilderness skills, your care for the environment, and your support for the members of your group. These points are considered for future trip assignments. As a result, campers are assigned to trips not only based on their ability, but also on their positive attitude and participation on previous trips.



So...what do Respect, Altruism, and Growth look like on the trail?

The goal of every trip is to have a safe and positive experience in the woods. Campers earn trip points when they:

- ☐ Ask questions and look for opportunities to both learn and practice wilderness skills. This might mean asking to set the pace on the trail, help prep dinner or set up a tent on an overnight, filter water, read the map, or plan a route.
- ☐ Follow the directions of the trip leader. That means supporting decisions that might include needing to turn around before reaching the planned destination, changing a route, or ending a trip early in the event of unexpected weather or unfavorable conditions on the trail.
- ☐ Keep with the group at all times. That means you don't outpace or run ahead of slower hikers. It also means not separating from the group *for any reason*.
- ☐ Choose to be a positive role model by supporting and encouraging everyone in the group and by sharing responsibilities such as carrying a portion of the group gear or picking up and carrying out trash in your pack.
- ☐ Practice care for the environment by demonstrating the values of "Leave No Trace." We teach "Leave No Trace" on our trips, but you can also learn more about it here: Int.org/.

Counselors in Training

CITs and ADV are our oldest campers, who participate in a program to develop leadership and camp counseling skills. As a CIT or ADV, you can expect to have routine responsibilities such as assisting in sections and in classes, and special event duties such as serving at the banquet or supporting Big Games. Throughout the summer, you will have the opportunity to go on special trips and to develop skills in our wilderness and class programs.

The most important thing you can do this summer, however, is be a positive role model and represent Pok-O Spirit at its best. As a CIT or ADV, you have the opportunity to share your love of camp and make a meaningful difference for younger campers!

Staying Healthy at Camp

Camp is an active place so make sure to eat a variety of foods at every meal and drink lots of water. Staying healthy also means taking a shower and washing your hair and body *with soap* at least every other day and always after a hike. It means changing your clothes daily and sending your dirty clothes, towels, *and the sheets on your bed* out with the wash every laundry day.



We participate in activities rain or shine. On sunny days, be sure to wear sunscreen and a hat. On rainy days, wear a raincoat and change into dry clothing if you get wet. This includes dry socks. If you find you don't have any dry socks or shoes, or you have run out of clean clothes, tell your counselor and they can help you!

If you feel sick, tell your counselor. They can contact the nurse if needed. You can also talk directly to the nurse during health office hours. In addition to feeling sick, you should see the nurse if you find a tick on your body, you have scratches or bug bites that look red or feel hot, you have blisters on your feet, or you have a cough.

If you are bringing medicine to camp, the nurses will store it for you and administer it when you need it. NO medicine can be kept in your cabin...that includes vitamins and over-the-counter medicine you can purchase at a pharmacy or grocery store.

Feeling Homesick

It's completely normal to miss home, even if you are a returning camper. Learning how to be away from home is part of the summer camp experience. If you're feeling homesick, there are several things you can do that help:



- Jump into activities that you were excited to experience at camp.
- Try writing down how you are feeling or writing a letter home.
- Feel your feelings. It's okay to be sad or cry.
- Give it time. It may take a few days, but you will find there are a lot of fun things to experience at camp.
- Talk to your counselor. They can help!

When You Need to Talk to Someone...

Camp is an awesome place to spend the summer, try exciting activities, and meet new people. The adults and the other kids at camp are supposed to be safe. If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable, or if you simply need someone to talk to, you can always go to your counselor, your section head, a nurse, or any other adult at camp you feel comfortable talking to. If you feel like you weren't heard, or didn't get the help you need, talk to another adult. We are here to help and want you to have the BEST SUMMER EVER!

Staying in Touch with Your Family

Your family and friends can send you letters and bunk notes or packages. Mail gets delivered during Rest Hour every day except Sunday. You can, and should, write letters or bunk note replies home as well. Your family wants to hear from you too!

While campers are not allowed to use the phone, your family can call you after the first week of camp. Why do they have to wait a week? It takes several days to adjust to a new environment. Waiting a week helps make this adjustment period easier and allows you to focus on the fun of camp.

Getting Ready for Camp

Packing for Camp

Part of getting ready for camp is packing. If you aren't packing yourself, be sure to participate in the process with your parents. Beyond the items in the Packing List, you won't need to bring a lot to camp, but anything that makes you feel more comfortable can be a nice addition to your bunk.

Some campers like to bring LED lanterns or string lights or handheld fans. Some like to bring a foam or egg-crate style mattress pad or a favorite blanket to make their bed cozier. Some bring photos from home and other small decorative items to post next to their bunk.



A Screen Free Summer

Pok-O is all about spending time with friends and in the outdoors. Leave your screens at home! Instead, bring books, cards, crafts or other handheld games or puzzles for downtime. If you play an instrument, consider bringing it to camp and sharing your talents. You can also borrow books and games from our JOffice library.

Camp Lingo

Living at Camp

Lower Camp/Pok-O-Moonshine: The original camp location on Long Pond since 1905. This is the current location of cabins for male campers. It's also where the swim docks, boat docks, and dining hall are located.

Upper Camp/MacCready: Originally a farmstead, this part of camp became the location of cabins for female campers in 1967. Our athletic fields, tennis courts, hockey rink, and horseback riding program are also located here.

Section: This is the area of camp where your cabin is located and campers your age live. Each section is made up of several cabins and each cabin has its own counselor. Sections are run by a Section Head. This is the head counselor for your section. They are a great person to talk to if you need help with anything!

Inspection: Daily cabin clean-up and section chores.

Horsemasters: This is like inspection, but for horses, and includes feeding, grooming and mucking at the barns. This is mandatory for riders, but all campers are welcome to join.



Getting Around

The Path: A wooded path that connects Upper Camp and Lower Camp. Campers travel the path frequently to go to classes and meals. We also play a lot of camp games on the path and in the woods that surround it. It's a short walk...about 1/10th of a mile.

The Pok-O-Queen: This is the main building at Upper Camp where we hold arts and crafts, conditioning, and other classes as well as camp activities. The main office is located here as well.

The Crux: Our Indoor/Outdoor [Rocking Climbing Center](#).

The Homestead: A historic, educational farm located just down the road from camp. The location for our blacksmith classes.

Pok-O-Patch Mountains: Camp is surrounded by four mountains all under 3000 feet: Bare, Rattlesnake, Sugarloaf, and our namesake, Poke-O-Moonshine Mountain. If you climb all four in one summer, you'll receive the Pok-O-Patch!

Camp Events

Moonshiner: Pok-O's version of a talent show.

Clubs: On most Saturday mornings, we host clubs. These are activities created and led by staff. They are usually off-beat and a bit silly like Ultimate Debate Club, Circus Club, or "Give Every Dog On Camp a Bath" Club.



Big Games: This is a general term for all-camp games. Most games have themes and costumes. Once a camper is placed on a team, that will be their team for all time. Our biggest of the Big Games are Clash of the Titans in the first session and Greek Games in the second. Both involve a series of events played throughout the session.

Vespers: Every Sunday, all of camp dresses up and gathers to quietly reflect upon the week. This is done in the form of readings, poems, stories and music. Staff and campers are invited to sign up to participate.

Dances: Often referred to as "Slide Shows." Loud, joyful and chaotic...no talent for dancing is required.

The Camp Song: This is usually sung at the end of all-camp events like Sunday Funday or a Moonshiner. There's some singing, a bit of shouting, and some jumping about. If you don't know it already, you'll catch on quickly!

Get Psyched...

Thank you for taking time to learn about Pok-O. We hope you are excited for camp... We look forward to seeing you this summer!

If you have questions, you can ask your parents to email them to: summerdirector@pokomac.com. You can also hop onto a new Camper Zoom this spring.

The Camp Song

There's a camp called Pok-O-MacCready...
And it's a camp we all love!
Where the sun is always shining
In the skies above.

(Then everyone shouts "SKIES ABOVE")

There is swimming, fishing, and hiking...
And it is all like a dream.

(Then everyone shouts "LIKE A DREAM")

But the thing...

(Everyone jumps)

We like...

(Everyone jumps again)

The best of all

Is James' i-i-ice cream.

(Then everyone shouts "ICE CREAM")

Written by Eddie Cameron
Former Camper, Counselor and Headmaster