4-H Camp Shankitunk Backpacking Program: Overnight Trip Protocol

Participation Requirements:

**Backpacking I** – Overnight male and female campers in good physical health ages 8 and 9 years old by the time they attend camp who have enrolled in the class with their parent’s knowledge may participate. Campers may not enroll in this class after registration has ended. The class must be capped at a maximum of sixteen (16) campers: eight (8) male and eight (8) female.

**Backpacking II** – Overnight male and female campers in good physical health ages 10 years old and older by the time they attend camp who have enrolled in the class with their parent’s knowledge may participate. Campers may not enroll in this class after registration has ended. The class must be capped at a maximum of twenty-four (24) campers: twelve (12) male and twelve (12) female.

**Backpacking III / Wilderness** – Overnight male and female campers in good physical health ages 13 to 16 years old by the time they attend camp who have enrolled in the class with their parent’s knowledge may participate. Campers may not enroll in this class after registration has ended. This class must be capped at a maximum of ten (10) campers: five (5) male and five (5) female.

Assigning Groups/Buddies:

Prior to the trip, (Monday during class) the trip leader will assign each camper a buddy of the same sex with whom he or she will remain throughout the trip. The buddy system will be activated whenever a potential problem may arise regarding the accountability of a camper. Counselors must carry a buddy roster and tell campers to inform a counselor immediately if their buddy is missing.

Two sets of buddies will be put together to form tent groups. There should be no more than four campers per group. In the event of varied ages, e.g. Backpacking II, an effort will be made to assign groups similar in age.

Staffing the Trip:

Each backpacking class must be supervised by at least two (2) counselors/staff. The ratio of counseling staff to campers shall not exceed 1:8 to ensure adequate supervision. Counselors assigned to a group must be of the same sex of the campers in that group.

Although all counselors will have been oriented during the staff training trip, a **qualified trip leader must be designated in each class that will be leaving camp.** See “Out of Camp Trips/Activities Policy” for Trip Leader Qualifications.
Preparing for the Trip:

Counselors must complete all components of the Trip Orientation for Campers before the group leaves main camp on their trip. Campers must be oriented to: potential hazards, rules for safety, health and sanitation practices, leave no trace/protecting the environment, rendezvous places along the way where the group will stop, basic first aid and emergency procedures, off limit areas, and other trip requirements. See “Trip Orientation for Campers” for more information.

Counselors must direct campers on what to pack for the trip. See “Packing a Bag.”

The Trip Leader must meet with the Camp Nurse to get a Camper Health Check-List (camper initials with issues, medication needed, etc.), sign-out a first aid kit, and pick up any medications needed that night.

The Trip leader must sign-out two radios and inform the Program Director that the group is leaving, upon departure.

Counselors must direct all campers to fill their water bottles before leaving camp.

The Hike:

When the group is ready to leave for their hike/trip, they should leave as a group. One counselor must lead the group in front and one counselor must follow behind the group, each with a radio to communicate any emergency situations or ask the leader to wait if necessary. Tripping groups must stop at least three (3) times at defined rendezvous points to ensure the group is still accounted for and doing well on the hike.

Example Meeting Points include: Top of hill by Rec Hall, Bottom of hill by pond, Turtle rock, Monkey Face rock, before crossing the road, Pavilion on other side of road, etc.

Upon arrival at the site, the Trip Leader must take and record attendance; and all counselors must review off-limit areas, identify the group meeting location (campfire pit), help campers as they set up their tents, and set up their own tent as identified below and/or as shown in the site map.

Setting Up the Camp Site:

Upon arrival at the campsite, counselors should identify any off-limit areas and point out the main campfire pit where the group will meet in an emergency situation.

Campers should set up their tents in their assigned groups with the following considerations in mind (See Map of Site in lesson plan binder):

- Tents should be set up just off the main walkway through the site to prevent stumbling in the dark or emergency vehicle access if the gator is necessary.
- Tents (camper and counselor) must be set up in groups: “Female” and “Male.”
- No less than 50 feet of space must exist between the “Female” and “Male” groups.
- At no time shall campers of the opposite sex be in the same tent.
- At all times, counselor tent door flaps shall face out toward the camper tent door flaps of the group to which they are assigned.
- Camper tents shall be no more than 20 feet from the counselor tent.
- Camper tent door-flaps must face the assigned counselor’s tent door flap.

Please Note: As is the case with assigned cabins on main camp, campers may only enter the tent to which they have been assigned.

Supervision on the Trip:

All code of conduct and other camp rules apply to any camp hike or overnight trip.

Given that the group is away from the immediate vicinity of the camp nurse, counselors must be extra diligent in maintaining camper safety by actively supervising and proactively communicating any concerns via radio to main camp immediately. Counselors are responsible for monitoring where campers are and accounting for what they are doing throughout the trip. Activities such as gathering wood, building shelters, going to the bathroom, etc. often result in campers splitting up; so, counselors must ensure that campers travel with a buddy from their assigned tent group.

Regardless of the activity, campers must be under immediate visual observation and in verbal contact with a counselor at all times. If a counselor calls for campers to assemble in the event of an emergency, they must do so immediately. If a counselor requires additional assistance as the result of missing supplies or an emergency situation, they must radio down to main camp immediately. A member of the core staff will answer the request and drive the gator up the mountain if necessary to prevent a lapse in adequate supervision.

Lost Camper Plan:

If a camper has been separated from the group, the trip leader must immediately activate procedures for finding a lost child. The following lost camper procedures shall apply: assemble the campers in a secure place under counselor supervision, notify the Program Director, commence a counselor search for the lost camper (beginning with high risk areas such as a waterfront) while maintaining supervision of the other campers, notify the police if the search is unsuccessful, notify the parents. Full procedures are located in the Emergencies in Lennox section of the Emergency Procedures Manual.

Evening Campfire:

The class should assemble at the pit and will remain together as one group for evening activities, campfire, and snack. The trip leader must call and record role to ensure all are present.
WED NIGHT: The Backpacking III/Wilderness class will join Backpacking II at the Overlook for the singing of Boom Chicka Boom with main camp. A counselor will coordinate with main camp via mobile radio to start singing. Main camp starts. After the singing of Boom Chicka Boom is complete, the Backpacking III/Wilderness class will promptly leave the overlook and return to their site for evening snack as a group. They will need to light their fire, built earlier in the day.

ALL NIGHTS: After evening snack, campers may remain at the campfire to chat with friends under the supervision of the class counselors.

If a camper is tired and wants to retire to their tent for the night, they may do so with their assigned buddy. At the time a camper retires to their tent for the night, a counselor of the same sex (with their radio) must move up to the tent areas to continue supervising as campers settle down for bed (traveling back and forth between tent areas as necessary). At no time may campers be in their tents without appropriate counselor supervision. At 10:00 pm all campers remaining by the fire should be dismissed to their tents. A final check of the campfire shall be conducted to ensure no campers remain and that the fire will burn down in the pit (no overhanging sticks, etc. Wet fire lightly if necessary.)

**Reporting Evening Bed Check:**

After campers have been dismissed from evening campfire they must report directly to their assigned tent for the night. They will be allowed 30 minutes to get ready for bed as in main camp, but then need to be settled down.

Each night that the group is out, the trip leader must record and report an evening bed check via mobile radio to the Camp Director or designee on main camp by 11:00 pm. If for some reason, things are not all settled, a follow up radio report is required every 30 minutes or less until all campers are settled for the night. This is similar to the super-patrol conducted by the core staff on main camp at midnight.

Counselors must walk around to each tent in their tent area (male or female) and ensure that all campers are settled down in their assigned tent. After walking around to check tents, both counselors must meet up between the groups to confirm that all campers are accounted for and the campers are settled for sleep. The trip leader must then radio down that a bed check has been completed. Both counselors must then retire to their tents for the evening.

The radio call for reporting an evening bed check on camp trips must be logged with by the Camp Director or designee on main camp. See below for example log entry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>REPORTING</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/14/2016</td>
<td>10:47 pm</td>
<td>Wilderness</td>
<td>Susie Q</td>
<td>All quiet in shelters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>