



ALABAMA 4-H
**SUMMER
CAMP**
2026 PARENT PACKET





Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, and Chaperones:

Thank you for choosing the Alabama 4-H Center for your summer camp program! We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of your child's life this summer. Our staff works year-round to ensure that your child's experience at 4-H Summer Camp meets his or her needs and exceeds expectations!

Your child will be encouraged to renew old friendships and to make new ones. Each child will have the opportunity to try new things and will be challenged to be the best he or she can be! 4-H Summer Camp strives to instill the values of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health through belonging, independence, generosity, and mastery in the lives of all who come to camp. The 4-H Center staff appreciates your patience and understating with the number of forms and the amount of information required to attend camp. The Alabama 4-H Center follows American Camping Association standards, which require a great deal of paper work. However, the paper work is important and ensures that your child has the best and safest experience possible. Please fill out all paper work completely and accurately. Turn it in to your county Extension office in a timely manner to ensure that your child is able to attend camp without delay. If you still have questions, contact your county 4-H agent. Our staff is here to help in the best possible way.

Welcome to the 4-H Camp Family!

Sincerely,

The Alabama 4-H Center Staff

The Alabama 4-H Center Staff

The Alabama 4-H Center | 892 Four H Road | Columbiana, AL 35051
(205) 669-4241 | ala4h@aces.edu | www.alabama4hcenter.org/

CHECK-IN/ CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

CHECK-IN: You will be able to arrive on property as early as 11:00 a.m. No early arrivals; the gate will be shut. Registration is between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at the front office/main lodge area. Buses will park and the campers will go to the housing area. Check in with your county camp coordinator. All medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter must be turned in to the camp nurse during the check-in process. Lunch, for campers and chaperones, starts promptly at 12:00 p.m. If there are any unusual plans (late arrivals or early/late departures), notify the 4-H Center as soon as possible so proper arrangements can be made. No early registration will be available. Registration may run late on Wednesday, depending on the nurse's availability.



HEALTH STATION: The nurse will collect and review the health history form provided by your county camp coordinator. For the health and safety of all campers, we require that all medications, including creams and vitamins, be turned in to the camp nurse. This avoids misuse or loss of the medication and also gives the nurse an opportunity to discuss with you the specifics of administering the medication. We require that all medications be in the original bottle (or a duplicate bottle that can be requested from the pharmacy). We also prefer that you send only the amount of medication needed for the duration of your camper's stay. If you are sending over-the-counter medications, put the original bottle in a resealable sandwich bag with your child's full name clearly printed on the bag along with the medicine form. Campers who use asthma inhalers should bring two if possible—one for the nurse and one to keep with them.

DEPARTURE AND CHECK-OUT: The picture will begin at 8:30 a.m. Campers will be picked up in front of Guthrie Lodge at 8:45 a.m. You will complete the check-out process with your county camp coordinator. If your child has medications at camp, these will be returned to you at this time. For your child's safety, please have your photo ID with you to match with the list of people authorized to pick up your child.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD

MAIL AT CAMP: Campers love to receive letters from home during their stay at camp. We will distribute mail at dinner each night. If you plan to write a letter, please send it at least 2 full weeks before your camper's scheduled session to make sure he or she receives it while at camp. Keep cards and letters cheery and newsy in such a way that will not make the camper homesick. All mail should be sent to camp with your child's name and camp session clearly marked on the outside:

Alabama 4-H Center
Camper's Name & Session ____
892 Four H Road
Columbiana, AL 35051

To ensure that your camper receives their mail on time, parents should give it to the county camp coordinator or if dropping off your child, give it to the front office or the camp manager.

PHONE CALLS & EMERGENCIES: Campers are outside and involved in activities during the day and are not available to receive phone calls. We do not allow campers to make phone calls from camp unless there is an emergency. If you would like to find out how your camper is doing, please leave a message with the main office, and we will call you back with a report. The main office is staffed during camp from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After business hours, please leave a message, and we will respond the next business day. The camp phone number is (205) 669-4241.

VISITORS: We do not allow visits during the camp sessions. Experience has shown that visits disrupt the camp routine, detract from the counselor's ability to effectively

manage their group, and increase the level of homesickness for the child being visited and for his or her peers. If you want to see the facility before camp starts, you may visit the 4-H Center by setting up an appointment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT CAMP

MEDICATION: In addition to noting on the Parental Release and Consent form the medicine(s) your child may require, please follow these steps:

- 1. Medication must be in the original container with the original label (or a duplicate bottle that can be requested from the pharmacy)** including easily read and understood pharmacy instructions. If you would like to add a note or personal instructions, you are welcome to do so, but we must follow the prescribed dosage.
- Because of our American Camping Association (ACA) accreditation, we are not allowed to distribute any medications. Send with your child any acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or over-the-counter pain medications. These must be in the original container with the original label.
- All medication(s) must state the camper's name, doctor, and phone number as well as the name of the medication, dosage, and frequency.
- Include enough for the camp duration.
- Ensure all medications are not expired. This includes any over-the-counter medications. Double-check inhalers and EpiPen expiration dates.
- Place all medications, along with the medication form, in a sealed sandwich bag labeled with your child's name and county.
- Give all medications to the camp nurse on registration day when your child arrives at camp.
- Any EpiPens or asthma inhalers may be kept on the child's person as requested by the parent or required by the camper's physician. Mark as follows:
Alabama 4-H Center
Camper's Name & Session ____
892 Four H Road
Columbiana, AL 35051

GENERAL MEDICAL INFORMATION:

The camp nurse is on property 24 hours a day while camp is in session and is responsible for the overall care of the entire camp population. All of the 4-H Center's program staff are required to have current certification in first aid and CPR, and any staff working at the pool also must have Red Cross lifeguard certification. When health matters require it, campers may also be driven into town and seen by a nurse practitioner, a physician's assistant, physician, or even at Shelby Baptist Medical Center in Alabaster (30 minutes from the 4-H Center). Also if necessary, an ambulance may be dispatched to pick up an injured person. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified if a child requires a hospital or doctor visit. In the event of injury or extended illness, the camp nurse and a representative from the camper's county Extension staff may decide that the camper should not return to camp. If a child cannot return to camp due to illness or injury, it is the family's responsibility to pick up their child as soon as possible.

Do not pack medicine in your child's luggage—it must be turned in to the camp nurse during check-in! All medications are stored and locked in a separate area. This policy is for the safety and welfare of all participants at camp and to discourage misuse or inappropriate behavior. This is a requirement of the American Camping Association (ACA) through which we are accredited.



MOSQUITO BITES & SUNBURN: We cannot guarantee that your child will not be bitten by mosquitoes or get sunburned while he or she is at 4-H Camp. However, we do train our staff members to encourage campers to protect themselves against both. We recommend that you send both bug repellent and sunscreen of an appropriate SPF for your child. The counselor's job description requires that

he or she encourage campers to apply sunscreen before exposure to the sun and to apply bug repellent before outdoor evening programs. We recommend that your child check for ticks under mosquito bites and sunburn while at camp.



HOMESICKNESS: Homesickness is a very natural reaction to separation from familiar surroundings and routines. Some first-time campers experience homesickness. Chaperones are trained to deal with the initial signs; in severe cases, they are assisted by the program coordinator, who will communicate with parents. We encourage parents to be brave during a bout with homesickness. We urge parents to cooperate with the camp administration in these cases and to understand and believe that their child will benefit the most by staying at camp for the entire session. Parents should avoid making a pre-camp promise to pick up a homesick camper early. Emphasize to your child that they are *going* to camp; you are not *sending* them. Avoid saying, "I'm going to miss you so much. I can't wait for you to come home." Instead say, "I'm so excited for you! You'll have a great time!"

SHOWERS: Chaperones are instructed to urge campers to shower regularly. All showers have separate stalls and doors or curtains.

BED-WETTING: Campers are urged to use the toilet before bedtime. Campers with potential bed-wetting problems can be awakened for a late-night bathroom visit if necessary; indicate this on the health form. Campers who tend to wet the bed are strongly encouraged to bring two sets of sheets and a blanket to camp in addition to their sleeping bag and pillow.

THE RULE OF 3 & THE BUDDY SYSTEM:

To account for all people at all times, everyone at camp uses the rule of 3 and the buddy system. Any time a camper needs to leave the group, he or she must take one other buddy and an adult.

LIVING AREAS: Campers may be sleeping in a dorm or a cottage during their stay at camp. All campers are housed by their birth-determined sex. In the dorms, each room has its own or shared bathroom. In the cottages, the campers will be using a bathhouse. Pack appropriately for either because you will not know where you are staying until you arrive at camp.

GENERAL CAMP POLICIES AND INFORMATION

PAYMENT: Full payment is required to complete registration.

REFUNDS & CANCELLATIONS: No refunds will be issued under any circumstances. Counties may substitute another camper (if one is available) who has not yet registered to fill your spot. Refunds will not be provided if your child leaves early because of homesickness or disruptive behavior as determined by the camp manager.

FOOD SERVICE: The Alabama 4-H Center strives to offer kid-friendly, tasty meals. Cold cereal can be made available as an alternative at breakfast. A jelly sandwich or cheese sandwich is always available as an alternative at lunch or dinner and a veggie/salad bar is also available at those times. We encourage all campers to drink at least one glass of water at each meal to avoid dehydration. At least two weeks before

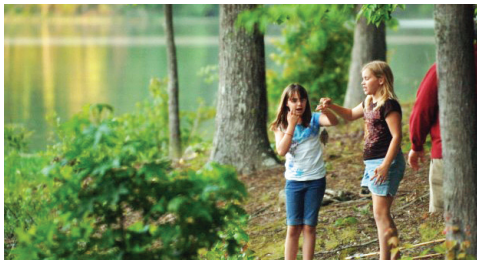


camp, please let your county Extension office know of any dietary needs your child may have.

PARENT & CAMPER EVALUATIONS: We appreciate your immediate comments and feedback about our staff and program. If you see or hear of a problem with any part of our program or staff, please contact the 4-H Center so immediate corrections can be made. Our 4-H Center staff is available to answer your questions or concerns. Do not hesitate to call or stop by the office.

PICTURES: During camp activities, staff members will be taking pictures of campers experiencing new things and having a great time. These pictures will be posted to the Alabama 4-H Center page www.facebook.com/Alabama4hcenter.

GRAFFITI: The 4-H Center works hard to provide a safe, clean, and well cared for facility for our participants. Graffiti is not allowed on any surface of the dorms or spaces at camp. Those caught vandalizing property will be charged for the damage and may be excused from camp.



PRANKS AT CAMP: We promote an inclusive camp environment where everyone feels a sense of safety and belonging. Pranks are not tolerated at camp and will result in immediate dismissal.

BULLYING: The Alabama 4-H Center has a zero-tolerance policy on bullying of any kind. There are several different kinds of bullying including physical (hitting, tripping, holding door closed), verbal (name calling, belittling, humiliating), and social (exclusion, singling out for ridicule, coercion). Camp will not tolerate these behaviors at any age from male or female campers, on or off camp, in person or via electronic devices.

CAMP ACTIVITIES

Campers in 2026 will see a few changes to the day programs. Campers will participate in different activities. Activities may differ from the ones listed below.

POOL: Campers will be given the option to go swimming in the pool every day either as a program rotation or during night swim.

**Instructors are American Red Cross lifeguard certified.*



CLIMBING WALL: Campers will set goals and attempt to ascend all or part of our 35-foot rock climbing wall. They will be encouraged by their peers; students will truly enjoy this thrilling experience.

**Instructors are trained in belay techniques.*

GIANT SWING: Our swing offers students a chance to face their fears while depending on their group. Participants will wear a full-body harness and be hoisted to the top of a 30-foot pole where they will pull the quick release to swing.

**Instructors are trained in swing facilitation.*

PADDLEBOARDS: Paddleboards offer students a unique way to experience the Coosa River. Participating students will be required to wear a personal flotation device. Students will be given an introduction by the instructors to familiarize them with using the paddleboards.

**Instructors are American Red Cross lifeguard certified.*

SPORTS/PARTY NIGHT: Each night, campers will have the option of a night swim, putt putt, field games, basketball, volleyball, or indoor volleyball.

KAYAKING: Campers will be given basic instructions for kayaking safely. Any person on the water will wear a personal flotation device (PFD). **Instructors are American Red Cross lifeguard certified.*

ANIMAL ADVENTURES: Campers will learn about reptiles and birds of prey. The campers will get to meet live animals along with playing some fun games to learn more about animal characteristics and habitats.

NEW FOR 2026 ONLY—REGATTA RACING:

This summer only, campers will build regatta boats. On the second night, 4-H agents from each county will race their regatta boats. It is sure to be a fun and exciting time for all. We can't wait to see what the campers create!

PACKING: Review the packing list. Use it as a checklist to pack your camper's belongings.

If you have any questions about these items, please call us at the Alabama 4-H Center (205) 669-4241.

The 4-H Center will not assume liability for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property. All clothing and personal items should be clearly marked with your child's full name. Any unclaimed camper items left at the 4-H Center will be donated to Goodwill after July 1.



PACKING LIST

- Water bottle** *Refillable bottles are fine. **
- 1 pair of water-friendly shoes**
No flip-flops.
- Bedding (twin size)**
 - Sheets or sleeping bag
 - Pillow
 - Blanket
- Money for canteen**
 - Souvenirs*
** \$0.50 to \$30.00 (quarters, ones, and fives are preferred)*
- Party theme: Mythical Creatures

WHAT NOT TO BRING:

- **Knives, fireworks, expensive jewelry or cameras, markers of any kind, food, gum, spray cans (including shaving cream and silly string), or pets.**
- **Candles and matches.**
- **Expensive clothing.** We prefer play clothes because camp activities can result in stains.
- **Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and firearms.** These are prohibited and will result in a camper's immediate dismissal from camp.
- **Electronic/handheld video games, radios, MP3 players, CD players, iPods, cellular phones, laptops, DVD players, etc.** 4-H camp is in a natural environment designed for children to get a break from the pressures of the world. If we discover that your child has any of these items after you leave, we will lock the items in the office until the camper checks out.
- **Illegal substances and items with offensive logos or inappropriate messages.**
- Call for permission before bringing any personal sports equipment.



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- Toiletries**
 - Towel/washcloth
 - Shampoo/conditioner/soap
 - Deodorant
 - Toothbrush/toothpaste
 - Shower shoes
- 2 pairs of closed-toe/heel shoes**
Tennis shoes preferred. Crocs, Five-Fingers, ballet flats, and Kweens are NOT considered closed-toe shoes. If you can see the foot through the shoe, it is not closed-toe/heel.
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray *Roll-on or lotion preferred.*
- Enough clothes for 3 days & 2 nights
Make sure to check the weather while packing! Bring clothes that you are willing to get dirty.
- Rain gear *Poncho or rain jacket.*
- Small backpack for the day
- Appropriate bathing suit and towel
Those who do not comply with the bathing suit rules will be asked to change or cover up.
 - Females
 - Only one-piece and tankini bathing suits.
 - No more than 2 inches between the top and bottom of the suit (tankini).
 - Tops and bottoms must fit well enough to be secure and stay on during swimming.
 - Bottoms must cover the entire front and behind.
 - A shirt over a bikini is not acceptable.
 - Males
 - Shorts must be mid-thigh or longer.

