

# CAMP BLUESKY 2024

LIFE GIVER

JOHN 10:10

## PARENT AND CAMPER HANDBOOK

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## **Hello Parents and Campers!**

We are so excited to have you joining us for our 23rd year of camp! At Camp BlueSky, our mission is to help students grow spiritually, develop lasting friendships, and have fun! Our aim is to help campers cultivate a deeper love for Jesus, while building relationships and pursuing adventure. We cannot wait to celebrate a life-changing camp experience with you! In this handbook, you will find some important details about camp including our general daily schedule, some costumes you might want to pack, and Camper Policies that will be followed this year.

Parents, thank you so much for entrusting us with your children. We do not take this responsibility lightly and it is such a pleasure to serve your family! Our prayer is that your campers grow spiritually, build lasting relationships, and have fun. In order for that to take place, we have crafted what we believe are excellent programs and safety protocols. Please read the following handbook carefully and let us know if you have any further questions.

Campers, you are getting ready for the experience of a lifetime! Camp is a unique and exciting environment that you get to be a part of this year. We want you to have fun and stay safe, so we think it is important for you to read this handbook as well! There are many guidelines we all get to follow while at camp and it is easier for all of us to know those before you arrive. We cannot wait to see you soon!

*Blessings,*

*Camp Bluesky Leadership Team*

## COMMON TERMS

Here are some common terms you will see throughout this document.

- **Camper** - someone who gets to attend Camp BlueSky as a participant (aged 7-17) • **Counselor** – a volunteer with Camp BlueSky who will work directly with your camper. Counselors receive special training to support campers throughout their stay at Camp BlueSky. Our Camp Staff Training includes Child Safety Training through the Child Safety and Protection Network, Cross-Cultural training, and special training for Leading Small Groups, Sharing the Gospel, Technology Safety; and, of course, training to learn camp songs, cheers, and games! Each counselor will have an average of 6 campers of the same age that they are responsible for. (A camp counselor is not the same as a therapeutic counselor!)
- **Cabin** – a cabin is both a place and a group of campers. The cabin (place) is where your camper will live throughout their stay at camp. A cabin is also what we use to refer to the group of campers who are living, eating, and playing together in the same cabin (place) together all week. (Ex: *Head back to your **cabin** to get ready for our evening activity.* AND *Your **cabin** gets to go to lunch first today!*)
- **Mountain Group** – Campers move through Mountain Groups as they grow up at camp, based on their grade/year at school. Each Mountain Group has its own cheers, colors, and activities together, which get increasingly adventurous as they move up. They are each named for a peak in East Africa, from smallest to largest!
  - These are the 10 Mountain Groups:**
    - Girls - Suswa, Satima, Meru, Lenana, & Kenya
    - Boys - Longonot, Lengai, Elgon, Kibo, & Kili
- **Session** – a session is the week-long, overnight experience of camp. We are offering 4 different sessions of camp this year.

## WHEN AND WHERE IS CAMP?

We are excited to host Camp BlueSky at Brackenhurst Conference and Retreat Centre this year! Below you will find important information about how to get to Camp BlueSky and when our camp sessions are hosted.

## DIRECTIONS

**How to get to Brackenhurst:** Drive from Banana Raini Road to Kiambu Country. (20.7 kilometers if leaving from Village Market). Once you pass a Gulf Petrol Station and Nifty Café and Wine Bar, you will take the next turn on the right. You will see a large sign for Brackenhurst Conference and Retreat Center. You will follow this road until you reach the gate for Brackenhurst.



## CAMP DATES

**Session 1:** 2 - 7 June

**Session 2:** 9 - 14 June

**Session 3:** 7 - 12 July

**Session 4:** 14 - 19 July

## CAMPER POLICIES

**Fun!** We want our campers and staff to enjoy themselves while they are at camp! Camp is meant to be fun! In order for camp to be fun for everyone involved, there are rules and policies in place to help guide us. If at any time a camper is jeopardizing the fun element of camp for themselves or others, the camp staff, volunteers, and leadership team will intervene to aid that camper. If simple verbal correction does not lead to a change in behavior, the camper's parents will be notified.

**Boys Camp/Girls Camp.** Camp BlueSky has both girls' and boys' camps. We love having a mix of campers! Boys and girls will interact with each other throughout the day, but there are strict guidelines as to how much interaction can take place.

1. Boys are never allowed into the girl's camp area. Girls are never allowed into the boy's camp area. Our cabins are very clearly marked, and the boundaries will be communicated on Opening Day.
2. Boys and girls are never allowed to be alone, one-on-one with each other, or in a group setting together without a staff member present. This helps ensure everyone's safety.

**Technology.** Campers are not allowed to bring any technology with them to camp. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartwatches, computers, gaming systems, or any device with internet capabilities. If a camper is caught with a piece of technology, they will be asked to give it to the Leadership Team until they are picked up at the Closing Ceremony. If a camper is traveling to and from camp without a parent or guardian, the Leadership Team can store the camper's cell phone in a safe for them throughout their stay at camp.

**Abuse.** Camp BlueSky is vitally interested in the well-being of campers and staff. All staff and volunteers complete abuse awareness and prevention training prior to serving at Camp BlueSky. Camp BlueSky staff, volunteers, or campers may never behave abusively towards anyone. This includes physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse. Physical punishment of any type is against camp policy and will not be tolerated. Bullying of any type will not be tolerated. Any such abuse directed at a staff member, volunteer, or camper is grounds for immediate dismissal from camp.

## DRESS CODE

### Boys Camp

- Clothing should not be form-fitting or ripped (e.g., no tight athletic pants, yoga pants, leggings, cut-off shorts or shirts.)
- Shorts should be as long as your fingers when held straight by your side.
- Shirts should be worn at all times.
- Graphic t-shirts should be kid-appropriate (no swear words, derogatory or inflammatory language or imagery, nudity, rude symbols, or violence).
- Shirts and tank tops should have good coverage of your torso.
- Close-toed shoes must be worn during recreational activities.
- Swimming costumes/swim trunks must be modest.
- Jewelry that dangles (earrings, necklaces, bracelets) should not be worn during recreational activities.
  - We will ask all campers to remove their hoods when indoors. We want to see those smiling faces!

### Girls Camp:

- Form-fitting yoga/athletic pants should be worn with full-length shirts. Opaque yoga/athletic pants are not acceptable. Leggings should not be see-through.
- Shorts should be mid-thigh. Long shirts that cover shorts must be tucked in, so they do not hide your shorts.
- Graphic t-shirts should be kid-appropriate (no swear words, derogatory or inflammatory language or imagery, nudity, rude symbols, or violence).
- Shirts and tank tops should have good coverage of your torso and bra. No crop tops or tank tops with low-cut arms, front, or back.
- Close-toed shoes must be worn during recreational activities.
- Swimming costumes/bathing suits must be one piece. No tankinis or bikinis.
- Jewelry that dangles (earrings, necklaces, bracelets) should not be worn during recreational activities.
  - We will ask all campers to remove their hoods when indoors. We want to see those smiling faces! 7

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

We ask that if your camper is experiencing fever, cold, flu, vomiting, rash, or any sickness that will inhibit their experience at camp, you consider not bringing your camper to camp. We know sickness is always unfortunate, especially when it gets in the way of fun plans, but we do not want your camper to spend all their time with our Camp Nurse rather than their friends. We also want to protect the health and well-being of the other campers and staff. Please do not bring your camper if they are experiencing anything that is contagious.

If your camper becomes ill during their stay at camp, you will be contacted. If it is deemed that your camper is contagious or they do not feel well enough to participate in camp activities, we will ask you to pick them up early. This is to protect your camper from further illness and protect the camp experience for those around them.

If you have not listed allergies or dietary restrictions on your camper's registration form and need to, please contact our office ASAP. We need to know about any allergies or dietary restrictions BEFORE Opening Day. This will ensure that all staff and kitchen staff are ready and equipped to keep all campers safe.

Camp BlueSky does have a nurse on staff. Our Camp Nurse will be around campus for all of our activities so that he can keep a close eye on our campers. The Nurse will also oversee the handling of all camper medications. In addition to the Nurse, Brackenhurst has a doctor on campus that we can call if a serious injury or illness occurs.

Here are a few notes on medications:

- **NO medications, vitamins, or supplements are allowed to remain in camper or staff possessions.** This is to ensure safety in our cabins and to prevent any medication being mishandled.
- If your camper has an Epi-Pen, Inhaler, or similar medication, either the camper or counselor will be able to hold on to that medication for your camper. Please let the Camp Nurse know about this BEFORE leaving after Camper Check-In. We want our staff to be educated and capable of administering this medication if needed in an emergency.
- Please pack all medications in an organized fashion for our nurse. LABEL medication CLEARLY! Parents, you will have an opportunity to personally give medications to the Camp Nurse at Camper Check-In. Unless stated otherwise, the Camp Nurse will only follow instructions stated on the medication label.

At Camp BlueSky, there is beauty to behold everywhere! Sometimes that can be in the form of special visitors. At times we may have monkeys on campus, but the security at Brackenhurst is always very quick to keep them away from our campers and staff.



## TIPS TO PREPARE YOUR CAMPER

1. Put your child's name on **EVERYTHING!** Even the most responsible child will lose things, especially when 5 or more campers are living together. Make sure the camper knows what he or she is bringing. Many times, the parent will pack the bag and the camper will not even know that the unclaimed shirt or jacket belongs to him or her.
2. If your camper takes regular medications or supplements, please pack the medicine well and personally hand them over to the Camp Nurse on Opening Day.
3. Send your child's toiletry articles in a small plastic pail or organizing container with a handle or in a bag that can get wet. They can put their shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, combs, etc. in the pail and take it right into the shower with them. They will not have to look for their things or try to carry them and their towels into the shower. It is best if the container has holes in the bottom.
4. Send a book or travel game for your child to use. It's a good way to get to know other campers, especially during rest time.
5. Check the batteries in your child's torch before they come to camp.
6. Camp is a wonderful opportunity for children to grow. Parents can prepare campers for a positive camp experience: "I know you will have fun, make new friends, and the days will fly by because you will be so busy in your activities." On the other hand, phrases such as: "If you need me, call me and I'll come and get you if you want me to," sow seeds of self-doubt and the possibility that they may not have a blast at camp in the child's mind. Please help encourage your camper and get him or her ready for a great time at camp! Please remember that we do not let campers call home or speak to their families while they are at camp unless it is an emergency or an extreme situation. Also, please be sure that all letters are encouraging to the camper. It is not healthy for the camper to read too much about home and how much he or she is being missed, but rather for him or her to read about how much fun you know they are having and how you can't wait to hear all their fun stories.

## CAMP MAIL

Campers LOVE receiving mail at camp! We pass out mail every day at lunch. Campers enjoy receiving letters from Mom, Dad, brothers, sisters, etc. If you intend to leave letters for your camper, you will have the opportunity to drop them off on Opening Day. Letters should be written before arrival, with each letter in a separate envelope. Please write the child's first and last name on each envelope, and the day of the week you'd like them to get it. You may add a small treat to your envelopes if you would like, but please do not leave anything excessive or anything that does not fit in a standard letter envelope. We pass out mail on Mon, Tues, Wed, and Thurs (no mail on Sunday or Friday).

## EXAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

7:20 Rise and Shine

7:55 Breakfast Assembly on Main Field

8:00-8:35 Breakfast

8:35-8:45 Cheetah Clue: a fun, camp-wide game! The cabin that solves it correctly first wins a prize! 8:45-9:15 Empower

9:20-9:55 Impact Time

10:00-10:30 Skill 1

10:40-11:10 Skill 2

11:20-11:50 Skill 3

12:00-12:45 Lunch

12:50-1:40 MAC/SWAG

1:50-2:40 Rest Time

2:45-3:45 Insane Game

3:50-4:15 Canteen Time: an opportunity for campers to get yummy snacks!

4:15-5:35 Free Time: time for campers to play games, make crafts, have conversations, and more! 6:00-6:55 Dinner

7:00-8:00 Evening Program

8:00- 8:45 Evening Game

8:45-9:45 Jr. Camp Showers, Rewind, Lights Out

9:15-10:15 Sr. Camp Showers, Rewind, Lights Out

## PACKING LIST

What should I bring to camp? Great question! Below is our recommended packing list. As a reminder, Brackenhurst is generally colder than Nairobi. Make sure to pack your jumpers and any other warm items you may desire to wear. We will have some evening activities outside.

1. Pack at least a 7-day supply of clothes.
2. Be sure to label ALL clothing and other items with the child's name and come with a master list of all items brought to camp. That will help the counselor locate things if they are lost, and you can check against the list while your camper is packing up to leave camp. Even so, some things may get lost. Do not pack anything that would cause serious problems if it were lost. Items of significant value should be left at home. It is the parent's responsibility to locate lost items at the Closing Ceremony. Items left at Camp will be donated to charity.
3. **PROHIBITED ITEMS: Cell phones, iPods, iPhones, iPads, computers, video games, or similar electronics; no knives or weapons of any kind, no valuable jewelry.** These items will be confiscated and held during camp. Campers will not need to bring a phone as emergency contact numbers have been provided before they arrive. **Students also do not need to bring money to camp.**
4. Campers are responsible for their own belongings. Camp BlueSky does not assume responsibility for any items. Please use good judgment in determining what your child brings to camp. Our camp staff will do all they can to help campers keep up with their belongings, but the primary responsibility belongs to the camper.

**Please use the list below as a guide for packing:**

- Bible
- Reusable water bottle
- Pen and stationery
- 5 -7 T-shirts
- 1 White Plain t-shirt
- 3 – 4 Pants/trousers
- 3 – 4 Shorts (athletic and casual)
- 3 – 4 Long-sleeved shirts
- 2 Sweatshirts or jackets/jumpers
- Raincoat or poncho
- Ample supply of socks

- Ample supply of undergarments
- Camp necklace from last year
- Pajamas (may be cool at night)
- 1 or 2 pairs of closed-toe shoes/trainers (Please note: Flip flops can only be worn at certain times.)
- Flashlight/torch (headlamp preferably)
- Insect repellent
- 1 Laundry bag
- 2 Towels that can get dirty and possibly stained
- Sunscreen
- Deodorant, shampoo, and soap
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Comb and/or brush

\*Please remember that your camper will want to layer his/her clothes, as it will be cooler in the mornings and evenings than in mid-afternoon.

\*All bed linens (pillows, sheets, blankets, etc.) will be provided, but your camper may wish to bring his/her own if he/she would prefer to sleep with his/her own pillow, etc.

### **Adventure Program Additional Packing**

Campers in the Adventures Program will participate in activities such as outdoor rock climbing, hiking, extended time on the ropes course, and camping out. These campers should come prepared for these types of activities. Camp provides the essential equipment that these campers will need.

Additional items needed:

- Hiking boots or sturdy tennis shoes with good tread (NOTE: break in your boots before camp!) •

Small backpack for three days of clothing.

- Warm clothes for evenings outside
- WARM SLEEPING BAG and PILLOW
- Headlamp
- Yoga mat/Sleeping pad for camping

**Note:** Blow-up mattresses are NOT allowed. The sleeping pad must be small and light.

## PROGRAM COSTUME IDEAS

We have a lot of fun camp days ahead of us! If you are like us, you will want to dress the part for some of our themed programs. Here are a few that you can prepare for!

1. **Chumvi and Nuru** are our two teams at camp. If your camper has not been to camp before, they will be assigned to a team on Opening Day. The team colors are red (Chumvi) and blue (Nuru). We will have Chumvi and Nuru challenges multiple times each day. Our Camp Store will be selling buffs in the team colors that can be used as headbands.
2. **Maji Mayhem:** It's Maji and it's Mayhem! Come prepared to get wet and earn a W for your team! We've got water all over the place for this wild battle, so make sure you are wearing clothing and closed-toed shoes that you don't mind getting wet!
3. **Sock War:** Sock War is our most treasured and competitive camp game. This is the last chance for Chumvi and Nuru to show their pride and bring a victory to their side. Bring your team colors and camouflage and make every effort to help your side win this all-out battle!

## CAMPER CHECK-IN AND CLOSING CEREMONY

Below you will find a list of procedures that will be followed on Camper Check-In and Closing Ceremony.

### 1. Camper Check-In

- a. **Camper Check-In is open from 2:00pm - 4:00pm** on the Sunday of your session. Please plan accordingly and arrive on time. Camper activities begin at 4pm.
- b. You will have clear signs and instructions to follow upon entering the gate at Brackenhurst.
- c. After completing Check-In for your camper, you will be more than welcome to enjoy the café at Brackenhurst. We ask that you do not linger in the camp area to enable your camper to get settled and to allow us to begin camp activities.

### 2. Closing Ceremony

- a. **Closing Ceremony is on Friday at 10am.**
  - b. You will have instructions to follow at the Brackenhurst gate as to where to park, where to find your camper's luggage, etc.
  - c. If you arrive early, we ask that you do not go find your camper to allow them to complete their camp experience well with their cabins.
  - d. Campers will begin assembling for the Closing Ceremony at 9:50 am on Friday.
  - e. Campers will be released to their parents following the Closing Ceremony. You **MUST** find your camper with their counselor to pick up your camper. **If someone other than a listed parent/guardian is picking up your camper, please let the Camp BlueSky Office know ASAP.** If our staff is unaware of a different pick-up person, the parent/guardian listed will be called to confirm who the camper is allowed to leave with.
  - f. The camp store will close at 10:40am.
  - g. All Camp BlueSky staff and volunteers will be in a meeting starting at 11:00am.
3. The camp store will be open throughout Camper Check-In and Closing Ceremony. Only payments via MPESA will be allowed. (No cash will be accepted).
  4. If you plan to leave mail for your camper during Camper Check-In, please come prepared with mail already written.
  5. Brackenhurst has an excellent café that you may enjoy before or after Camp Check-In and Closing Ceremony.

## CAMP TRADITIONS

If you are new to Camp BlueSky, or just a parent who never knew the more fun details of camp, here is an explanation of some of our favorite Camp BlueSky traditions!

### 1. Mountain Groups

Campers move through Mountain Groups as they grow up at camp, based on their grade/year at school. Each Mountain Group has its own animal, cheers, colors, and activities together, which get increasingly adventurous as they move up. They are each named for a peak in East Africa, smallest to largest!

#### **These are the 10 Mountain Groups:**

Girls - Suswa, Satima, Meru, Lenana, & Kenya

Boys - Longonot, Lengai, Elgon, Kibo, & Kili

### 2. Chumvi & Nuru Teams

These are the two big teams at camp that compete throughout the week. And it is FIERCE! Every camper becomes a part of one team on their first day at camp and once a Chumvi (red team) or Nuru (blue team), always a Chumvi or Nuru - someday your children will be the same! The names come from Matthew 5:13-16 in Kiswahili, where Jesus describes his followers as the *chumvi* (salt) and *nuru* (light) of the world.

### 3. Gold Rocks

Every morning campers search for gold rocks around camp grounds - the cabin with the most at the end of the week wins a coveted bead for their necklace.

### 4. Cheetah Clue

The Cheetah is a camp emblem, hidden daily. The cabin that solves the clue and finds the Cheetah gets a prize!

### 5. MAC & SWAG

MAC (Men After Christ) and SWAG (Strong Women After God) are camp programs that let the campers spend special time together as guys or girls. These are times to enjoy friendship and fun, celebrate who they are as people created in God's image, and learn how to support and honor one another - while at camp and beyond. There's a little competition involved (it's camp after all!) with cheers and games, but we always focus on respect and celebration!

### 6. Camp Necklace

Campers and staff get to add camp beads to their necklaces year after year. Everyone gets their Mountain Group bead each week, but there are also beads to earn - Gold Rock, Chumvi/Nuru, Mountain Shield, Honor Camper, Lion's Pride, and more. A growing necklace is a badge of history at Camp BlueSky!

### 7. Summit Fires

This is the grand finale of camp - a huge bonfire, cheers, songs, Say So (campers share what they learned that week), games, torches, and a dance party in the tent! It's an amazing time of reflection and celebration.

### 8. Lion's Pride

The Lion's Pride challenge can be attempted by our oldest campers, to challenge their bodies, minds, and hearts. Though there are many elements, the key pieces include fire-building, Scripture memory, silence,

and a run. Few make it into the Lion's Pride but even the attempt is a thing of honor!