

Overnight Camp Cell-Phone Use Policy

At Skyland Ranch, we believe camp offers a unique opportunity to disconnect from the distractions of everyday life and reconnect with the world around us—both the people we meet and the nature we explore. To help everyone make the most of their time at camp, we have established the following cell-phone use guidelines:

1. Cell-Phone Use During Camp

Most areas at camp are **cell-phone-free zones** to encourage personal interaction and outdoor adventure. Campers are expected to leave their cell phones at home or turn them in to a staff member upon arrival. This policy allows everyone to:

- **Build Face-to-Face Connections:** Without phones, campers are more present and engaged, forming stronger friendships through real conversations and shared experiences.
- **Enjoy Nature Fully:** Camp is a time to immerse yourself in the great outdoors, from hiking trails to stargazing. Limiting screen time helps you appreciate the beauty of nature around you.
- **Unplug and Recharge:** Being away from screens promotes mindfulness, creativity, and relaxation, giving you a much-needed break from the pressures of social media and digital communication.

Campers who turn in their cell phones will have opportunities to use them to contact family via text or phone call. A staff member will always offer them the opportunity to connect, but campers may choose not to. If a camper's family requires more contact with their camper, then overnight camp might not be the right fit for them. Phone calls and texts home can be made at the following times of day:

- **After lunch**
- **After evening activities**

2. Cell-Phone Use During Trips

For campers participating in trips, we allow limited cell-phone use within the following guidelines:

- **Focus on Activities:** Cell-phone use is not permitted during scheduled activities or group tasks, ensuring full engagement in the trip's experiences. Campers may use cell-phones during activities to take photos but should refrain from making calls or sending messages.
- **Appropriate Usage:** During designated downtime, campers may use their phones in ways that are respectful to others and align with camp values.
- **Maintaining Balance:** Staff will provide reminders and support to ensure that campers balance their use of technology with meaningful face-to-face interactions and personal reflection.

By offering limited cell-phone access, we provide older campers with an opportunity to practice responsible technology use while still prioritizing the goals of the camp experience. Should a staff member deem a camper to be using a cell-phone at inappropriate times or in inappropriate ways, the staff member has the authority to adjust allowances as they see fit. Any cell-phone or other technology brought on a trip is the responsibility of the camper, even if it is in the possession of a staff member. Girl Scouts of San Geronimo is not liable for any damages sustained to any technology that is brought on a trip.

3. Building Resilience

At camp, we believe that stepping away from the constant connectivity of technology helps build **resilience**. When campers set aside their phones, they:

- **Face New Challenges:** Whether it's trying a new activity, navigating a difficult trail, or working through homesickness, camp provides opportunities to practice perseverance and problem-solving without relying on screens for distraction.
- **Develop Independence:** Without immediate access to a phone for answers or social validation, campers learn to trust their own instincts, build self-confidence, and foster a greater sense of autonomy.
- **Adapt to Real-World Situations:** Through group activities and outdoor exploration, campers learn to adapt to different environments, communicate effectively, and work through challenges as they arise, building emotional resilience for life beyond camp.

4. Emergency Contact

Parents/guardians can reach the camp administration at any time in case of emergencies. Likewise, campers will have access to staff to contact their families in urgent situations.

If your camper does come to camp with a cell-phone and you receive a call of concern from your camper please contact the emergency line immediately at **909-748-7229 (camp emergency line) or 909-307-6555 (main council number)**. Please give us the benefit of the doubt. We will not keep you from your daughter; her mental health is also our top priority. We will allow you to talk to her if you need to; however, realize it is not always the best for her development as a self-sufficient adult. This can be hard to see in the situation. When you call let us know that you received a call from her and we will connect you. Realize we do not have places for phones to charge so don't be surprised if the phone loses battery.

As with most summers we are reviewing the place of cell phones in our society and at camp; please make sure to complete the parent survey at the end of camp to express your opinions on cell phones in camp. There are great advantages to kids being unplugged and exposed to nature both mentally and physically, but we are also aware of our changing society. To see more on this visit: <https://sunshine-parenting.com/5-reasons-to-unplug/>. In addition, if you do send a cell phone, we will store it with the other medication and return it at check-out.