

# MILITARY TEEN ADVENTURE CAMP 2026 PARENT HANDBOOK

June 15-19, 2026



Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center

1267 4-H Camp Road

Appomattox, VA 24522



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## QUICK FACTS ABOUT HOLIDAY LAKE 4-H CENTER

**Mailing & Physical Address:** 1267 4-H Camp Road  
Appomattox, VA 24522

**Phone Number:** 434-248-5444

**Website:** [www.holidaylake4h.com](http://www.holidaylake4h.com)

Tyler Cheely, Program Director  
[cheelytf@vt.edu](mailto:cheelytf@vt.edu)

**Contacts for questions:**

Heather Benninghove, Center Director  
[heathern@vt.edu](mailto:heathern@vt.edu)

**Mission:**

Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center's mission is to improve the quality of life through educating youth and adults in a natural setting.

**Licensing and Accreditation:**

Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center is inspected annually by the Virginia Health Department. Additionally, we are accredited by the American Camp Association. We are proud to meet and/or exceed the nationally recognized standards of quality for youth camping.



## WELCOME

Dear Camper Families,

We are excited that you have decided to be a part of Holiday Lake 4-H Center's Military Teen Adventure Camp! We are very proud of our program, staff, our history, and the thousands of campers we have served since 1940.

Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center offers a variety of programs throughout the year. During the summer months we host 4-H Junior Camp, serving 19 different localities that surround the 4-H Center. During the non-camping months, we are host to many local schools, colleges, organizations, and business for both educational and recreational opportunities.

We are proud to be a part of America's largest youth development organization. Our mission is to improve the quality of life through educating youth and adults in a natural setting. Our programs are designed with that in mind, we strive to get participants outside and provide them with a fun, educational, and hands-on experience. Our staff, programs, and facilities are designed to support our campers as they make friends, learn new skills, build self-confidence, and gain a sense of independence in our nurturing camp community. We believe that children need camp, now more than ever and our staff are committed to creating an environment where everyone can learn and grow.

In the pages below we hope to provide all the information needed to prepare your teen for camp. If you have any questions about our programs, do not hesitate to reach out. If you would like to schedule a private family tour, give us a call. We look forward to serving you and your teen this summer.

Sincerely,

Heather Benninghove & Tyler Cheely  
Center Director & Program Director

## CAMP ACTIVITIES

### Shooting Sports:

- Archery
- Rifle (.22)
- Shotgun

### Aquatics:

- Swimming
- Kayaking
- Canoeing



### Challenge Course:

- High Ropes Course with zipline
- Climbing Wall
- Low Ropes Course

### Athletics & Recreation:

- Volleyball
- 4 Square
- Gau- Gau
- Basketball
- Soccer
- Pickleball
- Tennis
- Softball
- Horseshoes
- Fishing

### Nature:

- Herpetology
- Entomology
- Wildlife Ecology
- Outdoor Living Skills
- Aquatic Ecology
- Forestry

### AND MORE!



## LODGING

A portion of our facilities, including our cabins were built in the 1930's as part of the Works Progress Administration. Campers will be lodging in our cabins located directly across from our bathhouse. Each cabin has 10 twin size beds, 8 of which are bunk-style. Each cabin will be supervised by trained Summer Staff ages 18-23.



## STAFF

At Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center, we have a staff team that is dedicated to providing an exceptional camping experience that will create lasting memories and build life-skills that will help build teens into adult leaders. We carefully select and train our staff to serve as positive role-models and leaders in our camp community. Our dedicated, caring staff are focused on providing a fun, safe experience where youth can excel as individuals and thrive as members of a group. All staff are individually selected after an extensive application, interview and national background check process. Our seasonal team is led by our full-time professional staff that call Holiday Lake 4-H Center home year-round. We maintain a ratio of 1:8 (or better) throughout all aspects of camp. Our Summer Staff are all 18 years of age or older and every lodging area will have a minimum of at least one staff member 21+. Program staff are trained and hold required certifications to teach in their area of expertise. All staff participate in three full weeks of staff training. Most of our staff are recruited from colleges and university located in Virginia, many of which grew up in the Virginia 4-H Camping Program. Many of our staff are working on their degrees in education, recreation or a related field. They are dedicated to providing the best possible experience for your teen.

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE FROM CAMP

The Military Teen Adventure Camp will be sharing center spaces with the Virginia Department of Forestry's (VDOF) Camp Woods & Wildlife Camp. Camp Woods & Wildlife is an academic, structured, residential camp that focuses on field experiences in forestry and other natural resources. This program is structured for 13-16-year-olds and is staffed by the VDOF and other natural resource conservation agencies and organizations. For the most part, campers from these two unique camps will be kept separate. Spaces shared include meal times and pool times, check in time will be one of those times. There will be staff and signs to direct our campers to the correct check in location.

### ARRIVAL DAY

#### ***Parent/Guardian Drop-Off***

Check-in Day is Monday, June 15 from 9:00 -10:30 AM. Early arrivals will have to wait until staff are prepared to accept campers. Special arrangements for late and early arrivals are discouraged, however if such accommodations are required, please contact the 4-H Center.

Staff and signage will be placed around camp to direct you to the correct check-in location.

The check-in process will include:

- Sign-In – We will confirm we have received all of the required paper work and campers will receive their lodging assignment and nametag.
- Medical Station – We ask that all over-the counter and prescription medications (**in their original containers, please**) are turned into our Camp Medical Team. You will have the opportunity to discuss any special needs your teen may have. We ask that you are patient with this process as we strive to serve every teen as an individual to meet their needs. Your teen will then have a brief medical screening to be admitted into camp.
- Camp Bank – Campers may bring cash to buy snacks and/or souvenirs from our Camp Store. Our camp store is open daily during recreation times in the afternoon and evening. We encourage campers to turn their money into the camp bank so we can secure it when not needed.
- Luggage Drop-Off – Parents and teens will say their farewells and camp staff will greet your camper and assist with relocating luggage to the cabins to get settled in.

### ***Airport Pick-Ups***

Pick-Ups and shuttles from airport will be available from the Richmond International Airport. Parents of campers flying in should communicate with the 4-H Center about flight information so we may better prepare. Staff will greet campers at the arrival terminal and shuttle them to camp.

### DEPARTURE DAY

### ***Parent/Guardian Drop-Off***

Check-out Day is Friday, June 19 at 11:00 AM. Much like check-in there will be staff and signage in place to direct you. We will ask you to stay in your vehicle as we direct you through the check-out process.

### ***Airport Departure***

Prior communication with the Center is important so we may accurately schedule shuttles to transport campers back to their respected airports. Staff will remain with campers until such time as they are not permitted. Once campers have entered their gate terminal staff will remain at the airport until flights have taken off.



## WHILE AT CAMP

### HEALTH & WELLNESS

All camp staff are trained in CPR/AED and First Aid and we have a certified Emergency Medical Technician onsite who operates using standing orders reviewed annually by a physician. Nearby there are two local hospitals and a few walk-in medical clinics should additional medical care be required. Parents will be notified by the Camp Director in the event of a significant injury or illness requiring doctor's care. Parents are responsible for medical bills that require doctor's care and prescription medication. The completed Health History Form is required TWO WEEKS prior to opening day for attendance. Upon arrival, all campers are subject to a health screening to check for observable evidence of illness, injury or communicable diseases.

### **Medications**

All medications must be delivered to the Camp Medical Team upon arrival. Drop off parents should avoid packing medication in your teen's luggage so it is easy to access at the drop of station. All daily medications your camper requires should be listed on the Medication Form provided and placed in a clear zip top bag, labeled with the camper's name.

- All medications (over-the-counter and/or prescription) MUST be in the ORIGINAL container with dosage instructions. Prescription medications must have the campers name printed on the bottle or it cannot be administered. *This includes epi-pens and inhalers, they must come to camp in the box they were in when picked up from pharmacy.*
- Medications in bags, pill boxes, or any other non-original medicine bottles/containers will not be accepted. If a doctor has provided a sample pack a prescription must accompany it.
- The 4-H Center must follow the dosage instruction listed on the bottle unless there is a written note from the prescribing doctor outlining different indications.
- Medications that are expired will not be administered.
- Our Clinic is stocked with basic over-the-counter medications for your camper to be administered as needed, with your permission. There is no need to send over-the-counter meds with your camper unless they are required to take them daily.

### **In case of emergency**

Should your child become sick or injured at camp, the 4-H Center medical staff will provide all

the necessary treatment to your child. If your child's condition does not progress as expected, all attempts will be made to contact you and/or the child's emergency contact.

In the event of an emergency at home you may contact the 4-H Center Staff. During business hours Monday- Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30PM -Center Office 434-248-5444. After business hours you may call the 4-H Center and leave a message and call or text the cellphones of Heather - Center Director 434-547-5789 or Ryan– Program Director 336-782-7136. These are personal cell phones and should only use in the event of a true emergency. It is also important to know that the 4-H Center does not have reliable cell coverage so leaving a message on the machine is an important step. Messages are checked periodically through-out the evening.

### **BEHAVIOR AT CAMP**

Each camper will be provided with the Virginia 4-H Code of Conduct. Each camper and parent should review and sign this form. We strictly enforce these standards at camp. Our staff will make every effort to provide positive, realistic expectations for your teen. All members of the Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center community, including staff and participants, are expected to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times. After reasonable efforts to modify behavior, a teen may be dismissed from camp. Teens that cannot live within the rules of camp, or those that are adversely affecting the experience of other campers will be dismissed from the program. In this case it is the parent's responsibility to come to camp to pick up their children.

### **MEALS & SNACKS**

The Holiday Lake 4-H Center Food Service Staff prepares the meals and serves nutritionally balanced menus that follow USDA guidelines. In order to accommodate food allergies, teens are responsible to check the food ingredient list with the Camp Nurse prior to each meal and select the appropriate menu items during the meal. Camp staff cannot be responsible for what your camper chooses to consume. We strive not to serve food containing nuts. However, we cannot guarantee that cross contamination from producers has not occurred for any allergy. Please call the office before Camp begins with any questions. All allergies are considered on a case-by-case basis and we will do our best to accommodate.

Meal service will start with lunch on Monday and end with breakfast on Friday.

Meal times: Breakfast -7:15AM      Lunch -12:00PM      Dinner - 6:00PM

A variety of snacks are available for purchase from our Camp Store twice daily.

## CAMP STORE

Snack prices range from \$0.25-\$1.00 per item and include things such as chips, crackers, cheese sticks, meat sticks, ice cream, candy, drinks, etc. Campers are permitted to purchase two snacks and one drink per store time.

Souvenir prices range from \$1.00-\$40.00. Items found in the camp store include but are not limited to stickers, postcards, water bottles, t-shirts, hoodies, and more.

Items vary, depending on availability.

## CAMP DRESS CODE

At 4-H Camp modesty refers to the manner in which a person behaves while showering, getting dressed, and taking care of personal hygiene. Showering behind a door or curtain, keeping a towel/clothing over the body before getting dressed, and refraining from making any comments about your own or someone else's body would be examples of modest behavior at 4-H camp.

In order to help ensure an emotional safe, accepting, and appropriate camp environment, the following dress code will be followed by all camp participants:

- All apparel worn at camp should be in good taste and not viewed as offensive by others. This includes logos for alcohol, tobacco, drugs or other inappropriate items, profane language or images, gang signs or symbols, or anything else deemed inappropriate by Camp Director.
- No strapless tops, see-through items, or very short shorts. All clothing should be well-fitting and appropriate for varying levels of activity.
- No undergarments may be exposed.
- Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times. Close-toed shoes are required for all recreational sports activities and some classes.
- For swimming, everyone must wear swimsuits appropriate for being active. Swimsuits that run the risk of indecent exposure, including strapless bikinis and ones that have ties or strings to keep it on the body, are prohibited.

## PREPARING FOR CAMP

### MAIL & CARE PACKAGES

All camper mail is delivered daily during our flag lowering ceremony. We believe all campers love receiving letters from home during camp. Mail can be addressed as follows:

Camper Name -MTAC  
Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center  
1267 4-H Camp Road  
Appomattox, VA 24522

To ensure that your camper gets their mail we suggest you mail it before their departure for camp, the mail is notoriously slow in this area. If you would rather not risk the mail you may hand it to a staff member at check in. Be sure to label which day you would like us to give to your camper.

If you decide to send a package, please be mindful of camp rules, do not send anything that could disrupt the camp community and its guidelines. If food or candy is included in a package it should be in small amounts. As food in the cabins attracts unwanted critters, campers are not permitted to take food into their cabins. As more and more campers each year have food allergies, we ask that no peanut or tree nut items be sent.

### LOVING CAMP, BUT MISSING HOME

Attending a residential camp program for a week can positively change the life of a child, but it may be the first time your camper has spent a full week away from home. We recommend you talk with your child about this new adventure prior to attending our program.

Please reinforce the positive aspects of camp, such as new friendship, new experiences, and independence. Missing home is natural and our staff are there to help. Be assured, our staff are well-trained to identify and handle issues that may arise. We discourage you from telling your teen(s) that they can come home from camp after a few days. We've found that this can actually encourage homesickness and make a camper less happy.

Parents should understand that initial letters home might involve strong homesick feelings, especially from first-timers. Please do not hesitate to call us. We will do everything we can to make the experience at camp a positive one, and if homesickness continues, we will contact you.

## PACKING LIST

### Clothing & Personal Items:

- pants/jeans and/or shorts
- shirts
- underwear & socks
- shoes/sandals/flip-flops
- closed toe shoes
- jacket/sweatshirt
- rain gear
- pajamas
- bathing suit
- sunscreen
- hat/sunglasses
- water bottle
- bedding (twin beds -sheets and blanket or sleeping bag)
- pillow
- medication (if applicable)
- money for the camp store

### Optional Items:

- bag for wet/dirty clothes
- fishing gear & license (if you are 16)
- insect repellent
- flashlight

### Toiletry Basics:

- toothbrush
- toothpaste
- brush/comb
- hair ties (if applicable)
- soap
- shampoo/conditioner
- deodorant
- glasses/contact case/solution (if applicable)
- wash clothes/loofah
- towel for shower
- towel for pool

### Leave at Home:

- knives & weapons
- electronic devices
- jewelry or other valuable items
- cell phones – there is limited Wi-Fi access and no cell service
- Juuls, vapes, or other tobacco items

There is no need to buy new clothes or shoes for camp, as they will mostly likely return dirty. We recommend labeling belongs so if something is misplaced throughout the week it can be easily returned.



## AFTER CAMP

### LOST AND FOUND

Many items are left at the pool and bathhouses, we do our best to return items to their owners as lost and found items are found. This is especially easy if items are labeled. Try as we might socks and underwear are NEVER claimed so they usually end up in the trash. Before departure from camp, we will encourage all campers to peruse the lost and found remaining to claim any items. Any items left will be kept for two weeks and then we will donate it to our Lost & Found Camp Closet. This closet is used through out the summer by campers in needs of similar items.

### SURVEYS

At the end of camp, we will have the teens complete a survey about their experience. After the dust has settled from camp, we will email you a Parent Evaluation. We value your feedback in order to improve our programs and services for your children. When we return your teens to you, we know they will be tired and may not share much about camp until they've rested. We hope that once they've rested you can get more out of them and be able to share it with us. We truly want to know how camp was for them and how we can make it even better.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Many camps, schools and youth agencies have struggled to deal with adolescent behavior on public forums such as Instagram and TikTok. We have found many of our campers registered on these sites ourselves. In the past campers have sought out the personal accounts of our summer staff. Many of our staff have accounts for their staff personas on social media to appease those campers. Please know our camp discourages camper-staff interactions on such sites throughout our staff training so a follow or the occasional like is the only interaction your camper should expect.

We do encourage you to visit our official Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center accounts on Facebook and Instagram rather than contact any individual camp staff member.

**We hope that the information above has been helpful, if you have questions that remain unanswered, please feel free to reach out to the 4-H Center, we are happy to help.**

*Military Teen Adventure Camps are the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with Purdue University*