



6903 W. White Eagle Road  
Leaf River IL 61047  
t: (toll-free) 1-866-471-4616  
t: 1-815-713-4110  
f: 1-815-738-2764  
info@campkupugani.com  
www.campkupugani.com

# 2025 Parent Handbook

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# The Camp Mission

Our camps are intentionally diverse, intentionally empowering, and intentionally challenging. “Kupugani” is a Zulu concept meaning “to raise oneself up.” Camp Kupugani exposes children of varied backgrounds and ethnicities to each other. Living, playing, and working together are the best teachers of instilling bonds of friendship and trust. They represent an essential step towards breaking down societal barriers that prevent positive interaction. Camp Kupugani provides a safe atmosphere where children are individually empowered via enhancing their communication skills and engaging in community building. By way of carefully selected program activities, we give them the tools to maximize their potential, free of the sometimes-limiting restrictions of school and predisposed social patterns. At Camp Kupugani, our campers will have fun while changing their world!

## THE CAMP CORE VALUES

- Personal development / empowerment (Be your best)
- Community (Show your best)
- Excellence (Do your best)
- Fun
- Safety
- Environment

These values guide our decisions, activities, actions, and expectations of campers and staff. Each one is connected and related to each other. They are concepts we live by every day.

**Personal Development / Empowerment** — At camp, everyone learns important life lessons. By planning healthy, developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences, in which campers make discoveries through experiential education, we encourage healthy risk-taking and challenge each person as an individual. We build confidence and self-respect by providing suitable structure, strong moral and ethical role models, and opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills. Campers enhance their personal sense of security and strengthen their self-confidence as we provide opportunities for leadership and personal growth. Each child is uplifted by our youth-based empowerment practices that support autonomy and take children seriously.

**Community** — Camp friendships are based on honesty and a deep sense of caring. As a result, campers and staff alike develop the most meaningful relationships...ones that last a lifetime. You learn the true meaning of community while at camp. You feel connected with others and gain respect for each person. We celebrate the uniqueness that each individual brings to camp but also realize the common ground that we all share. By providing caring, support, and guidance, we maintain an atmosphere that enhances supportive relationships. We also ensure that every camper enjoys the opportunity to belong by providing training for cultural competence, sensitivity to inclusion, programming that enhances cultural understanding and interaction, and recruitment practices that result in diverse staff and campers.

**Excellence** — We strive for the best and encourage others to do the same. We have high standards and bring with us a great deal of knowledge, expertise, and commitment. Camp requires a spirit of cooperation and a positive attitude. By having a staff of caring, moral and ethical role models, as well as a program that demonstrates appreciation and acceptance while still providing clear limits, we allow campers to excel.

**Fun** — Enthusiasm and a positive attitude at camp help create a fun, energetic, spirited environment. Our staff leads the way in providing tons of contagious liveliness each day!

**Safety** — Safety is our top priority. We maximize the physical and psychological safety of our campers by providing safe and health-promoting facilities, practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease confrontational interactions, and training to address put-downs, bullying, and harassment. We model behaviors that accept and affirm all. Additionally, as an ACA-accredited camp, we comply with ACA standards for certification, as well as state and county health and safety regulations.

**Environment** — We take seriously our relationship with the environment and convey that attitude to our campers. In addition to providing learning opportunities through experiential education, we teach the campers service to the environment by modeling good practices that are respectful of the world in which we live.

# Personal Development/Empowerment

Although they are a part of different cabin, team, and table groups, each camper retains a sense of self-identity, with each camper's personal goals for what will be accomplished during the session. Independence and self-reliance develop as campers care for their own gear, help with cabin tasks and projects, share their feelings in guided teams, make activity choices, and participate in both fun and meaningful evening activities.

## Teams and evening activities

Each day, campers participate in special guided sessions with their team—a diverse group of fellow campers with whom they will spend special activity time each day. The camp as a community does an evening activity together. By way of these carefully designed activities, campers increase their personal accountability, decision-making, social skills, and appreciation of natural surroundings. Your camper will make new friends, get to know campers who are different from them, feel good about themselves, do things they were at first afraid to do, gain self-confidence, and gain lifelong tools and skills.

## Spirituality

In keeping with our multicultural focus and respect for each individual's belief system, we have campers of many different faiths and beliefs. Before meals, we observe ten seconds of silence for people to recognize the meal however they see fit.

## Cellphones & Other Electronics

Camp is a place to celebrate and enjoy the great outdoors—to take a break from being “plugged in.” Therefore, we do NOT allow campers to have TVs, DVD players, computers, cellular phones, video/computer games, personal music players, stereos/boom boxes, digital cameras, or sophisticated electronics at camp. We ask that you please support us in our decision not to allow electronics and discuss with your camper the importance of this policy, so there is no misunderstanding when they arrive at camp. Should you have questions about this policy, please contact our office.

## Money & Valuables

Money and valuables are **not** needed at camp. Any spending money needed for the camp store can be drawn from the camper's camp store deposit. Camp will NOT be responsible for valuables brought to camp.

## Missing Home, for Campers

Missing home and family (even pets) is natural for children. Our staff is trained in working with children and helping them to deal with missing home. It is common that the first letters you receive may indicate a trace (or a large helping) of sadness, which can be hard to receive. Should you receive one of these letters, it's important to resist the urge to come to your child's short-term emotional rescue at the cost of the long-term growth in your child's independence. Here are what other experienced camp parents do to support their campers' growth while acknowledging their emotions:

- Remind themselves that homesickness is an emotion that most campers feel to some degree at camp and many college students experience as well.
- Call an experienced camp parent friend who has likely received one of these letters in the past.
- Contact the camp via phone or email and ask for an update on how their camper is doing and discuss the letter home and their concerns. These parents are sure to remember the letter could have been written and sent a few days ago, so the emotions expressed may be well past.
- Write an encouraging letter to their camper. These letters both acknowledge and validate the camper's feelings and offer encouraging statements. Ex: “I know you might feel sad sometimes, and that is totally normal. I also know that you're growing and that the more involved you are at camp, the easier it will be, the more fun you'll have, and the days will start to feel shorter. I'm confident in you and know you can do this! I'm so proud of you!”

**Ninety-five percent of campers experience a short adjustment period during the first few days of camp.** Soon, campers get caught up in the excitement of new friends, activities & camping adventures. Your support of our normal process is critical to your camper's success. How can you help your child adjust to being away from home?

- Start while your camper is still at home and help them to be proud of being independent and ready for camp. Review our camp video with them and reinforce their excitement/interest about camp. Talk about the fun things they are looking forward to doing at camp.
- Share stories about your own first forays away from home (keeping the spin positive!).

- Point out what your child does well and how that will be an asset at camp.
- Set the goal of staying the whole session. **Please do not tell your child that they can come home or that you will pick them up if they are homesick. Such “pick up deals” set them up for failure instead of success. It prevents our staff from helping them become fully integrated into camp and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.**
- “Practice” things you’ll do at camp, such as “camp showers” (3-5 minutes) and writing letters home. Pack plenty of self-addressed stamped envelopes!
- Practice overnights with family/friends to help first-time campers get used to being away.
- Send pictures of family & friends with your camper; pack a favorite personal item.
- At camp, send upbeat, cheerful letters that focus on how much fun your camper is having at camp and not on what they are missing at home. (Be sure to post a letter one or two days before your camper leaves for camp.)

## Shy / Introverted Children

At all levels of organization, we have an open door policy; counselors also regularly check in with each camper. Even then, certain campers, especially shy / introverted ones can find it difficult to seek assistance. It is their responsibility ultimately to let someone know if there is an issue with which they need help. For the well-being of the whole camp community, everyone also has a responsibility to report detrimental behavior by campers or staff, even when uncomfortable.

## What about when you miss your child (aka chillsickness)?

We know it is difficult for parents to be away from their child during camp - that is normal. We want to work together to make the experience positive for you and your child! Some tips, from other camp parents, on what you can do include:

- Before your camper leaves, make a list of things you are going to accomplish while your camper is enjoying the camp experience (things you have not gotten around to before now!)
- Write your child.
- Remind yourself about why you chose our camp - try watching the videos again to remind you of the growth, development, and independence you want for your child.
- Check for photos of your camper regularly on the Bunk1 sharing system
- Talk with another parent who has experienced the same feelings when their child left for the first time. Try our Kupugani Parents Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/kupuganiparents/>)!
- Take time for yourself! Just like your camper is trying new things and experiencing personal growth, be sure you do the same so you can be re-energized when your camper arrives home with numerous camp stories.
- If you find yourself with a serious case of chillsickness, read this: [campkupugani.com/resist-urge-pick-up-child-early-from-camp-discomfort-positive-growth-experience/](http://campkupugani.com/resist-urge-pick-up-child-early-from-camp-discomfort-positive-growth-experience/)
- If you need detailed specifics regarding your child's camp experience, provide them with a journal to enter more information regarding their experience; agree regarding expectations about meeting your needs.

## Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Policies

Camp offers a safe, substance-free environment. Positive values set the tone at camp and are role-modeled by our staff. There shall be no smoking/chewing of tobacco, drinking of alcoholic beverages, use of illicit drugs or other abusive/harassment behaviors at camp. **We reserve the right to dismiss any camper or staff member whose actions, behavior or attitude is contrary to the best interests of the camp or other campers. Please discuss these policies with your camper prior to their arrival.**

## Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Personal Development & Empowerment at Camp

- ☐ Discuss what to do if feeling homesick while at camp and how to work through this situation should it arise.
- ☐ Discuss the importance of being at camp to try new things.
- ☐ Discuss that cellular phones, digital cameras, and other electronics are not allowed at camp. For practice consider having a family screen-free day. You and your camper may find a sense of liberation from your devices.
- ☐ Discuss your plan for keeping in touch with them while they are at camp (how often will you write letters, e-mails, etc.).
- ☐ Discuss that they will not be able to call home while they are staying with us and how they can stay in touch with you while they are away.

- ☐ Discuss the importance of appropriate behavior while at camp and the consequences for inappropriate behavior.
- ☐ Discuss that there is not a visiting day while at camp.
- ☐ Discuss that while at camp, teams and evening activities provide a unique chance for self-improvement by participating fully and embracing challenges.
- ☐ Discuss that if your child is having a problem, the counselors are there to help; your child should not wait to tell you as the parent; your child can tell a counselor; your child should feel empowered to be honest and ask for what is needed to enjoy their camp experience.
- ☐ Discuss with your child that if neither cabin counselor can help or is part of the uncomfortable situation, your child can (and should) always talk to Kevin or Natasha (or another camp administrator).
- ☐ Minimize your child's "camp lag" by having your child go to bed at 10PM and wake up at 7AM.
- ☐ If you are a parent who may be prone to "childsickness", make sure to discuss with your child beforehand the importance of them getting in pictures and smiling to allay your fears!
- ☐ Discuss that you will need to say your goodbyes in the car and will not be able to escort your child to their cabin.

## **Partnering with Parents**

We pledge open and honest communication while your child is with us and ask that you do the same in disclosures before camp and a willingness to work with our staff to make your child's experience a success. We ask that you encourage your child around issues concerning the camp community, adjustments, or conflicts, should they develop. If you get a letter or hear something that raises concerns, or if you have any questions or concerns, contact a camp director immediately.

## **Data Form**

**Please complete and return the Camper Data Form 30 days prior to the start of your session.**

All comments are reviewed and shared with your child's counselor as appropriate. Goals, expectations, program requests and comments serve as a guide for your child's experience. Specifics you share are a valuable resource allowing your child's counselor to get to know your child better.

## **Letters are important!**

Please send cheerful letters with a focus on camp, *not* what they are missing at home. Write letters to your child before they leave home so that your camper will have mail waiting on arrival. **We recommend that your child receive 3-4 letters per session;** because more than that can imbue a child with undue pressure to write back while they're trying to fully enjoy the limited time they have at camp, we deliver mail only four times per session! If by chance you forget to pre-mail a letter, families can write a letter, date it on the outside, and give it to someone in the office for later distribution. **Please include your child's cabin name** (available no later than check-in day)!

Write to:

CAMPER'S NAME  
CABIN NAME (available no later than check-in day)  
Camp Kupugani  
6903 West White Eagle Road  
Leaf River, IL., 61047

To facilitate your receiving mail, supply your camper with envelopes pre-addressed to you (or to whomever is receiving the mail). For the campers' envelopes, please put your home address as the return address.

## **E-mail**

We have partnered with Bunk1.com to provide secure one-way e-mails (and access to camper photos). E-mail is delivered with mail. Campers will NOT have access to send outgoing e-mail while at camp. Included with this packet is information on how to e-mail your camper. Please input your camper's cabin name when sending e-mail via the service. **Please be sure to share this information with friends & family members.** Although e-mail seems convenient and easy to send, campers far prefer to receive snail mail! As with snail mail, we deliver e-mails only 4 times per session.

## **Telephone Contact**

If you are experiencing high levels of childsickness insufficiently helped by talking with another parent, checking in with the Kupugani Parents Facebook group, or viewing pictures online, you can call the camp office, and we will be happy to have someone return the call when he have time (usually no later than after the next meal). **We do not**

**allow campers to use the telephone or to call home.** Your cooperation in explaining our policy to your child is appreciated.

## No Care Packages Please!

To continue to build a strong cabin community, we ask that you not send care packages of any kind. Letters are the best way to let your camper know that you are thinking of them while they are at camp. If a camper forgets any of the items listed on the basic packing list (located later in the handbook), you may send them. **Only items on the basic packing list will be accepted. All other items will be disposed of at our discretion (especially Gummy Bears, which Kevin will eat!)** A parcel will be considered a care package if it arrives in any of the following: a box, a padded envelope, any envelope of any type or size that appears to include anything more than one letter. The Camp Director will open the package in private and distribute the appropriate contents to the camper by the following day. Please send any medications, airline tickets and camp paperwork directly to the camp office.

## Adjusting to Camp Time / Other Transition Issues

At camp, the children generally wake up by 7 AM and go to bed at 10 PM—with some limited variations to this schedule. To maximize your child's enjoyment of camp, at least a week before camp, please help them become acclimated to the camp schedule by having your child get used to the camp schedule at home. This really helps them adjust more easily to camp life and avoid “camp lag,” which can be very similar to “jet lag.” For each hour that your child's home schedule differs from camp time, give it at least a day to get used to the difference. You can even sing our good morning song and goodnight song if you'd like!

- It can also be a good idea for a first-time camper to spend practice time away from home under similar circumstances as at camp (i.e., no cell, texting, etc.). Another good transition tip is to use a wall or desk calendar to show your child the times before, during, and after camp, and that camp is a discrete amount of time.

## Pictures of Your Child at Camp

Through Bunk1.com, (in addition to the one-way e-mails noted above) you may view the Photo Gallery of photos posted daily. Please remember that your child may not be smiling in every picture we take...sometimes they are not aware of the picture we're taking...sometimes they're trying to look tough (especially for Capture The Flag)...etc. This is not necessarily indicative of the time they're having or fully representative of their camp experience. Also, don't be alarmed if you see other children in more pictures than your child; that may relate to the activities we were able to capture and in proper exposure, etc. We will contact you if your child is truly struggling.

## Potential Topics of Discussion at Camp

At camp, we like to be intentional about making sure our campers have information that is accurate and useful before they need it. This empowers our campers to speak openly about difficult topics in a safe and welcoming environment.

These topics may come up at various times during a camp session, including “I am from” poems, team time, or cabin discussions. Especially if your child does not know a great deal about these issues beforehand, we encourage you to briefly explain these topics before camp.

## Diversity and Bias

At Kupugani, inclusivity and understanding are paramount. Although biases color our experiences, and ignorance can arise from limited exposure to difference, we're dedicated to collectively addressing and overcoming these challenges. The topics of religion or race or politics or other “taboo” subjects may come up at camp. Campers openly explore these issues in a number of ways including cabin discussions, evening activities, and team activities. Although there's no singular correct way of thinking, we celebrate and value positive interactions, fostering empathy and awareness. Everyone should feel respected and appreciated—able to build meaningful connections that transcend biases.

## Drugs and Alcohol

Although there is no specific way that alcohol and drugs are addressed at camp, the topic may come up in team activities, cabin discussions or evening activities.



## Romantic Relationships

in every aspect of camp life, we aim to foster healthy relationships. As campers form connections, it is important to have respect, communication, and kindness in all interactions. Whether experiencing a budding romance or simply navigating friendships, campers need be mindful of how actions and words impact individuals and the wider community. We strive to have positive examples of support and consideration, building relationships based on mutual understanding and care. Kupugani is an environment where everyone should feel valued and respected.

## Sex and Sexuality

These topics may be raised during a dedicated voluntary discussion during siesta time. The children take an anonymous true/false quiz, so facilitators understand the group's level of knowledge and then the quiz is discussed. Below is a list of pre-camp conversation topics to touch on in preparation for issues that may be discussed at camp.

### Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Sex and Sexuality, Diversity, and Drugs and Alcohol

- ☐ Discuss the biological and physiological mechanics of sex.
- ☐ Consider reading the book *30 Days of Sex Talks*  
(<https://www.amazon.com/Days-Sex-Talks-Ages-8-11/dp/0986370819>) (Ages 8-11)  
(<https://www.amazon.com/Days-Sex-Talks-Ages-Empowering/dp/0986370827>) (12+)
- ☐ Discuss that people have different sexual identities; it can be a spectrum rather than binary.
- ☐ At camp, people are celebrated and appreciated however they identify (or not identify).
- ☐ Discuss that Kupugani has a diverse community, with many people with varied nationalities, cultures, religions, and viewpoints.
- ☐ Discuss the importance of diversity and prepare your camper to be open with other people's religion or lack thereof, and/or other beliefs that differ from theirs.
- ☐ Discuss the effects of alcohol and other drugs.
- ☐ Discuss the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.
- ☐ Discuss that if your child should have a romantic relationship, they should prioritize respect, communication, and kindness in all interactions.

## Community

### The Community of Camp

Camp offers a secure and welcoming community where campers can try new activities, broaden interests, make friends, express themselves and feel a sense of belonging. Living closely together allows for an experience of team building, which promotes life skills in sharing, cooperation, and compromise. Campers gain the pride of being a supportive member of their cabin and the camp community at-large. We promote an environment free of physical or emotional abusive/harassment/bullying/disruptive behavior. This type of behavior is not tolerated, has strong consequences, and may lead to dismissal.

The Kupugani community is one where it is cool to be kind (not cool to be cruel, as can happen occasionally in other child-serving locales). All community members are expected to try their best and give generously of themselves, be honest and respectful, participate enthusiastically in all parts of the program, make their best effort to understand and work with others, respect and listen to others' opinions, abide by all safety policies and never endanger themselves or others, and to ask for help should they have any problems.

Should a camper (or staff) struggle with any of the above, we have a check-in system to try to find solutions, as delineated below:

- Step 1: Check in with Counselor
- Step 2: Check in with Co-Counselor or Co-Facilitator
- Step 3: Check in with a Camp Administrator
- Step 4: Check in with Kevin (and possibly parent/guardian)

## Camp Upkeep and Maintenance

Participating in camp chores helps keep our home clean and organized and ensures that facilities like showers and toilets are well-maintained for everyone's comfort. If there are any issues, such as broken fixtures or cleanliness concerns, campers should take action by either fixing it (if possible) or promptly notifying staff. We expect our camp family to take pride in our camp and uphold its standards so that everyone can have the best possible experience.

## Camp Tours for Prospective Camp Families

We invite folks to view our virtual tour (<https://campkupugani.com/kupugani-virtual-tour/>). If you have friends interested in seeing camp, we provide tours **by appointment**. It is of utmost importance to camp security that we know who is on camp and that all visitors are accompanied by staff. Please call in advance to set up the appointment.

## Camp Food Service

Three hearty all-you-can-eat meals are served family-style each day. Each meal has fruit and vegetables, and salad is available for the noon and evening meals. Table mates share the responsibilities of setting and clearing their tables. Special medical food needs or concerns (including food allergies—e.g., lactose intolerant or peanuts—and preferences, e.g., vegetarian) should be brought to our attention prior to the camp session.

## Candy, Food & Beverages

We ask that no candy, food or beverages (including bottled water) be brought or sent to camp for the following reasons:

- Food in the cabin attracts insects, mice, and chipmunks.
- It can undermine the cabin community if a few campers have food and others do not.
- A variety of snacks are offered while at camp as well as limited amounts of soda and candy.

**Any food & beverage items will be disposed of at our discretion. They will not be returned to the sender. Prior to camp, please discuss this policy with your child as well as their friends and other relatives.**

## Birthdays at Camp

For every camp birthday, there is a birthday celebration with camp friends as well as lots of recognition from the camp community. We encourage you to send birthday cards to your child, but **no care packages are accepted**. You will not be able to speak with your child on their special day, so plan ahead with your birthday correspondence.

## Camper Placement

We understand your concern and interest in your child's cabin placement. It is important to us as well that each camper be placed into a peer group with interests and experiences that will further our camp mission, and provide a welcoming, yet challenging interaction. Our cabins sleep 7 to 10 campers and two staff members. **In making cabin assignments, the primary factors considered are age, and whether the placement furthers the camp mission; also considered are geographic location, grade in school, and previous camp experience.**

## Laundry

At around the mid-point of each session, we partner with a local laundry service to have your camper's laundry washed, dried, and folded. There is a charge for the service, which will be made to your camper's store account. Please pack accordingly for the time that your camper is with us. Please mark your child's name (not just initials) on each laundry bag as well as each piece of clothing. **Camp cannot be responsible for lost or damaged articles.**

## La Tienda Camp Store and Online Store

Supplies can be purchased at the camp store on a limited basis: T-shirts and sweatshirts, hats, disposable cameras, water bottles, and snacks. Purchases are charged to the camper's account. The camp store deposit is usually sufficient to purchase snacks for the session, plus a souvenir or two; if you think that your camper will want to purchase souvenirs beyond the camp store deposit—for example a camp sweatshirt (\$20-\$50)—you may contact us to increase the deposit. Any excess balance remaining after camp can be donated, rolled over to the following year, or refunded. It is your responsibility to direct Camp Kupugani on the disposition of these funds. If you have not contacted camp concerning any remaining balance less than \$5, that balance will be considered a donation to the Kupugani Scholarship Fund. We have an online store where one can purchase Kupugani swag even when not at camp. Pack for Camp is an on-demand screen printing service, which allows you to order items in specified colors and styles. You can find our online store here: <https://www.packforcamp.com/pages/kupugani>.

## Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Community at Camp

- ☐ Discuss with your child the importance of making good food choices while at camp, and that sodas and sweets are limited while at camp.
- ☐ Discuss with your child that care packages are not allowed. Make a list of realistic items that your child would like to have at camp to make their stay comfortable (see packing list later in this handbook for guidelines).
- ☐ Discuss with your child the importance of making new friends and talking to a counselor or administrator if they encounter any problems.
- ☐ Discuss with your child that every camper is part of a group and as a parent you expect your child to cooperate and help out.
- ☐ Discuss with your child that clean-up is an everyday part of camp and you expect your child to fully participate; if there are any issues, such as broken fixtures or cleanliness concerns, campers should take action by either fixing it (if possible) or promptly notifying staff.
- ☐ Discuss with your child the importance of building your child's own quality relationships with other campers and staff members.
- ☐ Discuss with your child the importance of our check-in system to seek solutions to unacceptable behavior.

## Excellence

### Accredited Camp

ACA Accreditation means that Camp Kupugani submitted to a thorough (over 300 standards) review of its operation by the American Camp Association (ACA)—from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. American Camp Association collaborates with experts from The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth service agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. Camp Kupugani and ACA form a partnership that promotes summers of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety. The Illinois Department of Health and the Ogle County Health Department also license and inspect camp yearly.

### Dedicated Camp Counselors & Staff

Camp carefully selects staff members for their interest and commitment to working with children. Each staff member meets a high standard of dedication and skill. Interviews are given, references are checked and background checks completed. Many of our staff continue their youth work throughout the year. Staff members attend a comprehensive staff training, which emphasizes counseling skills, group dynamics, safety procedures and facilitation skills. Our counselors form a strong, committed team with a single focus: a safe summer filled with fun, learning and growth opportunities for each camper. Camp policy does not allow “tipping” or “gratuities” for any staff member. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

### Contact from Camp

Your child will be encouraged to write home at least twice a week. You can also keep updated by following our camp updates online. We may also communicate via e-mail. **Please make sure that we have your correct e-mail address on the data form.** If you feel it necessary to call camp, a staff member will call you back as soon as we have time (usually no later than after the next meal).

## Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Excellence at Camp

- ☐ Discuss with your child that the staff may communicate with you to share with you your child's progress while at camp.

## Fun

### Activity Choices

Many land and water activities are offered, giving campers a wide choice of exciting activities to try. Our daily schedule combines scheduled group activities and choice periods. Campers will generally be able to choose two activities per day, and we re-evaluate our group schedules continually to ensure that all of our campers are able to spend time doing the activities they enjoy most. Prior to camp, please encourage your child to choose a good variety of activities for a well-rounded camp experience. If you have some specific program expectations for your child's participation, please discuss this with your child as well, and note this on the camper data form.

### Trips

Older campers may have the opportunity to take an overnight trip out of camp. Examples of past trips include tenting, hiking, and caving. For the trips, we focus on the requisite procedures, training, expertise, and planning, in keeping with standards mandated by the American Camp Association, so that campers have a rewarding, safe experience.

## Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Fun At Camp

- ☐ Discuss with your child what activities your child would like to participate in while at camp as well as what activities you would like your child to try at least once.

## Safety

Safety is given top priority at camp. Facilities and policies have been constructed to provide a thorough and consistent safety program. During staff training, counselors are oriented regarding safety rules and expectations for all aspects of camp life. Safety regulations are practiced by all campers and staff. Talk to your campers about the importance of following safety rules.

- We follow the "Rule of 3" at camp, meaning no camper should ever be alone 1-on-1 with an adult; there must always be a third person present.
- Except when allowed during certain activities, you must walk at camp.
- You must wear shoes that have backs or heel straps (Crocs don't count) unless you are going to the shower. Bare feet may be allowed in certain grassy areas as directed by staff.
- You can go for a walk outside of activities only with supervision.
- No pocketknives are allowed at camp.
- No medicines of any kind are allowed in the cabins. All medications must be checked in with the camp nurse. The Nurse will bring meds to meals; please do not go to the Nurse's Station before meals. (The only exception to the no-meds-in-cabins rule is if you have severe allergies/asthma and have received prior permission to carry your emergency asthma inhaler or Epi-pen in a fanny pack.)
- We use a bell to signify the beginning and end of activities or to let you know when to wake up or when mealtime is starting. That bell sounds only once or twice. If there is ever an emergency situation at camp, you will hear the bell ring continuously. If that happens, all activity must stop, and everyone must gather in front of the dining hall for further instructions.

Usually on the first or second day of camp, campers must take a standard swim evaluation to see who can swim, and also to check how campers react to being around water. Campers who attempt but cannot complete the evaluation can still be in the pool (in the shallow end) and participate in all water-based activities (canoeing, river walks, playing in the lake, etc.).

## Hydration at Camp

Hydration is always important at camp. Campers are outdoors and active most of the day and sometimes in high heat and humidity. Campers are encouraged to bring (and use and refill) water bottles.

## Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Safety At Camp

- ☐ Discuss with your child how important safety is at camp.
- ☐ Discuss the importance of taking the swim evaluation, even if your child is unable to swim. Supportive lifeguards are on hand to provide immediate help and guidance.
- ☐ Discuss the importance of drinking plenty of water at meals and throughout the day
- ☐ Discuss with your child what to do if they feel ill or have other symptoms. Educate them on basic preventative hygiene. Discuss proper 20-second hand washing with your camper.

## Environment

At camp, we practice “leaving no trace”—meaning that we try our best to leave the environment the way we found it.

- At camp, no animals should be harmed (except maybe mosquitoes...).
- Remember, the animals were here first, and often are very helpful to us humans: snakes, bats, dragonflies, and toads eat lots of mosquitoes; if you see them around, we welcome their presence.
- Please do not take food outside the dining hall. No food or drinks are allowed in the cabins. Remember that where there is food, there WILL BE animals.
- If you see litter anywhere, please pick it up and dispose of it properly.

## Pre-camp Conversation Checklist About Respecting The Environment At Camp

- ☐ Discuss with your child that they should practice “leaving no trace”.

## Packing For Camp

### Mark Your Clothing & Equipment

**Please use a laundry pen to mark each piece of equipment and clothing sent with your child.** Mark the article of clothing so that the camper's name will be visible when the article is folded. The collar or waistband of most clothing articles and inside hats/shoes works well. For towels, sheets, pillowcases, sleeping bags and laundry bags, place two name tapes on opposite corners. Mark names clearly on items such as cameras, teddy bears, fishing poles, and flashlights. Don't forget duffel bags, too! We ask that you please use full names (not initials). At camp, some clothing/items may be misplaced, left at camp, or packed into another child's bag. Thus, proper “ID” on equipment and clothing will greatly assist in the return of articles to their proper owner. **Any lost or unclaimed clothing or belongings left after camp will be disposed of after one week.**

### Pack with Your Child

Be sure to pack with your child. That way, both of you know where everything is, your child is empowered by participating in the process, and you can ensure that you're all set with the packing list. It's a good idea to put a checklist (noting any special items) in the bag to facilitate the return packing process. The space provided for camper belongings is a large storage drawer under the bunks in cabins. It is important for the health of the camp community that no items be shared and that campers keep their belongings organized and separate from other campers' belongings.

## Pack in Duffel Bags

Duffel Bags are the preferred camp luggage—easy to carry and easy to store. Remember to put the child's name on duffel bags. **Please limit packing to 2 bags maximum.**

## Clothes to Have Fun In!

Please send clothing that campers can really play in. Campers will get involved in a “hands-on” way; their clothing may show the wear & tear. Please do not send expensive clothing to camp. Stains are a way of life at camp as proof of having fun. **Camp will NOT be responsible for lost or damaged articles; this includes sports/activity equipment.** Additionally, at camp we celebrate the whole camper, rather than giving undue attention to physical looks. **Rather than dressing to “look good” or attract attention, campers should choose clothes based on activities they will be doing at camp.** This means clothes that can get dirty; clothes they can easily move in; and clothes that need not be positioned carefully. Avoid clothes that are too tight or ill-fitting, that expose undergarments, or might inadvertently expose genitals, buttocks, breasts, nipples, etc.. Also, clothing/accessories with violent language or images, depicting drugs, alcohol or other illegal items and activities, or including hate speech, profanity, pornography, or weapons will not be permitted. You and your child know best what makes them feel confident and comfortable; we want campers to be empowered to express themselves and feel good in their bodies!

## Toiletries

For safety reasons, plastic (rather than glass) containers are recommended. A toiletries case or basket is helpful in carrying toiletries to the shower facilities and in keeping your camper's items separate from those of other campers.

## Hair Care

At camp, there is limited time to get ready and shower. Campers should have their hair in a style requiring no more than 5 minutes of daily care! Also, camp gets busy and dirty; there is a strong possibility that hair can get “ruined” and not look how it would outside of camp. That is totally okay; we celebrate your child for much more than their appearance! However, campers and parents should understand that campers might return with “messy” hair.

## Bedding & Sleeping Bags

Sleeping bags are required. In addition to being used outside if the cabin sleeps out or if the camper goes on a solo, the sleeping bag may also be unzipped and used as a bed comforter as needed. For health and safety reasons, we require the use of sheets, pillowcases, and blankets for beds at camp.

## If Sensitive to Mosquitoes

There always seems to be one (unpredictable) week at camp when mosquitoes tend to be very active. If your child is especially sensitive, be sure to pack loose clothing (perhaps safely treated with Permethrin) and 20% Deet repellent.

## Packing list

### THE BASICS (YOU WILL NEED ALL OF THESE...PLEASE USE CHECKLIST!)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> brush/comb   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 swimsuits (one for mud sports)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> toothbrush/paste   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 red and 1 blue t-shirt for Kupu-Olympics!   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal hand sanitizer  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lotion  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pajamas/robes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Any necessary hair care products  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> soap/soapbox/shampoo   | <input type="checkbox"/> names and addresses of 5 friends (to send free camp postcards)                              |
| (2 in 1 shampoo/conditioner is a good idea)   | <input type="checkbox"/> stamped, pre-addressed envelopes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hat or visor   | <input type="checkbox"/> jacket/windbreaker  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sunscreen/lip balm   | <input type="checkbox"/> rain gear/poncho  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> insect repellent   | <input type="checkbox"/> sunglasses  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pr tennis shoes (in case one gets wet)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> flashlight & extra batteries  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pr Teva type sandals/Aqua sox                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> water bottle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stationery/stamps/pen/pencil                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> culturally representative item (i.e. flag, clothing, etc.)                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping bag   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 long sleeve cotton shirts   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 short sleeved t-shirts  | <input type="checkbox"/> laundry bag   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 sweatshirts/sweaters   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 bath towels (optional: incl. beach towel)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 pr jeans/pants/sweatpants                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kupugani T-Shirt (for picture day...new campers get one at check in)                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 pr shorts you can move in                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fitted sheets and 2 flat sheets (singles)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 blanket  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pillow and 2 cases  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> socks (enough for one week)                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> index cards with your name and contact info (to share with new friends before leaving camp) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 pr underwear  | <input type="checkbox"/> packing list of items you packed  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> period or menstrual products if needed (incl. tampons or pads)   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> large garbage bag labeled with your name (for wet/dirty clothes) |  |

### Optional

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> riding helmet (if doing riding)   | <input type="checkbox"/> colored pencils or drawing materials              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> toiletries case/basket  | <input type="checkbox"/> small (battery-operated) fan                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> musical instrument  | <input type="checkbox"/> disposable camera or other non-digital camera     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> reading material/books  | <input type="checkbox"/> one nice, casual outfit                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fanny pack for carrying inhaler or Epi-Pen, if necessary  | <input type="checkbox"/> soccer shin guards                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> items to be tie-dyed (or backwards tie-dyed)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Croc-type sandals or flip flops (for shower only) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small backpack (for water bottles, change of clothes, etc.)   | <input type="checkbox"/> swim goggles                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> period swimwear ( <a href="https://www.amazon.com/s?k=period+swimwear+for+girls+ages+11-14&amp;crd=2UA54CWIJPRNV&amp;srefix=period+swimwear%2Caps%2C295&amp;ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_2_15">https://www.amazon.com/s?k=period+swimwear+for+girls+ages+11-14&amp;crd=2UA54CWIJPRNV&amp;srefix=period+swimwear%2Caps%2C295&amp;ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_2_15</a> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> Teddy bear or blankie                             |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis racket                                     |

**When packing your items for camp, please remember: Anything you wear during camp may get stained, torn, and sometimes completely ruined! Camp is fun and can get messy!**

**When leaving camp, please check that you have everything; we can keep lost items for a week at the most.**

**NOT to Bring!** *(We will confiscate the following and can't guarantee their return, so PLEASE do not bring them!)*

**-Food, candy, or gum.** We will provide plenty of healthy food. Food brought by campers will be confiscated; food in the cabins is an invitation for critters to visit.

**-Knives or other weapons**

**-Matches or lighters**

**-Hair dryers, curling irons or hair straighteners (fire hazard)**

**-Any electric fans or box fans (if necessary, those will be supplied by camp for the cabin).** Each cabin has a ceiling fan located in the center of the room.

**-Make-up or perfume**

**-Electronics (incl. electronic games, cell phones, MP3 players or personal music player or radios)**

**-Watches/clocks** (Constantly looking ahead to something that seems overdue can take the mind out of the present and restrict current enjoyment. Kupugani fosters a mindful culture where young people can focus on living in the present.)

**-Money**

**-ANYTHING VALUABLE**

# Traveling to Camp

Except for unaccompanied minors traveling from a different state or country, parents/guardians must arrange transportation for campers to and from camp. Within specific windows at the start of the session, Camp Kupugani can pick up unaccompanied minors flying into O'Hare airport, and drop them off at O'Hare at the end of the session, again within specific windows.

## Travel Plans Form

**We need a Travel Plans Form for every camper who attends—even if you are driving to/from camp.** This allows the camp to know exactly when, where and how to expect your child's arrival and departure and to make appropriate arrangements. **Please inform us of your child's finalized travel plans at least 2 weeks prior to your camper's arrival.**

## Check In: 3:00pm - 4:30pm

Families will be assigned specific 30-minute windows for our “drive-thru drop-off.” Our drive through drop off means only campers should leave the cars. Family members should use the bathroom before arriving at camp. This style of drop off may be challenging for certain campers and families, so please prepare accordingly. To help with the transition, avoid asking your camper: “Are you ready for us to leave?” and avoid transferring any worries or need for them to be preoccupied with home life. Make things easier on your camper by compartmentalizing any of your own fears so your camper can feel safe and secure at camp. (After drop off, feel free to cry your hearts out...reach out to our Kupugani Parent group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/kupuganiparents/>) on Facebook if you need further support for any child's sickness.) Assigned staff will visit your vehicle to **check-in any and all medication IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS** and to discuss any last-minute needs. All luggage should be in the trunk to be easily unloaded by staff. Staff will escort campers to their cabins where counselors will assist in moving into their summer home away from home. Once their camper(s) are checked-in, families are free to go, to facilitate their camper's independent growth.

## Check Out: 10:30am - 12:00 noon

Families will be assigned 30-minute windows to arrive at camp and triumphantly (and embarrassingly) embrace their child after the child has been dismissed to the parking area. Before you leave, be sure to visit the various tables set up for retrieval of any unused medications, unclaimed lost and found items, disposition of any leftover La Tienda funds, signing out your camper, and (if desired) registration for 2025 camp sessions. Once you've collected your camper, signed them out, and loaded their belongings, you may slowly exit the parking lot.

## Driving to Camp:

We are:

- 30 miles from Rockford
- 112 miles from Madison
- 113 miles from Chicago
- 304 miles from St. Louis
- 373 miles from Minneapolis-St. Paul

Online map services like MapQuest or GPS can occasionally provide inaccurate directions; the best directions are on our website at this link <https://campkupugani.com/camp-directions/>. Be sure to enter at the driveway with the big wooden Camp Kupugani sign; your GPS may direct you to an entrance across camp where your child will not be. Once you get within a mile or so of camp, you will be on a gravel road; please be careful and be sure to slow down when driving on gravel roads.

When arriving at camp, be sure to comply with the **SPEED LIMIT ON ALL CAMP ROADS OF 10 MPH.**

All vehicles are limited to the main parking area and should not enter the roundabout in the middle of camp.



# Camp Health Information

## Health Form

It is important that we have a complete and detailed health history on each child. Please **return the completed Health Form no later than 2 weeks prior to the session.** Your child may not attend camp without a completed health form. Required Information:

1. Health History
2. Immunization History
3. Parent's Authorization Signature
4. Emergency Contacts

Please notify the camp if the camper is exposed to any communicable disease within 21 days prior to camp and also if health conditions change after the date on which the Health Form is signed. Your child must have had a medical examination by a licensed medical professional within the last two years.

## Camp Health Service

Licensed health care staff oversees the camp health center. EMS response time is about ten minutes, and camp is less than 25 minutes from the nearest hospital and other medical clinic services. General care and first aid supplies are available at camp. Expenses of healthcare providers employed by the camp are provided as part of your regular tuition. Prescriptions, special medications, and trips to town (if needed) are charged to your child's account.

**You will receive a call if: your child stays overnight in the health center; is newly-prescribed medication; outside medical attention is sought or contemplated; or if your child should otherwise need emergency care.**

For non-emergency health updates, you can expect an email update towards the end of camp detailing any significant health center treatments.

## Medications & Prescriptions

Except for campers with severe allergies and/or asthma, all medications (brought or sent to camp) must be kept in the health center and will be administered by our healthcare staff. Medications must be clearly labeled with the camper's name, the physician's instructions, the name of the medication, and the dosage. **PLEASE BRING MEDICATIONS IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS WITH AN APPROPRIATE LABEL. The instructions and dosage on the container must match any parent or physician notes made on the health form.** Please have your physician/pharmacist correct the instructions on the container if the dosage has changed. **If your child is on behavioral medications, please continue this medication while at camp.** As with all medications, please send enough for the entire time that your child is with us. Campers with severe allergies and/or asthma should keep their insect sting / extreme allergy shots (Epi-pens, Ana Kits) and asthma rescue inhalers (metered dose inhaler) with them in a fanny pack, and one allergy shot/inhaler will be kept in the health center. **If you send medication in your child's baggage, please instruct your child that the camp health care staff will request this medication upon your child's arrival.** We ask that you **send only essential medications** to be administered by our health care staff. Vitamins/supplements are not needed at camp unless specifically prescribed by a doctor, and are not allowed in the cabins. Our health center is stocked with supplies of the usual over-the-counter medications (Tylenol, cough syrups, etc.).

## Precautions Regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus), H1N1, or Influenza-Like Illness

We ask that families monitor their camper's temperature and watch daily for symptoms in the 2 weeks leading up to camp. It's also wise for families to repeat at home this screening period for 14 days after camp. If a camper has had probable or confirmed infection or exposure to COVID-19 10 days prior to the start of the camp, please follow the most current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/respiratory-virus-guidance.html>. Campers are not allowed to attend camp if they have had an influenza-like illness (ILI) in the 7 days prior to the start of the camp. In addition, if they have been exposed to a person with an ILI in the 7 days prior to the start of camp, they may attend camp but should closely self-monitor and report development of ILI symptoms immediately. Persons who currently have or have had ILI in the previous 7 days should not attend camp for 7 days after their symptoms began or until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.

## Preventing Lice and Other Communicable Disease

The health of our campers and community is very important. In close-quarters, health concerns like head lice, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat and other illness can spread easily. While this cannot always be avoided, we ask that parents carefully inspect their children for signs of infectious illness and for lice nits and eggs and treat accordingly. Visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Pages/Signs-of-Lice.aspx> for more information. Should known exposure occur at camp, we will inform you of the problem and plans for dealing with them.

## Payments and Cancellations

### Tuition: \$2950 (2 weeks), \$5505 (4 weeks), \$7860 (6 weeks)

- Sibling discount -10% tuition reduction for each additional child in the family after first child is enrolled at full tuition. Referral discount - 5% tuition credit to split with each enrolled camper who tells us you referred them; although you can share multiple referral credits, each incoming camper can list only one person as the referral.
- A resident medical staff is available for routine medical services, but the costs of special medications, illness expenses, hospital costs, or consulting doctors are not included in the camp fee. Camp Kupugani does not carry camper medical or accident insurance. Bills for such claims will be sent directly to parents' insurance company or to parents by physicians, clinics, and hospitals involved.
- If you are concerned about a medical illness or other circumstance that might preclude your camper's attendance at camp, we encourage you to obtain third-party insurance that would cover your tuition because we are unable to give credits for non-attendance.
- The use, possession, or involvement in smoking, drinking, or unauthorized drugs, or any conduct that is not in the best interest of the camp, including physical or verbal abuse is cause for immediate dismissal from camp without tuition refund.
- Because we want your child to come back year after year, you can "lock-in" the rate during the year your child started camp. I.e, you can guarantee the \$2950 rate (\$1750, for those who took advantage of it in 2011) for as many consecutive years as they (or a sibling) keep coming to camp. Certain conditions apply.

### Payment of Camp Fees

Camp fees are payable in advance. The registration deposit is 25%. Campers enrolled after April 1 must generally make payment in full, unless the camp office, in advance, approves alternative arrangements.

### Cancellations

Cancellations received before February 1 will receive a full refund. If an application is canceled after February 1st, 25% of tuition will be retained. Cancellations after April 1st, but before 30 days prior to your selected session will have 50% retained. **Cancellations within 30 days of the start of the selected session will forfeit full tuition.** No reduction of the fee is made for late arrival, early departure or dismissal.

### Deposit for Miscellaneous Expenses

An additional \$125 (per 2-week session) camp store deposit for miscellaneous expenditures, paid in advance, is required for your child's camp stay. Items charged against the account may include: store purchases, laundry charges, medical prescriptions & expenses, etc. Only services actually used or items purchased will be charged. Any balance remaining can be donated, rolled over to the following year, or refunded (or an overdraft will be billed).

## Camp Dates

Sunday, June 22 – Saturday, July 5 (Blended Session 1)  
Sunday, July 6 – Saturday July 29 (Blended Session 2)  
Sunday, July 20 – Saturday August 2 (Girls 2-week Session)

**CHECK IN TIMES: 3:00PM TO 4:30PM / CHECK OUT TIMES: 10:30AM TO NOON**