

Summer Camps FAQ



COVID-19

How is Sunset Zoo enhancing its cleaning practices for summer camps?

Sunset Zoo has always followed guidelines provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment during its camp programs. These include cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and materials on regular basis before and after use. For example, we clean and disinfect surfaces before and after snack times and lunch. We also clean and disinfect at the beginning and end of the day. In order to lessen the exposure to cleaning chemicals, like bleach, we will have assigned seating to limit close contact with others throughout the day. Sunset Zoo also has Oransi Mod air purifiers in each classroom space, which are outfitted with a medical grade HEPA filter (MERV17).

Will Sunset Zoo require face masks during summer camps?

Sunset Zoo will follow recommendations issued by CDC regarding camp programs and the policies and procedures approved by the City of Manhattan. Currently, face masks are optional.

How will social distancing be monitored/maintained?

Sunset Zoo staff will monitor participants for social distancing throughout the day. We are currently planning for reduced capacity within our camp again in 2022 to provide for additional social distancing while in classroom spaces.

How will Sunset Zoo handle a positive COVID-19 case among its summer camp?

It is important that families communicate with Sunset Zoo should their child test positive for COVID-19 and not just call in sick or not show up to camp. Sunset Zoo will work with the Riley County Health Department to individually assess a positive case, whether staff or participant, and determine a path forward. Each situation will be different, and will be handled accordingly under the direction of the Health Department. Privacy will also be upheld, and we will not share names of individuals who test positive. Sunset Zoo's summer camp confidentiality statement is on the back of the parent handbook for further information related to privacy.

What happens if Sunset Zoo changes COVID-related procedures that I am not comfortable with?

If changes occur, like requiring masks instead of recommending masks, and your family is not comfortable with that change, Sunset Zoo will work with you to maximize refunds if canceling enrollment ends up being your family's choice. When changes happen, we will communicate them to registered families as soon as possible via email. Thus, it is imperative families monitor email throughout the summer and ensure Sunset Zoo has current, active email accounts on file.

Program Schedule & Procedures

How old does my child have to be to participate in summer camps at Sunset Zoo?

For 2022, Animal Crackers is the youngest summer camp, and all participants must have completed kindergarten through 2nd grade. Summer Safari is for participants having completed 3rd grade through 4th grade. Depending on COVID-19 trends, Sunset Zoo may bring back the Nature Navigators camp option, which will impact the grade breakdown of all camps and open spots for 5th and 6th graders. This decision will be made prior to registration opening on March 28th.

Where are summer camps at Sunset Zoo held?

All summer camps at Sunset Zoo are based in the Nature Exploration Center. Each camp has a designated room where they will begin and end each day. Throughout the day, however, each camp will split the time up between inside and outside activities.

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What are the session times for Sunset Zoo's Summer Camps?

All summer camps at Sunset Zoo run Monday through Friday with drop off starting as early as 7:30 a.m. and pickup by 5:30 p.m. The first week starts on Tuesday due to Memorial Day. Sunset Zoo does not prorate any program, so the first week is offered at the same cost as the others.

Do I need to sign my child in every morning?

Yes, this process is required. Staff will manage the sign in/out forms. Failure to follow this procedure will result in termination from the program. Our license that allows us to operate depends on this.

Can I drop my child off late?

Yes. If campers arrive prior to 8:30 a.m., parents will still need to walk them into the Nature Exploration Center where the classrooms are located. If your child's camp is not in the classroom when arriving late, you may be asked to walk your child to the location of the group within the zoo. Thus, please plan your time accordingly.

How can I reach my child in an emergency?

If this situation arises, contact Sunset Zoo's main office at 785-587-2737 or visit the staff at the camp check-in table.

Can I pick my child up early?

Yes. If you know in advance, please let staff know when dropping off your camper. However, this will not guarantee the group will be in the classroom when you arrive. You may have to check in with ticket booth staff to have help locating your child's camp so you can go to them to pick up your child.

Is it okay to have someone other than a parent or guardian pick up a camper?

*Yes, but everyone you want to be able to pick up your camper must be listed on the appropriate authorization form. **In addition, you MUST list someone other than a parent/guardian that has authorization to pick up your camper in case of emergency. This is required by our Kansas Department of Health and Environment license.***

Can campers bring personal items to the summer camp?

Yes. See the parent handbook for approved and suggested items. However, all items are subject to confiscation by staff if they cause challenges for the camp. All confiscated items will be returned at the request of the camper at the end of the day or if requested by the individual picking up the camper. We do understand bringing personal items may be necessary, and will not require them to be taken with parent dropping off a camper. They just need to remain in the bag they were brought in during camp.

What if a camper becomes ill during camp?

The summer camp supervisor will contact parent/guardian or emergency contact to inform them of the situation. Sunset Zoo follows the exclusion policy suggested by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and is available in the parent handbook. If a camper is not picked up in a timely manner, late fees may be assessed. While an ill child waits to be picked up, they will be isolated from the rest of the camp to reduce risk of spreading any illness.

What is the schedule of activities?

Please see the parent handbook.

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Summer Camp Paperwork

If my child attended Sunset Zoo's summer camp previously, do I have to complete new forms?

Maybe. Sunset Zoo keeps paperwork for participants on file until they age out of our camp programs. If your child attended summer camp in 2021 or Adventure Camp at Sunset Zoo during the 2021-2022 school year, then we will have your child's paperwork on file. If not, you will need to complete a set prior to participating. You can find the permission forms online at www.SunsetZoo.com, and it is strongly recommended families complete and submit forms in advance of participation. Participants will not be able to remain at Sunset Zoo without completed permission forms.

Does the Emergency Authorization form have to be notarized?

No, it is not required to have this form notarized but encouraged.

What if paperwork is not completed before the first day of summer camp?

Campers will not be allowed to stay with the camp if their paperwork is incomplete or not turned in. Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to complete required paperwork when dropping off their camper if not done in advance. Our Kansas Department of Health and Environment license requires us to have certain paperwork on file for each child enrolled. Thus, campers onsite without paperwork is in violation of our license.

Do immunization records have to be provided with the paperwork?

Depends. If your child attended an accredited public or non-public school and you verify they are up-to-date on their immunizations, you do not need to provide immunization records.

In the past, I was asked to provide a health assessment from my child's doctor. Is that needed for this new set of paperwork?

No. Our updated license through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment does not require any documentation from your child's doctor. We hope this helps simplify your task in completing the required forms

Summer Camp Supervisors

Do you conduct background checks on your staff?

Yes. The City of Manhattan conducts background checks on all staff and volunteers. In addition, all staff and volunteers working with children are included on our license, and they run a KBI, fingerprint background check on all individuals listed.

How do you hire your summer camp supervisors?

All our summer camp supervisors have graduated high school and have experience working with children and/or animals. Many of our summer camp supervisors are made up of our program assistants. These are staff that work year-round at Sunset Zoo delivering education programs to school, scout, church, and other groups. In addition, our license through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment sets minimum training and experience standards for staff, which include training in child development, identifying signs of child abuse and neglect, and First Aid/CPR.

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How does Sunset Zoo staff its summer camps?

Each summer camp will have a lead staff member serving a full-time shift that is supported by staff working part-time shifts. At all times we follow staff to child ratios established by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Other Questions

Do Sunset Zoo's summer camps take field trips?

In 2022, we will not take any off-site field trips that require vehicle transportation due to health and safety considerations in regards to COVID-19.

Does Sunset Zoo provide food for campers during summer camps?

Sunset Zoo provides AM and a PM snacks during camp. Campers must bring a sack lunch. Sunset Zoo's concession stand is poised to be open again in 2022. Thus, families may order lunch from the concession stand at drop off for an extra fee.

Can a parent eat lunch with their child?

Yes, but not with the camp. Parents wishing to eat lunch with their child must sign their child out of camp then back in when they return. This is to limit the number of individuals our camps are exposed to as we continue to mitigate potential outbreaks of COVID-19.

Will campers interact with animals during summer camps at Sunset Zoo?

All camps include the use of animals from our education animal collection. These animals are utilized during school and other programs conducted throughout the year. They are use to being handled by trained staff and volunteers, as well as being around groups of people. Campers will NOT enter animal exhibits, but will visit animals in the zoo every day.