



# POCONO PLATEAU

CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS

SUMMER 2026

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## Camp Safety Policies

### Our Commitment to Excellence – and What That Means to You and Your Child ACA Accreditation

As camp professionals, we understand that your biggest concern is for the safety of your child. We also know you have goals for your child's development related to the powerful lessons the camp experience provides in community, character-building, skill development, and healthy living. We share those same goals, which is why we have taken the added step of becoming an accredited camp through the American Camp Association (ACA).

ACA accreditation means that Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center submitted to a thorough review of over 200 standards 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-serving agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center and ACA form a partnership that promotes summers of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety.

### ACA helps all accredited camps provide:

- Healthy, developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences
- Discovery through experiential education
- Caring, competent role models
- Service to the community and the environment

### Why Is ACA Accreditation Important?

As the only recognized accrediting body for the camp experience in the United States, ACA accredits approximately 2,400+ diverse camps nationally. However, that number represents only 25 percent of the camps that operate in this country. ACA's goal is to continue to grow the number of accredited camps to ensure a safe and positive camp experience for more children. ACA-accredited camps meet up to 266 health and safety standards. Accreditation is a family's best evidence that their camp is committed to the health, safety, and overall well-being of their child. Other camps like to say they follow industry standards and best practices. Some even say they use the ACA guidelines, but the fact remains that camps that do not hold themselves up to a transparent, complete peer review of their operations are not acting in the best interests of their staff, campers, families, and the public at large. If your camp is not accredited, ask the owner or director why. ACA accreditation matters.



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## What Are the Standards of Accreditation?

The ACA accreditation standards focus on health, safety, and risk management. They are widely used as operational benchmarks for the camp industry by local, state, and federal government entities, insurance companies, and courts of law. Our camp and program completed the peer-review process, which includes a visit by an ACA-trained team of standards volunteers, signifying that we meet the standards applicable to our program. ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to ensure that current practices at our camp reflect the highest and most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation.

## We Set Our Standards High

Earning and maintaining ACA accreditation takes time and commitment. We set our standards high, to provide your child with an environment where he or she is having fun and is unaware of all of the work related to safety and learning, which has been carefully incorporated into the daily routine.

To be accredited by ACA, we had to demonstrate sound practices in every aspect of camp management and operation, including:

- Site: Fire protection, food service, sleeping quarters, utility, and maintenance systems.
- Transportation: Procedures concerning drivers, vehicles, and traffic on site.
- Health and Wellness: Staff qualifications, facilities requirements, recordkeeping, storage and administration medicines, health forms.
- Operational Management: Safety regulations, emergency communication systems, procedures for intruders, personal property regulations.
- Human Resources: Staff qualifications, screening and training, supervision ratios, and procedures.
- Program Activities: Aquatics, adventure/challenge, trips, horseback riding, and staff qualifications for special programs.

Mandatory standards also include requirements for staff screening, emergency exits, first aid, aquatic-certified personnel, storage and use of flammables and firearms, emergency transportation, obtaining appropriate health information, among others.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Camp Accreditation:

### What's the difference between state licensing of camps and accreditation by ACA?

Accreditation is voluntary, and ACA accreditation assures families that camps have committed to a safe, nurturing environment for their children. If a state requires licensing, it is mandatory; licensing requirements vary from state to state. Courts of law and government regulators recognize ACA standards as the standards of the camp community.



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### How do ACA standards exceed state licensing requirements?

ACA goes beyond basic requirements for health, cleanliness, and food service into specific areas of programming, including camp staff from director through counselors, emergency management plans, health care, and management. ACA applies separate standards for activities such as waterfront, horseback riding, and adventure, and travel.

What are some of the ACA standards for camps?

- Staff-to-camper ratios that are appropriate for different age groups
- Goals for camp activities that are developmentally based
- Emergency transportation available at all times
- First-aid facilities and trained staff available when campers are present

### Does ACA accreditation require criminal background checks?

ACA accreditation standards require an annual criminal background check on all seasonal staff and a criminal background check at least once every five years for year-round staff. They also require an annual check of the National Sex Offender Public website and an annual disclosure statement that attests to the non-conviction of violent crimes against children. When talking to a camp director as you consider enrolling your child, ask what the screening process for that camp includes.

### What the ACA Accreditation Standards Mean to You and Your Child

ACA accreditation serves as an assurance to families that our camp cares enough to submit to a transparent, thorough review of our entire operation. Our goal is to provide parents with as much information about our camp, to reassure you about your camp choice. Our voluntary participation in the professional development and accreditation process of the American Camp Association demonstrates our commitment to providing you and your child with the best possible camp experience.

For more information about ACA accreditation, contact our camp director or visit the American Camp Association website at [ACACamps.org](http://ACACamps.org).

### Pocono Plateau Training & Supervision:

Pocono Plateau full-time, year-round staff includes the Camp Director, Assistant Director, Food Service Manager, Hospitality Manager, Maintenance Manager, and Office Manager. For summer camp, additional staff are hired to help facilitate programs, prepare meals, and assist in maintenance needs. Adult volunteers stay for a week of camp providing supervision and support for summer campers. All Pocono Plateau full time staff, summer staff, and volunteers go through training and are required to provide background checks and child abuse clearances prior to their service. Campers are supervised at all times based on age-appropriate camper to counselor ratios.



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## Camper Behavior and Disciplinary Policy

Prior to your camper's arrival you and your camper must review and sign our Parent-Camper Covenant. By signing this, you and your camper agree to follow all camp guidelines. If this covenant is broken at camp, a dismissal from camp may be warranted.

If a camper violates the code of conduct to a degree that dismissal is warranted:

- **For Day Camp:** the parent/guardian will be contacted and will be required to pick up the camper. The camper will be dismissed for the remainder of that camp day, and the next scheduled camp day will be cancelled as well. A meeting or phone consultation will be scheduled with the parent to help us create an action plan for the camper prior to their return to camp.
- **For Overnight Camp:** the parent/guardian will be contacted and will be required to pick up the camper. The camper will be dismissed for the remainder of that camp week. If the camper is registered for any additional weeks of summer camp, we will allow them to return for the next registered week.

*\*We understand that each situation is unique. Prior to dismissal, we will work alongside our leadership team to create a safe environment for all campers to be successful.\**

## Summer Camp Nursing Staff

Our registered nurses reside on site under a physician's standing orders. The nurses stay in cabins on both the main site and the adventure site. The nurses' stations have infirmaries where medications are monitored and always locked. Nurses collect and review medical forms, monitor children with medication needs and specific allergies, and provide first aid and care for injured or sick children.

## Camper Wellness

At Pocono Plateau, your child's well-being is our top priority. We will contact you if your camper isn't feeling well for an extended period, develops a fever above 100.3°F, or experiences any injury that may require additional care. We will also reach out if your child is struggling—whether with homesickness, emotional or mental health needs, behavior concerns, or difficulty fully engaging in our camp community.

Prior to camp, you will complete a health form and camper profile that highlights any concerns for your child. Our staff review these forms prior to camp so we are aware of concerns and struggles that may arise as well as strategies that have been helpful in your home. Examples include bed wetting, home sickness, anxiety, mental health, or neurodiversity. If you would like to speak with camp leadership about concerns prior to your child's camp experience, please email [director@poconoplateau.org](mailto:director@poconoplateau.org).



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## Pocono Plateau Certified Lifeguards on Waterfront:

Pocono Plateau has a lakefront offering swimming and boating. We employ certified lifeguards to supervise all waterfront activities. Campers have a life jacket on prior to entering the lake. We use swimmer checks at Pocono Plateau's lakefront, ensuring campers enter and exit the waterfront area safely. Lifeguards call swimmer checks every 20-30 minutes during waterfront time to make sure all campers are accounted for.

## Camp Clothing & Comfort Guidelines

All people participating in summer camp at Pocono Plateau are expected to dress in a manner consistent with our natural setting and community well-being. Pocono Plateau supports campers feeling comfortable and confident. We encourage everyone to pack clothing that is functional for the camp setting. For example, choose swimwear that is comfortable but also functional- keep in mind that campers will be participating in water activities such as swimming, boating, slip n' slide, water games, and creek walking. Another example, bring closed-toed/closed-heeled footwear designed for outdoor terrain. For the care of the whole community, campers, staff, and volunteers are not permitted to wear overly revealing clothing or clothing with offensive language or artwork.



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## CAMPER COMMUNICATION

- **Phones:** We do not permit campers to bring cell phones to camp for several reasons. Cell phones can distract the intentional community-building that is central to the summer camp experience. They can also interfere with campers getting the rest they need at night to support their active engagement in camp life the following day. In addition, we recognize that families have different preferences regarding photo and video sharing on social media, which can be challenging to manage in a communal setting.

For these reasons, we maintain a clear no-cell phone policy to ensure a safe, consistent, and fully immersive experience for all campers. We ask both parents and campers to sign a covenant stating they left their cell phones at home.

While campers are not permitted to bring cell phones to camp, they may ask their counselor to speak with camp leadership or the healthcare team about calling home. If this occurs, a designated camp leader will assess the situation and may contact the parent/guardian first to discuss the situation before the camper speaks with you.

If you believe it is essential for your child to have access to a phone during their camp session, please contact us before your camper's week begins to make arrangements. Campers may not keep a phone on their person during the week, but we can discuss arrangements to provide access to our camp phone to call home when necessary.

Our goal is to partner with you so your child can enjoy a safe, healthy, and joy-filled experience at camp.

- **Email:** Emails are generally checked once a day in the afternoon. In the Subject Line, please include the camper's name and the camp number/camp name. Email address: [mycamper@poconoplateau.org](mailto:mycamper@poconoplateau.org).
- **Postal Mail:** If mailing through the post office, also include Camper Name, and the camp number/camp name and mail to 304 Pocono Plateau Road, Cresco, PA 18326.
- **Daily Photos:** We will share photos throughout the summer on our Facebook and Instagram pages. At the end of the Summer we will share a password protected page on our website to view all summer photos.

## Pocono Plateau Inclusivity Policy

Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center is one of four camps in the Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist Conference. Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries serve as sacred common ground for a great diversity of people from many backgrounds. Regardless of the varying theological perspectives among us, we all have a deep commitment to do no harm. More than this, we are committed to doing good. We come together in the wide embrace of God to love and be the community for each other as children of God. Love calls us to eliminate all harassment, devaluing, bullying, lack of acceptance, and other actions that harm or isolate any individual or group. We endeavor to interact in ways that honor each person as one created in God's image who is beloved beyond measure. Christian hospitality and deep welcoming are part of the enduring purpose of Camp and Retreat Ministries.