



**March 17, 2021**

## **CAMP O-AT-KA SUMMER 2021 & COVID UPDATE**

Camp O-AT-KA is dedicated to providing a fun and SAFE environment for your camper(s) to enjoy a great summer experience on Sebago Lake. Much has changed since last year and we know more about COVID, understand what is needed to open safely, and have guidance from national and local agencies; as well as a strong network of Maine camps working together to ensure that Maine continues to be a safe place for children of all ages to live, learn and grow.

Under the advisement of the CDC, camps were asked to not start making decisions about how they would open until March. Even now, the situation will continue to evolve as more information is learned. We are confident that O-AT-KA, along with our other partners in camping, will open for Summer 2021. There will be some variations and policies in place but all are manageable to ensure a protected environment.

We are asking our families to partner with us on this endeavor so we can get our boys to camp!

### **External groups O-AT-KA is working with:**

*American Camping Association (ACA):* A national field guide has been published to help camps throughout North America open safely. This guide covers all topics from transportation, communication, testing, eating, activities, waterfront, visitors, equipment usage, sanitation, etc. It is very thorough and will be the foundation of our planning. We encourage you to check out the ACA's parent resources as well: <https://www.acacamps.org/campers-families/news-resources/covid-19-resources-parents>

*Maine Summer Camps (MSC):* Maine Summer Camps is a member-based umbrella organization for all Maine camps. Local directors and staff belong to this important group that serves as advocates for the camping industry in our state, provides education and resources, helps promote Maine camping as a whole, and is our most valuable network of leaders working together.

*Maine Camp Experience (MCE):* Maine Camp Experience started as a recruiting resource in CT to promote Maine camps to the Tri-state area. This group of leaders has evolved into a resource for camp administration and provides access to national and local resources, idea sharing and resource pooling, and experts to help all camps navigate the summer experience.

*Maine CDC:* We will continue to work with the Maine CDC to follow policies set forth at the state and federal levels. Maine CDC is very supportive of the Maine camps and understand the economic impact that our industry has on the state.

## **Internal planning:**

O-AT-KA has hired two talented and experienced RN's to serve as our COVID coordinators for the summer. These two individuals have been working since February on the opening plan in coordination with the Executive Director.

The COVID coordinators will communicate with the Summer Leadership Team of Unit Heads, Summer Director, Program Directors, and Chaplain.

Special staff workshops will be incorporated into staff training week and a safety session for each Unit will take place on opening day of each session for our campers.

**Please note, we are providing information as we develop/ confirm it. Some things may be subject to change before camp opens and we will reach out directly to parents with exactly what needs to be done pre-camp. We will continue to update you, expand the list of questions, and provide updates to the website. The 2021 Parents Guide will also be sent out soon.**

## **FAQs**

### **1. Will my camper need to have a vaccination to attend camp?**

No. Unless a child has a pre-existing condition, vaccinations are not expected to be available to children under 18. If your child is vaccinated, we ask that you provide a copy of the vaccination record.

### **2. Will the staff at camp be vaccinated?**

We are very encouraged that the Federal government has made a recommendation to all states that summer childcare workers be prioritized for vaccinations. This would include those that work at camps. It will be state dependent but all of our sources are optimistic that the vaccinations will be available for our staff; prior to arriving at camp. Many of our staff members are teachers and educators so will have (or have had) the vaccination already; along with our healthcare workers. Even those with the vaccination will need to uphold the same policies regarding masking, social distancing, and proper etiquette.

### **3. Will my camper need to be tested prior to coming/during camp?**

Yes. We the policy for attending camp will be:

- We will ask families to refrain from vacations, large gatherings, social outings, sports tournaments, etc. for 10 days before arrival. Some kids may still be in school and that is ok! If you stick to what you are normally doing to be precautious, that is what is best.
- We will ask you to do and submit a daily temperature log for 10 days leading up to camp. Please bring this with you at check-in.

- ***Upon arrival at camp, you will need to provide a negative PCR test that has been reported within the last 72 hours.***
- Campers and staff will then be given a PCR test 5 days into the session of camp. This test will be administered by our Infirmary staff and sent to a local contracted lab for results.
- Campers and staff will be asked screening questions and have a temperature taken daily.
- On-site tests will be available for anyone that has symptoms throughout their stay at camp.

**4. Will my camper need to wear a mask while at camp?**

Sometimes. We will ask campers to pack 10 masks to bring to camp with them. We want them to bring their own masks so we know they are comfortable wearing them. It's a good idea to have them wear them before they arrive so you know they are a good fit! We will be supplying a mask lanyard for them to wear around their neck.

Campers will not wear masks while in their cabin, during outdoor activities, or anywhere near the waterfront. Campers will need to wear masks if attending an indoor craft (woodworking, pottery, etc.) and when entering buildings such as the dining hall. Like restaurants, they will be able to remove the mask once they sit down at their table. We will be shifting as many things as possible to outdoors. Campers will also need to be masked if they are in a camp vehicle.

**5. What will the visitor policy at camp be?**

In order to get our campers to camp, we need to be strict in other areas. The overwhelming recommendation is that we do not have visitors at camp, while camp is in session. This means we will not be hosting visiting days for those that are attending a full session or summer. For those that are with us for more than two weeks, we will have a virtual visiting "day" where you can schedule a time block to zoom/ video chat with your camper and check in!

**6. Will drop-off/ pick-up be different from past years?**

Yes. To minimize exposure of visitors on the O-AT-KA campus, we will have tents set up on the ballfield upon your arrival. We will ask that only one person exits the vehicle with the camper and is masked. Paperwork should all be completed before arrival and the Infirmary or office staff will be available the week prior to camp to discuss anything you need to. Your camper will start check-in with the Infirmary staff to get a temperature check and COVID questions covered. You will leave your camper's belongings with the staff and we will see that is gets safely to his cabin. Parents/ guardians will say goodbye at their vehicles.

We will have set times for drop off and pick up to ensure that not too many people are there at the same time. These will be sent closer to camp opening and we ask that you adhere to your set drop off time or communicate if a different time is needed.

**7. What if my camper is arriving by plane at either Boston or Portland?**

O-AT-KA will still offer pick-up and drop-off at Logan Airport in Boston or Portland Jetport. A disinfected van will pick up your camper and they will be spaced out and asked to wear a mask while in the vehicle. We will have hand sanitizer for when they arrive and when they depart the vehicle.

**8. What if my child is exposed or tested positive for COVID-19?**

An expert in the field recently shared that we must expect that someone will test positive during the summer and we will take every precaution to be ready for when that happens. This person also reminded us that “every camp will have a positive test but it will be very rare to have sick kids.” Rest assured, we will be ready to handle any situation.

If a child tests positive or is awaiting a test result, the parent/guardian will be the first to know! We will walk you through what steps are being taken, care received, etc. O-AT-KA will have an awesome area set up called “Shadow Camp.” The individual will join Shadow Camp until the quarantine period is over. As long as the camper is feeling well, we will have camp activities, meals, and fun for them so they don’t miss out. If not feeling well, there will be a quiet place to rest, eat and excellent medical care with our nurses – separate from our Camp Infirmary building.

**9. What is O-AT-KA refund policy if we decide that this isn’t the right year for camp for us?**

We understand that the past year (and continuing into 2021) has been very difficult. Camp is a place of joy and growth and should never cause additional anxiety. Our goal is to make camp comfortable and easy for each family. If you decide, AT ANY TIME, that you would rather not attend camp this summer; a full refund is available. O-AT-KA has been around since 1906 and we will continue to be there for you when the time is right!