



2026 PARENT / CAMPER HANDBOOK

Welcome to OVS Summer Camp

We are excited that your camper will be joining us this summer. Our goal is to provide a safe and caring environment for campers to connect, contribute, and have fun! Please read this handbook carefully and contact us with any questions.

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1. Contact Information

Camp Office	(805) 646-1423
Camp Directors	John Rowan jrowan@ovs.org
	Nick Almanza nalmanza@ovs.org
Equestrian	Caitlin Winter cwinter@ovs.org
	Katrine Nielsen knielsen@ovs.org
Health Center	(805) 646-1423 ext. 1238 healthcenter@ovs.org
Mail (resident)	CAMPER: [Child's Name], 723 El Paseo Road, Ojai, CA 93023
Email updates	ovs@ovs.org

2. Camp Community

The community at OVS is the foundation of your camper's summer experience. Learning to work alongside others and contributing to camp is key to a successful summer. Campers should arrive with a cooperative and positive attitude, ready to learn and play in a group environment.

Campers will be guided with respect by camp staff and are expected to treat each other and faculty/staff with that same respect. As part of the community, campers will pitch in with crew jobs and cafeteria clean up.

Money and Valuables

Day Campers are discouraged from bringing money or any valuables to camp. Resident Campers may bring a small amount of spending money for weekend outings, plan on approximately \$25.00 per weekend of attendance.

Cell Phone and Smart Watch Policy

Camp at OVS is a unique opportunity for children to practice independence and make meaningful connections. To maintain that environment, we allow very limited cell phone/smart watch use during the summer program.

- Day Campers are encouraged to leave phones at home.
- If a camper needs to call home, a staff member will contact you on their behalf.
- Resident Camper phones/smart watches will be collected upon arrival and returned upon departure.
- Resident Campers may use phones on Saturdays, 6:00–6:30 p.m.

Meals

Meals are freshly prepared on site by our OVS Food Services team and are included in tuition:

- Day Campers receive a morning snack, afternoon snack, and lunch.
- Resident Campers receive all meals and snacks.

Please list any allergies on your camper's health forms. Contact our Health Center (healthcenter@ovs.org) with any dietary concerns.

Communication

At the start of the program, parents will receive instructions on how to access the online platform where OVS and Camp Staff will post pictures, videos, and class updates. Teachers will communicate via the email provided at registration — please keep your contact information current.

Day Hikes and Overnight Camping

As an extension of our camp mission, campers may have the opportunity to participate in overnight camping trips or day hike excursions. Camping trips may take place at Lower Campus, Upper Campus, Lake Casitas, or Pine Mountain. Activities may include outdoor education games, team building, and nature exploration. Full details will be emailed prior to your session.

3. Dress Code

Campers are expected to wear clothing and footwear that is modest and appropriate for an active camp program. Camp clothing will get dirty — please don't pack your best items. All clothing items should be marked with the camper's full name in indelible ink or sew-on patches.

- T-shirts, shorts, and athletic shoes for recreational activities.
- Flip flops are not allowed for daily wear.
- Shorts must be appropriate length and fit for active play.
- Tops must cover undergarments and may not expose the midriff.
- Athletic shoes or sandals with heel straps are required during activities.
- Clothing referencing alcohol, drugs, violence, sexual innuendo, or bad language is unacceptable.
- Jewelry must be modest and may need to be removed for safety.
- Bathing suits must be modest and appropriate for active swimming (one-piece encouraged).
- Hair should be one natural color; hairstyles should not be extreme.
- Piercings are allowed only in the ears.

4. Code of Conduct

The Ojai Valley School and Camp expects campers to show respect for each other, staff, property, and camp policies at all times. The following are major infractions that may result in immediate dismissal without refund:

Drug & Alcohol Violations — use or possession of drugs, alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, or e-cigarettes.

Weapons — possession of guns (real or play), knives, slingshots, or any implement designed to harm.

Unauthorized Absence — leaving camp or off-campus excursions without permission.

Dishonesty & Harm — lying, cheating, stealing, property damage, or threats to others.

Harassment & Bullying — teasing, taunting, bullying, or creating a hostile environment.

Explicit Sexual Activity.

Technology Misuse — unauthorized computer access, harassment via digital means, or misuse of social media.

5. Health and Wellness

The health and well-being of our campers and staff is our top priority. Our protocols follow guidance from the CDC, CDPH, Ventura County Public Health, and the American Camp Association.

Required Medical Forms

All forms must be submitted to healthcenter@ovs.org by June 1, 2026:

- Medical Release Form
- Health Questionnaire
- Over-the-Counter Medication Consent Form (resident campers)
- Medication Form — must be signed by a licensed healthcare provider (if applicable)

Keep Your Camper Home If They Have

Fever above 100.0°F • Cough • Fatigue • Sore throat
Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea • Chills • Shortness of breath
Muscle aches • New loss of taste or smell • Congestion / runny nose

Health Center Admissions

Campers will be admitted to the Health Center for:

- Fever, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- All injuries including head injuries
- Severe pain or headache
- Allergic reactions
- Any health concern that inhibits participation

When Parents Are Notified

- Any illness or injury requiring further medical assessment
- Head or facial injuries
- Fever over 100.0°F
- Suspected joint sprains or dental emergencies
- Before and after any doctor visit
- Before any credit card on file is used for medical services

When a Camper May Return

- Fever-free for at least 24 hours
- Vomiting/diarrhea stopped for 24 hours
- Communicable disease: doctor provides written release
- Following surgery or significant injury: doctor provides written release and care instructions

6. Day Camper Information

Daily Schedule

Drop-off	8:30 a.m.
Pick-up	4:30 p.m. (name card required in visor/dashboard)
Day Bus Stop	Marina Park — 2950 Pierpont Blvd, Ventura

Daily Attendance and Communication

Parents should contact the Camp Office, (ovs@ovs.org) if the camper will not be attending that day, or will be picked up or leave early for any reason.

What to Bring — Day Campers

- Bathing suit appropriate for active swimming
- Backpack/book bag
- Water bottle (OVS provides one on arrival)
- Pool towel
- Sun hat/baseball cap
- Sunscreen

Equestrian Program (additional items)

- Riding boots
- ASTM-SEI approved equestrian helmet
- Breeches or long pants
- Shirt with sleeves

7. Resident Camper Information

Arrival and Departure

Arrival	2:00 p.m. on the Sunday the session begins (no early arrivals)
Departure	By 10:00 a.m. on the Saturday the session concludes

Dorm Life and Crew Jobs

Resident Campers will be assigned a roommate and an age-appropriate restroom within their dorm. Dorm counselors are nearby in a separate room in the same wing.

Campers are responsible for daily room cleaning, making their beds, doing personal laundry, and maintaining common areas. These responsibilities build independence and valuable life skills.

Laundry

Washers and dryers are located on campus near the dormitory. Laundry is done on weekends — detergent is provided. Campers gather their items in their laundry bag, wash and dry them, and return items to their room. Counselors supervise laundry time.

Calls Home

To support camper independence and acclimation, parent contact is limited to weekend communications (letters and emails to ovs@ovs.org are always welcome).

- Campers are discouraged from calling home in the first few days of the session.
- Campers are encouraged to call home on the first weekend.
- Campers with phones may use them Saturday, 6:00–6:30 p.m.; phones are collected on arrival.
- Parents may call/email the Camp Office (business hours 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.) to leave messages.

Weekend Excursions

On Saturdays, Sundays, and some weeknights, resident campers and staff may travel to local parks or beaches in Ventura County. Camp Counselors accompany campers, providing guidance, supervision, and fun.

Homesickness and Separation

First-time separation anxiety is common and normal. Camp is a nurturing environment designed to help children grow through this experience. A few tips:

- Discuss homesickness openly before camp — your attitude sets the tone.
- Reassure your child that the staff is trained to support them through any difficulties.
- Do not promise to pick them up early — instead, promise to work with directors to support them.
- Most children adjust within 2–3 days and carry a sense of pride and accomplishment throughout camp.

Parents will be contacted if a child does not respond to staff coaching after the first few days.

8. Resident Camper Packing List

OVS will provide a camp shirt and water bottle on Opening Day. Dorm storage is limited — pack light and label everything with your camper's full name. Ojai summers average in the 90s°F (32°C); pack lightweight clothes, but bring a jacket for cool beach evenings.

Clothing and Gear

- T-shirts and tank tops
- Sweatshirt or lightweight jacket
- Shorts and long pants
- Pajamas
- 2–3 swimsuits
- Sun hat, sunglasses, and goggles
- Personal garments (socks, underwear, etc.)
- Backpack/daypack

Footwear

- Comfortable sneakers / athletic shoes and socks
- Sandals with back-strap
- Water shoes
- Flip-flops/shower sandals

Bedding and Bath

- Lightweight blanket or sleeping bag
- Pillow with pillowcase
- Bath towels and beach towels
- Toiletries: toothbrush/paste, soap/body wash, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, comb/brush
- Sunscreen — a must!

Optional Items

- Flashlight/headlamp with batteries
- Laundry bag
- Costumes for Dress Days
- Journal, books, cards, or small games
- Paper, envelopes, and stamps (pre-addressed is helpful)
- Hair dryer
- Snacks (no candy, electronic devices, or toys)

Equestrian Program (additional items)

- Riding boots

- ASTM-SEI approved equestrian helmet
- Breeches or long pants
- Shirt with sleeves

IMPORTANT: Phones will be collected on arrival and returned each Saturday 6:00–6:30 p.m. only. Candy, electronic devices, and toys are NOT permitted in the dorm. Label every item with your camper's full name in indelible ink.

We look forward to an incredible summer together!

Questions? Contact us at (805) 646-1423 or summer@ovs.org