

Life Expeditions Cell Phone/Electronic Policy

As parents, we can remember a time before cell phones. Some of us pre-date cell phones or remember when only adults had them. Certainly, we remember when smartphones were not yet a thing, and you definitely did not see them belonging to elementary school kids.

Absolutely, NO cell phones, 'smart watches' or electronics are allowed in Lake Aurora programs!

There may be special exceptions granted for certain electronic cameras. Still, even those must be cleared by the program director before the start of the trip.

Any electronics brought to Lake Aurora because the camper needs them immediately before or after the program is over **MUST BE TURNED IN TO THE STAFF UPON CHECK-IN** for safekeeping. Because electronics brought by even one camper can negatively impact an entire trip, any such items found will be confiscated. An administrative penalty fee will be assessed for blatant disregard of this policy.

Rationale:

Technology can be a great tool. Many tools can be hazardous, and technology is no exception. As adults, we have made a conscious decision to accept the risks and trade some of our freedom and independence for all of the benefits that come from the electronic leashes we now carry everywhere we go. Smartphones are not all bad, and they offer many resources to us. Still, studies have shown screen time's negative impact on our youth. As someone who has ministered to youth and watched as generation x, z, and the Millennials have grown up, I have seen some of those negative impacts. The negativity comes from constant access to social media and easy access to things that Christians should have nothing to do with. Smartphones can be rightly compared to the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil from which Adam and Eve ate. There are many tools and toys which the devil can use against us. If my rhetoric sounds extreme, that is because the problem is a massive issue for today's youth. They desperately need drastic measures to counteract the world's influence and grip on their lives. Our kids need a break!

Trip Goals:

One of the primary goals of the life expeditions trips at Lake Aurora is to separate the kids from their familiar environment and allow that change of pace to be a catalyst to enable renewal and an openness to God and His word. They need a break from everyday life and desperately need a break from technology from which they often have no other escape.

It is vital to the success of our program that the kids do not have any electronics or technology with them. This policy is for the benefit of each camper and also for the benefit of the rest of the campers on the trip.

The adult leaders have cell phones with us for emergencies. I try to post pictures most days (especially for parents who experience more separation anxiety than their kids do, haha). That is the healthiest balance I have found for technology on our trips. Besides extreme need or for taking pictures, the adults on the trip will not use technology or cell phones. Our focus is definitely on your kids.

Sadly, we have reached a place in our society where some parents encourage their kids to break the rules rather than respect them. As a result, we have had to adapt what may seem an extreme policy when it comes to technology on the Life Expeditions trips.

To be signed by PARENT, CAMPER, and responsible adult dropping off camper

I understand the policy concerning cell phones and electronics at Lake Aurora’s Life Expeditions programs. I agree to follow and enforce this policy. I also understand that electronics will be considered dangerous contraband and confiscated if discovered, including an administrative penalty fee, which will be assessed and paid to Lake Aurora.

Please check the applicable boxes and initial after each applicable statement, and sign.

PARENT:

- My child is turning in a cell phone or other electronic device at check-in.
- My child has NO cell phone, electronic devices, or other prohibited items on them or packed in their gear and WILL NOT be bringing any with them on their Life Expeditions program.

Parent signature: _____

CAMPER:

- I do NOT have any cell phone, electronic device, or other prohibited items with me or packed in my gear and WILL NOT be bringing any such item on this Life Expeditions program.
- I have turned in a cell phone or other item that will be returned to me at the completion of this program.

Camper signature: _____

Responsible adult (if parent not present):

- To the best of my knowledge, the camper is not bringing any cell phone, electronics, or other prohibited item on this program and both the camper and parent are aware of this policy and have agreed to it
- Camper has turned in a cell phone or other item that will be returned after the program.

Responsible Adult dropping off camper signature:
