



Summer Academy

at the
University of Georgia®

2026
Handbook for
Parents &
Guardians





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents	2
About the program	3
Summer Academy senior leadership	4
Registration information	5
Camps	6
Frequently asked questions	7
Day campers	9
Extended day	10
Residential campers	11
Residential camper packing list	13
Photographs from camp	14
Health and safety	15
Important policies	16

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Summer Academy is a series of specialty camps for curious, motivated, and academically inclined campers aged 8–17 who are interested in STEAM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math). The mission of the Georgia Center is to enrich the lives of learners and produce a lasting impact through outstanding educational programs and services.



- Our camps are designed to:
- Expose campers to new areas of study and career pathways
 - Present content that appropriately challenges students
 - Promote advanced thinking, creativity, and application skills
 - Engage campers through meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities
 - Encourage collaboration and communication among campers

Summer Academy camp office

The Georgia Center
1197 South Lumpkin Street
Athens, Ga 30602

gc-youth@uga.edu

(706) 201-9427

<https://www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/youth-programs/summer-academy-camps/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UGA.Summer.Academy/>

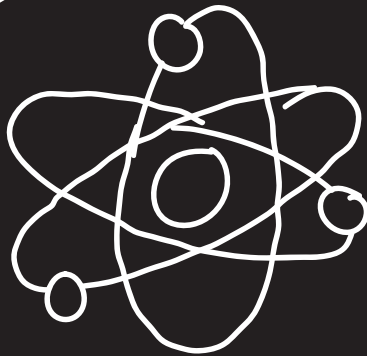
SUMMER ACADEMY SENIOR LEADERSHIP



Jeffrey Mitchell
Director of Youth Programs



Shelley Downs
Summer Academy
Camp Director



Jeffrey Mitchell has made helping students attain higher levels of education his life's mission through his nearly 20-year career. As the Director of Youth Programs, he oversees, develops, and manages a youth programming portfolio that includes summer camps and academic competitions.

Shelley Downs is a dedicated program and operations professional with experience across universities and nonprofits in youth engagement, outreach, and educational program coordination. Shelley brings a strong passion for creating meaningful, well-designed learning experiences that help young people grow, explore, and discover their strengths.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration

During the open registration period, you can register your child in our camps via our [website](#) or over the phone (706-542-3537). Before completing your registration, you must read and understand all waivers and acknowledgments. You will not be able to complete your camper's registration until you complete all required forms, waivers, and acknowledgments.



Financial aid

If you require financial aid, please fill out the [following application for financial aid](#) before signing up your child for a camp. Applications for financial aid will be open until Feb 28. Once registration for financial aid is complete, we will be in contact with those who qualify within two weeks. Financial aid will be awarded for up to \$200 off the camp price. **Do not pre-register your child for a camp if you wish to be considered for financial aid.**

Give the gift of camp

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to support Summer Academy campers, go to the [Commit to Georgia website](#). Your support is greatly appreciated.

To learn more about our UGA summer camp programs, please contact us at gc-youth@uga.edu, 706-201-7435 or toll-free at 1-800-811-6640.

You can also [join our Youth Programs mailing list](#) to receive camp updates.

CAMPS

Camp Offering

From photography to engineering, we offer a wide variety of camps that are sure to spark your child's interest in learning. To view a comprehensive list of camps available this year, [please visit our website.](#)





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: If I have a question about Summer Academy at UGA, who should I contact?

A: We are more than happy to answer any questions that you might have about Summer Academy at UGA. You can contact us by calling (706) 201-9427 or emailing us at gc-youth@uga.edu

Q: What is the cell phone policy for students at Summer Academy?

A: Campers are allowed to have cell phones at Summer Academy but are discouraged from using them during the hours of academic camp instruction, lunch, and extended day social time. You can find more information about our cellphone policy in the **Important policies** section of this handbook.

Q: What is the dress code for Summer Academy?

A: We encourage campers to dress comfortably for various camp activities, some of which may involve physical actions such as walking, running, jumping, or sitting on the floor. You can find more information about our dress code in the **Important policies** section of this handbook.

Q: What is Summer Academy doing to ensure the health and safety of students/staff?

A: The health and safety of Summer Academy students, instructors, and staff is our primary focus as we plan for camp. To ensure a healthy summer, Summer Academy will adopt and implement guidance from the University System of Georgia and UGA. You can find more information about our camp health and safety guidelines in the **health and safety** section of this handbook.

Q: How will I be able to see photos of my student taking part in Summer Academy programs?

A: Parents/guardians will be given access to our SmugMug website. SmugMug is a passcode-protected site that allows us to upload photos of your child while they are in camp. Additionally, you can keep up with us through our Facebook page and Instagram account.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My child's camp requires special materials and supplies. How do I know what to purchase?

A: Certain camps require students to pre-purchase kits or supplies. At least 2 weeks out from camp, we will email parents/guardians a list of required supplies or kits. If you do not receive an email from us within three weeks of your camp starting, [please get in touch with us via email](#).

Q: Where will residential campers be staying on campus?

A: This summer, residential campers will stay at a UGA undergraduate dorm. You can find more information about our camp lodging in the residential student section of this handbook.

Q: What will my child be doing after classes in the residential program?

A: We will host various supervised evening activities for students after day camp has ended. Activities will take place both on and off campus. Possible activities include recreational activities on Myers Quad, swimming and/or water activities, campus scavenger hunts, and trivia, to name a few. Activities may vary weekly, depending on weather and facility availability.

Q: Will there be supervision in the dorms?

A: While on campus, students will be supervised by our instructors, program assistants, or counselors. Staff working with Summer Academy are typically UGA faculty, staff, or students (graduate and undergraduate students). You can find more information about dorm supervision in the residential student section of this handbook.

Q: How will my student get around campus?

A: Summer Academy students walk a lot! We travel around campus mostly by foot and occasionally by bus or van. We encourage all campers to pack comfortable walking shoes.

Q: Can my student drive themselves to camp or walk home?

A: With prior permission from parents/guardians, we can accommodate student self-release. To make these arrangements, please contact us. To purchase a parking pass for your student, contact our registration office at **(706) 542-3537**.



DAY CAMPER\$

Drop-off

Although Summer Academy is based out of the Georgia Center, many camps are hosted in classrooms, labs, and studio space off-site. Day campers will receive camp-specific drop-off and pick-up locations in an email one week before the beginning of their camp. Summer Academy drop-off begins at 8:30 am, and camps start promptly at 9 am. If a student is running late, please contact the camp office.

Pick-up

Day campers must be picked up between 3:35 and 4:00 pm each day. Camp specific pick-up locations and maps will be included in pre-camp emails.

Pick-up passes

At drop-off on the first day of camp, you will be given a welcome letter and two passes with a unique pick-up number. Please display one of these slips on the dashboard of your vehicle when you come to pick up your camper. This will allow us to verify your identity without checking I.D., and we will be able to get your camper out to you faster. I.D.s will be checked if no pass is presented. Ensure you include anyone who might pick up your camper on their release list.

General daily schedule

8:30–9:00 am: Day camper drop-off and check-in

9:00 am–3:30 pm: Instructional time with 1-hour lunch break

3:35–4:00 pm: Day camper pick-up

Lunch

Lunch is provided for all campers. For most campers, lunch will take place in one of the UGA dining halls. For some camps located on UGA satellite campuses, lunch will be prepared by the Georgia Center's culinary team and delivered to campers by Summer Academy staff. The UGA dining halls and Georgia Center culinary team can accommodate any dietary restrictions or allergies for your camper. ***Campers are strongly encouraged to bring a snack.***

EXTENDED DAY

Program

Extended Day programming can be added to your day camper's registration. These extra-curricular camp activities will run from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. Our staff will facilitate activities such as swimming and/or water activities, field games, arts & crafts, and trivia, to name a few. Activities may vary week-to-week depending on weather and facilities.

Drop-off & pick-up

Drop-Off for extended day is the same as drop-off for all day campers. See page 9 for more information.

Pick-up for extended day campers will be from 5 to 5:30 pm. All extended day campers will be picked up in the same location, regardless of where they were dropped off. Specific pick-up locations will be communicated in pre-camp emails.



RESIDENTIAL CAMPERS

Camper check-in

Residential campers will move into their assigned dorm the Sunday before camp between 4 and 5:30 pm. Specific move in times will be communicated via email one week out from the start of camp. Please be completely moved in no later than 5:30pm to attend orientation in time. Dorm parking is often limited, so we encourage all parents/guardians to stick to their designated time slot. If you're having trouble finding us or running late, **please call us.**

Camper check-out

Campers can be picked up at their dorm on Friday from 6 to 7 pm. Resident counselors and camp leadership will be on site to aid campers and supervise the check-out process. To ensure camper safety, we will only release campers to the individuals listed on the camper's release list. Please ensure that whoever is picking up your camper has photo identification to verify their identity.

Lodging

Campers will be housed in a dorm on the UGA campus, conveniently located in the heart of the action. Campers will be housed in dual occupancy rooms, with male and female campers housed separately, with access to single-gender community bathrooms or en-suite bathrooms. Occasionally, a single arrangement is required to accommodate the number of enrolled campers. We can typically honor roommate requests.

While we know that many of our parents/guardians would like weekend stayover service for campers attending two camps in a row, we are unable to provide that service. Saturdays are a time for our camp staff to get recharged and ready for our next week of camp.



RESIDENTIAL CAMPERS

Airport shuttle

If your camper is flying into Hartsfield–Jackson Airport in Atlanta, we recommend using the [Groome Shuttle Service](#) to travel from the airport to the Georgia Center and vice versa. This shuttle service can be booked online and scheduled to drop off and pick up your camper at the Georgia Center. Please inform us of your Groome Service reservation so a member of our staff can be present at the drop-off location for your camper's arrival and to ensure your camper is on time for pick-up at the end of camp.

Meals

All meals are provided for residential campers, from their arrival Sunday evening until their departure Friday evening. Breakfast and dinner will be served at UGA dining halls, which offer a wide variety of foods and beverages. Most camps will also eat lunch in a UGA dining hall, while some offsite camps will have lunch prepared by the Georgia Center culinary team. The UGA dining halls and Georgia Center culinary team can accommodate any dietary restrictions or allergies.

General daily schedule:

7:15–8:30 am: Breakfast at Bolton Dining Commons

9:00 am–3:30 pm: Instructional time with 1-hour lunch break

3:30–4:30 pm: Small group/team-building activities

4:30–6:00 pm: Dorm time/small group activities

6:00–7:00 pm: Dinner at Bolton Dining Commons

7:00–7:30 pm: Residential campers prepare for evening activities

7:30–8:45 pm: Evening activities

8:45–9:45 pm: Debrief day with RAs, evening wind-down

9:45–10:00 pm: Room checks, lights out

Spending money

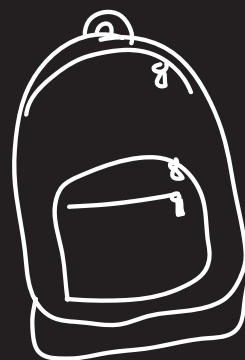
Campers can bring spending money, which is useful for vending machines, the pool concession stand, evening trips downtown, and the UGA Bookstore.

If we plan activities that require entrance fees or tickets, that cost will be covered by camp. Costs of snacks, souvenirs, etc. will be the camper's responsibility. Please only send your camper with the amount of money you are willing to allow them to spend. Summer Academy cannot be responsible for lost or stolen cash, gift cards or credit/debit cards.

Transportation during camp

Depending on the location of your child's camp, they may be shuttled from the dorms to the camp via UGA vans or buses, or on foot. Campers are always accompanied by one or more Summer Academy chaperones while on campus.

RESIDENTIAL CAMPER PACKING LIST



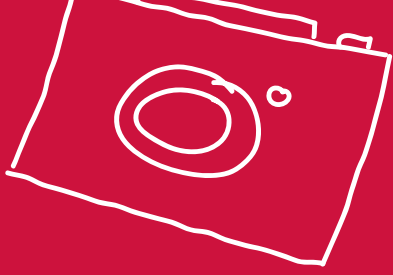
What to bring

- A set of twin, twin XL or full sheets and a pillow (because the bed is XL size, full size sheets are preferred) Blanket or sleeping bag
- Bath towels, personal toiletries, hygiene products, and shower caddy
- Camp required supplies (see FAQs)
- Flip-flops or sandals (a pair of flip-flops is recommended for the shower)
- Casual dress for 6 days of camp that is appropriate for the program and the weather
- A light jacket
- Walking shoes or sneakers
- Bathing suit and beach towel
- Backpack or another bag for carrying items between the residence hall and camp
- Hair dryer (if necessary)
- A bag for dirty/wet clothing
- Sunscreen and bug spray
- Raincoat or poncho
- Spending money (see above)
- Water bottle
- Clothing for evening activities (information about evening activities will be included in pre-camp emails)
- Optional items: book, journal, coloring book, sketchbook, headphones, booklight, nightlight, camera

What **not** to bring

- Refrigerator, microwaves, or other kitchen appliances
- Televisions or gaming consoles
- Desktop computers





PHOTOGRAPHS FROM CAMP

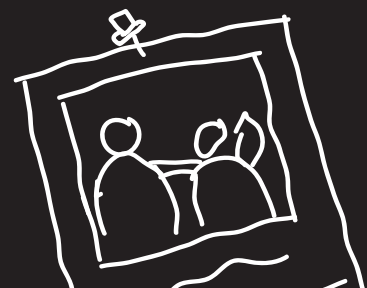


We know you want to see what your kids are doing while they are here at camp. At summer academy, we use SmugMug, a password-protected social media platform, to store and share our pictures with parents/guardians. We encourage you to check out the cool things your kids are doing and learning! Camp-specific information about accessing SmugMug will be included in pre-camp emails.



Camp staff will update SmugMug throughout the week, and all camp photos will be posted no later than the end of day on Monday of the week after camp. We also post photo highlights on our Facebook (UGA Summer Academy) and Instagram (@uga.summer.academy) pages.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us:
gc-youth@uga.edu.





HEALTH AND SAFETY



The health and safety of Summer Academy students is our primary focus as we make plans for camp. To ensure a healthy summer, Summer Academy will adopt and implement guidance from the University System of Georgia and UGA to ensure the safety of students, instructors, and staff. To increase the success of a healthy summer, preventative measures will be implemented, such as frequent disinfection of classrooms, an emphasis on handwashing, and consideration for classroom capacity in buildings and teaching spaces.

Medical and medication information

At check-in, students must turn in all prescription and over-the-counter medications in a plastic sealable bag with the student's full name written on the outside. Only in-halers and epi-pens are exempt from this requirement. Prescription medications must be in their original container with the student's name and directions on the container. All medications will be collected and stored by staff for the duration of the camp.

Summer Academy at UGA does not have any licensed medical professionals on staff to prescribe or administer medications. Students must be knowledgeable of their medications and how to administer them. Summer Academy staff will give students their medicine bags at the time designated on the medical form provided by parents/guardians during registration. Summer Academy staff will not handle students' medications directly nor provide guidance on how or what medications to take. If the student is unsure of the medication to take or the correct dosage, the student will need to contact their parent/guardian for clarification.

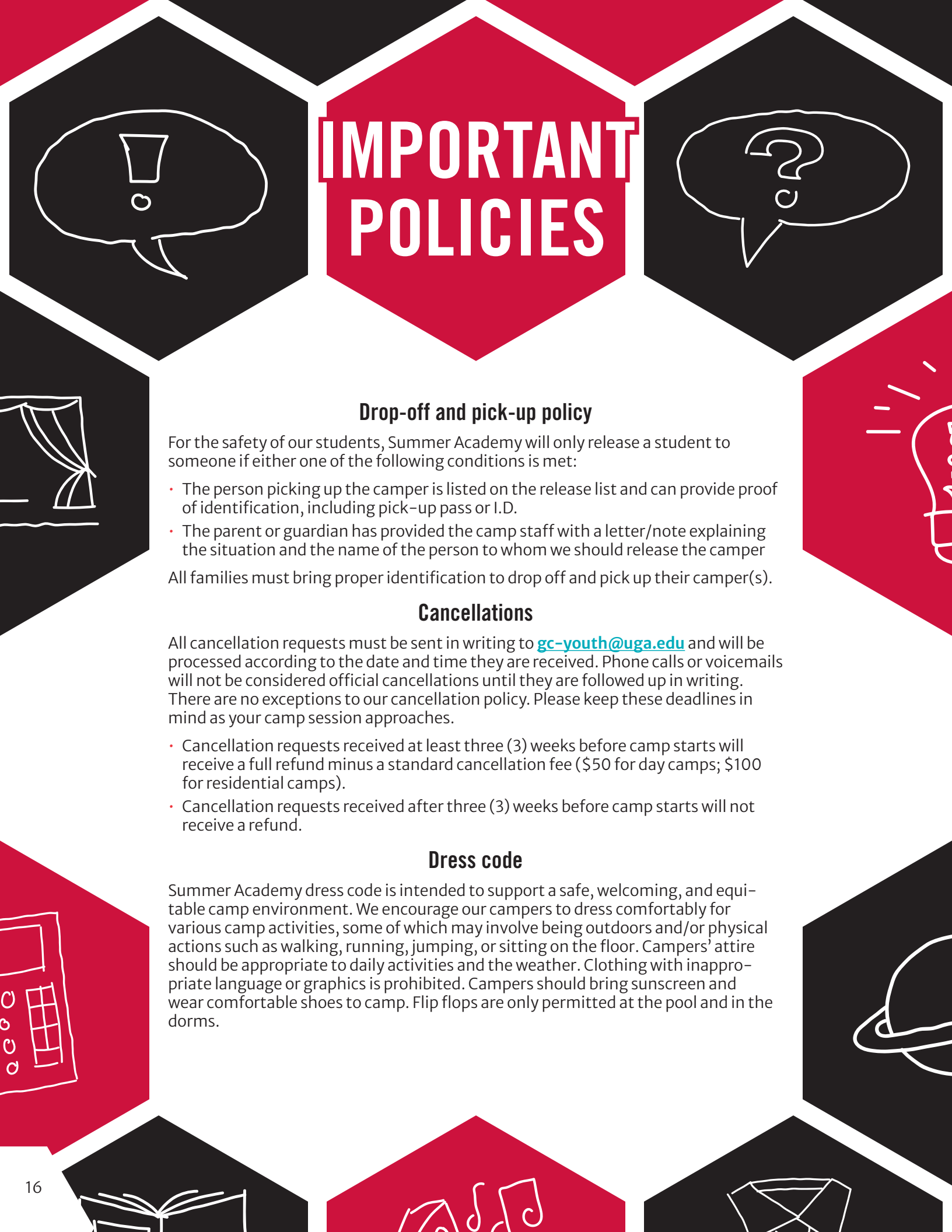
If you have authorized the administration of an over-the-counter medication during camp, we will provide it and notify you via e-mail what was given. If you have not given prior authorization when you registered, we will call you to authorize any over-the-counter medication for your child. If the complaint is not resolved by the time the medication wears off, we will call you and seek medical attention as needed.

All campers must have a completed medical form before the beginning of their camp. Failure to submit this form will prevent your camper from being treated at the University Health Center (for non-emergency situations) until we can contact you.

Safety information

Our primary concern is to ensure the safety of all our campers, instructors, and staff. Summer Academy follows and implements all guidance from the University System of Georgia and UGA. To meet required minors' protection guidelines, all staff must pass a background check and successfully complete UGA minors protection training before working with Summer Academy students.





IMPORTANT POLICIES

Drop-off and pick-up policy

For the safety of our students, Summer Academy will only release a student to someone if either one of the following conditions is met:

- The person picking up the camper is listed on the release list and can provide proof of identification, including pick-up pass or I.D.
- The parent or guardian has provided the camp staff with a letter/note explaining the situation and the name of the person to whom we should release the camper

All families must bring proper identification to drop off and pick up their camper(s).

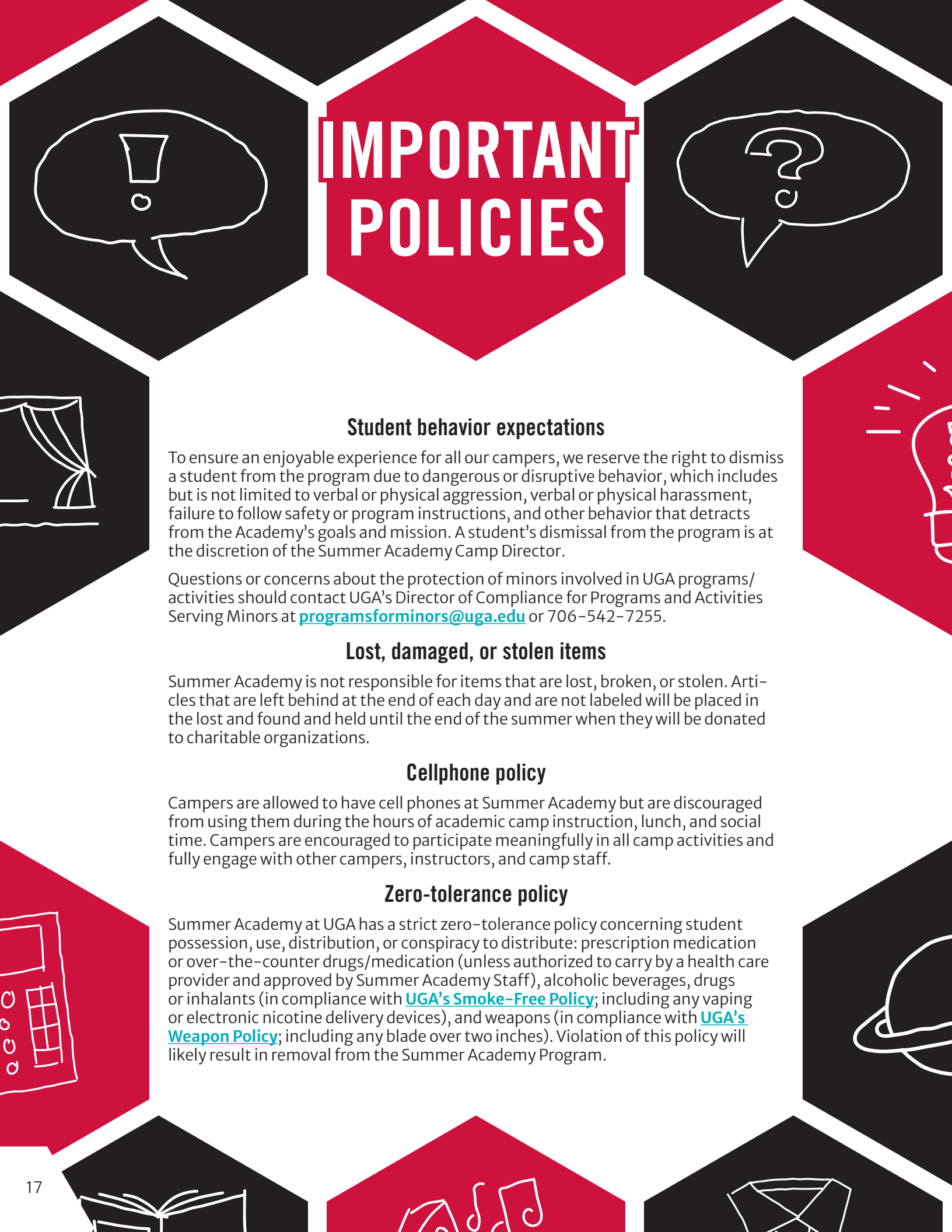
Cancellations

All cancellation requests must be sent in writing to gc-youth@uga.edu and will be processed according to the date and time they are received. Phone calls or voicemails will not be considered official cancellations until they are followed up in writing. There are no exceptions to our cancellation policy. Please keep these deadlines in mind as your camp session approaches.

- Cancellation requests received at least three (3) weeks before camp starts will receive a full refund minus a standard cancellation fee (\$50 for day camps; \$100 for residential camps).
- Cancellation requests received after three (3) weeks before camp starts will not receive a refund.

Dress code

Summer Academy dress code is intended to support a safe, welcoming, and equitable camp environment. We encourage our campers to dress comfortably for various camp activities, some of which may involve being outdoors and/or physical actions such as walking, running, jumping, or sitting on the floor. Campers' attire should be appropriate to daily activities and the weather. Clothing with inappropriate language or graphics is prohibited. Campers should bring sunscreen and wear comfortable shoes to camp. Flip flops are only permitted at the pool and in the dorms.



IMPORTANT POLICIES

Student behavior expectations

To ensure an enjoyable experience for all our campers, we reserve the right to dismiss a student from the program due to dangerous or disruptive behavior, which includes but is not limited to verbal or physical aggression, verbal or physical harassment, failure to follow safety or program instructions, and other behavior that detracts from the Academy's goals and mission. A student's dismissal from the program is at the discretion of the Summer Academy Camp Director.

Questions or concerns about the protection of minors involved in UGA programs/activities should contact UGA's Director of Compliance for Programs and Activities Serving Minors at programsforminors@uga.edu or 706-542-7255.

Lost, damaged, or stolen items

Summer Academy is not responsible for items that are lost, broken, or stolen. Articles that are left behind at the end of each day and are not labeled will be placed in the lost and found and held until the end of the summer when they will be donated to charitable organizations.

Cellphone policy

Campers are allowed to have cell phones at Summer Academy but are discouraged from using them during the hours of academic camp instruction, lunch, and social time. Campers are encouraged to participate meaningfully in all camp activities and fully engage with other campers, instructors, and camp staff.

Zero-tolerance policy

Summer Academy at UGA has a strict zero-tolerance policy concerning student possession, use, distribution, or conspiracy to distribute: prescription medication or over-the-counter drugs/medication (unless authorized to carry by a health care provider and approved by Summer Academy Staff), alcoholic beverages, drugs or inhalants (in compliance with [UGA's Smoke-Free Policy](#); including any vaping or electronic nicotine delivery devices), and weapons (in compliance with [UGA's Weapon Policy](#); including any blade over two inches). Violation of this policy will likely result in removal from the Summer Academy Program.