



Summer Camp

Frequently

Asked

Questions

What is CF-XTRA Summer Camp?

Summer Camp is one of the biggest events of the CF-XTRA year. The programme is a mixture of games, crafts, outdoor activities, bible-based sessions, worship, food and a whole lot of fun. It is a great opportunity to make friends, get to know young people from other Congregational churches around the UK, and explore faith as a Christian.

How do I book?

You can download the registration medical form from the CF website (www.congregational.org.uk/future-events/summer-camp-2017), fill it in and send it to the CF Youth & Children's Office in Manchester along with a cheque payable to 'Congregational Federation', or pay online (www.congregational.org.uk/payonline).

How much is Summer Camp 2017?

CF-XTRA subsidises some of the cost of Summer Camp wherever possible. Prices vary upon how early you have booked and if you completed payment and booking forms by the deadline. Having these prices and deadlines helps the Y&C Department know participant numbers for the event further in advance to inform the venue. Summer Camp cost £90 if you book before midnight on Sunday 30th April and £100 after that before final bookings close on Friday 26th May.

Your travel costs to and from the event are extra. There is a CF-XTRA policy that no one should pay more than £30 to travel to a CF-XTRA event. The costs above £30 can be reimbursed through the Y&C department.

Where is Summer Camp this year?

This year we're having our first Summer Camp in Scotland! We will be staying at Fordell Firs National Activity Centre in Hillend near Dunfermline. The postcode is KY11 7HQ.

How do I get to Fordell Firs National Activity Centre?

- 1: Sign up for using the Rail Courier Service from one of the designated train stations near you and travel with others to Inverkeithing station.
- 2: Book your own train and meet those who are travelling by R.C.S. at Inverkeithing station and transfer together to the venue.
- 3: Travel by car with family/friends directly to Fordell Firs.

Fordell Firs publish travel directions on their website: <http://www.fordellfirs.org.uk/contact.html>

What's the cost of the Rail Courier Service?

The Y&C Office will book 'return' train tickets between the designated start location and the destination station near the venue. You will need to make arrangements to travel to the designated meet-up station.

Once the tickets have been booked we will write to you asking for the cost of the train tickets up to a maximum of £30. CF-XTRA covers the remaining costs above £30 as a way to keep events accessible. CF-XTRA arranges and covers the costs for travel between the station and the venue.

How does the rail courier system work?

The Rail Courier system is in place to help families travel shorter distances, as the events move around the country. It is a chance to begin the event early by travelling with others.

We look at the locations people who book to attend are travelling from and pick a few mainline train stations to get the CF-XTRA Leadership to meet families at. These have included London stations, Birmingham New Street, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and York.

The national team finds the best journeys (either quickest or fewest changes), occasionally attempting to meet up with other groups travelling on route. They book the tickets and reserve seats so each group can sit together.

Families travel to their designated location to meet up with the CF-XTRA leader (who wears their CF-XTRA t-shirt, rail courier lanyard ID and has a sign saying 'CF-XTRA rail courier'). We arrange to meet 30 minutes before the train is due to leave just in case some is delayed on their journey to the station. One of the leaders has everyone's tickets. Occasionally we have some people joining a group already travelling if this is the case separate information will be given as your rail courier may meet you as the train arrives rather than in advance.

When everyone is together, or when the train can be boarded, the leaders ensure everyone gets onto the train and stores their luggage and finds their seats.

We request that the young people have luggage that they can adequately carry for themselves as the leaders will have their own luggage to transport as well. We suggest people have something to do on the journey. The leaders ensure everyone is ready for any changes of trains and stick together. Upon arrival at the destination station, the group will either wait for all the other groups to arrive if a coach has been booked or head directly to the venue in the minibus or taxis.

You may arrange to text your family to let them know you've arrived safely, but if you forget then family can contact Yvonne Campbell (General Secretary) to confirm you've arrived and only forgotten to text due to all the fun you're having!

On the return, families are requested to meet the young people at the station to pick them up on time. Please be in touch with the designated leader if you are delayed. They may have another connection to get themselves to travel home.

Can I bring a friend?

Yes! So long as their family are happy for them to come to a Christian camp then absolutely. Just make sure they book before the deadline too.

How long am I away for?

Summer Camp 2017 runs from Monday to Friday. That's 4 nights away and 5 days.

When do I get a kit list of what to bring?

We try to have a kit list complete and sent out to everyone attending about a month before Camp starts. Sometimes it can be a little later as the leadership team can still finalising the programme details of what to bring. As soon as it is ready it is published on the CF-XTRA Summer Camp webpage along with all the information you'll be getting through the post.

Can I bring my camera?

Yes you can, but it is your responsibility as we take no responsibility for valuables. Photos should be appropriate and only taken with permission of those in the photo. Your photos are for you, they should not be on social media without people's consent. If you're unsure, don't publish them online.

Can I bring my mobile with me?

We encourage someone to have a mobile for the journey to Camp so they can be in touch if they are delayed, although this can be a parent if travelling by car.

We do require full participation in the programme, so have a 'no phones in programmed sessions' rule so its best that electronics stay in people's rooms so they don't get lost. We take no responsibility for valuables; they are brought at the owner's risk.

Can I bring my musical instrument?

If you want to play in the worship band, yes please do! Tell us, and we'll do our best to get sheet music of the songs out to you before the event to practise.

Some instruments may be available so you may not need to bring your own such as a drum kit and piano. If you're thinking of bringing an instrument, please check.

Will I be the only new person?

We can't guarantee the answer to be 'no' for all events. But for the last two years ¼ of those who attended Camp have come for the first time and at every CF-XTRA event there has always been someone new.

I've never been away from home before and I'm a bit worried. What might I expect?

Summer Camp is a great time for everyone; we all get to know each other and make new friends. The day is full of activities, and the night times you'll be sharing a room with friends a similar age to you. The Core Team (aged 17-25) are about to answer any questions you've got and help make Camp amazing. There are also other adults about to help Core Team make the programme happen. Everyone is a little nervous when we're going into a new situation and we don't know what's going to happen, but Summer Camp is going to be one of your favourite weeks of the year! All of us who work to make Camp happen absolutely love these events and we come back every year because we want to let others have the same awesome experiences that we've had. You're going to love it!

Lots of us feel a bit homesick at some point in our lives and it can happen at bedtime when we have time to think about those who aren't sharing the fun with us or can't say goodnight to our loved ones in our normal way. Homesickness tends to improve when you're engaged in activities which you're really enjoying because you don't think as much about home. Give yourself time; tell someone how you're feeling and think of all the things you're looking forward to about the week. We try to discourage people from contacting home as this often makes homesickness worse.

Do I have to attend all the sessions and activities?

Yes. We don't have an option for staying in your room all day. We think that if you've signed up for Summer Camp then you should take a full part in it. The leadership team take a lot of care to ensure there is a balanced and interactive programme with lots of things to have a go at.

When should I be at a meeting point?

Summer Camp runs to a timed programme. You need to be ready with the right equipment (eg bible/notepad/outdoor shoes) by the time stated so everyone is ready to start on time. If you're not there, you'll miss out and possibly delay everyone else.

The leadership will often give a countdown to a session time for those who are in the accommodation block. But if you wear a watch for the week, that should help you keep track of how long you have before needing to be at the meeting point for each programmed session/activity.

Do we get any free-time?

Yes! Within the programme there will be blocks of time where there will be activities or games available to play with your friends, or you might bring an activity to do. You cannot leave site, and must let the leadership team know where you are going. You must follow the instructions and boundaries given to you and return on time. We do not want any search-parties needed to be sent!

Can my friend and I do the same outdoor activities?

Due to group sizes you may be in a different group to a specific friend, but you'll be part of a group you'll get to know and will be encouraging each other. If you *really need* to be with your friend, add a little note to your form stating who you'd like to be in a group with.

Will my friend and I be together all the time?

We try to make sure people are with someone they know in their room for sleeping. During the day time we have a variety of group options so that you get a chance to mix up and meet new people.

Can I share a room with my friend?

We arrange rooms by gender and by age. This year at Fordell Firs you will be in small dormitories. We take care to consider how best people will get on to have a good night's sleep. One of the great things about residential camps is that you get to share a room with other people who often become good friends for the week. If you're coming for the first time we make sure there is someone in the same position as you to get to know, or someone we know will help you settle in.

What are the night-time arrangements?

There is always a designated bedtime on the programme. However this varies depending on the event. Often there is an option to go to bed or have a final hot drink. Sometimes we have a film available (often split over two nights) while some people go to their room to get ready for bed instead. There will be a lights out time and leaders will be 'on duty' to ensure rooms are quiet to ensure everyone can get to sleep. We try to have a chilled time just before bed so that people aren't too hyper to sleep.

The young people are made aware who to go and awake up if there is a problem during the night. They'll know who the person is and where their room is. There is a male and a female 'on duty' and a second person available for safeguarding purposes.

I'm not sure I'm a Christian yet, does that matter?

That's okay. CF-XTRA is for everyone! One of the cool things about Summer Camp is that everyone who comes can learn something; we're all at different stages of our journey of faith all the way through our lives. You'll be fine so long as you're happy to come and hear more about Jesus and learn about the history and stories in the Bible.

I don't have my own Bible, do I need one?

We'll always have a Bible on the kit list of things to bring, and we encourage you to have your own so that you can get to know your own Bible. There are lots of different translations and it is good to find one which is accurate and understandable for you. Most common versions are perhaps *New International Version (NIV)*, *Good News Translation (GNT)*, and *New Century Version (NCV)*. We always make sure we have some spare Bibles about in case anyone forgets theirs.

Do I need to bring snacks?

The meals at Fordell Firs will be fantastic. If you eat everything at the meal time you'll be full enough not to need snacks. We definitely don't want you to be snacking all day and then be too full for the meal, or to eat a whole bag of sweets and not be able to get to sleep at bedtime!

What will the food be like?

This year we are at a self-catering venue, so we have an excellent team coming to prepare our meals. We don't do fussy eating and we ensure that everyone eats and drinks something at every meal time. You might find something new you like as well as foods you know and love. For those who require different meals such as vegetarian, gluten/lactose/citrus free, so long as it is mentioned on your dietary requirements for the event, we can communicate it to the catering team and ensure you have a meal suitable to your requirements.

Who has responsibility at the event?

The legal responsibility lies with the Congregational Federation. This year Yvonne Campbell (General Secretary) will be the CF's representative. There will also be members of Youth & Children's Group present to help the Core Team run the programme.

The leadership team includes the CF-XTRA Core Team (they are the elected people responsible for CF-XTRA) and other supporting leaders.

The Fordell Firs instructor team are responsible for their activities. Risk Assessments have been provided to the Y&C Department for the activities.

You are responsible for your good behaviour throughout the event.

What happens with medicines?

Generally, the appointed adult or staff person will keep hold of medicines and ensure people have them at the allotted times. Please ensure details of when medication need to be taken is provided on the medical form, or an updated list is provided with any changes at the event. We are unable to administer medication, but will supervise the young people taking it.

We ensure asthma inhalers are with the young person if they may be required during activities.

Preventative inhalers for mornings/evenings may be held by the young person if that is requested.

What happens if I get sick?

There will be at least two designated certified First Aiders within the group.

We can get sick for lots of reasons. At events it can often be related to tiredness due to exciting days and perhaps later bedtimes that you may normally have.

People have occasionally had headaches at events, often these are improved by drinking water, or a better night's sleep. We do not give out medication without parental permission and certainly not from other people's supplies.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS: If you think they might need medication, please pack some with instructions or details of when to be contacted for approval to take it. Medicines should be handed in to the designated 'medical' person at the beginning of the week (please see "What happens with medicines?" for more information).

Generally we wouldn't contact parents/guardians to request the young person is collected and taken home as illness can be a 24 hour-thing which bed-rest can improve. We will make a decision upon whether to contact parents/emergency contacts depending on the situation. If we want to confirm that something is 'normal' for the individual we will get in touch with the emergency contacts listed on the registration medical form.

Can I contact family and talk to my friends from home?

We want to encourage everyone to be 'present' at Camp. We suggest you tell your friends that you're going away for the week and probably won't be in touch. You'll have lots of people to get to know, and you can't do that if you're on your phone constantly. We can't guarantee internet access or mobile signal.

If you've travelled by Rail Courier Service, you may have agreed with your parents that you'll text on arrival. That's great, please do! If you forget, parents can contact Yvonne Campbell to check you've arrived because you're probably having too much fun already.

From time to time situations arise which means you may need to be in touch with family during the week, please let Yvonne know if you'll be expecting news or may need to take a phone call. She'll make sure the other leaders are aware of the situation if needs be.

If you're homesick, we discourage contacting home because it can make the feeling much worse and only by fully engaging in the life happening around you will help you to ignore that feeling and we know it will get better in time. The leaders may get in touch with the registered emergency contact 1 to let them know what's happening as that person may prefer to talk to their child themselves to reassure them.

What if I'm tired?

We firstly want to make sure you are well and fit. Secondly, for you to fully engage with the programme. We ensure there is a bedtime to allow everyone enough time to sleep. Our best advice would be to take advantage of the option to sleep at bedtime. The evening activities may happen until after your normal bedtime. Some of our younger participants may choose to go to bed as soon as the last planned activity ends, others may shower and/or get ready for bed more slowly. Every one reacts differently to the energy requirements of the programme.

Staying up late chatting to your friends will always make you tired the next day if you don't get enough sleep. You will be expected to be a full part of the programme whether you're tired or not. However, you may find that a free-time slot is a great chance for a 20 minute power-nap!

What if I'm not tired at bedtime?

There is a bedtime on the programme, and a 'lights out/quiet time' to enable people to get the sleep they need.

There may be others in your bedroom that do want to sleep but can't get to sleep if you're still moving around loudly or talking. We need you to be respectful of others in your room and in the same corridor who may also be able to hear you laughing and talking through the connecting walls. We do want you to be in bed rather than stay up and hang around with the leaders who may be holding a meeting or prayer time for the next day. You might just need to lie in bed for a while before all the excitement of the day wears off and your brain settles enough for you to sleep. If you don't let your body try to calm down and sleep, then of course you're going to struggle to sleep.

What happens if I need extra support or have additional needs?

If you let us know we can do our best to ensure your needs are met. For example, if you struggle with remembering instructions all in one go, the leadership will help remind you of what you need to do or get ready for the next activity. The leadership team are there to help everyone have a great time at Camp.

If you are dyslexic and benefit from any hand-out sheets printed on a different colour paper, if you let us know, we can do our best to accommodate your needs. We want to enable everyone to engage.

One of the special things about CF-XTRA is that it isn't overwhelming. We often have about 40-50 participants including leaders. It's a good size group to be able to get to know everyone.

If you need a little encouragement and reassurance to get things done or to meet new people, the leadership will help you and give you the space to have a go for yourself.

The basic answer is; if you can let us know in advance the support you might need, we can do our best to make things happen ready for your arrival at Summer Camp. The national team can look things up on the internet but it is often the family who knows best how you can benefit from additional support, so PARENTS/GUARDIANS please give us a ring or email and let us know. Help us to help you.

Further questions?

If you have any unanswered questions about Summer Camp, please get in touch with the Youth & Children's Office on 0115 959 6330 or email ycadmin@congregational.org.uk.

You can also contact the national office administrators on 0115 9111 460 or email admin@congregational.org.uk and they'll put you through to the right person.



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