

SOAR

at



SOAR at Vanguard Parent Handbook **2009**





Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome you and your child to SOAR! You are about to embark on a significant adventure with your child, and it is important for you to prepare ahead of time to ensure this is a successful experience for all. You are giving your child a wonderful gift by enrolling them in one of SOAR's programs.

SOAR is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA is a group comprised of community and camp professionals who are dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults through the camp experience. ACA defines "camp" as "a sustained experience that provides a creative, recreational, and educational opportunity in group living in the out-of-doors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surroundings to contribute to each camper's mental, physical, and social growth."

More specifically, we believe camp is one of the best ways to teach pre-teens and teens to be successful, independent, and self-sufficient in a close cooperative learning community that is supportive of their individual gifts and differences. Our goal is to give campers a wide range of activities, skills, and experiences that will not only challenge them while they are here at SOAR, but will also relate to their experiences at home and in the classroom. After campers return home, parents frequently comment to us about how much their children have grown, not only physically, but in their attitudes and self-esteem. These are important and positive changes we strive to instill in our campers while on their SOAR adventures.

We look forward to providing your camper with a summer of fun, friends, and many unforgettable memories!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Jones
Executive Director

John Willson
Director of AD/HD & LD Programs

ACA Camps Set the Standard

SOAR is Accredited By the American Camp Association (ACA)

ACA Accreditation Means...

- We cared enough to undergo a thorough (over 300 standards) review of our operation.
- Our camp complies with industry-established health and safety standards, recognized by courts of law and government regulators.
- We have a commitment to best practices in the industry.
- We go a step beyond a state's basic licensing requirements.
- We value expert collaboration. ACA collaborates with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to assure that current practices reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation.

"ACA Accreditation means that this camp submitted to a thorough (over 300 standards) review of its operation by the American Camp Association and complied with the highest standards in the industry," Cindy Moore, ACA National Standards Commission.



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CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS:

- Carefully Read ENTIRE Parent Handbook
- Fax Completed Student Forms Packet to 801-820-3050.
Instructions for completing these forms:
 - **Complete pages 1 – 4, which includes the following sections:**
 - Emergency Contact Information
 - Student Medical History
 - Parent Permission to Treat
 - Picture Release
 - Acknowledgement of Risk
 - **Have the Parent Permission to Treat section (page 2) notarized.**
Note: A notary may be available during registration- please check with admissions.
 - **Have the Student Physical Form completed (page 5) by your child's physician.**
Note: This form should be signed by your doctor, to indicate a physical has been completed in the past 24 months. Please check with your physician to determine the date of your child's last exam, as your child may not need a new physical.
 - **Attach a copy of your child's immunization records**
 - **Attach a copy of your child's insurance card**
 - **Attach a photograph of your child (if applicable)**
 - **Attach copy of flight itinerary (if applicable)**
- Call SOAR to schedule inbrief/debrief times & confirm travel arrangements.
(see pgs 12 & 13 of Parent Handbook for details)
 - Call (828) 456-3435 (Eastern Standard Time)

MY INBRIEF TIME: _____

MY DEBRIEF TIME: _____

- Submit Final Payment (Final payment is due no later than June 1st, 2009)

For students doing multiple courses:

- Schedule layover days

Time to start gearing up for camp!

This handbook contains information that you will need to be ready for camp. Please take a few minutes to read through everything. It's all-important, and if you are familiar with the information you can save time and questions later on. Keep this information handy so you can refer to it later.

Plan to make camp preparation a joint effort. Spend time as a family discussing camp policies and procedures. Carefully read through all information and forms contained in this packet. **Complete the forms and return them as soon as possible so we can make plans for your camper.** We make staffing, trip and class plans based on the information on these forms, so don't delay in sending them back!

Packing for Camp

As you begin your planning and packing for camp, keep in mind that storage space is limited. Don't over pack! We have carefully selected each item on the gear list to ensure your child will have everything he or she needs while on their course. All items on the gear list are required unless stated otherwise. Campers will have a limited amount of space in the dorm rooms to store their belongings.

Be sure to label all of your child's belongings, including clothing, cameras...everything! An excellent label source is Campbound.com. While we make every effort to help your child keep track of their belongings, we cannot be responsible for items that are lost.

Note: SOAR will return labeled items of \$25 value or greater. Items will be mailed C.O.D. SOAR is not responsible for returning items that are not labeled.

Laundry

Students will do their own laundry several times while on course. We feel this is an essential life skill for students to learn. SOAR will provide your child with the quarters and soap necessary to do their laundry. In addition to your large laundry bag, you are welcome to send a small mesh laundry bag that can help keep track of smaller items (socks, underwear, etc.).

Camp Packing List

On the following pages you will find gear lists for the SOAR at Vanguard course. If you have any questions about gear, please feel free to contact SOAR Admissions at (828) 456-3435.

Do Not Bring

Cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, sparklers/fireworks, weapons (including knives), hair dyes, expensive or valuable jewelry, skateboards, cell phones, computers, pagers, boom boxes, CD players or radios with speakers, walkmans, Discmans, iPods, MP3 players, or hand held video games. If any of the above items are brought to SOAR, they will be gathered & held until the end of the course. However, SOAR will not be responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Equipment & Clothing

All activity-related equipment will be furnished with exception of personal clothing and personal gear. The gear list may also be found on our Web site at www.soarnc.org.

Appearance Guidelines

SOAR is dedicated to providing students with meaningful summer experiences, which allow them to learn and grow. To that end, we feel an obligation to ensure each person feels comfortable in his or her attire and is not overly distracted by the clothing of those around them. Therefore, we have formalized our dress and personal appearance code. This dress code takes into consideration the need for self-expression, while also eliminating distractions that might undermine our students' experiences.

Staff and students are not permitted to wear provocative clothing. Male staff and students are not permitted to wear pants that expose their underwear or clothing with rips and tears in inappropriate places. Additionally, shirts are required unless involved in water activities. Female staff and students are not permitted to wear: short-shorts, tube tops, belly shirts or any garment that exposes an excessive degree of cleavage or the midriff area, pants that expose their underwear, or clothing with rips or tears in inappropriate places. Uncovered bathing suits should be reserved for water activities and must be either a one-piece bathing suit or bikini with ½ inch straps. String bikinis are not permitted.

Clothing that depicts violence, drugs, alcohol, or sexualized references is unacceptable. Staff and students are not permitted to wear torn clothing while at base or in public. Large key chains, cell phones, iPods, MP3 players or pagers should be left at home.

Significant appearance changes while at camp are not permitted. These include but are not limited to the following: drastic changes in hair style or color, piercings of any kind, and henna (temporary) tattoos.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

SOAR at Vanguard Gear List

CLOTHING

- 2 pair long pants or jeans
- 5 pair shorts
- 5 t-Shirts
- 2 swimsuits
- 6 pair socks
- 1 pair tennis shoes
- 1 pair water shoes*
- 6 pairs underwear
- Hat (for sun protection)
- 1 long-sleeved shirt or sweatshirt
- 2 sets sleepwear
- Rash guard top**

GEAR NEEDS

- Bed Linens (Twin Size)
- Pillow/pillowcase
- Headlamp with extra batteries
- Insect repellent (non-aerosol)
 - Pen and paper
- Rain Gear
- Day pack
- Sunscreen (maximum protection)
 - Sunglasses

PERSONAL NEEDS

- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Deodorant
- Soap/soapbox
- 2 bath towels
- 1 washcloth
- Prescription medications

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- Disposable camera (optional)
- Fishing pole (optional)
- Binoculars (optional)
 - Diving mask ***
 - Snorkel***
- Diving fins***

NOTES

1. **All clothing and personal items must be labeled!**

2. Jewelry, valuable watches and radios should be left at home.

3. All knives (other than a table knife) must be left at home.

* See Gear Guide for details.

** See Gear Guide for description of rash guard.

***Bring your own if you have them. If you do not have these, part of the spending money will be utilized for renting them.

Equipment/Gear Guide

DAY PACK

A day pack is a small backpack used to carry essential gear for day excursions. A school-type “book bag” will suffice.

RAIN GEAR

The price of adequate rain gear starts at \$30. **DO NOT BUY A VINYL PONCHO** — It rarely lasts as long as it needs to.

RASH GUARD

Rash guards are available in both long-sleeve and short-sleeve. They are key elements in the enjoyment of water sport activities as they help protect your child’s skin from the sun (if they have UV protection) and from common irritations associated with sand and saltwater. We recommend you purchase a rash guard that is the same size as the t-shirt size you would normally wear. Rash guards are meant to fit skin tight and are made of Spandex Lycra which stretches quite a bit. Companies that make rash guards include O’Neil and Body Glove. Some suggested Web sites are: www.rei.com, www.wavejammer.com, www.altrec.com and www.swimoutlet.com.

WATER SHOES

Water shoes will be worn for **all** water-based activities such as swimming. They can be purchased at any five and dime or Wal-Mart. The price is fairly inexpensive, between \$10 and \$20. Please purchase water shoes that are close-toed and non-Velcro and that fit like a slip-on shoe.

SUNGLASSES

Sunglasses should filter infrared and ultraviolet rays 95-100% and look really cool! Ground glass lenses that are optically correct are best. Dark, cheap sunglasses can actually cause more damage to your eyes than having no sunglasses at all.

HEADLAMP

While camping, students typically have to perform tasks after the sun goes down that require the use of both hands (e.g., adjust tents, pack backpacks). Also, some courses offer caving as a program activity. Consequently, we strongly recommend students bring headlamps instead of flashlights. Headlamps are inexpensive (\$5 – 10) and are widely available in stores such as Wal-Mart or K-Mart.

SUNSCREEN

There are many effective sunscreens on the market. A few even combine sunscreen with insect repellent. One suggestion is to try several brands prior to the trip to see which one works best for your child. The sunscreen should be waterproof and with a SPF rating no less than 30.

INSECT REPELLANT

A non-aerosol repellent is required (cream or liquid).

ALL PERSONAL ITEMS AND CLOTHING MUST BE LABELED!

Communication & Phone Policy

Information, our current camp newsletter and brochure can always be found online at www.soarnc.org. Important information will be sent to parents before and after camp through mail and e-mail (if available).

During camp, parents may call the following numbers if they need to speak with a director:

- Call SOAR at Vanguard at (863) 676-6091 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).
- After hours: An emergency pager number will be provided upon arrival at camp.

SOAR programs are designed to provide students with an opportunity to develop greater independence and self-reliance. With this goal in mind, students will be provided with the opportunity to call home once during their course.

The Alternative!



We encourage mail through the U.S. Postal Service. Our campers love it! It is the most dependable way to communicate with your camper. Mail is collected and sorted daily. E-mails and faxes are checked between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please address mail to your camper in the following manner for SOAR at Vanguard courses:

Child's Name
The Vanguard School
22000 U.S. Highway 27
Lake Wales, FL 33859-6858

You can send an occasional fax to your camper at (863) 676-8297.

Parents and family members can also send e-mails to their camper. While campers are unable to check their own e-mail addresses, you are welcome to send an e-mail to diann@soarnc.org. SOAR office staff print and sort e-mails daily, just like regular mail. **PLEASE make sure to include your child's full name in the subject line.**

Packages

Packages **should not** be sent to campers while they are on course. There simply is not enough room to store items sent in packages. **DO NOT SEND FOOD TO CAMP.** Please share with relatives and friends not to send food in the mail. The food served at camp is wholesome and abundant. We will do our best to accommodate your child's eating preferences.

Birthdays at Camp

If a camper has a birthday during camp, the cook will bake a special cake for the dinner meal, and we'll sing happy birthday.

Food at Camp

The Vanguard School boasts of world-class food service. We will accommodate vegetarian and non-orthodox kosher diets; however, students are ultimately responsible for their own food choices.

Health & Personal Well-Being

The number one concern for SOAR is the health and well-being of our community. All SOAR instructors are certified in first aid and CPR, and they receive training in all adventure activities. All swimming activities are

staffed by certified lifeguards. You will be notified if your child is ill or injured and needs to be taken to the hospital. Health checks are completed by a SOAR director at least once a week.

All campers are required to turn in a medical form and physical form signed by a doctor before attending camp. Campers must have a physical exam within 24 months of the start of camp. It is important for you to communicate any physical limitations your child may have with the staff prior to the course.

Parent Notification of Injury and/or Illness

Parents will be notified of student injuries and illness under the following circumstances:

1. When the injury or illness requires medical care beyond the scope of staff certification.
2. When the student is to be seen by anyone other than SOAR staff for medical care.
3. When an illness or injury results in the student being separated from the group for a significant length of time (i.e., more than one day).
4. When an illness or injury requires a student be removed from the course.
5. To obtain permission for administration of over-the-counter medication not included in SOAR's first aid kit (i.e., cough or cold medication).

Medication

Proper administration of prescription medication, over-the-counter drugs and vitamins is critical, and we need your assistance. If your child will be on any prescription medication during the course, please send each medication in the **original prescription container** (no pill dispensers please). Include only a two-day surplus. *Note: Each medication should be listed separately on the Medical Information Form.* Please notify SOAR if you will be initiating changes to your child's medication schedule during the four weeks prior to the course. If your child will be flying to SOAR, please **do not** put their medications in checked baggage.

SOAR staff receives training on all aspects of medication administration, including information about the common types taken by LD and AD/HD youth, their purpose and contraindications, and a standard protocol for administering the medication. SOAR instructors will review your child's medication information during the inbrief process.

Insurance

If an accident or injury does occur, your child will be transported to the nearest medical facility. Any charges for sickness related to doctor or hospital visits or prescription medications will be the sole responsibility of the parent. Family health insurance information must be written on the camper's medical form, and a copy of your insurance and prescription card (if applicable) must be on file with SOAR.

Visiting Camp

Parents will not be permitted to visit their children while they are on course. We welcome parents and campers to visit base before attending camp. SOAR directors give numerous presentations at national and regional conferences throughout the year. We would love for you to stop by and say hello if you are also attending the conference. Contact SOAR and watch your e-mail for specific dates and locations.

Participant Discontinuation of the Program

There are occasional instances when SOAR students may need to leave or may be asked to leave from a SOAR course.

These instances include, but are not limited to:

1. Illness or injury.
2. The student's profile and behavior upon arrival are inconsistent with information presented in application materials.
3. The student requires an inordinate amount of one-on-one attention from SOAR staff.
4. The student displays continual aggressive behavior toward other students, self, or staff.
5. The student displays inappropriate sexual behavior.
6. The student uses illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products.

SOAR reserves the right to remove students from the program due to these and other issues deemed appropriate to maintain the safety of SOAR students and staff and the integrity of the program. SOAR also recognizes that families may need to remove students from the program due to family emergencies, etc. Please review the cancellation policy for important information regarding participant discontinuation.

Transportation Policies and Procedures

To keep families abreast of SOAR's continued commitment to the safety of students during transport, we have posted SOAR transportation policies and procedures online at www.soarnc.org under the "General Info" page under the "FAQs" tab. If you have any questions regarding protocols, feel free to contact us.

Financial Information

Registration Fee:

Prior to June 1, families will be required to submit a \$250, **non-refundable registration** fee along with their application for admission. We accept check, money order, MasterCard, Visa and Discover. The registration fee can also be made by logging in to your account at www.soarnc.org. The registration fee will be refunded only if the camper is not accepted. If a camper must cancel a course, the registration fee may be used for another course during the current season or during the next season. After that, the deposit will become unavailable for use.

Tuition Balance:

For any registration received prior to June 1, the balance of all tuition fees is due two months before the start of the first course. After June 1, payment must be received *in full* for the student to be confirmed for the course. We encourage you to send final payment via check or money order, but we also accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Tuition payments can also be made by logging in to your account at www.soarnc.org.

Cancellations:

Upon cancellation, the tuition balance (excluding the registration deposit) will be refunded on the following schedule:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ▪ 61 days or more from course start date | Full refund |
| ▪ 31 – 60 days from course start date | 50% refund |
| ▪ 16 – 30 days from course start date | 25% refund |
| ▪ Within 15 days of course start date | No Refund |

SOAR reserves the right to cancel a course due to insufficient enrollment.

Scholarship Fund:

A limited number of scholarships are available to students based on financial need. Applicants are encouraged to contact SOAR early for necessary forms.

SOAR's scholarship fund is raised from donations made by parents of current and former campers. If you are interested in contributing to this worthwhile fund, please speak to us! Your contributions are tax deductible.

Spending Money:

Spending money for all course days will be added to your invoice. **We have carefully evaluated the amount of spending money appropriate for the course and ask you not to send more money beyond the invoiced amount.** SOAR will not be responsible for any money sent over the recommended amount. Approximately \$15.00 of your child's spending money will be held aside for a celebratory dinner near the end of their course. Any remaining money may be used by the student for souvenirs or necessary personal items during the course. Unspent money from purchases will be returned during the debrief. If requested, the staff will keep track of student spending through receipts, which may be returned to parents. This may be used to help teach financial accountability.

Tipping:

This practice is NOT permitted at SOAR. Please share your appreciation in person or send a note to those persons you wish to thank. Some parents choose to contribute to the SOAR scholarship fund as a way of expressing extra thanks.

Web Site Pictures

The course director will carry a digital camera throughout each course and take pictures of the students participating in the various activities. These pictures will then be added to our Web site for you to enjoy and share with others. It usually takes 2 – 3 weeks after the course ends for the pictures to be added to the site. Once on the site, you will be able to *right click* on an individual picture and save it to your computer.

Inbrief & Debrief Process

The inbrief and debrief meetings are crucial to all SOAR programs. If you are driving your camper to SOAR at Vanguard, the times you schedule your inbrief and debrief will serve as your arrival and departure times. Please do not plan on arriving earlier than your scheduled time. **This process typically takes about 30 minutes, but it could take up to one hour, so please take this into consideration when making your travel plans.**

During the inbrief, you will meet with one of your child's counselors and review your child's medications and medical history with them. During this time, you may also ask any last minute questions.

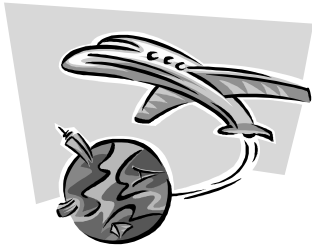
During the debrief, you will review your child's experience on the course. If your child will be flying to camp, we will be happy to conduct an inbrief via the telephone. Phone inbriefs are generally conducted earlier in the day so staff will not need to leave the group to conduct an inbrief. Likewise, phone debriefs will be conducted after the students leave the course. While it is crucial for your child to participate in this process, you may call the admissions office to request time alone with your child's counselors.

Please review the available inbrief and debrief times below and contact the admissions office as soon as possible to schedule your meetings. Time slots are on a first-come, first-serve basis, so call early to ensure a convenient time.

Inbrief Times: 12 – 2 p.m. (phone inbriefs only), 2 – 3 p.m., 3 – 4 p.m. and 4 – 5 p.m.
Debrief Times: 10 – 11 a.m., 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 12 – 1 p.m.

Travel to Camp

If your child will be flying to SOAR at Vanguard, it is required to clear airline dates and times with SOAR



Admissions before purchasing your ticket. A copy of the itinerary should be sent to SOAR as soon as possible. Most airlines require a photo ID for children 16 years and older.

NOTE: Students who are 13 years or younger and flying alone are required to pay an unaccompanied minor fee to the airline to and from their destination. Please make arrangements with your airline to pay these fees as you purchase your tickets, as this is ultimately your responsibility. If the airline escort fee is unpaid for the return flight, you may pay this fee by credit card via telephone. Call your airline for any questions, as escort fees and restrictions vary for each airline. Due to scheduling issues that may arise, SOAR cannot guarantee the name of the person picking up and dropping off your child sooner than one week prior to the flight. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

If flying to SOAR at Vanguard via Orlando International Airport (MCO) or Tampa International Airport (TPA):

- Arrival flights should be scheduled 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. the first day of the course.
- Departure flights should be scheduled 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. the last day of the course.
- SOAR staff will meet the student at the gate on the first day of the course and will return the student to the gate on the last day of the course. Parents will be called upon arrival and departure of their child.

If driving to SOAR at Vanguard:

- Arrivals are scheduled for the first day of the course 2 – 5 p.m.
- Departures are scheduled for the last day of the course 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Please contact the SOAR office at (828) 456-3435 as soon as possible to reserve an arrival time that is most convenient for your family.

Driving Directions to SOAR at Vanguard, Florida

From Orlando International Airport

On leaving the airport, take the "South Exit" (417) to Interstate 4 (heading West, towards Tampa). Take Exit 55 which is U.S. 27 and head South. Signs will indicate Haines City and Cypress Gardens. You will be on U.S. 27 for approximately 21 miles.

The Vanguard School is situated on the right side of the road, about 1 mile past the Eagle Ridge Mall. You will see a long, low white fence with beige pillars and a large International Learning Community wall. The driveway is a one-way drive; you must enter through the security gates at the SOUTH entrance (second gate) only. When you approach the gate, press A-Z button, and choose the appropriate option (116) to be admitted to the campus. Go to the end of the drive and turn right to the building with the flagpole in front (Administration Building).

From Tampa Area

Take Interstate 4 East (towards Orlando). Then take Interstate 75 South to State Road 60. At State Road 60, head East. Follow State Road 60 East to U.S. 27. The exit for North U.S. 27 is a left-hand exit (signs will indicate Haines City). Head North on U.S. 27 for approximately 3 miles.

The Vanguard School is situated on the left-hand side of the road, just past the Chevrolet and Dodge dealerships. You will see a long, low white fence with beige pillars and a large International Learning Community wall. The driveway is a one-way drive; you must enter through the security gates at the SOUTH entrance (first gate) only. When you approach the gate, press A-Z button, and choose the appropriate option

(116) to be admitted to the campus. Go to the end of the drive and turn right to the building with the flagpole in front (Administration Building).

From South Florida/Miami Area

Take either Interstate 95 or Florida's Turnpike North to State Road 60. Head West (towards Tampa) on 60, which will take you through most of Lake Wales. At U.S. 27, take the Northbound exit (signs will indicate Haines City) for approximately 3 miles.

The Vanguard School is situated on the left-hand side of the road, just past the Chevrolet and Dodge dealerships. You will see a long, low white fence with beige pillars and a large International Learning Community wall. The driveway is a one-way drive; you must enter through the security gates at the SOUTH entrance (first gate) only. When you approach the gate, press A-Z button, and choose the appropriate option (116) to be admitted to the campus. Go to the end of the drive and turn right to the building with the flagpole in front (Administration Building).

When You Arrive at SOAR

A staff member will be waiting to greet when you at The Vanguard School. You will be shown where to park and will be led to the registration area. A staff member will sign you in and ensure you have all necessary forms turned in. There will also be a chance for you to grab a quick snack before beginning your inbrief process. Once you are checked in, you will meet with one of your instructors. During the inbrief, you will review your camper's medication (if applicable) and talk about any last minute questions. After the inbrief is completed, you will be led to your child's dorm room where they can store their gear. Parents will then say goodbye as their campers meet with their group for some awesome games before dinner.

On the first night, all campers will meet together for dinner, and a first night ceremony. Each student will be presented with a gift that represents the number of SOAR courses they have completed. This will be a great chance to get to know the other people in the group, and review what will take place over the next few days. This will also be the time when each group will form a "Full Value Contract," which details the group guidelines for the duration of the course.

The next several days are exciting! Your child will have the chance to try out all kinds of awesome and fun activities. It will be an adventure they will never forget!

The last night of the course, each group will have an ice cream celebration and see a slideshow of pictures taken throughout their course and selected pictures from other courses. This allows each student to preview the variety of courses SOAR offers. These pictures will be available online for you to view. See the Web site pictures section for more details.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience with all of these details! Getting ready for camp is a huge task. The more you can do ahead of time the better. If you have questions, please feel free to e-mail admissions@soarnc.org or call 828-456-3435. Thank you so much for your consideration. We look forward to meeting you and your child soon!

