

GOLD COAST PERFORMANCE CENTRE

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



My school camp planner

Written by a camp instructor living with
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention
Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD),
anxiety disorder and special dietary needs.



Queensland
Government

Contents

Where will you be going?	1
What will you be doing?	2
What activities will you be doing?	3
What will you eat?	4
Where will you sleep?	5
How will you get to sleep?	6
Why should you go to camp?	7
How can I tackle challenges at camp?	8
What are your goals for camp?	9
How can parents, guardians and group leaders help you?	10
Photo gallery: Lodges	11
Photo gallery: Activities	12



Hi! I'm Sam, a camp instructor.

I have been diagnosed with ASD, ADHD and anxiety.
I eat gluten-free, soy-free and dairy-free.

I'm here to help you learn what to expect at camp!

Some things might apply to you and some might not – you can choose what is helpful for you.

I hope after using this guide you will feel ready to tackle the challenges (and embrace the FUN) of camp!

Where will you be going?

You are going to the Gold Coast Performance Centre (GCPC). GCPC is in Runaway Bay, set amongst many local sporting fields. When you arrive, there may be other people at the venue. GCPC is used for many activities, including school camps and sports competitions.

The staff at GCPC do their best to meet the needs of every person that visits the venue. Here are some of the ways they can support you:

- 2 of the lodges and buildings are wheelchair accessible.
- The catering team can cook for special diets.

Your teachers or group leaders can talk to our friendly service staff about more options to help you have the best time at camp.

Experience a virtual tour of the venue



Asking for help

Lots of adults will be at camp to make sure you are safe and have a great time. If you have any questions, you can ask the camp instructors or any of these people:



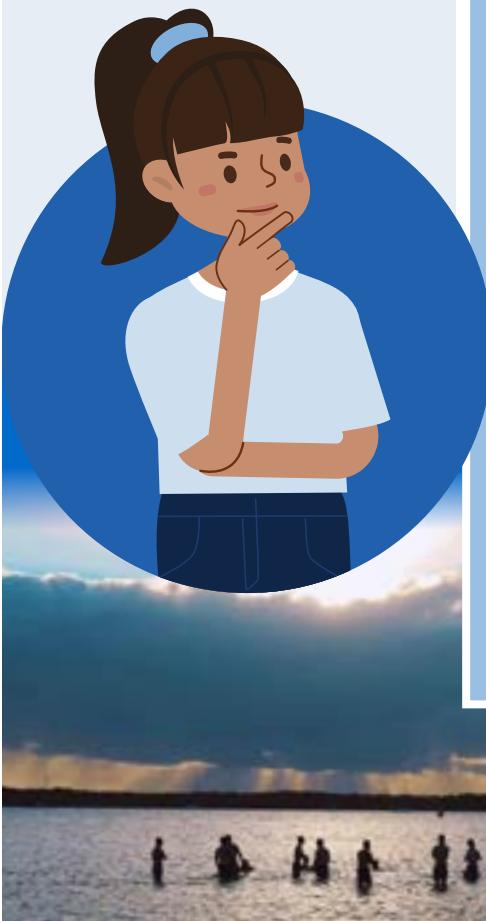
What will you be doing?

My first day

10am – Arrive at camp and take your bag off the bus.
A duty manager will introduce and induct you to GCPC.
Listen carefully to hear which lodge and activity group you are in.
Take your bags to your lodge and get ready for lunch.
11:45am – Lunch.
12:30pm – Change into comfortable clothes for your first activity.
12:45pm – First activity.
2:15pm – Break.
2:30pm – Second activity.
4:00pm – Leader-led free time. (You could have a shower, or a nap, or catch up with your friends.)
5:30 – Dinner.
7:00pm – Night activity.

A full camp day

7:00 – Breakfast.
8:30am – First activity.
10:00am – Break.
10:15am – Second activity.
11:45am – Lunch.
12:45pm – Third activity.
2:15pm – Break.
2:30pm – Fourth activity.
4:00pm – Leader-led free time.
5:30 – Dinner!
7:00pm – Night activity.



My last day

Wake up: Pack your bag, tidy your room, and double check you have not left anything behind!
7:00 – Breakfast.
8:30am – First activity.
10:00am – Break.
10:15am – Second activity.
11:45am – Lunch.
12:30pm – Home time!

Things you can control

There are lots of things you cannot control while on camp.

For example, you cannot control which lodge you are in or who is in your activity group. But there are things you **can** control. You can:

- listen carefully to instructions to keep you safe
 - **try your best in every activity**
- be respectful to the people and places around you
 - **ask for help when you need it or don't understand something**
- stay with your group so your group leaders know you are safe.

What activities will you be doing?

Every group does different activities at camp. You can write your activities in the table below.

Activities take 1-2 hours each.

First day	Full camp day	Last day
Arrive at 10:00am 	Breakfast Activity:	Breakfast Activity:
	Break Activity:	Break Activity:
Lunch Activity:	Lunch Activity:	Lunch Leave at 12:30pm 
Break Activity:	Break Activity:	
Dinner Night activity:	Dinner Night activity:	



Expect change

Camp activities and schedules can change because of bad weather, people being sick, or for other reasons out of our control.

Your group leader will do their best to tell you when things change. Try your best to accept changes if they happen. It will help you have the most amount of fun on camp!

Remember, you can always ask for help at any time.

What will you eat?

You will have breakfast, lunch and dinner at camp.

The chefs at camp cook your food before each meal. You don't get to choose what they cook, but you do get to pick what you eat from what they make.

It is **really important** to eat on camp so you have enough energy for the fun activities.

The chefs at camp look after people with special dietary needs and food allergies. If you have special dietary needs, your group leader will let the chefs know you need special food. Your parents or guardians will tell the school and GCPC about your needs before camp.

GCPC is a nut-free camp to keep people with nut allergies safe!



Breakfast is usually cereal and hot food. It might be toast, eggs, sausages, baked beans or hash browns.



Lunch is usually a hot meal. It might be spaghetti, burgers or rice. There is also salad and sometimes fruit.



Dinner is a hot meal. It might be a schnitzel, roast meat or beef stroganoff. It might also have some potatoes, rice, beans or carrots. For dessert you might have fruit, mousse or apple crumble.



Special dietary needs

I can't eat gluten, soy or dairy but the camp chefs are great at catering for me!



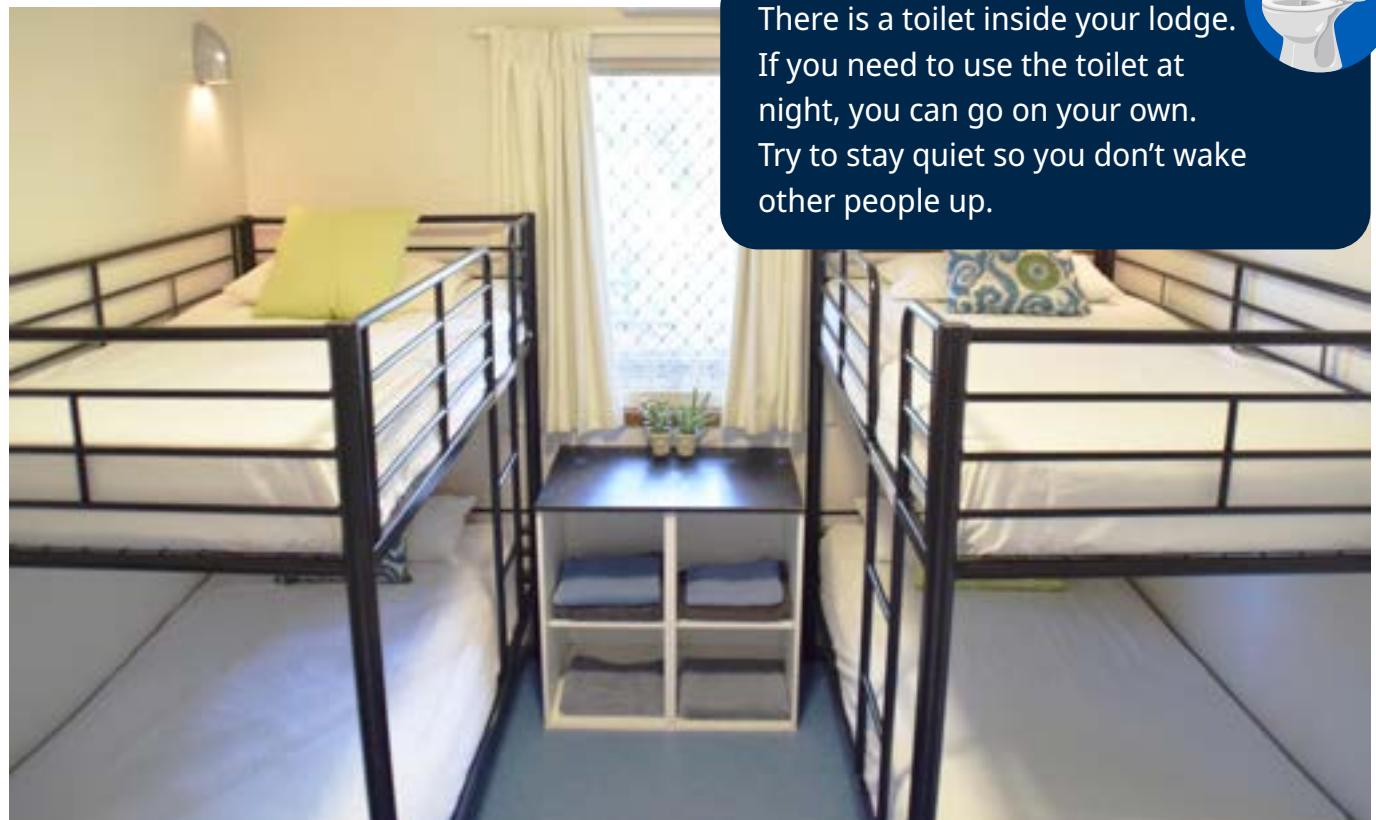
Where will you sleep?

Your group leader will decide which room you are in. You can only go inside your own lodge. You will find out which lodge and room you are in when you get to camp. You can't change rooms.

You will sleep in the same bed every night at camp. Keep your belongings in one area of the room so you don't lose anything.

At bedtime you can talk quietly to your friends. When the lights go out, it is time to be quiet and go to sleep. The lodges are dark at night, but you can still see because of the emergency lights inside the room and lights outside the lodge.

There is a friendly security guard at camp who walks around outside to make sure you are safe at night. You can say hello to the guard if you see them!



Your group leader will be in a different room to you. You can wake up a group leader during the night if you feel sick.

These are the teachers or group leaders you can go to if you need help:

Teacher or group leader	Room
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Teacher or group leader	Room
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Teacher or group leader	Room
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There is a toilet inside your lodge. If you need to use the toilet at night, you can go on your own. Try to stay quiet so you don't wake other people up.



How will you get to sleep?

Tips and tricks for sleeping at camp

1

Bring a comfort item from home. I have a blanket I take everywhere. You might have a favourite toy or pillow that makes you feel calm when you go to sleep. Remember to pack it in your bag, bring your noise-cancelling headphones and eye mask if you use them.



2

Distract yourself as much as you can before bedtime. Talk to your friends, do activities or read a book to keep busy so you don't think about it! Keeping busy before bed works for me because it stops me from feeling anxious or upset.

3

Think about your favourite movie or book. If I am lying in bed, feeling wide awake or scared or upset, I like to pick a story that makes me really happy or I read a book just before bed so that it's fresh in my memory. Then I think about the story. I think of different ways the story could end or I replay my favourite parts in my head. If I still don't feel sleepy, I keep thinking about my favourite story over and over to help me feel calm and I eventually fall asleep.



4

Bring your bedtime routine to camp. Is there something at home you do every night before bed? Can you do that at camp too? Doing your normal bedtime routine will help you feel more at home in a different place.

5

Be patient with yourself. It's normal to feel overexcited or overtired at camp. It might take longer to get to sleep than usual.



Sleeping in a new place

When I was younger I sometimes felt scared when I slept in a new place. I used to feel emotional, lonely, and sometimes I felt like crying. It's okay and normal if sleeping away from home makes you feel the same way. In fact, a lot of your friends might also feel scared or upset, even if they don't look like it on the outside.

Be kind to yourself, and most of all, tell yourself that **you can do it**.

I know you can do it, because I have done it.

You can do it even if you feel scared and even if you cry. **You can still do it!**

Why should you go to camp?

Camp is fun! You get to do exciting activities and spend time with your friends. The camp instructors are here to keep you safe and make every activity as much fun as possible.

Camp is a great place for you to learn important skills that will help you for the rest of your life.

At camp you'll get to:

- Learn how to do new activities. The instructors will teach you new skills and games you can use and play after camp.
- Go beyond your comfort zone and enjoy trying new things. It can be scary at first, but it can also turn out to be your new favourite activity. You won't know until you try it!
- **Make new friends!**
- Practice working as a team. Sharing your ideas and working with other people will help you get better at solving problems.
- Practice being a leader. Learn to be kind, confident and help others do their best!
- Practice your resilience. It's your super power for never giving up, even when things get tricky!
- Be more independent. You can do it! You've got this!
- And much more. This is just the beginning of what's possible!

Doing new things is scary... BUT WORTH IT!

I used to feel anxious when I was younger.

I used to find it difficult to talk to people.

Making eye contact with people was tricky for me. I used to be scared of a lot of things! I was afraid of heights, the dark, the feelings in my body and the thoughts in my brain.

Now I'm really good at talking to people! I'm a camp instructor, I do public speaking and I've done scary things all over the world. I've lived in other countries, earned a university degree and tackled my fear of heights.

That didn't just happen because I grew up. I kept trying new things and practicing doing scary things. Some of the first scary things I faced were on camp. I slept in new places, ate different foods and climbed high things! By practicing hard and scary things I got better at them and found them less hard and scary.

Now, I can do even bigger challenges that don't scare me. But it's only because I started with a small challenge on my school camp.

Camp is a great opportunity for you to do new things in a safe environment, even if they seem hard or scary.



How can I tackle challenges at camp?

New things can be difficult. They might make you feel scared or anxious.

Here are 3 things you can do to help you do hard things:

1

Remember your emotions, actions and thoughts are separate.

You can **FEEL** scared or anxious and still **ACT** brave or **THINK** brave thoughts. Sometimes, when I start to act and think bravely, I start to feel more brave!



2

Break your goals into smaller parts so you don't feel overwhelmed.

If your goal is to climb to the top of a rock wall and you find it really scary, it can be hard to get to the top. Instead, pick a rock hold close to you and aim to touch it. After you achieve that goal, you can make a bigger goal, like picking a rock hold even higher than the first one.

You can do it!



3

Normalise your emotions.

When you feel anxious or frustrated, it can be easy to blame yourself and have thoughts like 'I shouldn't be feeling this way' or 'I wish I didn't feel like this'. This can make us feel worse. Remember, it's normal to feel big feelings when you try new or difficult things. **Breathe and be kind to yourself.**



What are your goals for camp?

These are YOUR goals for camp. When camp is finished, you can look back at this and be proud of yourself for what you have worked towards and achieved.

It might be helpful to set smaller goals to feel confident and inspired to do EVEN MORE after you achieve them. You can think of goals for activities, sleeping, eating or socialising. The following examples can help to get you thinking.

1

(e.g. I will try one food that I have never tried before)

2

(e.g. I will try to do at least some of an activity that scares me)

3

(e.g. I will speak to one person that I have never spoken to before)



How can parents, guardians and group leaders help you?

How group leaders can help

- Complete the 'activity schedule' on page 3.
- Visit Cerge online for a site tour of GCPC to see inside the lodges, dining hall and sporting facilities.
- Contact GCPC before camp to plan how to meet and manage dietary needs.



How parents or guardians can help

- Consider what the best bedtime options are for your child. If having a sugary supper prior to bedtime will make it hard to sleep, advise teachers or group leaders of this dietary need. Pack normal bedding if the texture of a sleeping bag adds to an overwhelming sensory environment (which can increase anxiety).
- Consider packing your child's clothes in large, labelled ziplock bags. For example, one bag labelled 'Tuesday' with a whole outfit for that day, and another labelled 'bedtime' with pyjamas and teddy.
- Help your child think and talk about strategies for sleeping, eating different foods and trying new things prior to camp. It can be helpful to talk about your child's feelings and encourage them to leave their comfort zone and try new and exciting things!

Create a 'keep calm kit'

I have a kit prepared to help calm myself down when I have anxiety attacks. You could get an adult to help you make your own. My 'keep calm kit' contains:

- items that help me escape my busy mind and ground me in my body and senses, like; fidget toys, felt, Blu Tack, roll-on essential oil, Rescue Remedy, a ball, a pen and paper
- notes to remind me what to do when I feel anxious, like; questions to answer and breathing techniques
- positive affirmations and notes from my family that make me feel good.

Photo gallery: Lodges

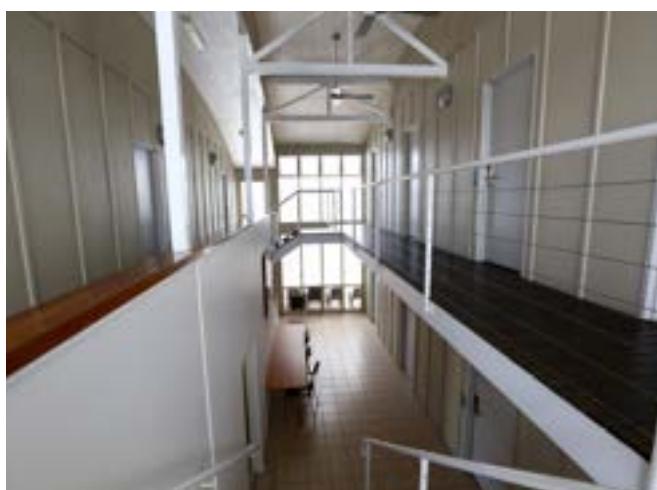


Photo gallery: Activities

