

Family Retreat Handbook

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COVID Operating Plan

2021

Staying Healthy

We want you to stay healthy while you're at Ekone and after you go home—to that end, here are some guidelines and requests for before, during and after you're at the ranch. This may feel repetitive since we're asking similar questions during registration—thanks for sticking with it!

Before you arrive

- **Monitor all family members for 10 days** before arrival for symptoms including: fever (greater than 100.4 degrees F), cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, cough, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, muscle aches or vomiting. Take temperatures of all family members before heading out to the ranch.
- **Limit travel** and exposure to other people to essential trips only for 10 days before arrival. If you must be around people due to work or other circumstances, use other precautions such as wearing a mask and/or maintaining a 6-foot physical distance.
- Please **cancel** your registration if
 - any family member develops the symptoms listed above within the 10 days before arrival (unless that family member receives a negative COVID test)
 - you learn that you or a family member has had close contact within 10 days before arrival with someone who has been diagnosed, tested or quarantined for COVID-19
- **Please don't stop on your way to Ekone** if at all possible. Fill your tank at home, pack snacks, and practice the fine art of the roadside pee!

Arrival at the ranch

- **Hugs:** many of us are huggers, and this has been a tough time for us! We'll greet you with a happy dance, air-fives, big smiles and probably some whoops of joy, but no hugs this year. Please make sure everyone knows this before getting out of the car.
- Everyone must have a **mask around their neck** when they arrive. Especially for dog snuggles since they love to greet people when they arrive.
- A designated Ekone staff member will check you in and give you any needed instructions or materials from a comfortable **6 foot distance**. Please plan on about 20 minutes of talking before you settle in for your stay.
- Bathrooms and water bottle refills will be available when you arrive. Check with your staff person to find out where to go.
- Please maintain at least a 6 foot distance from all other families (and watch kids to make sure they do too) unless you've checked in and both parties are ok with being closer.
- Remember to **check in with the physical boundaries of other families** when you first arrive at the ranch to establish what feels comfortable for both of you.

During your stay

- Continue to **monitor** all family members for symptoms listed above.
- **If anyone in your family develops any symptoms** of unwellness in any form, please alert an Ekone staff member and leave the ranch immediately.
- **Wash your hands** at every opportunity—we've made sinks more plentiful around the ranch for this very purpose! But especially, wash hands before and after you use the bathroom, before and after meals, and before and after any new activity.
- Use your best **cough and sneeze etiquette**

When you go home

- If anyone in your family develops concerning symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of leaving the ranch, please let us know.

Orientation Basics & Other Tips

Welcome! We're so glad you are here. Here are a few points of orientation to help you have a safe and enjoyable stay—please ask if you have any questions at all. An Ekone staff member will greet and orient you when you arrive—it will be less overwhelming if you read all of this information first!

Grounds

There's so much room to explore at Ekone! You'll have a trail map for family explorations, and these are the general guidelines to follow for the main Valley:

- **Boundaries for minors:** don't go behind the rope swings, behind the Lodge (where the clothesline is), on the far side of the driveway (except to pet the horses or go to personal campsites), past the picnic tables at the Yummy Tummy, or behind any curtains or closed doors without a caregiver.
- Kids 8 and over can explore within these boundaries in whatever way their caregivers are comfortable with (while following the rules and maintaining physical distancing as appropriate for each family). Kids under 8 years old must stay with a caregiver or Ekone staff member at all times.
- Everyone, **please read and follow signage** posted around the ranch, and stay out of the shop, the cabin, the trailer area behind the shop, and the lodge (Ekone staff may lead activities in the outer lodge, but it is still closed to general popping in and out).
- Rattlesnakes are part of this ecosystem. If you see or hear a rattlesnake, step back to at least 8 feet, keep an eye on its location, and if it is in the Ekone Valley, get an Ekone staff member so that we can catch and relocate it.
- **There is extreme fire danger even if it seems like there isn't. No candles, smudging, or flame of any kind. Do not drive on tall grass. Smokers, please ask an Ekone staff member about safe smoking areas.**

Corral & animals

The animals are excited to see you! Here are some guidelines for staying safe around them when there's not a specific activity happening:

- **Do not go in with the animals unless an Ekone staff member is present.** Stay out of the horse corrals—petting through the fence is encouraged but beware of electric fences!
- We have a lot of **electric fencing**--all wire (white and silver) should be considered "hot". Wood or metal rail fences are best for petting.
- All of our **dogs** are friendly, but they don't appreciate being mobbed. There are a few **cats** that live around the lodge. Please be respectful of the wild and domestic animals of this place...allow them to "get away" if they want to. Please do not throw anything for any of the dogs to fetch—they're too old now!
- There will be **staff-led times for snuggling** and interacting with the pigs and chickens and we'll let you know when those times are!

Bunkhouse/Camping

We're really looking forward to sharing the new bunkhouse (and a few super special camping spots) with you! Here are some guidelines for helping us keep the bunkhouse/camping safe and comfortable:

- Each family or "bubble" will have an assigned section of the bunkhouse (separated by doors) or an assigned camping area.
- **Please do not enter the sleeping area of another family** that you are not bubbled with at any time.
- **Silent times** in the bunkhouse and camping areas are **10pm-6am**. Plan to have some quiet activities for kids in the evenings and early mornings so they don't wake up longer sleepers. Quiet morning bird walks are another great way to let people sleep!
- When using **loft ladders in the bunkhouse**, face the ladder while going up and down and always have at least one hand on the handrails—teach children to use the ladders safely. No children under 8 are allowed to use loft ladders.
- No running or roughhousing inside the bunkhouse.
- **Please do not hang ANYTHING from the black sprinkler pipes**, as this can damage the pipes and/or cause the sprinklers to go off.

- **Windows and skylights in the bunkhouse** are for ventilation and emergency egress only—please do not allow children to go in and out of the window openings. To open skylights, lift bottom handle and push out—please only open about 6 inches.

Kitchen/Meals

- Always put on your mask and then **wash hands** before meals.
- Meals will be **served outside and from a distance**. Please respect the distance guidelines that are in place and bring food to any younger kids that may not be able to stay away from the serving tables.
- **Staff will serve the food** (with masks on) and will be able to tell you about the ingredients in each dish. There's always plenty for everyone, so please ask for the amount you would like to eat! "No-thank-you servings" are encouraged for trying new foods (ask your campers if you don't know what they are).
- **Tea and coffee will be available around 730am** at the Yummy Tummy. Bring your own mug or use one of ours!
- Any leftover compost on your plate goes in the **compost buckets**.
- It's a **wash-your-own-dish scene** in the outdoor sinks—it's great if each family can wash their dishes together, while still keeping distance from other families.
- Leave your dishes in the bleach water bucket at the end and Ekone staff will put them away to dry after the meal.
- **A note about snacks:** we will not be able to provide snacks between meals. If you (or your kids) need snacks, please plan to bring your own. Snacks will need to be stored in your car so they don't attract mice or bugs, and all wrappers/waste from snacks needs to be disposed of in a trash can. We are not able to provide refrigeration.

Bathroom facilities

- Please only use the porta potty designated for your family and always wash or sanitize your hands afterwards!
- There is an outdoor shower available if needed.
- Please **go easy on the toilet paper**, and don't put anything else in the porta potties!

Pond

- All minors must be **supervised by a very responsible adult** when in or on the pond (including the dock).
- We require everyone to **wear a t-shirt/swim shirt** that covers their shoulders while in the pond, to protect from sunburn without gunking up the pond with sunscreen residue. Please **DO NOT** apply sunscreen less than 30 mins before going in the pond, even if it claims to be waterproof sunscreen.
- Be aware that there can be sharp rocks at the bottom of the pond—**use caution** while entering and/or wear swim shoes or sandals.
- **No diving headfirst off the dock**—jumping feet first is ok, but please no running because the dock gets slippery (and of course no horseplay or pushing on the dock). No more than 5 people on the dock at once (it sinks).
- Boats are available but need to be **put all the way back on shore** after each use (they will also sink).

Rope Swings

- Rope swings are **closed before breakfast**.
- All kids **must have an adult with them the first time** they go on the rope swings. After that, if the caregiver is comfortable with it, kids 8 years old and over can be at the rope swings without an adult. The rope swings go really high (which makes them really fun!) and we want to make sure everyone stays safe.
- We would recommend washing your hands before and after using the rope swings.
- Rope swings are intended for people under 180lbs. One person at a time on each swing—sit with your bottom on the wooden seat and hold the rope with both hands—no standing or hanging off the rope. Wait until the swing has come to a stop before getting off. **Absolutely no roughhousing, jumping or other unsafe behavior.**

Lodge (big octagonal building)

- The lodge is off currently off limits to guest use—it is a living and working space for staff. Some Ekone staff-led activities may be available in the lodge during your stay.
- There is a bell on the north side of the lodge that staff may use for calling people together.

Emergencies/First Aid

- There are fire extinguishers and air horns in all buildings, each section of the bunkhouse, and an air horn by the pond.
- **Air horns** should be used if immediate adult presence is needed. If you are an adult, you hear an air horn, and you can safely stop what you're doing, please go to the horn.
- **Bells** (meal bell, lodge bell) call *everyone* together in a non-hurried way. If you hear an air horn AND a bell, immediately gather *everyone* in that location for possible evacuation.
- We have **first aid kits** on site--Ekone staff will access them if needed, but **please bring your own basic first aid kit and any necessary medications for your stay.**

Self-care

- **Drink lots of water!** This is a dry climate, even when it's not hot!
- **Stay cool!** Wear a hat, wet bandanna, wet long sleeved shirt, hose off.
- **Check for ticks** when changing clothes, and every night before bed. If you find an embedded tick (very rare, but it happens), pull it directly out or ask an Ekone staff to remove it for you.

Technology

Part of the beauty of spending time at Ekone is the opportunity to unplug from technology and be fully present with the land, animals and community. To that end here are some rules about technology at the ranch:

- **Devices (including but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, tablets, handheld video games etc.) are not permitted during programming in the Ekone Valley (for children OR adults).** Please turn off your devices and leave them in your car. If Ekone staff notice that you forgot, they will gently remind you to put it away.
- We would HIGHLY recommend unplugging completely during your stay at Ekone. If you need to give loved ones or house-sitters an emergency contact number please use the ranch phone: 509-773-4536. If you'd like us to hold on to your cell phone for you, we'd be happy to!
- **Things you might need to bring instead of a phone:**
 - A camera! If you want to take pictures (digital or disposable or polaroid are all good options!).
 - A wristwatch! There will be a bell for all meals.
 - An alarm clock! The sun is a great way to wake up, but if not knowing what time it is makes you nervous.
 - A book! Without a phone you'll probably have some extra time to catch up on some reading.
- If you must make a call or send a text you can walk up the driveway or canyon road to find cell service.
- **We do not have wifi** and are unable to let guests use the office spaces for plugged in internet, so please button up any emails or internet work before you leave home!

Other Notes

- If you are over 21 and would like to have an alcoholic beverage during your stay, please bring what you'd like to consume. Drinking is permitted as long as it stays family friendly.
- Marijuana consumption is not permitted in the Ekone Valley.
- Smoking (cigarettes or vaping) is only allowed in designated smoking areas and with no minors present. This is high fire danger country, and smoking is not permitted anywhere else on the property. When you arrive, please ask an Ekone staff to show you the smoking area if needed.

Let us know if you have any questions, if anything isn't working, or you need anything to make your stay more enjoyable!

Failure to follow these safety rules could lead to your injury or death and will certainly lead to not being able to use the rope swings (or other things) again for the duration of your stay. Here at Ekone we value the experiences of appropriate risk-taking, putting safety first and embracing danger, and looking out for each other. We do this by having as few "rules" as possible, instead teaching situational awareness and thoughtful, safe care for oneself and others. Please help us allow this special Ekone experience to continue by closely following the few rules we do have, and by constantly developing your awareness and thoughtful of the people around you and yourself, knowing that if you are responsible for injuring yourself or someone else, it will have wider repercussions and consequences on the Ekone community and on what kinds of experiences Ekone is able to offer. Thank you!

Keeping Each Other Safe

A quick note: this has been and continues to be a challenging time for all of us. Even though it might seem like Ekone is a “bubble” we have still felt the effects of COVID-19. Unfortunately we don’t have the power to create a space where the virus disappears, and some practices and activities around the ranch will be quite different in an effort to keep everyone safe. Even though it might not ‘feel like summer camp’ we do hope you’ll look for the beautiful moments of connection (even from a distance). We’re all in this process together and are happy to learn new ways and strategies for connecting if you have some to share!

Setting Boundaries/Getting Consent

One thing we’ve all had to navigate and learn during this time is how to set and negotiate boundaries that help us feel and keep each other safe. We’ve also had to practice getting consent from other people before coming into their space. During your time at Ekone we want you to feel empowered to set boundaries that feel right for you and your family and ask consent from other program participants. We know that especially now that more people are vaccinated, everyone has different comfort levels with physical distancing and are still so many nuances to work out in the moment.

Please take some time before you arrive to have a conversation as a family (and with any families you know that might be attending at the same time) about your expectations and plans for distance and closeness during your time at Ekone. And be prepared to continue having conversations while you’re at the ranch.

Here are some basic expectations from our end:

Physical Distancing

Families

- Family groups will set their own physical distancing boundaries with other families.
- Please help your kids manage setting boundaries and getting consent from other kids and families.

Staff

- Staff will maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more from program participants.
- We’d appreciate your help with younger children (or older children or adults!) who may have a harder time knowing what a 6 foot bubble is when around staff.
- Staff will give kind reminders if you are getting too close—please don’t take offense at this.
- All staff are vaccinated and will often be within 6 feet of each other.

Mask Use

Families

- All family members should bring at least 3 face coverings with them to Ekone to use during your stay.
- Please keep your mask handy (make sure they can hang around your neck) while you are participating in any Ekone-led activities in case you need it. Masks will be required for all Ekone-led activities when closer than 6 feet.
- Some people may be more comfortable socializing with masks on. Please be prepared to be asked to use a mask if you plan to socialize with other families.

Staff

- If for some reason an activity or event causes staff to need to be closer than 6 feet from participants, they will put on a mask and ask you to put on one too.
- Staff will wear masks while serving food.
- Staff will always have a mask around their necks in case there is a need to get closer than 6 feet.

Family Retreat Packing List

At Ekone we play hard, work hard, and enjoy being outside. Please bring clothing that is comfortable and practical for moving around and working in, and that you don't mind getting dirty, scuffed, and well-worn! There are no laundry facilities available (unless you count a quick swim in the pond!) *We are not able to loan out any items at this time*

CLOTHES

- t-shirts and tank tops
- shorts
- long pants for riding that aren't too tight or constrictive! Plus sturdy work pants (required for work projects)
- a jacket (evenings can be cool, and June-uary is real)
- socks and underwear
- pajamas
- sturdy walking and working shoes (light hiking boots, sneakers, etc.)

SUN & HEAT MANAGEMENT

- water bottle, preferably with a clip or strap to attach it to yourself
- chemical-free sunscreen and chapstick with SPF of 15+ ([here's a good list](#))
- hat with brim
- sunglasses
- lightweight, long sleeve, light-colored, loose button-down cotton shirts (good for keeping cool in hot weather)
- bandana
- swimsuit and a towel, plus a t-shirt for swimming in (we require shirts that cover shoulders in the pond)

GEAR

- small day pack or bag for keeping your daily necessities with you around the ranch
- flashlight/headlamp
- sleeping bag, sleeping pad and pillow (pads provided for indoor use--bring your own to sleep under the stars!)
- work gloves

PERSONAL ITEMS

- multiple face masks for each person to wear as needed
- don't forget your toothbrush!
- a camera! a watch! a book!
- chemical-free bug spray (you'll want it)

RECOMMENDED BUT OPTIONAL

- snacks (we won't be providing any)—please only bring snacks that can stay in your car.
- a thermos for tea or coffee if you'd like it throughout the day (we'll only be able to serve at breakfast)
- sandals or water shoes
- camp chairs for hanging out on the lawn
- riding boots (or any sturdy, smooth-soled shoe with a defined, low heel)
- books, journal, and/or letter-writing supplies
- games, art supplies or other forms of entertainment (there will be plenty of free time!)
- musical instruments or special talents...

PLEASE DO NOT BRING

- personal tech devices of any kind
- shampoo, conditioner, chemical-based bug spray, or other chemical-based products (we provide biodegradable soap, shampoo and conditioner)
- heat-producing appliances (hair dryers, curling irons etc.—you will fry our electrical system!)
- dogs...we've got too many already!

Horse Time at Ekone Ranch

General Procedures

- Staff and participants will wash their hands by the drinking fountain upon arriving for their horse activity, and before leaving.
- Staff and participants will wear face coverings during all programming, however, if your mask is a style that can be lowered and worn around your neck during the times when you are unlikely to be within 6 feet of anyone outside your household that is permitted. Your Ekone wrangler will decide when is an appropriate time, so check with them before you remove your mask.
- We will practice masking and un-masking while wearing a helmet, so that if an appropriate time for un-masking happens while you are on a horse, we can accommodate that! We're aiming to strike a safe balance between appropriate caution and hot-summer comfort.
- One change we've made in the last few years is that we are no longer offering a helmet waiver option for those 18+. We've decided that across the board, our own staff included, any person who rides a horse on Sacred Earth Foundation land will do so wearing a helmet. Safety first!
- If you want to help feed all the critters in the mornings or the evenings, wear your mask! Feeding will be on a volunteer basis and led by an Ekone staff member.

Activity Options

one riding session will be available per person during the weekend, connection from the ground may be available more than once

Riding Lesson

- ❖ Lessons will take place in the Ekone valley and are an opportunity for more thorough coaching and skill-building. No experience necessary; we'll tailor the lesson to your level! These will be primarily bareback lessons. *(past Ekone campers—we hate to burst your bubbles, but be prepared that we won't be doing any loping this summer—there just won't be enough time! Maybe some limited trotting in the arena, but that's up to your wranglers and the horses!)*
- ❖ **Balance Lesson:** for those new to bareback riding and/or wanting a deeper horse-connection experience, we'll explore balance and communication with the horse from their back, in the round pen or in the arena or on toodles through the Aspens, and likely some of all three!
- ❖ **Skills Lesson:** for participants more familiar with riding at Ekone ranch, you'll get a quick refresher course and we'll work on practicing and developing particular skills that you may be interested in.
- ❖ **Exploratory Lesson:** *for kids 8 and under*, we're offering a balance lesson and fun introduction to riding at Ekone. We'll practice basic balance exercises and feel what it's like to connect with such a big, incredible animal, and we just might go visit the goats or the Hill of Joy while we're at it!

Trail Ride

- ❖ Experience Ekone trails from the back of a horse! Depending on the skill level of the group and at the wranglers' discretion, Ekone wranglers will either be mounted or on the ground for this ride, or some combination thereof.
- ❖ A lesson in the arena may be a part of this ride, and the wranglers will assess the general group experience level to decide this.
- ❖ Trail rides will be conducted at a walk.
- ❖ Adults will ride in saddles; children and teens will generally ride bareback, at wranglers' discretion.
- ❖ Trail riders must be age 10+, under 200lb, and have some past riding experience.
- ❖ Our horse program is relationship-based, emphasizing good communication and respect for the horses. This will not be the "get on and go" experience you may have had at a dude ranch or on vacation! We reserve the right to re-direct any rider towards a lesson or connection session.

Horse Connection Session

This sweet session will be designed based on your inspiration and your wrangler's inspiration, and might include any of the following:

- Grooming
- Join-up
- Connection-focused groundwork
- Learning & practicing horse bodywork
- Horse baths
- Herd observation activities
- Grazing time
- Horse reflection activities
- Observing horse training (maybe even our yearling, Zephyr!)
- Non-demanding time (simply hanging out with the horses)