

Cell Phones- A Real Problem at Camp

You have agreed to abide by the camp cell phone policy when you registered for camp by signing the Agreement Form located on the Health Form. This document simply clarifies why the policy is so important. For reference, the policy states:

- Campers are not allowed to bring cell phones or any other electronic devices to camp.
- If a cell phone is brought to camp it will be collected by a counselor at the first cabin meeting and turned in to the Camp Director until the end of camp. If a camper is caught with a cell phone after that time, it is grounds for immediate dismissal.
- Counselors will turn their cell phones in to the Camp Director at the beginning of camp and if caught with a cell phone, it will be grounds for dismissal.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE:

When campers have cell phones at camp, this can cause trust issues. When children come to camp, you are temporarily transferring their primary care from you to the camp staff. This is one of the growth-producing, yet challenging aspects of camp. As children learn to trust other caring adults, they grow and learn little by little, to solve some of their own challenges. We believe this emerging independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp. It is one important way your child develops greater resilience and develops self-confidence- an important life skill. When campers feel they must have the ability to call home, this essentially means they have not made this transition. We can assure you that if your child is experiencing a challenge in their adjustment to camp, the 4-H educator will contact you. If your child expresses concern about being away from you, you can help by sharing with them that there is always someone at camp available to help them. They will have access to trusted activity leaders, cabin counselors, camp directors and the medical staff. **We respectfully ask that you leave cell phones at home.**

HIDING CELL PHONES:

We appreciate that most families will honor our request and support our reasoning for not bringing cell phones to camp. We also recognize that some families may feel that hiding a cell phone in camper luggage is OK because their child won't get homesick or won't abuse the opportunity. This is not ok! For example, if your child brings a cell phone and passes it to another child to use, it can have and has had a negative effect on the camp experience of the other child and their family. We ask that you are considerate of ALL camp children and respect other families as they help foster their child's independence.

TEXTING:

We also understand that for many teens, and increasing numbers of younger children, texting is the favored means of communication. We certainly are not against this form of communication outside of camp. At camp, however, we value the camp experience of connecting with people face to face and nurture the art of interpersonal communication. The texting of friends outside of camp impedes the ability of campers to grow from this special aspect of camp and the process of building new friendships. By leaving the cell phones at home, this does not become an issue.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS:

Another drawback of having cell phones at camp is the built-in camera. As with schools, there are camps around the country where children have secretly taken inappropriate photographs of other campers or staff and displayed them publicly. While we do not ban digital cameras, we do not recommend bringing them to camp. Please help us maintain a safe environment by explaining this to your child. You should know that any camper that takes a compromising photograph of another camper or staff member and makes it public through websites or social media may be subject to dismissal from camp and may not be allowed to return. If the law is broken, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

iPODs and MUSIC/VIDEO STORAGE DEVICES

We maintain a policy restricting the use of ipods and other types of music and video data storage devices at camp. Due to the capability of such devices to access the internet, download and store, in a private manner, easily available sexually explicit, degrading, foul and vulgar content, they are inappropriate for use at camp. In addition, it is our aim to promote activities, whether formally planned, informal, or spontaneous during free time, that are inclusive and group oriented rather than exclusionary for private personal use or benefit.

COUNSELOR and ADULT STAFF CELL PHONES: Counselor cell phones will be collected at the beginning of camp and stored in a secure location. Use will be upon request only. Counselors and Adults will have access to walkie-talkies for communication when in cabins and during activities in case of emergencies. Adults will carry cell phones for emergency purposes.