



From the Director of Dogwood Acres

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We recognize that your children are your most precious, valuable and prized possessions. Therefore, our overriding goal is to protect the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of your children during their time at Summer Camp.

To meet those needs, we train our counselors to foster community and trust with their campers and to help campers feel comfortable within their unfamiliar surroundings. We teach our staff and campers that scary stories, sarcasm, put downs, vulgar language, violent behavior and similar things may happen elsewhere, but are not appropriate in a Christian camp environment. Campers are encouraged to share their ideas and be themselves without the fear of ridicule or embarrassment from others.

We teach our counselors to recognize camp-related risks when leading activities and to take preventative measures such as making sure campers drink plenty of fluids, wear insect repellent and sunscreen, or wear the proper footwear for a particular activity. We want Dogwood Acres to be a safe place for all of our participants, both campers and staff. To meet that goal, we ask for some help from you, the parents. One way we do that is by having you complete a health history form for your child so that we may be better prepared in the event of an emergency. The health form that accompanies the confirmation of enrollment material needs to be notarized and brought to camp with you on check-in day.

The health form is kept confidential and used by our health care staff and our supervisory staff. Please fill out the form as completely as possible. Campers are not singled out, made to feel embarrassed or treated differently because of information gathered from the health form. Rather, the more we know ahead of time, the easier it is to help your child have a successful experience at camp. If you have questions or need clarification regarding the health form, please call me.

So that we may comply with state health & safety standards and best practices of the summer camping industry, children who attend camp programs need to have had a physical exam within the last 2 years. If your child has not had a physical exam since JUNE 12, 2009, he or she will need one before arriving at camp. If your child attended camp last year, the physical exam report we have on file may be current. You can check your Enrollment Confirmation for a message indicating whether a more recent physical exam is needed. If your child needs an up-to-date physical, you can have a physician complete the last section of the health form or attach a copy of an exam report to the health form.

Forming a Partnership with Parents...

We equip our counselors to handle any number of situations they may encounter with campers during the summer. But when it comes to helping your child have a successful experience at camp, you as parents are our number one resource. You know your children better than we will ever know them, especially in the short span of a week at camp.

Most times at school, mom and/or dad will only get a call if there is a serious emergency or if a discipline situation has escalated to the point of no return and the child is to be sent home.

Know that if a situation involving your child arises, be it homesickness, a behavioral issue, or a healthcare concern, you may be contacted by me, our health center staff, or our assistant summer camp director. The difference is, our intent is to include you throughout the process, not just at the end or at the point of no return. We may call you to let you know what's going on in your child's unit in order to keep you "in the loop". We may call you to ask for some advice, or to see if you could shed some light on a particular situation. We may even call to ask you to send a letter or an email to help your son or daughter adjust to his or her new surroundings.

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If you do get a call from camp this summer, don't panic, just relax and remember that working together we can help your child have a positive experience.

In Closing...

We encourage you to share your concerns and thoughts about Dogwood Acres with myself and the entire Mission for Dogwood Acres team. Your continued feedback is welcome and requested. Please let us know what more we could be doing to help ease your concerns and what more we can do to make your child's experience with us more transformational and successful. What services or programs can Dogwood Acres provide that would benefit you and your family and how can Dogwood Acres serve *you* better?

We also encourage you to share this letter with your child. Talk together about your child's expectations of camp and your expectations of them while away at camp. If you have any questions or would like to discuss something related to summer camp, now or at any point in the future, please email me at veldhuisen@gmail.com or call me at (850) 535-2695.

Peace in Christ,

Kevin Veldhuisen
Director of Dogwood Acres