

Summer Camp “No Cell Phone” Policy

As of January 1, 2015, campers are not permitted to possess a cell phone or any other electronic devices for any reason on the campground. Any camper caught violating this policy will have their cell phone/device confiscated until the last day of camp.

Camp Maranatha Summer Camps

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Parent Letter and Camp Policies Regarding Cell Phones, the Internet and Other Technologies

Dear Parents,

We have always taken the safety and well being of our campers—your children—very seriously. After all, giving your children over to the care of other people is perhaps the greatest act of trust you as a parent can engage in. We aim to do everything we humanly can to earn and keep that trust. We also know we cannot do this without your help. With more and more children using the Internet, cell phones and other technologies at younger ages, we appeal to you as parents to partner with us to ensure that your children continue to have the safest, most wholesome experience while with us.

Please read our letter carefully. It will help you understand the challenges some technologies pose to the continued health and safety of our camp community. Please also review and then read to/with your child the enclosed policies regarding the Internet, social networking sites and exchanging contact information with their Cabin Leader. As always we invite you to call us if you have any questions or concerns.

Cell Phones

As you now know we have a “no-cell phone” policy at camp. It states, **“Campers are not permitted to possess a cell phone or any other electronic devices for any reason on the campground. Any camper caught violating this policy will have their cell phone/device confiscated until the last day of camp.”** Aside from the fact that cell phones are expensive and can get lost or stolen, and that the physical camp environment is not kind to such items, there is a fundamental problem with campers having cell phones at camp, and that is **trust**. When children come to camp they—and you—are making a leap of faith, temporarily transferring primary care from you as their parents to us and their Cabin Leaders. 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. Contacting you by phone essentially means they have not made this transition. It prevents us from getting to problems that may arise and addressing them quickly. Sending a cell phone to camp is like saying to your child that you as the parent haven’t truly come to peace with the notion of them being away from you and in our care.

We agree to tell you if your child is experiencing a challenge in their adjustment to camp. You can help by talking with your child before they leave for camp and telling them that there is always someone they can reach out to, whether it be their Cabin Leader, a trusted activity leader, the Dean, the Director or camp nurse. We are all here to help, but if you don’t trust us, your children certainly won’t!

Your Kids, Our Staff after Camp

Our pledge is to put your children in the company of the most trustworthy and capable young adults we can choose for our volunteer program—Cabin Leaders who are well suited to the task of caring for campers. The effort we put into screening and selecting our staff is part of that pledge. Our staff work with your children in the context of a visible, well-scrutinized environment that has many built-in checks and balances. Cabin Leaders are supervised by senior staff guided by policies regarding behavior. Their actions are also visible to teammates and campers. However, by our choosing them we do not recommend them as personal baby-sitters, Nannies or child companions outside of camp. In general we discourage our staff from having contact with your children after camp since we cannot supervise it. We choose our staff for the camp season only. We do not take responsibility for their behavior off-season. As a parent you are, of course, free to make your own choice in this matter. While we cannot keep you from allowing your child to visit with our staff members, in so doing you take full responsibility.

Working Together to Keep Your Children Safe

We see many positive, exciting ways for youngsters to enjoy the healthy benefits of the Internet and other technologies. As advocates for children we want to work with you to keep those experiences safe, healthy and positive and urge you to talk with your children—both about camp and their online activity in general.

With utmost care and respect,

James and Djuana Parker
Summer Youth Camp Coordinators

Helping campers be “unplugged” to get “plugged in”.