

CAMP SEQUOIA 2021 PARENT HANDBOOK



An essential guide to help you prepare for a great summer at Camp Sequoia!

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Camp Sequoia family! We greatly appreciate the trust and confidence you have placed in us and we want you to know that your child's physical and emotional health, safety, and well-being are our priority. Our staff members have been specifically selected for their judgment and are being further trained to provide a safe, nurturing and meaningful experience for your child. You have chosen to provide your child with an incredible experience that will help him build self-confidence and internal tolerance to frustrating situations as well as develop his social cognition skills while having an amazing summer in a safe, accepting camp community. We are excited that you have chosen to join our camp family and we hope this is the beginning of a long relationship.

We are sending you this handbook to help you prepare for camp. It contains information on our policies and procedures, our packing list, strategies to help prepare your child for camp, how to order Camp Sequoia clothing, plus more. We encourage you to read through the handbook and use it as the resource it is designed to be. Within the next few weeks you will receive another set of forms to fill out pertaining to travel arrangements and information that will help us get to know your camper so we can provide him with the best experience possible.

As the summer approaches, questions are sure to arise, so don't forget to revisit this handbook as you prepare for the summer. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time with questions or concerns.

Looking forward to a great summer,
Brian and the Camp Sequoia Staff

2021 CAMP SEQUOIA DATES*

Full Season: June 27----- August 7

1st Session: June 27----- July 17

2nd Session: July 18-----Aug 7

***Camper Departure to Camp and Return Information**

Camp Sequoia provides bus and van transportation from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. All new campers attending Camp Sequoia are required to take the bus to camp if they are not flying into Philadelphia International Airport. Taking the bus to camp makes the transition process much easier for campers and allows them to become acquainted with fellow campers prior to their arrival at camp. We will have experienced staff on each bus who know how to make this transition a positive one for your son. **We do not permit new campers to be dropped off at camp on opening days, unless exceptions are made to accommodate the global 2020-2021 situation. Please refer to camp communications on this matter.**

Our campers report that taking the bus has been tremendously helpful in easing their anxiety and helping to form initial friendships. Most importantly taking the bus is part of the overnight camp experience!

Luggage Options

We require that luggage arrive at camp before our campers arrive in camp. Our staff will unpack your camper's belongings, make his bed for him and have his room set up for when he arrives. Arriving at camp and seeing their rooms set up helps campers feel like they have their own space once they arrive. Furthermore, it allows our busy opening day to run more smoothly. Additionally, this allows us to take additional sanitation measures to ensure all our campers' health and safety. **There are no exceptions to luggage requirements for the health and safety of our community, as all luggage is required to have a quarantining period.**

We use a company called **Camp Trucking** to ship baggage to and from camp. Camp Trucking will pick up your camper's belongings at your home and return them there as well. Camp Trucking sign up forms can be found on our website or by visiting them here: <https://www.camptrucking.com>. Families who live within driving distance of camp may drop off their child's belongings on designated drop off days or use Camp Trucking. If you live outside the service area of Camp Trucking, we will work with you directly regarding other shipping options.

Dropping luggage off at camp

If you would like to drop off your child's belongings at camp, our designated drop off days will be on **Monday June 21st from 4:30-7:30 P.M. for Full Season and First Session campers. Our luggage drop off day for 2nd Session campers will be Wednesday July 14th at 7:30-8:30 P.M. We will provide you with information as to where to meet our staff for luggage drop off.**

Camper Luggage Departure

If your camper's luggage is being handled by Camp Trucking, it will already have left camp before your child leaves and will arrive at your home within a few days. If picking up on campus or at the airport, luggage can return home with parents. **If you are utilizing any of our departure stops, please arrange for luggage to return by Camp Trucking**, as we do not have room on returning vans to accommodate camper luggage.

***Visiting Day for Full Season Campers**

Visiting Day for our full season campers will be determined closer to camp based on the recommendations of the American Camp Association, the CDC, and local PA ordinances. In 2020, we were not able to hold an in person Visiting Day, and may need to hold a virtual visiting day in 2021 in order to protect the health of our community. Such determinations will be made depending on the global and national situation at the start of camp.

Dress Code

All campers are required to wear socks and sneakers at appropriate times (given the activities they are doing). One exception is for trips to and from the pool when they may wear crocs, sandals or aqua shoes. Wearing of flip-flops and is not permitted in camp because they have limited support and may cause injuries. Bathing suits or surf trunks are required for the pool.

Camp Sequoia light blue t-shirts are mandatory on trip days. If your child loses or damages their camp shirt and does not have an extra we will provide him with a new one at your expense. Expensive clothes are not necessary at camp.

Please leave t-shirts from other camps at home. The Perkiomen School Security staff will be confused if they see our campers wearing t-shirts from other camps.

Purchasing Camp Clothing and Ordering Required T-shirts

Camp Spot is our official camp supplier from which you can order your free Camp Sequoia t-shirt and other items that are useful for camp that are included in our packing list. Please visit our website to enter the online store.

All campers must have one light blue Camp Sequoia t-shirt. We provide one free of charge and must be ordered from our online camp outfitter, Camp Spot (link to the store is on our website www.campsequoia.com). Campers may bring last year's light blue shirt if it is in good condition and does not have stains, tears, etc. Returning campers may still order their free t-shirt for this year.

We recommend you purchase an additional couple of t-shirts in either light blue or dark blue.

Please order as soon as possible to ensure on-time delivery as Camp Spot gets extremely busy as the camp season approaches. We suggest ordering one size up so your camper can (hopefully) fit into his camp shirt next summer. If you have questions about your order, please contact [Camp Spot](http://www.campsequoia.com) as Camp Sequoia cannot answer questions about your order.

Laundry

A local laundry company does our laundry service. If your camper is prone to night-time accidents, we ask that you send them with 4 rolls of quarters and a bottle of detergent as staff will wash their sheets in the coin operated washing machines/dryers in their dorm as needed outside of the normal laundry schedule. LIT's will have the opportunity throughout the summer to learn to do their own laundry as part of their life skills program.

Communication with Campers

Camper Mail

Address all mail as follows:

Camper Name
Camp Sequoia
200 Seminary Street
Pennsburg, PA 18073

Campers really look forward to mail at camp. A few days without a card or letter can be upsetting. We suggest you send one letter several days before the start of your child's camp session.

Some Do's and Don't's when it comes to writing letters to your children (please share this with relatives, etc.):

- **Do** sound enthusiastic and offer encouragement in your letters.
- **Do** provide your children with pre-stamped postcards or stationery.
- **Do** understand that most campers don't like writing long letters home while at camp -----this is why postcards are great.
- **Do** comment on pictures you see of your child on our website.
- **Do** keep your questions positive. Rather than saying: "Is anyone being mean to you?" ask "Which kids do you like being with the most?"
- **Don't** say "We miss you, the dog misses you, etc." in letters as it can make children feel upset and responsible for your emotional well-being.
- **Don't** write letters about events they may be missing out on at home.

Campers are encouraged to write home twice a week. Campers who need assistance with handwriting will be assisted by their counselors. You can also find excellent camp stationery in our online store that does not require a lot of writing. Please note that camp is not responsible for letters after they leave campus, as we have no control over the United States Postal Service's efficiency and reliability.

Parents can send email to their camper at camp. Emails will be printed once each day and are delivered with the campers' regular mail. Please note that we cannot print out pictures or attachments to emails. We request that incoming email be limited to no more than once per day. Emails received after 4:00 P.M. will be delivered the next day. **Camper emails should be sent to the following email address: letters@camp-sequoia.com. We do not read emails sent directly to campers so it is essential to put your child's full name AND DIVISION in the subject line of the email.**

An important note about letters from campers: At any overnight camp, it's not uncommon for children to write letters home when they are upset about something. This is particularly true for our campers who have a tendency to be overly emotionally reactive to challenges or who "get stuck" and perseverate on the negatives. Parents often call camps concerned about a letter they have received only to find that whatever their child was upset about at the time they wrote the letter has been forgotten about. We are always happy to speak with you via phone or email about any concerns you may have.

It is common for some of our campers to want reassurance that their parents are worried about them while they're at camp. As a result, they express a negative tone in their letters (or during their phone call) knowing that their parents will react. At times, this is the case with campers who are doing beautifully at camp.

If you hear about something from your camper that is upsetting, please don't panic. Instead, please contact us and let us know what your camper shared with you. We will investigate your concerns and respond to you with factual information. **An important part of our work at Camp Sequoia is helping our campers understand perspectives aside from their own. This is part of the process of building social thinking skills, and can be especially difficult for our population.** We will always address any concerns you and your son has to make sure they have the best possible experience during their time with us.

Camper Phone Calls

It is our policy that campers do not receive phone calls unless pre-arranged. From past experience and documented research on homesickness, we have found that phone calls home don't help campers who are having a difficult time adjusting to camp, and they can create new difficulties for campers who are adjusting well.

Parents may choose to schedule a limited number of calls with their camper during each camp session so as not to disrupt from the camp program. Phone calls will be scheduled during the day and evening on the Monday of the second week they are with us. You may email us during the first week of camp to let us know you would like to schedule a phone call.

Should you decide to speak to your child while at camp please follow the same "Do's and Don'ts" that apply to writing letters. Campers who share their time between separate parent households may arrange a phone call with each parent. If your child has a birthday at camp, you will be able to schedule a brief phone call on their birthday. **Phone calls can be difficult for some of our campers. A camper who is doing beautifully at camp can become anxious upon hearing their parent's voice and can become emotional. Phone calls home often leave parents worried and concerned. You are not obligated to schedule a call so please don't feel guilty if you think your child would be more successful at camp without a phone call. Some of our campers choose not to have a phone call home as they feel it will hinder their progress. If your camper requests to not have a phone call home, please respect their decision as they are invested in their own success at camp.**

Timing of Calls

All camper phone calls are limited to around 10 minutes in order to assure that we do not disrupt your child's routine too much and to allow other campers to make calls. Please note that we only have two phone lines at camp and phone calls go in order from youngest campers to oldest so getting through phone calls will take several days.

***Camp Office Information**

Our winter office will be relocating to camp on June 5th. Our phone and fax numbers remain the same, however any mail sent to us after June 6th should be sent to the following address:

**Camp Sequoia
200 Seminary Street
Pennsburg, PA 18073**

Our summer camp office is open from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily Monday–Friday. We will check voicemail and email on weekends, but our office staff typically has those days off and our administrative staff prioritizes being out and with engaged with campers rather than waiting for a phone call or email. We do close for lunch and dinner but have our voicemail engaged. If you call at other times, or if all of our lines are in use, you will connect to our voicemail system. We will reply to you as quickly as possible.

In the event of an emergency after hours, please realize that your message will roll to an after-hours phone which is answered on a rotational basis by a member of senior staff. Please consider emailing office@camp-sequoia.com as a better means to get a message to us after hours for questions that are not absolute emergencies.

Parent Communication with Camp

You will hear from us individually within the first few days of your child arriving to let you know how your child is adjusting to camp. Please let us contact you rather than you contacting us as the first few days of each session are extremely busy and our attention is focused on helping our campers adjust to camp. We will also send a nightly email summarizing the events of the day for you to get a flavor of camp and keep track of what is going on each day.

We are always happy to speak with you and we regularly communicate with parents to share information and ask for advice.

Please understand that emails/phone calls may not be returned until later at night or the next day. While we want to respond to parents as quickly as possible, our primary concern is making sure our campers are safe, healthy, and successful; thus, we are out and around camp during the day.

Email to Camp Office

To email us at our Camp Office, use office@camp-sequoia.com; please do not use this address to send emails to your camper. **The email address to send letters to campers is: letters@camp-sequoia.com**

Vacations While Your Camper is at Camp

If you plan to be away from home for extended periods during the summer, please provide our office with vacation dates, an address and telephone number at which you can be reached as well as an emergency contact.

Camper Evaluations

You will receive a detailed evaluation by late August to early September regarding your camper's experience at camp as well as information regarding the topics covered during their weekly Social Thinking group. We know that you may be eager to read your camper's evaluation before that time. However, we invest a tremendous amount of time into writing camper evaluations. Thus, to be fair, we need to send out all evaluations at the same time.

Camp Photographs

We have staff dedicated to photography and post pictures each night on our secure picture website, Smugmug. You may view the photos on our website by clicking on the "Pictures" tab or by going to

<http://www.campsequoia.smugmug.com> We will send out the password to view photos closer to the start of camp. We make a concerted effort to make sure all campers are included in pictures frequently. However, you may not see your camper in a picture every single day. It is very common for parents who have children at overnight camp to over-analyze pictures and worry if they see a picture with their camper not smiling. Please keep in mind that your camper is most likely not smiling at home at all times and should not be expected to smiling at all times during camp. Photographs capture only a split second of time.

Package Policy

Each camper may receive **one package per week** (and no more) in order to reduce feelings of competition between campers.

PACKAGES CANNOT CONTAIN FOOD OF ANY KIND (including drink mixes, gum, ramen soup, candy, etc.)

We are conscious of allergies and other food issues with our campers and want to avoid any potential problems. If you wish to send a package to your child, please make it one containing books, magazines, games, puzzles, etc. **Please inform all family members of our package policy. Contact us if you would like to arrange something special for a birthday celebration etc. in lieu of sending food in a package.**

Staff and Supervision

Our most important off-season task is the hiring and training of our exceptional staff. We pride ourselves on the quality of the individuals that work with the campers and the fact we have a very high return rate of staff each summer. We employ three types of staff that work with our campers in all divisions (age groups): General Counselors, Activity Specialists, and Division Leaders.

Division Leaders are administrative staff members who are college graduates and/or have more extensive experience with camps and our population. Division Leaders provide active oversight, evaluation, skill building and support to a division of campers. General Counselors stay with their division throughout the day and work with campers in activity periods, in the dorms and eat meals with them. Activity Specialists teach our activities yet also live with a division of campers and eat meals with them. Our female staff is also assigned a division whom they will sit with during meals. Many of our staff members are undergraduate and graduate education majors, special education majors, psychology majors or going into clinical fields such as speech and language pathology or counseling. Leadership staff members are college graduates and hold licensure or expertise reflective of their role at camp. All staff members are subject to a thorough background check and a multiple interview process before being hired.

In addition to offseason training seminars, all staff members report for an intensive staff orientation two weeks prior to camper arrival. Senior staff typically has an additional 5 days of face to face training to prepare for your camper. This training includes building a comprehensive understanding of Social Cognition, Frustration Tolerance, our camper population, dynamic inquiry based instruction and building team dynamics.

Our Administrative Staff includes our Director, Program Director, Pool Director, Independent Skills Director, Social Skills Group Director, Head Counselors, Nurses, Associate Director, and Division Leaders. We are all actively involved in camp and with our campers. Aside from our Associate Director, we are not in the office the majority of the day.

Campus Security & Crisis Response

Our camper's safety and health is key to a successful summer. The Perkiomen School security staff patrols the campus throughout our stay. Senior Staff are trained on-site with and are internationally recognized with **Crisis Prevention Certification**. This training includes a myriad of "what-if" scenarios to give staff the experience and confidence to appropriately respond with camper welfare in mind. We review emergency response procedures (fire drills etc.) with our campers within 24 hours of their arrival to camp and maintain open lines of communication with local authorities in the unlikely event the need should arise. We coordinate with the Perkiomen School in regards to potential campus wide events and a synergistic response. Additional screening, testing, and sanitation measures were implemented for the 2020 season, which led to our successful camp season, and we will continue to emphasize sanitation and follow state and national guidelines to keep our campus covid-free.

Electronics Policy

Video Games, Video Cameras, Computers, Cell Phones, iPod touch, iPads etc. are not permitted at camp. We strongly believe that these items detract from the camp experience and our goals at Camp Sequoia. Campers travelling alone to camp by plane are fine to bring a cell phone in order to communicate with camp and parents while in transit. Campers should turn the cell phone into the Sequoia office upon arrival.

iPods/MP3 players: We allow personal music players that cannot access the internet or have games on them at camp for use at specific times (rest period and evenings before bed). Campers are not permitted to listen to their personal music players during activities, meals, clean up time, etc.

Kindles, e-readers and electronic reading devices that cannot access the internet are fine to bring.

Other Items: Any other devices that access the Internet or can be used for electronic communication are prohibited at camp.

Please be aware of the risks involved with sending any expensive/fragile possessions to camp. Camp Sequoia is not responsible should these items be lost or broken by your child or another camper during the summer. If any prohibited items above are found at camp, we will hold them until the end of your camper's session.

Other items prohibited at camp:

Pocket knives, video cameras, air conditioners, bicycles, scooters, skateboards, any type of toy that shoots things (ex. Nerf guns, water guns), water balloons, mini refrigerators, scissors, televisions, DVD players. Obviously, this is not a comprehensive list.

We have found that some campers will use books, toys, etc. as a way to avoid or replace interacting with their peers if they have difficulty understanding how to initiate social interaction. If we find that your camper is using such things as distraction from interacting with his peers, we will put parameters around the times when he can use these items. Please discuss this with your camper if you anticipate this happening. During “down times” campers are always provided with activities they can enjoy together in a group.

Books, toys, etc. are not permitted to be brought to meals or activities.

***Camper Spending Money**

We ask that you please send \$60.00 for each session your camper will be at camp. Each camper’s spending money will be kept in our safe. Campers will be given spending money from the “bank” each morning of our trip days (if we hold off campus trips this year). We give campers between \$15-20 per trip (depending on the trip) and do work with our campers around money management skills. We find that some of our campers would like to buy anything and everything they see so we do work with them to limit impulsive spending. We suggest that you send your camper’s spending money prior to camp if they will be flying or that you give it to us on arrival day. **In the event we are not able to hold off campus trips in 2021, spending money will not be necessary.**

Please provide your camper’s spending money in cash in small bills (1’s, 5’s 10’s only) and please do not send us checks to be cashed for spending money. We will not be able to readily cash the checks while at camp. One option is to add the \$60 to your final payment (along with fees for any of the optional trips described below).

***Optional Programs (TBD if these will be held in the 2021 season)**

We offer an optional golf program for campers who are interested in playing golf. We play on a small golf course located close to camp. This is a 9-hole par 3 course. There is a fee for this optional program that will be included in the golf registration form. If you are interested in your camper playing golf, please discuss this with him prior to camp. We have found that at times campers have been signed up for golf but are not interested in playing due to the fact they don’t want to miss activities at camp. You will receive a golf registration form in our next mailing. Please note that golf fees are non-refundable (unless we are unable to hold the golf program).

We offer optional overnight trips for our campers in the Freshmen, Junior, Inter and Senior divisions. Overnight trips are chaperoned by our staff with at least one administrative staff member on each trip. You will receive an overnight trip registration form in our next mailing. Please note that space is limited on trips and enrollment is on a rolling basis. A full slate of these will be made available in mid-April. As part of their life skills development, LIT’s will have some input on their trip with details to come to those families specifically in a subsequent mailing. Again, please note that these may not be possible for the summer of 2021 depending on the global and national circumstances regarding the pandemic.

Religious Services

Campers are welcome to participate in religious services if they (or you) would like them to do so. We do not force campers to attend religious services so if you would like your camper to attend please discuss your expectation with them. Our Counselors will be attending religious services with campers. We offer Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and non-denominational options.

Camper Living Arrangements

Campers will live in a dormitory room with another camper who is in their age group. We group campers together based on the information you provide about your child as well as our impressions on who would do well living together. **We will send out a Camper Profile form which will, in addition to our conversations, help us place roommates appropriately.** Living with peers is an incredible bonding experience for campers. It teaches children how to live in a community, share living space and become more flexible. If your camper may have issues about privacy, please let him know that he can change his clothing in the bathroom. However, he should not expect his roommate to leave the room each time as it is a shared living space. We find that most campers quickly overcome their privacy issues at overnight camp which can be a self-confidence booster.

It is natural and expected that some campers may have disagreements with their roommates during their stay at camp. This is particularly true for campers who can present with rigid thinking and have trouble understanding others' perspectives. Our goal at Camp Sequoia is to help our campers build their social thinking skills and learning how to resolve conflicts is a significant part of this process. Unless we believe the situation warrants a change, we will not change roommates as a result of disagreements. Rather, we will help campers work through their disagreement and learn how to compromise.

It is a natural tendency for some parents to want to "make things better" any time their child is upset and alleviate their discomfort. Please understand that demanding that your child change roommates will deprive them of the opportunity to develop resiliency and social problem solving skills. This is an integral part of the overnight camp experience for campers, and particularly for many of our campers.

Health Care & Medications

Please see the medical and prescription forms covering all areas pertaining to health care and medications while at camp. If you have questions, please contact us sooner rather than later.

Diet and Nutrition

Camp Sequoia is very fortunate to have the Perkiomen School Dining Staff managing our food service. The Perkiomen School dining service offers a wide array of healthy food options at each meal. The dining staff serves over 300 students during the academic year and are well educated about the dietary needs for children with a wide variety of food allergies/sensitivities. The Dining Staff will have a list of our campers who have food allergies/sensitivities.

Meals are served buffet style with The Perkiomen School staff serving. Each lunch and dinner there is a deli bar where campers can have sandwiches made for them as well as a salad bar and pasta bar. We also have a policy for all meals that campers must drink at least one cup of water to aid in hydration before they have juice.

Our staff sits amongst the campers during all meals and monitors each camper's food intake during meals. We are happy to discuss any concerns you have in regards to your child's diet at camp as we want you to feel comfortable knowing that we are watching out for them as closely as you would at home.

Sodas are not served at camp and campers are not permitted to use the soda machines on campus. While we do allow campers to purchase 1 soda while on trips, we are happy to limit their purchasing of soda, etc. at your request.

We have found that many campers are more open to trying new foods at camp than at home and we encourage them to try new foods, eat vegetables and salads, etc. That being said, we do want to be clear that overnight camp is not a place to get into power struggles over food with campers; thus, we will not force campers to eat anything they don't want to eat.

Campers are **not permitted** to bring food and drinks to camp or receive packages containing food or drinks.

Hygiene

Please discuss with your camper that all campers are required to take a shower once a day during shower hour and are required to brush their teeth twice a day as well maintain overall good hygiene such as wearing clean clothes, having their hair brushed, etc. Part of developing perspective building skills is to understanding how others perceive you based on your hygiene and overall appearance. We closely monitor our campers' hygiene and are happy to assist them with any hygiene tasks. Overall we find that many of our campers are more open to being responsible for their hygiene and appearance at camp than they might be at home. Furthermore, we have found that many campers are willing to take

on new hygiene tasks at camp when they see their peers doing these tasks (using deodorant, shaving, etc.). All campers ages 11 and older participate in our weekly “Guys Group” period where we teach the importance of establishing a good hygiene routine for making and keeping friends.

As indicated in our packing list, please make sure your camper’s toiletries are in a shower caddy with a handle. We find that combination shampoo/shower gel and a shower sponge is best for camp instead of a bar of soap and separate shampoo bottle. AXE brand makes several combination shampoo/shower gels and their own shower sponges, which are very durable.

Preparing Your Camper for Camp and Homesickness

It is both normal and expected that both you and your camper may be anxious about attending camp for the first time. Some of our first time campers are very anxious and in some cases resistant to attending camp. This is due to several factors including: their fear of being outside of their comfort zone and a lack of self-confidence regarding their ability to be successful in new situations. Additionally, the "new normal" has made it so many of our young men have been deprived of social experiences over the last year with confinement to their homes. Being outside of that routine may cause expected homesickness as they adjust to a new community.

We have a lifetime of camp experience as campers, staff members and administrators and know what is necessary to help prepare for a successful overnight camp experience.

According to Bob Ditter, psychologist and camping expert, the more a child has a chance to “practice” behaviors that are similar, the more the child will experience mastery. Going away to overnight camp for most children will be most successful if parents try the following:

Talk About What to Expect:

Use the camp website and mailings to talk about what camp will be like. Let your child know they can turn to the counselors when they need help at camp.

Practice Makes Perfect:

Campers who have not spent significant time away from home should “practice” by having sleepovers before camp. Talk to your child afterwards to discuss how the experience went for them.

Getting Ready:

Have your camper participate both in shopping for camp and some of the packing. Practice folding clothes, and making a bed from “scratch”, putting their clothes away on their own, etc. The more involved you have your camper in the preparation process, the more ownership they will feel in getting ready for camp.

Problem Solve with Your Camper Before Camp:

“What should you do if you run out of underwear? Answer: Tell your Counselor. You might want to try role-playing some possible camp scenarios with your camper.

VERY IMPORTANT—Examine Your Own Feelings About Your Camper Being Away:

Children are excellent sensors of parental angst. If you are not ready for your child to be away he will sense this and may feel responsible for you emotional well-being. Furthermore, it will be harder for your child to go to camp and feel permission to have fun.

Focus on the Positive:

Parents who talk about how much they are going to miss their children actually create more anxiety and a heightened sense of homesickness. While it may be hard for you to see them go, remember that camp is a wonderful gift that you are giving your child, one that will help him grow and develop as a person while also having a GREAT time.

Homesickness

What is referred to as homesickness is really anxiety about being in a new situation and not feeling emotionally safe yet. Most campers attending overnight camp feel some anxiety about being away from home. In fact, we believe that managing and overcoming homesickness is an integral part of the camp experience. Camp is the best place for young people to learn coping skills, gain independence and enhance their self-esteem. Adapting to camp life, with the help of a caring and attentive camp staff, is a challenge that helps young people develop those important life skills.

Here are some helpful tips to help your camper prepare for camp and feel a sense of investment in the process:

- When packing for camp, ask your camper what special (non-valuable) personal items they might want to take along. This is to increase their comfort level by having something familiar nearby as they adjust to a new place.
- Talk about going to camp in the days leading up to it. About one week before his departure, start talking about what he is looking forward to, what he wants to do most at camp when he gets there, etc. Please keep the discussion positive even if he shows anxiety or resistance.
- Let him know that most kids feel nervous about going to a new place. Reassure your camper that you believe in his ability to be successful, make friends and have fun.
- Have a letter ready to mail a day or two before camp begins so it is there the day your child arrives. Avoid talking about how you'll miss he or what he'll be missing at home.

Here are some GREAT things to say to your camper as he prepares to leave for camp:

"I'm going to be looking at the pictures on the website every day to see what you're doing at camp"

"I'm going to write you so you'll know that we're O.K., the dog is O.K. etc."

"It's going to take you some time to get used to being at camp and feeling comfortable but I know you'll be fine and have a great time"

"Your room is going to be set up for you when you arrive"

Here are some NOT GREAT things to say to your camper as he prepares to leave for camp:

"Just try camp for a week and see how you like it"

"You can call me anytime"

"I'm going to miss you so much"

"I can't believe you'll be gone for such a long time"

PLEASE AVOID THIS MISTAKE!!

Whatever you do, please don't tell your child: "If you don't like it, I'll come get you." Promises like this are guaranteed to set your child up for failure and make our job much more difficult. Most importantly, they deny your child the opportunity to develop the resilience, pride, and sense of independence that come from working through something that is difficult. Should you decide to pull your child out of camp early, there will be no tuition refund or pro-rated tuition.

Homesickness typically happens during specific times (mornings, rest period) and rarely during activities. The way we deal with homesickness is to help campers focus on an activity and connect with peers as distractions. In our experience, staying active and having social connections are the cure for homesickness.

Homesickness typically lasts between 1–5 days; however, it is very common to take up to a week for campers to feel fully comfortable. **Based on our experience we find that camper's ages 8–11 typically present with a shorter period of homesickness have a faster adjustment (typically within 1–4 days they are adjusted to camp life). Campers ages 12–17 sometimes are more inclined to be homesick and may have a slightly longer adjustment to camp life.**

If your child is experiencing homesickness and does not show any signs, he may convey this to you in a letter. Often by the time parents receive a letter the period of homesickness is over. **Please note that we will not have your child call you if they are homesick. This is guaranteed to make campers more anxious and will sabotage their ability to be successful at camp.**

We have many years of experience helping children through homesickness at camp and specifically train our staff to assist campers in their transition to camp.

Let Us Help!

Campers can always email us before camp (office@camp-sequoia.com) or talk to us on Skype, Zoom, or FaceTime with questions or concerns about coming to camp.

Extending Your Camper's Time at Camp

We believe that there is no better and faster way for a child to improve his self-confidence and social skills than to have a positive experience at overnight camp. A lifetime of overnight camp experience has taught us that the longer campers remain at camp, the more likely they are to form strong connections with their peers, become more independent, more mature and most importantly feel good about themselves.

Specifically, for Camp Sequoia, the longer our campers stay with us, the more likely they are to generalize the social thinking concepts and language we utilize each day in our program.

If your child is scheduled to attend first session and would like to stay at camp for our second session, we will pro-rate your child's tuition for the remainder of his time at camp. You will have the opportunity to discuss this with your child over the phone and we will support whatever decision you make. Please note that we may not have availability to extend in your camper's age group.

Success at Camp Sequoia

Through our thorough application process and conversations with all of our camp families, we do our best to ensure that each camper is a good "fit" for our camp community. However, children respond to new environments in different ways, and we occasionally may determine that a camper's required level of support or behavior is not what we are equipped to handle. Usually, before this decision is made, the camper's parents will be engaged in problem-solving discussions. After all other possibilities are exhausted, a camper may be asked to leave camp. Parents must make arrangements to pick up their child at that time or arrange for transportation at their expense. No refunds will be granted. This decision is always a last resort.

While we have never asked a camper to leave due to homesickness, we have unfortunately found that there are times when parents are not willing to allow their child the time to work through their adjustment to camp and chose to pull their child out of camp early. We strongly discourage this and ask that you have a dialogue with us before you make this decision. As camp professionals with a lifetime of camp experience and clinical backgrounds, we know what is necessary for campers to be successful at camp and ask that you trust our professional judgment. Pulling your child out of camp early can clearly send the message to your camper that you are not confident in his ability to be successful in new situations, work through his discomfort and develop resiliency. When children believe that their parents will “rescue” them from any discomfort they experience, they have a much harder time developing coping skills and resiliency as they mature. We believe that camp is a “healthy challenge” for all campers and even more so for our camper population. Should you choose to pull your camper out of camp early there will be no refunds or pro-rated tuition.

Most importantly, we want all of our campers to leave Camp Sequoia feeling great about themselves. In cases of early departures, we will make sure that campers recognize the successes they had during their stay at camp – and we hope that parents will be equally committed to emphasizing the positive. Below is a company that offers camp cancellation insurance. Please review their policies carefully in order to select the specifics that best suit your needs. We always recommend that you enroll for a 'no fault' policy if you choose to be insured, although this policy may have been modified due to the pandemic.

Aramark: 1-800-358-0779 Ex 221

Sharing Additional Information About Your Camper

We often find that some parents would like to share additional information about their camper with us right before the beginning of camp. **While we appreciate the effort in helping us to get to know your child so we can provide them with a successful experience we ask that you please share any additional information with us prior to June 6th which is when our office moves to camp.** The 10 days leading up the beginning of camp is our staff orientation, which is a very intensive week for our staff. We are conducting staff orientation typically for 12 hours per day. It is difficult for us to speak on the phone with parents during staff orientation.

Supporting Your Camper’s Growth After the Camp Season

We are always happy to hear from our camper’s parents after the camp season when they recognize the growth their child has made at camp. Granted, it is easy for our campers to fall into the same patterns at home once they are back in their comfort zone. We encourage you to take advantage of the growth your child has made at camp. For example: Your child will become accustomed to picking up his clothes and putting them in the laundry every day. Rather than doing it for him once he’s home we encourage you to remind him that he can do it himself now. **The skills, independence and maturity your camper will develop at camp will only last if you support and encourage continuing maturity, which we believe is particularly relevant to our camper population.**

Another area we encourage parents to support is maintaining friendships. Our campers need to learn that they have a responsibility in maintaining friendships after camp, which takes effort. We encourage campers to keep in touch by email, phone and other methods that kids use to socialize today. For younger campers

we find that Skype or Zoom are great ways to keep in touch with friends at camp. Some of our younger campers also play games together online. Our older campers tend to communicate by texting, Facebook, or playing online games together. We suggest that your camper communicate with at least one camper from camp on a monthly basis. Many of our campers need reminders to make the effort to reach out to camp friends. It would be a good idea to set up a free Skype account for your camper if he does not have one already.

Other Ways to Support Your Camper's Growth After Camp

"Learning Social" as we call it at camp is a lifelong process. Since social expectations increase with age and the "hidden rules" of social interaction become more abstract there is always room to learn more. We are happy to work with you to try to find people in your area who are adept at using the Social Thinking framework as we find this is the most effective method to help children develop their social cognition. Granted, Social Thinking is still considered a "cutting edge" approach and many professionals are not yet familiar with this work.

We are also happy to speak with your camper's teachers, therapists, etc. after the camp season if you feel this would be helpful in helping them transition back to home.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you have questions. We are here to support you and want your camper to have a successful, fun-filled summer at Camp Sequoia!

****Please note that this is a weird year, and to accommodate state and local laws, CDC guidelines, and American Camp Association recommendations, we may need to change location, dates, transportation, trips, fees, or other camp details in order to best serve and protect our community. Any such updates will be communicated to our community through email, so please keep up to date with all camp communications.***

**Thank you for your flexibility and understanding during these unprecedented times,
The Camp Sequoia Team**

“Lingo” we use around Camp Sequoia

Freshman Campers ages 7--9, **Juniors** Campers age 10-11, **Inters** Campers ages 12---13

Seniors—Campers ages 14—15, **LITs**—Campers ages 16—17

Division Leaders -- Administrative staff members who are in charge of a specific division

Majors—Activities chosen before the 1st day of camp that last for the duration of a session **Minors**—

Activities chosen on the first day (and every week) that last for the duration of the week **Free Swim**—

Recreational Swim Time that happens each day. Instructional swim also happens daily.

Group—All campers participate in a twice weekly Social Thinking/Frustration Tolerance/Team Building group with campers in their division

Independent Skills—Freshman, Junior, Inter and Senior campers participate in a weekly class where we teach skills pertaining to some executive functioning tasks. LIT campers participate in a 2 period daily Independent Skills curriculum.

Guys Group—Junior, Inter, Senior and LIT campers participate in a weekly group in which we teach the social aspects pertaining to the increased social expectations and “hidden rules” that come during puberty and adolescence. Our Guy’s Group curriculum is tailored for each specific age group.

Trip Day—Each week all campers participate in a weekly trip. No activities are done on trip days except for evening activity.

Evening Meeting—Each night after dinner our entire camp community meets and are able to share successes and compliments about fellow campers that were observed during the day. During evening meeting we also share information about upcoming events, etc.

Evening Activity—Each night a variety of activities are offered that campers pick from at that time. Some evening activities will be whole camp activities.

Rest Period—Each day (except trip days) after lunch campers return to their dorm for relaxation, games and letter writing twice a week.

Quiet Time—Each night after nighttime hygiene routines are completed, campers have a designated period before bed. Our Freshmen, Junior and Inter campers have a novel read each night by counselors which they can listen to or they may spend time with other campers doing a quiet activity. Senior and LIT campers typically play games or spend time in each other’s rooms during quiet time.



CAMP SEQUOIA REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Camp Sequoia Summer Office Information

Hours 9:00-6:00 (M—F) *

Phone: 610-771-0111 Fax: 610-771-0122

Email: office@camp-sequoia.com

Web: www.camp-sequoia.com

*Note: After hours calls roll to an emergency phone

View camp pictures online

Go to: www.camp-sequoia.com and click on Photos

OR go to: <http://campsequoia.smugmug.com>

The password to view pictures: Will be emailed to parents

Pharmacy (camper's medications)

Pharmacy Number: 267-354-1833

Dipen Patel is the Pharmacist for Camp

Priyanka is the pharmacy Tech for Camp

Email: sellersvillepharmacypf@gmail.com

AFTER HOURS: 267-304-4449

Camp Luggage Service

Camp Trucking

Web: www.camptrucking.com

Phone: (970) 949-0690

Camper Contact Information

(Camper Name and Division)

Camp Sequoia

200 Seminary Street Pennsburg, PA 18073

Email: letters@camp-sequoia.com or

Click on the e-mail campers' link on our website:

www.camp-sequoia.com

Please put your child's name /DIVISION in the subject line of the email and please limit emails to one per day.

Session Dates

Full Season: Sunday June **27th**-Saturday August **7th**

First Session: Sunday June **27th**-Saturday July **17th**

Second Session: Sunday July **18th**-Saturday August **7th**

Order camp clothing and supplies from Camp Spot, our official camp outfitter:

Visit our website www.camp-sequoia.com or www.thecampspot.com *Enter "Camp Sequoia" on home page to access our catalog.

Order stick-on labels for clothing and camp items:

Mabel's Labels: www.campsequoia.mabelslabels.com