

Camp Policy for Campers and the Internet

We have asked your parents to go over some policies we have developed about the Internet and other important issues so that everyone has the best experience at camp as possible.

- 1) We view e-mail, IM and social networking sites, like Facebook.com and MySpace.com, as positive ways for you to express yourself and keep in touch with your friends. As a camper you have the right to exchange e-mails or IMs with other campers and invite other campers to be on your “friends” list in any way that you *and your parents* see fit.
- 2) When it comes to exchanging contact with anyone on our staff, however, *your parents must take full responsibility for you to do that. This includes giving or getting an e-mail or IM address, cell phone number, social networking profile, weblog or any other Internet contact.* (We tell this to the staff during orientation). It’s not that we don’t think your relationships with your counselors are important. They are! It’s just that, once they leave camp, we can’t take responsibility for what happens between you and them—*only your parents can.*
- 3) Regarding e-mails, IMs and comments you might make to other campers on their social networking site, we ask you:
 - a) to keep what you say positive and respectful of staff and campers alike;
 - b) not to use obscenities, vulgar or sexual language;
 - c) not to say mean or threatening things to or about other campers or staff;
 - d) not to post pictures online that would embarrass or violate anyone’s privacy;
 - e) not to pose as another camper online or spread false information about anyone or say damaging or threatening things to or about anyone;
 - f) not to use a website or blog or e-mail to talk about things that are against camp policy, like using drugs or alcohol or bullying or sexual things.
- 4) Most Internet communication is positive, and that’s great! In the rare case where there might be any negative messages to other campers or staff, our policy is to call the parents of campers who send those messages and share the content with them.
- 5) Any camper who violates any of our policies regarding the Internet or other communication might not be able to come back to camp and might even have to answer to the police or other law enforcement authorities.
- 6) We want you to be safe on the Internet. ***If you receive a threatening e-mail, IM or message on your personal website—one that is mocking, uses vulgar or harassing language—here is what you should do:***
 - a) Do not respond to the message or retaliate, because it might encourage the sender or get you into trouble.
 - b) If possible, record the message onto your hard drive.
 - c) Print out a copy of the message, then close it but ***do not delete it.***
 - d) Tell your parents about it and have them notify the local police or, if necessary, contact your Internet service provider (like yahoo, aol, earthlink, g-mail, etc.)
 - e) If you suspect that the sender is from camp, call us immediately.
 - f) You or your parents can also contact Pedowatch (www.pedowatch.com) or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (www.nemec.org).

Camp is meant to be a fun, safe and happy place for all of us. We need your help to keep the way people from camp communicate with one another positive and in the spirit of camp—a way that makes everyone feel safe.

Resources - Regarding Your Child and their Online Activity

Children today spend a tremendous amount of time each week online. While this can be a healthy and positive experience, as a friend and an advocate for children and their safety, *we recommend that you as parents be knowledgeable about their online activities*. While your children may balk at your effort to supervise them or see their online profile, we also know children listen to their parent's advice and concern. We've gathered information from many sources and are providing you with a summary of that information as a kind of ally in the maintenance of your child's continued well-being. We have also included resources that you may wish to contact for further help or information. If you aren't already, make it your business to become familiar with your child's computer and the Internet. You can't protect your children unless you know what is out there. If you want further help, contact www.masterteacher.com/index.html

Safety Tips for Teens Online

- 1) Avoid giving out your last name, phone number, address, name of your school, where you hang out or sports teams you are on.
- 2) Use the privacy features on your service.
- 3) Avoid meeting people in person who you have met on the Net that you don't know. If you do agree to meet someone, let your parents know and take some friends along.
- 4) Be careful of what you post online—pics and text are open for the world to see. Teens seem to forget this!
- 5) Remember that *anyone can pose as anyone else online!* Unless you are positive of the person's identity, be skeptical.

What to Tell Your Child If They Are Threatened Online

- 1) Don't respond or retaliate. Doing so may only make matters worse or get you into trouble.
- 2) If you can, save the message on your hard drive and print out a copy. Then close the message or program.
- 3) Tell your parent or trusted adult.
- 4) If it is someone from camp, call the camp director.
- 5) If necessary, call your Internet service provider.
- 6) If necessary, call the local police (like in cases of a threat on your life, a sexual advance, etc.)
- 7) Another resource: The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (www.ncmec.org).

Other Resources

"Keeping It Safe—Nine Important Steps to Internet Safety and Protecting Our Children," www.Westchestergov.com. A handy, helpful pamphlet put out by the District Attorney's Office in Westchester County, New York.

MySpace Unraveled: A Parent's Guide to Teen Social Networking, Larry Magid and Anne Collier, Peachpit Press, 2006. Extremely helpful, informative and comprehensive, easy-to-read guide for parents. Paperback, about \$15.

www.Wiredsafety.org A set of Internet sites having to do with various online safety issues.

"What Parent's Need to Know about MySpace—Your Guide to a Kid's World on the Internet," *U.S. News and World Report*, September 18, 2006. Great, easy to read, all-in-one-place article.

Netsmartz.org

This site is operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Offers videos, cartoon print material and online activities to help children 5 to 17 learn how to be safe online.

MySpace Unraveled: A Parent's Guide to Teen Social Networking, by Larry Magid and Anne Collier (Peachpit Press, paperback, \$14.95).

Helps clarify the social networking scene for parents in simple and clear terms and gives specific instructions on how to talk with children about MySpace.com and similar sites to ensure safety.