



Dear Parents and Camper:

The Camping and Education Foundation, Camp Koochiching, and Ogichi Daa Kwe embrace the use of social networking sites on the internet, such as Facebook, as a means to connect our camping communities during the off season. Currently, JR Verkamp, Assistant Director of Camp Koochiching, and Melynda Roscoe, Assistant Director of Ogichi Daa Kwe, interact with campers on Facebook group pages. They update campers on events, monitor the sites to ensure that they are safe for camp members, and keep in contact with our campers during the winter months.

As an organization, we also share the concerns of many families, schools, and camps regarding the dangers associated with young people's use of social networking Web sites. As you may know, the risks range from online sexual solicitation to cyber bullying to the damaging of one's own reputation, school or camp admission status, and even job prospects by posting inappropriate information on personal pages.

With the best interest of our campers, parents, and community in mind, we have developed policies designed to keep campers, employees, and camps safe. Our policy is enclosed for your review. We hope you will discuss it with your child and encourage him or her to share any inappropriate postings by or about members of our camp community. We ask that both parent and child sign the document and return by May 1.

In conjunction with the policies developed for campers, J.R. and Melynda have created a Helpful Suggestion Sheet for both campers and parents. The purpose is to promote safety and awareness while using social network sites and the Internet in general. The suggestions are printed on the back of this letter and we recommend you read through them carefully.

Please know that we remain committed to the health and safety of all members of our community. As always, we appreciate your support and welcome your comments.

Sincerely,

Hugh Haller

Steve Heinle

Kathy Dix

Cyber Policy for Campers

The Camping and Education Foundation, Camp Koochiching, and Ogichi Daa Kwe view social networking sites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook), personal Web sites, and Weblogs positively and respect the right of campers to use them as a medium of self-expression. If a camper chooses to identify himself or herself as a camper at our camp on such Internet venues, some readers of such Web sites or blogs may view the camper as a representative or spokesperson of the camp. In light of this possibility, our camp requires, as a condition of participation in the camp, that campers observe the following guidelines when referring to the camp, its programs or activities, its campers, and/or employees, in a blog or on a Web site.

1. Campers are to be respectful in all communications and blogs related to or referencing the camp, its employees, and other campers.
2. Campers must not use obscenities, profanity, or vulgar language.
3. Campers must not use blogs or personal Web sites to disparage the camp, other campers, or employees of the camp.
4. Campers must not use blogs or personal Web sites to harass, bully, or intimidate other campers or employees of the camp. Behaviors that constitute harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, comments that are derogatory with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, color, or disability; sexually suggestive, humiliating, or demeaning comments; and threats to stalk, haze, or physically injure another person.
5. Campers must not use blogs or personal Web sites to discuss engaging in conduct that is prohibited by camp policies, including, but not limited to, the use of alcohol and drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, and bullying.
6. Campers must not post any photos portraying obscene, profane or vulgar behavior.
7. Campers must not post photos of another camper without his/her permission.

Any camper found to be in violation of any portion of this Social Networking and Blogging Policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

I have read and understand the Cyber-Policy. I am willing to follow the policy for the wellbeing of camp, myself, and camp community.

Camper Signature

Parent Signature

Comments:

Information for Parents & Campers: Keeping Campers and Camps Safe

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS for CAMPERS

As a camper using the internet, it is important to educate yourself about the risks associated with online activity and to have concrete ways to stay safe. i-SAFE America, www.isafe.org, a nonprofit foundation dedicated to Internet safety education for youth, outlines "The 4 Rs" of Internet safety.

1. Recognize techniques used by online predators to deceive.
2. Refuse requests for personal information.
3. Respond assertively if you are ever in an uncomfortable position online. Exit the program, turn off the computer, tell a trusted friend, or call the police.
4. Report any suspicious or dangerous contact that makes you feel uncomfortable.

The following are precautions to take every time you are on the web.

- Protect your identifying information (name, sex, age, address, school, teams). It only takes a little information for a predator to identify you.
- Create a username and online profile that is generic and anonymous.
- Know how to exit an inappropriate Web site.
- Guard your pictures. You never know who may be looking at them.
- Keep in mind that chatroom "friends" are not always whom they say they are.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS for PARENTS

Most teens are online chatting with peers. Unfortunately, there is an associated risk to our children with the potential of predators, cyber-bullying, harassment. The following are strategies to help keep their children safe by arming them and you against the threats posed by social networking sites. These helpful suggestions were provided by Wiredsafety.org.

- Personal information stays personal.
- Keep the computer in a family room, kitchen, or living room, not in your child's bedroom. Knowing you are watching, kids are less likely to put themselves in risky situations, and you can safely oversee what's going on.
- Learn enough about computers so you can enjoy them together with your kids.
- Watch your children when they're online and see where they go.
- Make sure that your children feel comfortable coming to you with questions.
- Keep kids out of chatrooms unless they are monitored.
- Discuss these rules and risks with your children.
- Get to know their "online friends" just as you get to know their other friends.
- Warn them that people may not be what they seem to be. Predators often pose as children to gain our children's trust.