



## **Preparing Your Child for Camp**

### **A Guide for Parents and Guardians**

Dear Camp Families,

As we prepare to welcome your child to camp, we are committed to ensuring that Pilgrim Lodge remains a place where every child feels respected, included, and able to be their authentic self while at camp. Here is some information for you with strategies to prepare your child for camp.

#### **Be Prepared for Diverse Identities and Experiences**

Campers arrive with a wide range of experiences and perspectives. In today's world, some may be more aware of current events than others. Our goal is to create an environment rooted in kindness, connection, and belonging for everyone.

We ask families to help prepare campers by having a simple conversation before camp:

- Treat everyone with kindness and respect
- Avoid asking personal questions about someone's background or family
- Understand that some topics are private
- Speak with a Dean, Counselor or staff member if something feels uncomfortable

At camp, we have clear expectations:

- No camper should feel singled out based on race, identity, language, appearance or any other personal factor
- Humor or behavior that could make others uncomfortable will be addressed
- When sensitive topics arise, adults will gently guide respectful, age-appropriate conversations

Our Deans, Counselors and staff are trained to support campers, respond to concerns, and help maintain a positive, inclusive environment focused on friendship, play, and growth.

#### **Getting Ready**

As you help your child prepare for camp, there are some great ways to help them feel confident. As you talk about their time away, use positive phrases like, "I love you," "You're going to have a great time," and "What a fun place to make new friends!"

Share with your child that you are excited for them to have their camp experience away from home. If they are worried about being homesick, you can let them know that homesickness is normal and that they can let a Counselor know that they are having a difficult time. Counselors are prepared to support them. Review your plans for pick-up at the end of the session so that they know what to expect. Do not talk to your child about how much you'll miss them. Do not tell your child that they can call home or that you'll pick them up early. These messages can distract them from being fully immersed in the camp environment or plan for an exit strategy before they even get to camp. At camp, we hope that they can trust the adults present to support them.

Pack for camp with your child. Your camper will feel more prepared and comfortable knowing they have what they need. If you think they will have a great week, your confidence will instill confidence in them!

### **Disconnecting from Devices**

If your child is accustomed to spending time using a cell phone or other device with screens, consider putting limits on screen time before camp. Helping your child adjust to less screen time before camp will make the transition to camp less difficult.

### **Communication**

Campers can send mail from camp, but they are not allowed to email or make calls. Consider sending them to camp with materials to write letters and addresses for people to whom they may want to send mail.

A great way to support your child at camp is to send mail or leave notes that you have written at a note station when you drop-off your child at camp. Keep your writing positive and do not emphasize how much you miss your child as worrying about you or home may create anxiety while they are at camp.

Consider mailing letters before your child leaves home as it can take time for mail to arrive at camp. (Please do not send food). Address the envelope as follows:

Pilgrim Lodge  
Attn: Camper's Name  
103 Pilgrim Lodge Lane  
West Gardiner, ME 04345

You can also send emails through your Ultra Camp/Registration Account as follows:

1. [Log-in to your UltraCamp Account](#)
2. Look for the three horizontal lines in the top left corner
3. Select Message Center
4. Select Email a camper
5. Purchase Email "Blocks" (one "block" contains 5 emails) (\$5 / block)

If you have concerns about how your camper is doing while at Pilgrim Lodge, you can reach out to us at [info@pilgrimlodge.org](mailto:info@pilgrimlodge.org) or 207-724-3200 and we can provide you with an update. If there is an emergency at home while your child is with us, you can call 207-458-8219 (emergencies only). If you call for any purpose, please leave us a message. We don't always answer the phone because we may be attending to the needs of campers at camp! If your camper is consistently expressing to the adults at camp that they are having a difficult time, the Camp Director will call you to share information and discuss strategies with you for how to support your child.

**If you would like to see photos of your child while they are at camp**, we periodically post pictures of our activities. Photos are only accessible to adults with an UltraCamp log-in. While we will post photos regularly, our staff are focused on what's most important—our campers and running camp—so photos may not be posted daily or at the same time each day.

1. [Log-in to your UltraCamp Account](#)

2. Look for the three horizontal lines in the top left corner
3. Select Photo Gallery
4. Select the year for the season of camp you would like to view.
5. Select the camper who is at camp this week

**Download Cost:** 1 Photo - \$1.00, Entire Album (wait until the end of the session) - \$10.00  
(You can always view without purchasing!)

### **Behavior Expectations**

To create an environment where campers get the most from their experience while focusing on safety as our top priority, we ask that you review our Camper Agreement with your child:

To the best of my ability, I agree to bring my openness, curiosity, unique gifts and authentic self to camp. I will seek to follow the schedule, participate in camp activities, and challenge myself to try new things.

I agree to seek assistance and help from counselors, deans or staff on behalf of myself or others should a situation arise with which support is needed.

I agree to treat others at camp with respect. When disagreements or conflicts arise, I understand that Pilgrim Lodge uses strategies to help campers address and repair harm.

I agree to participate, to the best of my ability, in creating a community at camp and working together to address disagreements or conflicts.

### **I understand that the following behaviors could result in me being sent home from camp:**

- Bullying, hazing, threatening another, or use of derogatory language or slurs,
- fighting, hitting, biting,
- threats of self-harm,
- stealing, destruction of or intrusion into another's property, or vandalism of camp property,
- defying a Counselor, Dean or staff member,
- refusal to eat,
- wandering from program areas,
- sexual activity,
- unauthorized possession or use of cell phones,
- possession or use of weapons or fireworks,
- possession, use or distribution of tobacco products, alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, misuse and distribution of prescription or non-prescription medication or use of inhalants.

**Thank you for partnering with us to set your child up for success and to create a camp community where every child belongs!**

**info@pilgrimlodge.org, 207-724-3200**