

## Homesickness

*Even if your daughter has been to camp, please read!*

Homesickness is very real and can be experienced by a camper away from home for the first time or a camper who has lots of experience spending nights away from home!

We ask parents to be mindful of the reality of homesickness and consider if your child is ready to be away from you for five days and four nights.

Things to help discern if your child is ready for this experience:

### Signs your daughter may not be ready for sleep away camp:

- Your daughter has not experienced sleepovers away from home or relatives, or she has experienced them but does not enjoy them.
- Your daughter is not able to adjust to new social situations independently.
- When you vacation with your daughter she has trouble adjusting to a new environment.
- Your daughter is hesitant about coming to camp but is agreeable because she knows you want her to go.

### Signs your daughter is ready for sleep away camp:

- Your daughter can take care of her own personal hygiene
- Your daughter is pushing you to go away to camp.
- Your daughter has had successful sleepovers away from home.
- Your child has experience with someone other than her parents successfully managing bedtime.
- Your daughter can successfully navigate new situations, environments and people.
- Your daughter is interested in trying and learning new things.

### Other considerations:

Even though your daughter may have been to camp several times, she may experience homesickness for the first time!

We have noticed that older campers often have difficulty being away from their phones and social media.

Phones, electronic devices, including Apple watches are not permitted at camp. We recommend setting limits for use prior to camp so your daughter becomes comfortable with her phone for an extended period of time.

Sudden disconnection from these devices can lead to anxiety and difficulty engaging in activities and with others.

- Counselors and counselors in training (CITs) are not equipped to manage ongoing homesickness.
- A camper may experience homesickness and is able to be redirected by positive reinforcement, a snack or sitting quietly for a short period.
- If homesickness continues beyond these measures the counselors and CITs are encouraged to bring the camper to the health hut.
- Health Hut staff will also encourage the camper with positive redirection, a snack, a rest for one full activity rotation (45 minutes). Most often, the camper is able to rejoin her cabin mates and enjoy camp.
- If a camper is unable to return to her cabin and engage in camp, we will call the parents with the camper so you can offer encouragement. Sometimes, that one connection will be what the camper needs and they will be able to return to their group's activities.
- If the camper is still unable to rejoin her group, or rejoins but returns to the health hut soon after, we will encourage a return to her group for the second time.
- If the camper is not willing to rejoin, parents will be called and the camper will be sent home.

It is important to note the nurses cannot manage campers with persistent homesickness that impedes their ability to participate meaningfully in camp activities. Our primary responsibilities are to ensure campers with medical needs receive the care they need to stay healthy while they are away from home and to be available to assess and manage any health concerns or crises that may arise during camp.

While we encourage all campers to participate and enjoy the camp experience, we are unable to repeatedly accommodate a homesick child in our health hut when our multiple attempts to redirect them have been unsuccessful.

Should you need to be in touch with Camp Mattakeesett please email: [nurse mattakeesett@gmail.com](mailto:nurse mattakeesett@gmail.com) or Mattakeesett@gmail.com.