



Homesickness at Camp

It is very common for campers to experience homesickness, even if they are returning campers and have stayed away from home before! When a camper is preoccupied with missing home while they are at camp, our goal is to help them overcome this obstacle and enjoy the rest of their week while feeling confident about how they moved through it.

What to Know about Homesickness:

- At times, homesickness presents with physical symptoms (headache, stomachache, vomiting). Our counselors and Health Center staff are aware of this and will work to distinguish between physical sickness and homesickness.
- It may be helpful to set expectations and discuss homesickness with your camper prior to their arrival at camp so that it is not a surprise if it surfaces at camp.
- We find that speaking on the phone with parents/guardians can make the camper's homesickness worse, but we know that you know your children better than we do. As such, we are happy to arrange a phone call in this situation if that is your desire.
- We rarely ask a parent to come and pick their child up because of homesickness. Homesick campers are absolutely welcome to stay at camp! We are very confident that our staff can help a child work through difficult moments of homesickness and turn their week into a great experience at camp.

Homesick Camper Protocol:

1. A camper's cabin counselor is typically the first person to become aware that a camper is feeling homesick.
 - The counselor will talk with the camper to understand what is going on and ensure there are no safety concerns causing the camper to want to leave camp and return home.
 - Our counselors use methods such as "distract and delay" to help a camper move through moments of homesickness.

A counselor might say, "I know this is hard. Do you think we can talk about it more at lunch? I don't want you to miss out on the zipline because you're feeling sad. Do you think you could try to push it out of your mind until we walk to the Dining Hall later?" This process might be repeated throughout the day to accumulate enough evidence to show the camper how they are already overcoming it.

2. If the homesickness persists despite counselor interventions and consumes the camper and their experience, a director will become involved.
 - The director will speak with the counselor and camper to gain an understanding of the situation.
 - The director will call the camper's parents/guardians to inform them of the situation and ask how they would like to proceed.
3. At this point, the decision of the next step is placed in the hands of the parents/guardians.
 - If desired, a call can be arranged between the camper and their parents/guardians.
 - A camper can remain at camp, and we will help them to work through moments of homesickness when they arise.
 - We can also arrange an early pick-up with the parent/guardian.
4. If the decision is made for the camper to remain at camp, their counselors and/or a camp director will continue to monitor and check in with the camper. We are happy to keep the parent/guardian apprised of the situation.