



# Ajawah Family Handbook

[www.ajawah.org](http://www.ajawah.org)

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## Welcome!

We feel honored that you have chosen Camp Ajawah for your child's summer experience and look forward to sharing with you the values and traditions that have been, and continue to be, the foundation of our camp family.

Camp Ajawah is proud to have been serving youth and adults on the shores of Linwood Lake near Wyoming since 1929. For years, our staff have been committed to providing fun and safe experiences for youth of all ages in a beautiful outdoor setting. Attending summer camp is a very exciting time for campers and parents, and it is natural for both to be a bit anxious about the camper leaving the comforts of home, adopting new routines, and meeting new people. With regards to this, we would like to familiarize you and your camper with our procedures to minimize that "first-day anxiety." This guide was designed as a reference tool for you and your camper. Please read through it to acquaint yourself with information that you will want to know about summer camp.

This document undergoes occasional changes. You can always find the most up to date version at [www.ajawah.org](http://www.ajawah.org)

## Mission & Purpose

### Mission Statement

We value the place and the spirit that is Ajawah in the role of nurturing the growth of whole and happy people. We strive to build positive self-esteem, self-confidence and independence through wilderness experience, while gaining knowledge and appreciation of the out-of-doors.

We promote fun, friendship and cooperation while respecting differences within a diverse community.

We believe in developing a relationship with a God who teaches how to love and be loved.

### Camp Ajawah's Purpose

Since its founding in 1922, Camp Ajawah's purpose has been:

To nurture the growth of children

In their independence and self confidence;

In the knowledge and appreciation of nature;

In the ability to get along with others and to respect their differences;

In knowing how to love and be loved;

In a relationship with God

## Diversity and Inclusion

We welcome campers of all backgrounds, races, religions, gender identities, and gender expressions; and we strive to create an inclusive and equitable environment for all of our campers and staff. We cherish diversity and want to make sure ALL feel authentically at-home at Camp Ajawah. We honor and respect every individual's preferred pronouns and ask that our campers do the same. Please contact us if you have a perspective on your camper that may help us support your camper better while they are at camp (e.g. what tools will set your neuro-divergent camper up for success, what your transgender camper needs to feel at home, etc.). We are committed to working with campers and their families to deliver a supportive and inclusive experience this summer!

## Introductions

### Contact Information

Girls Camp Director:  
Mindy Meier  
mindy@ajawah.org

Camp Ajawah  
21600 Zodiac St NE  
Wyoming, MN 55092  
651-462-5720

Boys Camp Director:  
Paul Blakely  
paul@ajawah.org

Email can always be sent through the contact page on our website: [www.ajawah.org](http://www.ajawah.org). You can also email the Camp Registrar at [ajawah@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:ajawah@wpc-mpls.org) with questions about registration, payments, financial assistance, cancellations, etc. The Registrar can also help connect you to the appropriate Camp Director or the Camp Medical Director with questions if needed.

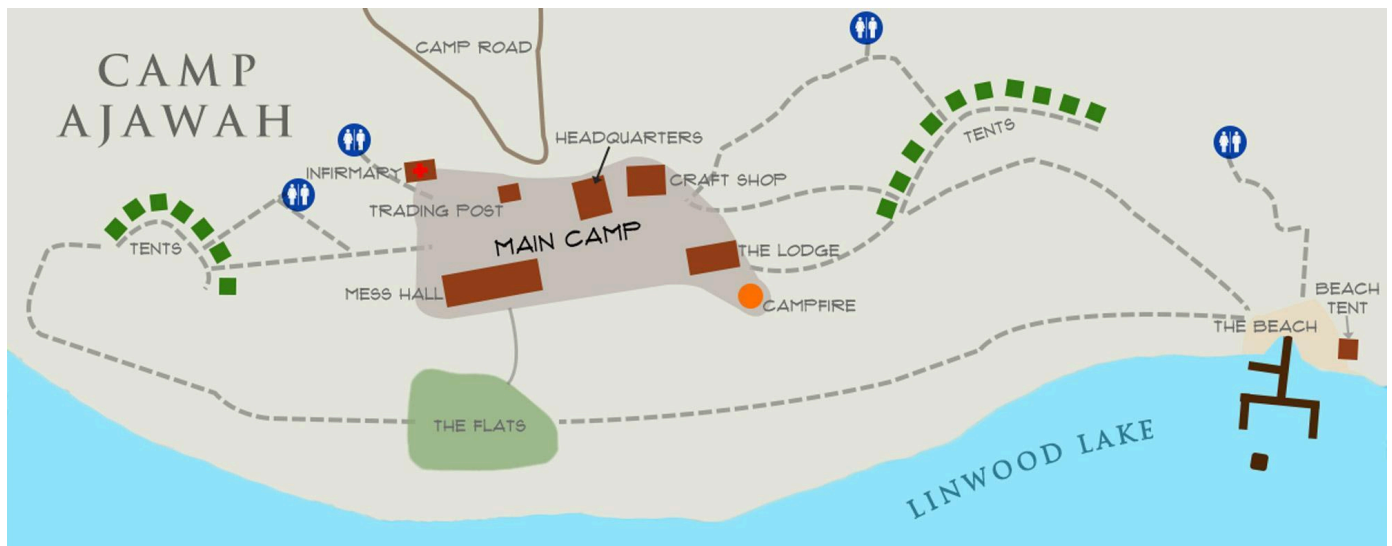
### Directions

From Interstate 35: Take exit number 135 for South-US 61/County Rd 22 (for Wyoming).

Go west on Viking Boulevard for 5.3 miles, then turn left onto Zodiac St NE (*watch for the sign for Martin Island - Linwood Lake access, as it will be shortly after this*).

You will turn into Camp Ajawah property about 0.3 miles down the road, on the right side.

### Map of Camp



## Preparing for Camp

### Registration and Forms

Registration can be completed online at [www.ajawah.org](http://www.ajawah.org). We will send confirmation once we have received your registration and deposit and verified that space is available in your desired session.

All forms should be completed at least 2-4 weeks before arrival at camp, and are available through your [Camp Management account](#).

### Tent Requests

Campers are assigned to their tent and unit based on age. Campers can request being placed in a tent with one or two friends if they are the same age and the request is made in advance. We try our best to honor such requests, but cannot guarantee these placements, particularly for groups of three or more campers or for campers of different ages. Some first-time campers request to be paired with a friend or sibling, but most returning campers know that wherever they're placed they'll have friends nearby.

## First and Last Day

### Transportation

Camp Ajawah does not provide transportation to and from camp. You are responsible for getting your child to and from camp on the first and last days of camp.

### Drop-Off

Please arrive at camp during the designated drop-off time. This will be communicated by the Camp Director prior to your session. Please call us if you will be arriving late.

Upon arrival, you will pull up to the Health Staff tent (before parking/exiting your car). Please make sure **all medications** (including over the counter, vitamins, and supplements) are ready to hand off to the Health Care team, as they are not allowed in tents. Once your camper has been cleared by the Health Care team, you can park and head to the check-in table, where the Camp Director and Registrar will make sure all paperwork and payment is complete, including money for Trading Post (\$20 recommended per two week session, \$10 for one week, unused funds will be returned at the end of the session). Once these two steps are completed, you can bring your camper and their things to their assigned tent and accompany them to the beach for their swim test (if they have their most recent swim lesson card, they can bring that as well).

### Pick-up

Final Camp Ceremonies will be the evening of the last night of camp. The Camp Directors will provide exact details about times in their pre-camp communications.

## After Camp

Mail received at camp after your camper has completed their session will be returned to the sender. Packages received after your camper has completed their session will be brought to Westminster Church after the session has ended, and will be disposed of if not picked up within a reasonable time.

Lost and Found is shown to campers regularly, and will be displayed in the main camp on the last night of camp. Any unclaimed items after a camp session has ended will be brought to Westminster Church. Unclaimed items will be donated or disposed of if not picked up within a reasonable time.

## Packing List

The quantities listed are just a suggestion. You know your camper best. Send the appropriate clothing for 13 days, less for a the optional Boys2 one -week session. **There is no laundry available.** A plastic tub or trunk is great for packing items (optional), it will keep them dry. It should not be taller than 20 inches, as it must slide under the cots. A small crate/plastic bin, or set of shelves, works well for a nightstand, and for storage of odds and ends and personal items. Do not send packages of water bottles, these contribute to litter at camp.

Please **DO NOT bring** electronics of any kind (including cellular phones, music players or portable game systems), weapons (real or play), expensive items, or any food items.

<b>Clothing</b> Shorts (5) Long sleeved/flannel type shirts (2) Sweatshirts (2-3) Jeans, pants (2-3) T-shirts, tank tops (1 per day) Undergarments Pajamas (or shorts and top to sleep in) 1 pair sandals/flip flops 1 sturdy pair of shoes/running shoes Pair of old shoes to get wet/dirty Socks (several pair), including 1 warm Bathing suit (or 2 or 3, they stay wet) Hat (1 or 2) Bandanna(s) (optional) Rain gear (coat or poncho, boots) Girls Camp - A special outfit/sundress for "RITZ" dinner on 2nd to last night of camp! <b>Bedding</b> Old sheet for mattress cover Sleeping bag or sheets and blanket for cot Pillow, pillowcase(s) Mosquito net for cot (see below)  Laundry Bag	<b>Hygiene</b> Toothbrush and toothpaste Comb and brush Bath towels, washcloths Soap Shampoo Shower/sink caddy (ice cream bucket) Deodorant Hair ties Feminine care (tampons, pads) Sunscreen Mosquito spray (lots!) Mosquito after bite lotion (calamine or itch sticks) <b>Gear</b> Beach towels (2 or 3) Blanket for campfire Ground cloth (tarp) Water bottle (labeled with name) Flashlight and batteries 1 duffle bag or pack for overnights Stationery, pens, stamps Books, coloring for rest hour/beach Sports gear, if desired. (Baseball glove, fishing gear.) Jackknife* Scout handbooks for Scouts
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*\*A small pocket knife is allowed for scout activities if your camper has attended safety training or has their knife safety scouting badge.*



*This is an example of the mosquito netting needed. It can be found at Dick's, Amazon, REI or other sporting goods stores.*

## Life at Camp

Campers will experience a variety of activities during their camp session. Our camp staff aim to encourage campers' creativity, skill development, and understanding of the world around them. They will experience dirt, mud, bugs, plants, and various types of weather—but camp will go on. Our staff are trained to recognize and avoid unsafe situations. However, if your child has a specific reaction (allergies, fears, etc.) to any camp elements; be sure to indicate this in their health information.

Our day usually starts around 8am, with lights out at 10pm. Activities are announced by a bugle call. They have swimming, arts and crafts, canoeing, outdoor skills, camp games and bonding time with each other daily. There is down time each day for rest as well, so bringing a book, magazine or other quiet activities is a good idea! We end each day with songs around a campfire.

## Living arrangements

Campers live in open-air canvas tents, sleeping on cots with mosquito nets. Tents typically house 4-6 campers of similar age. Tents are grouped into units, by age, with consistent counselors assigned to each unit.

## Overnights and activities outside of camp

Some activities call for us to take campers outside of camp property (e.g., hiking, rock climbing, canoe trips, etc.) The older units may participate in an off-site overnight. Campers learn basic camping skills in addition to having an opportunity to do something new and challenging. Overnights happen rain or shine. We certainly watch the weather and bring groups in at first sign of a severe storm, but groups remain at their campsites if it's lightly raining. Some of the best memories happen in the rain!

## Scouting

Ajawah began as a Boy Scout Camp and continues to enjoy an active scouting program. Ajawah is sponsored by Troop 33, Troop 100 and Cub Scout Pack 33 of the Northern Star Council, so campers in Scouts BSA programs are offered opportunities to work on earning scout ranks or badges, but are not required to do so while at camp. Campers are not required to be part of Scouts BSA to attend Camp Ajawah.

## Food

Meals are served family style, with all campers participating in setting the table, serving and clean-up. If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, we work to offer substitutions. We do not make modifications for food preferences. Special medical food concerns or needs including food allergies (e.g., gluten or lactose intolerant or nuts) and preferences (e.g., vegan, vegetarian, etc.) should be brought to our attention PRIOR to arrival at camp. If your child has a severe allergy or dietary restriction, contact the camp directors to discuss if Camp Ajawah is properly equipped to manage it.

Camp Ajawah cannot guarantee campers or staff will not come in contact with foods they may be allergic to. Because we eat family style and have cookouts, it is our expectation that by sending your child to camp you are saying your child has knowledge of their diet and can manage their food choices.

## Trading Post

Our camp store is called the Trading Post, and is open daily after dinner. Campers are allowed one sweet treat per day. They can also buy bug spray, sunscreen, stamps, toothbrushes and other necessities.

## Being Away from Home

### Homesickness

Often, homesickness lasts only until the camper becomes adjusted to the camp schedule. Our staff members are trained to aid campers in becoming adjusted as quickly as possible. However, if you suspect your camper may experience some homesickness, you can help his or her transition by saying goodbye promptly during the first day of camp. For many campers, a two week session at Ajawah will be the longest time they've ever been away from home. The challenge can be significant for both kids and their parents. Ajawah counselors and staff are very experienced in coaching campers through their experience and we believe that overcoming the challenge of homesickness can be a hugely positive experience.

### Mail

Mail is extremely important to campers. Writing to your camper can make a world of difference. When writing mail, please keep your letters cheerful, and avoid mentioning missing your camper or describing things going on at home that may trigger homesickness.

Mail should be sent to: Camper Name  
Camp Ajawah  
21600 Zodiac Street NE  
Wyoming MN 55092

Please allow approximately four days for mail to travel in either direction. Even express mail takes up to three days to arrive, so please plan accordingly. If you send any correspondence via overnight or other priority mail services, please do not require a signature, as there is not always someone in Headquarters when mail/packages are dropped off, so requiring a signature may delay delivery.

PLEASE DO NOT PACK FOOD OR SEND FOOD CARE PACKAGES! Having food in the tents attracts raccoons, mice, chipmunks and other animals into your camper's living area. Please respect camp policy and do not send packages of food to your camper. All packages will be opened with staff present. Any food sent to camp will be confiscated and disposed of, and will not be returned to the sender. Please make sure friends and family are aware of this policy. Please do not pack water bottles as they contribute to litter on the camp property.

Your camper will be encouraged, but not required, to write home. Don't be surprised if you do not get many letters, though, as camp is a very busy place! **Pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelopes or postcards are a great way to make it easier for campers to write home.**

### Phoning Home

We do not allow campers to make or receive phone calls on the Ajawah phone. If you would like to hear how your camper is doing, you may call and request an update and we can arrange a time for a counselor or the camp director to get back to you. **Campers may not bring cell phones to camp.** If they are found, they will be confiscated and will be available for pickup at Headquarters on the last night. In a family emergency situation, arrangements can be made to connect with your child.

### Visiting

There are no visiting times for families during camp. Seeing family members can trigger homesickness for your son/daughter and other campers. **Please do not show up at camp unannounced.** It is very disruptive to camp



programming and can feel uncomfortable for campers to see unrecognized people on camp property. If you need to drop something off or your child needs to leave for any period of time, please contact the Camp Director to make arrangements.

## Camper Expectations

### Code of Conduct

Given the long relationship between Ajawah and Scouting, our code of conduct is based on many of the components of The Scout Law. Campers and staff are expected to respect the rights and dignity of each other and their surroundings when they are participating in our programs.

**TRUSTWORTHINESS.** Tell the truth. Keep your promises. Stealing will not be tolerated.

**HELPFULNESS.** Help fellow campers and staff when asked.

**FRIENDLINESS.** Be a friend to everyone, even (especially) people who are different from you. Create an inclusive environment for all your fellow campers.

**COURTEOUSNESS.** Be polite. Use good manners.

**KINDNESS.** Treat others as you want to be treated. Violence (or threats of violence) toward yourself or others will not be tolerated. Bullying, offensive language and gestures will not be tolerated.

**OBEDIENCE.** Follow all Camp Ajawah rules. Report to and stay within the program area to which you are assigned at all times. Do not leave Ajawah property unless part of an approved group.

**THRIFTINESS.** Do not be wasteful. Use time, food, supplies, and natural resources wisely.

**BRAVERY.** Face difficult situations even when you feel afraid. Do what you think is right despite what others might be doing or saying.

**CLEANLINESS.** Pick up after yourself. Leave Ajawah as you found it. Keep your body and mind clean. No alcohol, drugs or tobacco (including vaping products) are allowed on camp property.

**REVERENCE.** Respect the beliefs of others (political, religious, social, cultural, etc). Respect others' personal space (including not touching another person or their belongings without their permission, not entering another's tent without permission). Romantic relationships are not allowed.

### Violations Policy

**Level 1:** Arguing, swearing, refusing to listen, being inappropriate, minor personal space issues.

First incident occurs:

- Immediate consequence: time out, removal from activity or loss of privileges, followed by debrief.

Second incident occurs:

- Immediate consequence: time out, removal from activity or loss of privileges, followed by debrief.
- Meeting with the Unit Leader and Camp Director. Brainstorm possible solutions.
- Phone call home to update parents to work on solutions together.

Third incident occurs:

- Immediate consequence: time out, removal from activity or loss of privileges, followed by debrief.
- Phone call home by Camp Director and likely removal from camp.

**Level 2:** Violence (i.e. hurting others, self or property); stealing or threatening the safety of others. Behavior causing significant detrimental impact to the camp experience. Leaving camp without authorization. Any instance:

- Meeting with the Unit Leader and Camp Director to brainstorm possible solutions.
- Phone call home to parents/guardians and to work on solutions.
- Consequences could include behavior contract, possible removal from camp.

In situations where no staff was witness to a concern brought forward, Ajawah staff will make a good faith effort to determine what happened and whether a violation of the code of conduct occurred. Determination of whether specific conduct constitutes a violation of the code of conduct may be a judgment call.

If a camper is sent home due to violations of our behavioral policy, no refunds will be given.

## Health and Safety

Storm shelters are available in the basement of the Mess Hall in case of severe weather. Emergency procedures are practiced by all campers at the start of camp.

Daily medical care is provided by the Camp Health Provider in accordance with standing orders from our Camp Medical Director. First aid and CPR certified medical staff are available 24 hours a day in the Infirmary. Physician consultation is available 24 hours a day. First aid kits are kept in all program areas as well as in the campers' living areas, and are also carried on hikes and campouts.

## Illness and Injury

If your camper shows any symptoms of illness (including common cold symptoms) before coming to camp, or is exposed to a contagious disease in the 21 days before camp, please notify us. A child who is sick before camp begins should be kept home for his/her own sake, and for that of the other campers. To prevent spreading an illness, a camper that has a communicable disease or head lice may not attend camp until the condition has been fully treated and can no longer be transmitted to others.

For non-emergency medical treatment, campers are taken to the infirmary, where minor first aid can be administered. Despite our diligence on infection prevention, given close living quarters, it is quite common for minor illnesses to spread through camp.

If a camper is diagnosed as having a significant communicable disease or head lice while at camp, the camper will be discreetly removed from camp activities and parents will be asked to pick up their camper as soon as possible. Given limited infirmary space, we cannot keep sick campers in the infirmary for extended periods of time, such as overnight or a full day, nor can we isolate a child with a contagious disease. Campers also feel better faster when they can rest and recover at home, which means they ultimately can enjoy more of their camp experience! Therefore, we may ask that parents of ill campers care for their child at home and see their family doctor if needed.

In the event of a more serious injury or illness, parents or emergency contacts are called to make arrangements for treatment or pick-up. If you cannot transport your child yourself, or in case of emergency, we will transport your child to and from the hospital or doctor's office. If at camp, we use the Fairview facility in Wyoming, MN. If out of camp, we will use the closest appropriate medical facility. Any expenses incurred (doctor or hospital fees, medications, etc.) will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Camp Ajawah staff will make every attempt to create a positive experience for your camper throughout their session(s). However, if we are unable to accommodate a camper who is ill, injured, or has significant behavioral issues, parents/guardians must have a firm plan prepared to arrange for their camper's pickup. Emergency contacts should be listed on the health form. The parents/guardians, emergency contact, and/or other authorized person(s) must be available to pick up their camper if deemed necessary by the camp staff.

## COVID-19

Camp Ajawah will continue to abide by guidelines set forth by the CDC and MDH for managing potential and confirmed cases of COVID-19. Rapid testing may be performed in the infirmary for suspected cases. For general purposes, masking will not be required during camp. However your child may be asked to wear a mask if they appear to be getting ill, while we evaluate their symptoms.

## **Chronic Medical Conditions and Camp**

Please note that Camp Ajawah is a physically active, highly independent camp setting. Please contact us prior to camp if your child has a chronic medical condition, so we know if Camp Ajawah can safely accommodate their needs. This includes significant mental health history, especially history of self harm or threats of self harm.

Campers with chronic diseases should ensure that their condition is in good control prior to coming to camp, and have a written plan for how to handle complications, should they occur (asthma flare, blood sugar control issues, etc). If a camper's chronic disease cannot be kept in control at camp, they may need to return home. Once their condition is back in control, they may be able to come back to camp.

Because some medications take 4-6 weeks to reach a therapeutic level, please speak with a director if your child's medication has been altered within two months of the start of camp. Additionally, ADHD medications can have the same benefits for your camper in the camp community as it does in school. Helping your child focus on activities or diminish impulsive behavior in social situations could give the same advantage to succeed at camp.

## **Medications**

For the safety of all campers, all medications, vitamins, or supplements must be kept in the Infirmary. Medications, vitamins or supplements are NOT allowed in the cabins except emergency medications pre-approved by the Camp Director or Camp Health Practitioner (i.e., inhalers, epipens). Medications may only be taken in the presence of the Infirmary staff and are typically given after breakfast, lunch, dinner and before bedtime. All medications should be in their original containers, and placed in a bag labeled with your camper's legal name. Medications with dose and time they are taken must be listed on the camper's health form. Please double check that you have enough medication for the entire session at camp.

The Infirmary staff may administer other nonprescription medications if needed by your camper during their stay, provided you have not indicated an allergy to such medications on the Medical Form. You do not need to send over the counter medications if they are not expected to be taken on a daily basis, as these are stocked in the infirmary.

## **Vaccinations**

While we do not require any specific vaccines for attendance, we strongly recommend that all campers and staff are up to date on all CDC recommended vaccines.

## **Camp Mental Health Statement**

Camp Ajawah staff will support, to the best of our ability, every camper's social and emotional wellbeing so they may have a successful session at camp. We aspire to create a camp community that is safe, inclusive and welcoming. There may be situations that arise where, despite our best efforts, continuing at camp is not in the best interest of the camper or the camp community as a whole.

We recognize that campers come to us with a range of backgrounds, home experiences and history, and that this may be reflected in behavioral situations, as well as social and emotional health while at camp. We will work through situations that arise within our level of training, and connect with parents/guardians as appropriate, depending on the scope of the situation and the individual camper's needs.

Parents/guardians of our campers should be aware of the possibility that certain behaviors or situations may present themselves while at camp, including—homesickness, behavioral and emotional struggles, isolation, bullying, anxiety, or depression. In more serious situations, we may become aware of suicidal thoughts, self-harm,

eating disorders, or other mental health struggles and harmful behaviors. Our staff that work directly with campers are trained to understand and manage behavioral, emotional and mental health situations that could arise during camp. As our front-line staff, they are also trained to bring in additional support (i.e. Camp Health Provider, Camp Director, etc.) when a situation becomes harmful to the individual, the group, or when it cannot be resolved.

Although our staff demonstrate a great deal of expertise in youth development and exhibit exceptional compassion, we are not mental health professionals or social workers. Should a camper need support that goes beyond what we can safely provide, or should a situation escalate to a level where we can no longer safely find resolution for the camper, we will contact a parent/guardian and advise them that their camper can no longer stay at camp and must be picked up as soon as possible.

### **Final Suggestions/Tips to set your camper up for success!**

Talk to your camper about the importance of making new friends, being inclusive, and interacting openly with everyone. The opportunity to meet and get to know people from different locations, backgrounds and with different life experiences is one of the joys of summer camp!

Review the suggested packing list, and make a list of realistic additional items your camper would want. Reminder no electronics or food are allowed!

Review all policies and expectations with your camper prior to arrival, so they are familiar with behavior expectations as well as consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Make sure you have a back-up plan for who camp staff can contact, and who could pick up your camper, should a situation arise that requires this.

Teach your child how to address an envelope, make sure they have addresses for friends and family, and/or provide pre-addressed/pre-stamped envelopes.

Putting letters in the mail for your camper a few days before the session starts allows them to get mail earlier in the session! Tell your camper how proud you are of them and how much fun you assume they are having! *Please note that with mail delivery times, it is quite common for parents to get a homesick letter 4-5 days after camp starts. By the time you get this letter, your camper has almost always settled in and adjusted and is having the time of their life. If your son/daughter is struggling more than the typical camper we will be in contact with you.*

Tips on preventing homesickness:

- Refrain from suggesting that your camper might become homesick while in his or her presence or talking about how much you will miss them. Instead, talk about how much fun they are going to have and how excited you are for them.
- Do not tell your child they can call home if they are feeling sad or missing home. Phone calls usually intensify homesick feelings and increase the camper's potential for leaving camp early. Please know that we will contact you if your child is having significant difficulties adjusting to camp, becomes ill or gets injured.
- Please do not tell your son/daughter that if they are homesick that you will just come get them. This sets campers up for more difficulty getting through homesickness.

Don't be surprised if there are some emotional goodbyes the last day - our campers form deep bonds with each other during their time at camp. Send some paper/a notebook along so they can exchange contact information to keep in touch outside of camp!