



**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

**At Camp Hollymont we are challenging staff and campers to do a digital detox and to focus on the people, places, and opportunities in front of them. Fostering independence and promoting healthy lifestyle choices are worthy camp goals. We need your help as we encourage your camper to reduce her emotional dependence on technology.**

**The continued health and safety of our camp community requires careful attention to other aspects of technology and social media interactions. Please make sure that your camper understands our policies regarding cell phones, social networking, and exchanging contact information with their counselors. As always we invite you to call us if you have any questions or concerns about any of these issues.**

## **Cell Phones**

**We have a “no cell phone” policy at camp. This policy includes smart watches that act as phones and any other means of accessing social media. Aside from the fact that the items are expensive and can get lost, stolen, or damaged, there are fundamental problems with campers having these items at camp. Lessons of independence and self-sufficiency are hindered. Opportunities to re-create oneself by getting away from friends and social dynamics at home and creating new friends and social connections are lost. Trust between campers and their parents/guardians and the camp staff is diminished.**

**When your camper comes to camp, you both make a leap of faith by temporarily transferring her primary care to the Hollymont staff. This is one of the growth-producing, yet challenging aspects of camp. If your camper has constant cell phone contact with you, then she misses the opportunity to deal with problems on her own. As she reaches out to other caring adults, she grows and learns, little by little, to solve some of her own challenges. We believe this emerging independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp. Cell phones at camp send the message to your camper that you haven't truly come to peace with the notion of her being away from you and in our care.**

**We agree to tell you if your camper is experiencing a challenge in her adjustment to camp. You can help by talking with your camper before she leaves for Hollymont and**

telling her that there is always someone she can reach out to, whether it be her counselor, her head counselor, a director, or camp nurse. We are all here to help, but if you don't trust us, your camper certainly won't!

## Digital Cameras

Another drawback to having cell phones at camp is that most of them have built-in cameras. Some camps around the country have reported that their campers have secretly taken photographs of other campers or staff during changing or showering times and later uploaded those images onto the Internet.

To lessen the possibility of this happening at Hollymont, we have decided to ban personal possession of digital cameras and GoPro cameras. Your camper may bring a disposable film camera. Please review the pictures when they are developed and destroy any inappropriate pictures. We take hundreds of photographs during the summer, which are available for viewing on the Bunk1 website (password required). Please help us maintain a safe environment by explaining this to your camper.

Please Note: Any camper who takes a compromising photograph of another camper or staff member and uploads it onto the Internet or makes it public in any way may be subject to dismissal from camp or may not be allowed to return. If the law is broken, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

## Campers & Staff After Camp

Our pledge is to put your camper in the company of the most trustworthy and capable young adults we can hire—counselors who are well suited to the task of caring for campers. The effort we put into screening and selecting our staff is part of that pledge.

We are not in a position to recommend our staff as babysitters, nannies, or camper companions outside of camp. Our staff works with your camper in the context of a visible, well-scrutinized community of co-workers and campers. Supervision occurs on many levels and we are all guided by clear, firm policies regarding behavior. In general we discourage our staff from having contact with your camper after camp without having direct parental or guardian approval and supervision. We hire our staff for the camp season. *We cannot supervise nor do we take responsibility for staff behavior during the off-season.*

We also recognize that campers and staff develop close, trusting relationships with one another at camp and that these relationships are healthy, wholesome and beneficial to campers and staff alike. We are aware your camper may naturally want to keep in touch with her favorite counselors after camp. We will provide each camper with the mailing address of her counselor(s) and cluster mates. While snail mail is not the norm these days, we encourage you to monitor any letters that arrive from staff members.

Please Note: Our official policy is to forbid the exchange of contact information through electronic medium (i.e. Internet, cell phone, etc.) between campers and our staff, whether paid or volunteer without the express permission of the camper's parent or legal guardian.

With the Internet as it is, we know campers can “find” their counselors if they persist. Our recommendation is simply for you as parents/guardians to be aware of your camper’s online activities and supervise them as you would any other aspect of her life in your home. Likewise, if you as the parent or legal guardian wish your camper to exchange such information with a camp staff member, that is, of course, your right. However, by doing so, you should understand that *you accept full responsibility for overseeing whatever contact occurs as a result.*

We see many positive, exciting ways for girls to enjoy the benefits of the Internet and other technologies. As advocates for children, we want to work with you to keep those experiences safe, healthy, and positive. We request that you discuss Hollymont’s technology and social media policies with your camper as they are the basis for the interactions we have with you and your camper.

Sincerely,

Emily Levy  
Camp Director

Missy Roper  
Executive Director

Gail Mashburn  
Administrative Director