

Your Child and Online Activity

Camp Mack has a commitment to the safe and healthy development of your child, not only during time spent at camp, but also throughout the year. This commitment gets more difficult to meet as technology expands. Part of this commitment is setting up communication boundaries for staff and volunteers as they work with your child. Setting up a communication boundary line has become more difficult due to the reality of the internet.

- The internet is a great tool to maintain connections, but those connections may not always be healthy.
- It is a public space, but is often viewed as private.
- It is a tool that is basically unsupervised and often isolated which can lead to a lowering of inhibitions.

We have developed electronic communication policies for all staff workers (paid and volunteer – including Counselors and Team Leaders). We request Team Leaders /Counselors not to contact your child unless we have your expressed permission on the attached permission form. We feel it is your right and responsibility to determine which adults have contact with your child. We view the role our staff workers have with your child as a professional leadership relationship. Camp Mack is not responsible for the behavior of leaders off season.

With children spending so much time online today we feel it is imperative that parents be knowledgeable of their children's online activities. Even though some children may balk at this involvement, we know that children listen to parents. We would like to share with you and your child the information that we have gathered as well as sharing some resources that are available to you for further information.

- 1) Become familiar with your child's computer use and the internet.
- 2) Leaving your child unsupervised for a long period of time on the computer may lead to activities that are risky, over-stimulating or inappropriate. Internet use often occurs in a child's room. This isolation can lead to immature and impulsive actions, especially when there is a false assumption that the internet is private.
- 3) Set rules and guidelines for your child's computer and internet use. This will show your child that you care and may prevent risky behaviors on their part.
- 4) Become knowledgeable of the downside of the internet and inform your child of your concerns and how you will be overseeing their use of the internet. We recommend the following three actions.
 - A) Check the browser history of the computer your child is using. Microsoft Explorer, AOL, and Netscape all have history tabs or "my favorite places" that show you the site your child has visited. A survey in Boston in 2005 revealed that 70% of all boys age 14-18 spend from between 3 and 6 hours a week on pornographic sites without their parent's knowledge¹.
 - B) Check down-loaded files by checking the directory that files are loaded into.
 - C) Ask your child about their internet presence, their online social networking profile. There is a wide variety of these sites available today. If they have one, look it up or review it with them.

from Bob Ditters document "Regarding Your Child and Their Online Activity"