

Walden Cell Phone and Screens Policy

At Camp Walden we have established a policy of no cell phones and no screens for our campers. We have come by this policy through a thoughtful and deliberate evaluation of the issues and believe that our policy is in the best interest of your camper's health, safety and overall camp experience.

Cell Phones

Campers are not allowed to have cell phones at Walden. Aside from the fact that cell phones are expensive and can get lost or stolen and that the physical camp environment is not kind to such items, there is another fundamental problem with campers having cell phones at camp, and that is trust. When children come to camp they—and you—are making a leap of faith, temporarily transferring their primary care from you as their parents to us and their counselors. This is one of the growth-producing, yet challenging aspects of camp. As children learn to trust other caring adults, they grow and learn, little by little, to solve some of their own challenges. We believe this emerging independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp. It is one important way your child develops greater resilience. Contacting you by phone essentially means they have not made this transition. It prevents us from getting to problems that may arise and addressing them quickly. Sending a cell phone to camp is like saying to your child that you as the parent haven't truly come to peace with the notion of them being in our care.

We agree to tell you if your child is experiencing a challenge their adjustment to camp. *You can help* by talking with you child *before they leave for camp* and telling them that there is always someone they can reach out to, whether it is their counselor, a trusted activity leader, the Unit Programmer or even the Director or Camp Health Officer. We are all here to help, but if you don't trust us your children certainly won't.

Another drawback of many cell phones these days is the built-in camera feature. It has happened at some camps around the country that children have secretly taken digital 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 we have decided to *ban all digital cameras and suggest that if your child wants pictures from camp, that they bring a disposable film camera.*

Hand Held Video Games

For some campers, the prospect of spending their time at camp without their video game device can be daunting. We do appreciate the anxiety your camper may feel but we consider it not unlike other potential anxieties that may be associated with them being away from home. We have a number of strategies to help campers cope and thrive while at camp and we will help your camper overcome any anxieties they may have. We have found that once at camp, kids are preoccupied by all that is going on and forget about playing their game. We believe it is important that all our campers have a respite from screens while at camp to fully appreciate and be involved in what we offer at Walden.