



# Parent Manual

# Table of Contents

<b>Welcome to Camp Quest Texas!</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What is Camp Quest?</b>	<b>3</b>
Our Mission	3
Our Vision	3
Our Values	3
Our Goals	3
Camp Quest's History	4
Camp Quest Today	5
Camp Quest Texas	5
<b>Packing List</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Camp Arrival and Departure</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Health Information</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Medications</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Camp food</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Homesickness</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Rules For Rational Living At Camp Quest</b>	<b>14</b>
Be Safe And Healthy!	14
Be Respectful And Kind!	14
Be Responsible!	15
<b>Behavior Policy</b>	<b>15</b>
Behavior Management as an Extension of Camp Quest's Organizational Goals:	15
Discipline: Uncommon, Consistent, Calm, Quick	16
Setting Campers Up for Success: Set Expectations and Boundaries Early	16
Steps to address problematic behavior:	16
TRAIN:	16
TELL	16
REMIND	16
ACTION	17
IMPLEMENT	17
NEXT LEVEL	18
Grounds for immediate dismissal	18
<b>Camp Quest Texas Song</b>	<b>19</b>

# Welcome to Camp Quest Texas!

The volunteers of Camp Quest Texas are busy preparing the best camp experience possible. This manual is designed to give you critical information to help you and your camper be prepared and make the most out of CQTX.

We hope this manual provides you with all the information you will need to be prepared but should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Camp Director at [campdirector@campquesttexas.org](mailto:campdirector@campquesttexas.org).

## What is Camp Quest?

### Our Mission

Camp Quest provides an educational adventure shaped by fun, friends, and freethought, featuring science, natural wonder, and humanist values.

*Values we teach: integrity, empathy, creativity, critical thinking, and community.*

### Our Vision

Camp Quest envisions a world in which children grow up exploring, thinking for themselves, connecting with their communities, and acting to make the most of life for themselves and others.

### Our Values

These principles guide our operations.

- **Grassroots innovation** – empowering local leaders, exploring new approaches, sharing what works
- **Practicality** – taking action, creating solutions, providing hands-on support
- **Courage** – speaking out, challenging ourselves and others, audaciously advancing our mission
- **Integrity** – standing up, engaging honestly, living our principles
- **Cooperation** – sharing ideas, working together, cultivating community
- **Empiricism** – testing ideas, building from evidence, rejecting what doesn't work
- **Fun!**

### Our Goals

Through our programs, we seek to:

- **Develop supportive communities** for freethinking families
- **Foster curiosity, scientific inquiry, and critical thinking** in young people to enable them to draw their own conclusions
- **Cultivate reason and empathy** as foundations of an ethical, productive and fulfilling life
- **Provide a safe and fun environment** for personal and social growth
- **Encourage exploration** of the natural world
- **Promote open dialogue** that is marked by challenging each other's ideas while treating each other with respect
- **Raise awareness** of positive contributions made by atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers, and other nontheistic people to our society
- **Demonstrate** atheism and humanism as positive, family-friendly worldviews

## Camp Quest's History

Camp Quest was founded in 1996 by a small group of dedicated and energetic people with the Free Inquiry Group of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. Edwin and Helen Kagin, Ed McAndrews, Elizabeth Oldiges, Nikki Orlemann, and David Scheidt served as members of the original Camp Quest planning committee, with Vern Uchtman as chairperson.

The idea to offer a summer camp program designed for children from atheist, agnostic, humanist, and other freethinking families originated partially in response to the Boy Scouts of America's increasing enforcement of their policy requiring boys to profess a belief in God. It became clear that children from nontheistic families needed their own place to belong and enjoy the summer camp experience.

The first Camp Quest session, serving 20 campers ages 8-12, was held in Boone County, Kentucky in August of 1996. After meeting in Kentucky for two years, Camp Quest relocated to Ohio in 1998.

Edwin and Helen Kagin served as Camp Directors for the first ten years of the original Camp Quest camp, retiring at the end of the 2005 camp session. Edwin was an Eagle Scout who became an atheist later in life. Edwin was a lawyer, and served as the National Legal Director for American Atheists until his death in 2014.

Helen was an anesthesiologist. In 2010, in memory of Helen, Camp Quest, Inc. established the Helen Kagin Memorial Campership Fund to provide financial aid to families who need assistance paying to register their children for camp.

As the original Camp Quest grew, it expanded to serve teenagers ages 13-17 as well as children 8-12. Camp Quest Smoky Mountains was the first new Camp Quest to launch in 2002. By summer of 2006 there were a total of six Camp Quests, including new locations in California, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ontario.

As the number of Camp Quests increased, a need developed for coordination among the independently operated programs. In 2007 Camp Quest, Inc., the operator of the original Camp Quest, expanded its mission to also serve as an umbrella organization supporting all of the Camp Quest camps in North America. In 2008, with the generous support of a grant from the Institute for Humanist Studies, Camp Quest, Inc. hired its first employee as Executive Director, Amanda Metskas.

## Camp Quest Today

Operating out of Columbus, Ohio, today Camp Quest National provides services to 12 licensed affiliates located throughout the United States. While most affiliates conduct a single week of camp each summer, some locations run two weeks of camp each year.

In the summer of 2014, our affiliates served over 1,500 campers at week-long sessions. Every year, that number grows.

It is a very exciting time to be part of the Camp Quest movement. Our organization is growing and professionalizing rapidly, and demand for our camps continues to grow. Several potential new locations are in the process of building the structures necessary to become Camp Quest affiliates.

Finally, while driven by our philosophical desire to accommodate all youth, Camp Quest remains a small nonprofit in which factors such as supervision ratios, host camp facilities, financial resources, or available medical support may practically limit our Affiliates' ability to accommodate every potential camper. We encourage parents to contact us to find out whether Camp Quest can provide a positive and safe camp experience for their child. Indeed, parent-leader communication before camp is most essential for ensuring that Camp Quest is prepared to support your camper in achieving a positive, empowering summer camp experience.

## Camp Quest Texas

Camp Quest Texas began in 2009; started by three passionate women who wanted to bring the Camp Quest experience to the Lone Star State. Amie Parsons, Whitney Ford, and Erin Taylor started the first camp with support from Marybeth Gill, Kevin and Cathy Smith, and other members of the North Texas Church of Freethought. Camp Quest Texas is now an independent non-profit corporation in the state of Texas that is a licensed affiliate of Camp Quest, Inc. serving families from all over the state. Camp Quest Texas began as a one-day weekend camp before becoming a one-week overnight camp. Each year CQTX has continued to grow and is looking to expand to a second week of camp in the coming years.

CQTX has been held at various host campsites throughout the years. We consider ourselves lucky to have found YMCA Camp Ray Bean. We have worked with YMCA staff for several years and we are pleased with the mutual respect offered by both parties.

# Packing List

\*\*\*PLEASE MAKE SURE TO LABEL ALL ITEMS WITH YOUR CAMPER'S NAME\*\*\*

## Equipment

TWO water bottles WITH handle/hook and/or Camelback (to be carried with camper all day)  
Small backpack or slingback (this is a MUST for the camper to carry belongings to/from activities)  
Flashlight  
Extra Batteries  
Permanent Marker(s) to sign camp shirts  
Hat with a wide brim  
Sunglasses  
Cooling Towel (ie. Frogg Togg)

Optional:

Camera  
Swimming goggles  
Small battery powered fan

## Bedding

Twin fitted sheet  
Twin flat sheet  
Blanket or sleeping bag (Do not send a sleeping bag rated for winter/below 30 Degrees)  
Pillow w/ pillowcase

## Clothing

9 Shirts/tank tops  
9 shorts  
10 underwear \*extras may be needed  
10 socks \*extras often needed  
2 pair of jeans/long pants (required for some activities)  
1 Sweatshirt/light jacket  
1 Long sleeve shirt  
2 Pajamas or other sleepwear  
Rain Gear (poncho and/or light raincoat)  
1-2 Swimsuits (campers wear this under clothes some days, no string bikinis)  
Sturdy Mesh dirty clothes bag that will accommodate all of the camper's dirty clothes

Outfit for the Dance: Some campers cosplay or wear costumes, some go formal, some go as-is, they have autonomy and all are accepted wearing what makes them feel great.

Outfits/supplies for Talent Show if they choose to perform.

## Personal Hygiene

Bathroom Tote (That is waterproof and ventilated and adequately holds their needed supplies. Campers bring in and OUT all their bathroom supplies. Totes designed for Dorm environment are ideal)

Toothbrush with holder

Toothpaste

Soap (if bar soap have a container for it)

Shampoo

Conditioner

Hair products \*heavily perfumed may attract more bugs

Hair ties/headbands

Brush and/or comb

Washcloth or Loofah

Deodorant

Optional:

Lip Balm with SPF Protection

Make-up

Wet Wipes \*\* Let camper know we do NOT flush these

Tampon/pads

Lotion or After Sun Lotion

## Feet

Flip Flops or Shower shoes for shower

Tennis shoes/closed toe shoes \*\* This is a requirement for some activities

No flip flops around camp, we prefer sturdy sandals with a heel strap (like Teva, chaco, or Keen)

## Extra

Sunscreen \*\* At LEAST two bottles. Be aware spray sunscreen runs out significantly faster than the lotion so send more if that is a sunscreen of choice.

Insect Repellent (two bottles - spray is better than cream, make sure it contains DEET or another EPA-registered repellent)

2-3 Towels - At least one for Swimming and one for Shower (2 if they use one for their hair)

Journal and pen

Games to share in Cabin

Books and/or magazines to read

\*Do not send overly bulky, ornate, or expensive books or games. This is camp and ALL items sent will return as though they went camping too.

Optional:

Some campers enjoy decorating their cabin/bed area - please be judicious in types of decoration - nothing obscene/scary/or likely to leave marks on camp property

## Camper Mail:

Parents, we will have boxes out at check-in where you can leave daily mail for your camper. Label with the Camper's name, cabin, and day to deliver. NO Food, PLEASE. We will not have regular postal delivery or pickup. Email or call camp leadership if you have to get a vital message to us or your camper.

## Other

*Cleanest Cabin award is kind of a big deal :)*

Please be mindful of what luggage your camper chooses. If everything can be stored under the bed, it goes a long way in making the cabin look better. They will be sharing half of that under-bed space with a camper in the other bunk. Large bulky chests do not fit under the beds and pose tripping hazards.

*Organization:*

If you have a first-time camper or one that is less organized, help them out ahead of time. Organize outfits into ziplock bags and label them. Have them be involved in packing. Many a camper has sworn they were out of socks only to find their socks in a hidden pocket of the suitcase on the last morning. Some campers arrive and unpack every last thing just to see what was packed for them. Remind younger campers to save their special outfits for the occasions they were packed for.

*Hygiene:*

If you have a younger and/or new camper, begin practicing the daily activities of camp: Can they do ALL of their morning routine: shower, dress, fix hair (including detangling long hair), brush teeth in a reasonable time without constant prodding? Do they know how to hang their wet towel to dry and not put it on their bed? Can they apply most of their sunscreen, especially on their face? Can your camper sweep and use a dustpan and generally pick up after themselves? Can they make their bed? These responsibilities await them at Camp Quest :) Give them a heads up.

*A word about water bottles:*

Think about your camper's abilities and needs when it comes to water bottles, they need to be able to fill it themselves and, most importantly, actually drink from it ALL DAY. Can they manage to open and close it properly? Is it sturdy? Can they carry it on their body the majority of the time? Both too big and too small are not good for them; they have numerous opportunities to refill bottles. If you choose to use a Camelbak/ backpack water system, can they manage to use it, fill it, clean it, and troubleshoot leaks? Cabins have a small fridge and they fill water bottles and put one in the fridge and take one with them so they switch out for the cold one whenever back in the cabin or they can fill it in the dining hall. Please do not send "misting" water bottles.

LABEL EVERYTHING. Yes, EVERYTHING.

## Please, NO.

NO PHONES. Absolutely no cellphones at camp - (or iPads/tablets/laptops, etc.) If it connects to the internet/cell towers: NO. It will be confiscated and parents will be responsible for picking it up at the end of camp. Parents please support us in this and be the first checkpoint before arrival to their cabin. Please.

NO FOOD or CANDY

NO WATER BOTTLES WITH 'MISTING' FEATURE

NO JEWELRY/VALUABLES

NO PETS

NO MATERIALS INAPPROPRIATE FOR CAMPERS OF ANY AGE

NO MEDICATIONS (even OTC) packed with CAMPER - all go to Medical staff as directed.

\*NO DRUGS/ALCOHOL/TOBACCO/VAPE PRODUCTS

\*NO WEAPONS, FIREARMS, or KNIVES

\*NO FIREWORKS

\*Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, weapons, and physical altercations are conditions for immediate dismissal from camp.



# Driving Directions to Camp Quest Texas

## at YMCA Camp Ray Bean on Possum Kingdom Lake

### about 85 miles West of Ft. Worth

The campground's postal address **3000 Park Rd 36, Graford, TX 76449**, and since your GPS and Google Maps can probably get you there, that's where these driving directions will start. But the campground itself is about another 1.5 miles from there and does not have a postal address – see the map.)

From the 3000 Park Rd 36, Graford, TX 76449 address, continue south on Park Rd 36 for about another mile and veer left at the fork onto an unnamed road.

Continue on that road for about a quarter mile and then turn sharp left.

Follow that road north and then west for about four tenths of a mile to YMCA Camp Ray Bean.

The GPS coordinates for the actual campground are **32.867760n 98.477883w**, and if you wish, you can enter that into Google Maps to see the campground.

#### A couple of notes:

YMCA Camp Ray Bean is owned by YMCA Camp Grady Spruce where we had camp a couple years ago, so if you Google search for Ray Bean, it may keep coming up with the parent camp, Grady Spruce. The two camps are about a mile apart.

When you bring your camper to camp, you will probably want to enter the Possum Kingdom Lake area from the east on Park Rd 36 which splits off Hwy 16 about 3 miles NE of the 3000 Park Rd 36 address.

After you drop off your camper and go north on Park Rd 36 to return home, you will come to a right turn at the intersection of Hwy 2951. If you turn left onto Hwy 2951 at that intersection, you will find a number of local restaurants along the next couple of miles of the highway at all price levels.



# Camp Arrival and Departure

Below you will find the procedure for Camp check-in and check-out.

Please have all gear clearly labeled with the camper name.

In order to keep traffic jams to a minimum, we will have cars line up along the right side of the road leading into camp. We will allow a certain number of vehicles into the camp at a time. Once a vehicle exits camp, we will allow another to enter.

Vehicles will exit along the same road as they enter so please do not block the road while waiting.

We will have over 100 campers to process in two hours. Because of that, we ask that farewells be reasonably brief.

(please see map attachment)

LAC = Lynn Activity Center - the big building visible as you enter camp

## **Arrival at camp** [Sunday 2pm - 4pm]:

- Wait in car until directed to LAC (car line along right-side of road)
- Park and enter LAC with camper(s), medications, and mail [NOT luggage]
  - station #1 : camper info confirmed - emergency contact info and authorized pickup persons (these will be the only persons allowed to take camper home)
  - station #2 : cabin assignment - receive camper name badge and cabin color
  - station #3 : medical information confirmed - allergies and medications - turn in medicine and forms
  - station #4 : lice check (Please check at home prior to arrival)
  - station #5 : Cabin Area Leaders- anything camp should know to take the best care of the camper
  - station #6 : photo of camper w/ visible name
  - station #7 : camper mail drop-off
- Farewells
  - Campers move to the Dining Hall in small groups
  - Parents drive gear to cabins and drop off in front of cabin. In case of rain place inside cabin.
- Campers will meet their Cabin Counselors and cabinmates in the Dining Hall

## **Departure from camp** [Saturday 10:30am - 11:30am]:

- Campers will be mingling in/near LAC (farewells and shirt signing)
- Wait in car until directed to LAC (car line along right-side of road)
- Park and enter LAC
  - station #1 : confirm as authorized pick up person - camper will be called over to join
  - station #2 : medical - pick up any unused medication
  - station #3 : lost and found - check for any items belonging to camper
- Campers will be called over - please do not enter the camper area
- Return to vehicle and drive to cabin
- Verify camper with cabin counselor
- Load luggage
- Farewell and depart camp



## Health Information

The health and well-being of your child is our biggest priority. We are committed to providing your child with outstanding medical care. The Clinic at camp is staffed 24 hours a day by trained emergency medical personnel.

Our Camp Staff will contact you if any of the following happens:

- Your child spends the night in the clinic for any reason.
- Your child has a schedule change due to an illness or injury.
- Your child requires off-site care (i.e. stitches, X-ray, dental care).
- Your child repeatedly visits the clinic with the same complaint.

Please understand that our Camp Staff cannot call every parent of every camper who comes to the clinic. Scrapes, insect bites, ice packs, and headaches are routine. We often let tired campers rest and rehydrate in the clinic. Our Camp Staff will care for your child as if they were their own.

Off Site Medical Care: Should your camper require any off site medical care, we will make every effort to contact you. In the case of an emergency, we will not delay care if we cannot reach you. Parents are financially responsible for care that takes place off site.

Sunscreen and Hygiene: We believe that campers have the best experience when both camp and parents are partners in educating children about their sunscreen and hygiene routine. Please communicate with your camper about your expectations i.e. that they will apply sunscreen, brush their teeth, change their underwear, shower regularly etc.

## Medications

Campers are not allowed to keep ANY medication in their cabin. Medications brought to camp will be stored in the clinic and administered by clinic staff. Please bring all medication to the clinic table on Opening Day.

- **RX Medications:** The medication must be in the original packaging with pharmacy label for dosing instructions with the camper's name. Our Camp Staff CANNOT accept or administer any medications that are not properly labeled as this violates the law. This includes pills, liquids, inhalers and injectables.
- **OTC Medications:** Campers who take over the counter meds for occasional symptomatic relief need to bring these medications with them to camp. OTC medication should also be brought to camp in its original packaging and dropped off at the clinic table on Opening Day.
- **Asthma Inhalers:** Rescue inhalers may be kept with the camper as long as they are listed on the camper's medication list and camp volunteers are aware. These may also be kept in the clinic to minimize the risk of loss and allow Camp Staff to keep track of camper usage and take the necessary steps to improve respiratory health if the camper uses an inhaler more than usual.
- **EpiPens:** Please check the expiration date prior to arriving at camp. It is strongly recommended that EpiPens be kept in the clinic. However, they may be kept with the camper as long as they are listed on the camper's medication list and camp volunteers are aware.

### IMPORTANT

Camp is not the time to experiment with new medications or the time to put your camper on a "medication vacation". This is especially true for campers with ADD/ADHD, we have found that because of the structured camp schedule, these campers have a better experience if they stay on their medication while at camp.

# Camp food

Three hearty and well-balanced meals are served each day. Each meal has fresh fruit and a salad bar is available for lunch and dinner time meals. Cabins sit together, eat “family style”, and each camper will have the opportunity of setting up and cleaning up the meals at some point during their stay. A daily snack is also provided between lunch and dinner.

# Homesickness

To give you some idea of how your camper will be supported, the following is the training staff receive regarding homesickness.

Let campers know feelings of homesickness are normal and to be expected. Some campers are going to get homesick. We have found that letting them talk about their feelings and writing a letter to their parents is usually the best approach. Engaging campers in other fun activities can also be very effective to distract them from homesickness. Typically, campers are most homesick at bedtime. Encouraging them to get some sleep and see how they feel the next day can be a good approach. Let campers know they should talk with you again at lunchtime if they are still homesick. If a camper approaches you about homesickness and later appears to be doing fine, do not bring up the homesickness with the camper; wait for them to approach you about it. If you bring it up, that will make the camper remember missing home and likely cause homesickness to resume.

If you're having trouble, contact your Cabin Area Lead or Assistant Director. Do not allow campers to use your phone to call home.

Steps for Reducing Homesickness:

1. Orient and Welcome. Before your campers arrive, study their names. Use their names. Maintain close contact with campers during the first day. You are their substitute parent.
2. Integrate. Immediately integrating your campers into camp gives them a good first impression of camp, gets them pumped up, and gives them a sense of control. Organize bonding games, create cabin chants, tell campers about the schedule, and get them excited about activities.
3. Provide Social Support. Normalize their experience and empathize with their feelings. Don't let a homesick camper monopolize your time but do show you care. Encourage homesick campers to get involved in all aspects of camp life. Pair them with veteran campers.
4. Promote a Connection with Home. Write letters! Make lists of what you'll be excited to tell your family about. (NEVER promise to let campers call home or use phone calls to bargain or reward).
5. Assess Coping. “Tell me all the things you think or do to help make things better when you're feeling homesick.” Help campers cope in adaptive and realistic ways.
6. Analyze Coping. The most effective way to cope is to adjust to things you can't change (such as the actual length of camp) and change what you can (like whether you participate in activities or not).

7. **Teach Coping.** Doing something fun to forget about homesick feelings; doing something (writing a letter) to feel closer to home; talking with someone to help them feel better; thinking about the good side of things (activities, friends) to feel better; thinking that camp is actually pretty short to make time go by faster; trying not to think about home and loved ones to forget about homesickness; thinking about loved ones to figure out what they would say to help.
8. **Encourage & Follow-Up.** To prevent rumination, keep most of your conversations with homesick campers to a 15-minute maximum. Say “I’m certain that if you keep trying hard, you’ll be less homesick by this time tomorrow. Let’s check in then and see what worked the best. For now, let’s get going to the next activity.”

## Rules For Rational Living At Camp Quest

Here at Camp Quest, everyone works hard to choose behaviors that are **safe, healthy, responsible, respectful, and kind**. Our rules for rational living help us create a positive, fun, welcoming community environment.

### Be Safe And Healthy!

1. **Follow the Rule Of Three.** With the exception of bathrooming, campers must always be in the presence of at least two other people, campers or volunteers. A camper must **never** be alone (except in the bathroom) and must **never** be with only one other person, even if that person is a family member. The Rule Of Three may be satisfied by one or more persons being a reasonable distance away as long as they can see all other persons. This allows for two individuals to have a sensitive discussion while still maintaining safety. Campers must obtain permission to leave the group or cabin area without an adult.
2. **Run in the field!** Running inside is not a safe choice.
3. **Be alert of your surroundings.** There are things at camp that could potentially harm you like vehicles, poison ivy, and animals. If you notice something that might be unsafe, let other people know and make sure you tell a counselor!
4. **Report all injuries to a counselor, no matter how minor.**
5. **Take care of yourself!** Brush your teeth twice a day, wear shoes outside, drink lots of water, wear sunscreen and a hat, take showers, and wash your hands frequently. Your counselors are here to help you stay safe and healthy. Follow their instructions!

### Be Respectful And Kind!

6. **Show the Host Camp our love.** We are here as guests of our Host Camp and they are awesome! Let’s work together to leave our camp better than we found it!
7. **Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their beliefs.** Everybody is here to have a good time and learn from one another. While it is totally awesome to question and debate ideas using evidence, please treat everyone with kindness and respect, even if you disagree with their ideas.
8. **Respect other people’s feelings, property, and space.** Only enter other people’s cabins if you have a counselor’s permission. Clean up after yourself. Ask permission to borrow or use games, toys, and supplies, and return the items in good condition. Consider how your behaviors and choices impact other people. Pranks, even fun pranks, can unintentionally hurt

others. We are promoting a positive culture and pranks do not fit into that culture. Please refrain from pranks at camp. It's easy to get carried away and make a poor choice. Think before you act!

9. **Embrace others for who they are and make new friends.** At Camp Quest, we think it's amazing to be different and we want everyone to feel comfortable being themselves. This week we all have an incredible opportunity to learn about and befriend other people and find out what makes them special. Even if you have old friends at camp, take this opportunity to discover new friends too! It is human nature to fall into a pack mentality and exclude others so make an effort to be inclusive. If you are having trouble getting along with someone at camp, ask a counselor for help.

## Be Responsible!

10. **Help others make good choices.** If you see someone forgetting to follow a rule or making a poor choice, please help them out with a friendly reminder or conversation.
11. **Take care of your cabin.** Sharing a cabin is awesome, and it comes with important responsibilities. Take pride in keeping your cabin clean so people can safely move around. Keep all food out of the cabin and keep the doors closed to prevent bugs and animal visitors. Just be sure not to lock anybody inside a cabin!
12. **Think about your choices.** This week you will have many opportunities to make positive choices. Use reason and compassion to choose safe, responsible, healthy, respectful, and kind behaviors. If you aren't sure how to make a good choice in a situation, ask a counselor for help!

Finally, and most importantly.....**HAVE FUN!!!!**

## Behavior Policy

### Behavior Management as an Extension of Camp Quest's Organizational Goals:

Our approach to behavior management strives to uphold our organization's relevant overarching organizational goals:

- Develop supportive communities for freethinking families
- Foster curiosity, scientific inquiry, and critical thinking in young people to enable them to draw their own conclusions
- Cultivate reason and empathy as foundations of an ethical, productive, and fulfilling life
- Provide a safe and fun environment for personal and social growth
- Promote open dialogue that is marked by challenging each other's ideas while treating each other with respect
- Demonstrate atheism and humanism as positive, family-friendly worldviews

## Discipline: Uncommon, Consistent, Calm, Quick

- Uncommon: If you are constantly correcting minor behavior problems, it becomes very easy for children to tune out. Instead, choose your battles around safety and the impact to the camper and others.
- Consistent: Every volunteer should know the discipline procedure and follow through on any disciplinary interactions they have with campers. If rules are sporadically enforced, it is less likely they will be followed. At all stages of the disciplinary process, consequences must be enforced when rules are broken. No exceptions.
- Calm: Campers should never be penalized with anger or emotion. At all levels of the process of behavior management and discipline, volunteers should remain calm. Discipline should never be personal, vindictive, or pleasurable.
- Quick: When an unacceptable behavior rises to the level of intervention, that intervention should be implemented as quickly and matter-of-factly as possible.

## Setting Campers Up for Success: Set Expectations and Boundaries Early

We set our campers up for success when we introduce and discuss the rules in cabins the first night. Volunteers should aim to have campers identify the reasons for the rules and discuss what will happen if the rules are repeatedly violated. Volunteers should also discuss our system of consequences and answer any questions about what is expected. For most behaviors, especially in the first days of camp when campers are learning our expectations, problematic behaviors can be managed by reminding campers of the rules, giving the reasons for those rules, and allowing natural consequences to take effect.

Natural consequences are consequences that happen in response to a camper's behavior without any volunteer involvement. These consequences are imposed by nature, society, or another camper. Volunteers do not give a natural consequence, instead the consequence occurs by not interfering. Natural consequences are powerful and, for most campers, will be enough to prevent any further disciplinary action. For the small number of campers that will have to be formally disciplined, logical consequences will be necessary.

### Steps to address problematic behavior:

TRAIN:

TELL

Campers will be informed of camp rules and acceptable behaviors at the beginning of camp.

- All camp rules and cabin rules should be communicated to campers on the first day of camp.

REMIND

Remind the camper of the rule that was broken.



- This would be a verbal warning.
- All verbal warnings should involve brief conversations between volunteers and campers about behavior and a reminder of the rule that has been broken.
- Campers should be asked to identify the problematic behavior and reasons that behavior is not acceptable.
- The conversation should emphasize behaviors and their consequences, making positive choices, and the impact that behaviors have on the camper and others.
- If a behavior is occurring within a group, bring the entire group aside for a conversation.
- A verbal warning should occur out of earshot of other campers with the misbehaving individual(s).
- The volunteer should state “This is your verbal warning.”

## ACTION

Remind the camper of the rule and consequence of their continued behavior.

- Campers should be asked to identify the problematic behavior and reasons that behavior is not acceptable.
- The conversation should emphasize behaviors and their consequences, making positive choices, and the impact that behaviors have on the camper and others.
- The leader should make a clear statement about consequences. “If this behavior continues then you will have X consequences.”
- At this stage, the consequence will be a logically connected consequence that is a loss of privilege. For example: “If you continue to make the rest of the cabin late, then you will be the last camper in our cabin to select activities for tomorrow.”
- You should aim to communicate the behavior, concern, and consequences to other volunteers who frequently work with that camper (co-counselors, activity leaders, etc). At a minimum, the camper’s counselors should be informed of verbal warnings so they can identify whether the behavior continues and help determine whether it will be necessary to move the camper to the next stage of disciplinary intervention.

## IMPLEMENT

Remind the camper of the rule, implement the consequence of behavior, and inform the camper of the next consequence of their continued behavior.

At this stage, a camper has been told the rules, reminded of the rules, and informed of the consequences if the behavior continued. You must implement the action if a camper breaks the same rule or commits another related infraction.

Remind the camper of the rule and deliver the consequence that was identified.

- Campers should be asked to identify the problematic behavior and reasons that behavior is not acceptable.
- The conversation should emphasize behaviors and their consequences, making positive choices, and the impact that behaviors have on the camper and others.
- Further consequences should be different and more extreme than the original and will be determined in conjunction with the Cabin Area Lead or Assistant Director.

- The volunteer should make a clear statement about consequences. “If this behavior continues then you will have X consequences.”
- At this stage, the consequence will still be a logically connected consequence that is a loss of privilege.

For example: “If you continue to make the cabin late, then you will be the last camper at camp to select your activity for tomorrow.”

Note: All consequences must be actionable. Do not state a consequence that you are unable or unwilling to implement. Under no circumstances should physical harm or withholding of adequate food be used as a consequence (dessert is a privilege and may be withheld if relevant to the problematic behavior).

#### NEXT LEVEL

Contact the Cabin Area Lead or Assistant Director immediately and a written behavior contract will be made. Camper behavior will be monitored closely.

## Grounds for immediate dismissal

The following will be grounds for immediate camper dismissal at the discretion of the Camp Director:

- Any camper who engages in an act of physical aggression or violence.
- Any camper who engages in sexual activity or misconduct.
- Any camper that uses or is found in possession of prohibited items: illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping materials, weapons or fireworks.
- Any camper who otherwise endangers campers or staff while at camp.

## Camp Quest Texas Song

Oh, we're embarking on a quest, *(clap clap)*  
To find the jackalope! *(clap clap)*  
We know it's hot but we don't care,  
We're packed and ready to go.

With Santa by our side, *(clap clap)*  
We know we won't get lost. *(clap clap)*  
We don't mind the Texas heat,  
We'll sweat our butts right off!

So, Socrates hold on to your hat,  
We'll build you a rocket ship and strap it to your back.

I don't mind the worms and bugs,  
I hope you don't mind either; I filled your shoes with slugs.

So grab your arrows *(clap clap)*  
and jump into your boat. *(clap clap)*  
We made them this morning,  
Oh man, I hope they float.  
There's something in the air. *(clap clap)*  
The feeling is the best. *(clap clap)*  
I'm having fun with all my friends at wonderful  
CAMP QUEST!!!