Parent Survival Guide 2013
Required Reading for All New Camp Parents!

This guide was developed to answer some of the common questions and concerns that you may have. I encourage you to contact me if you have other questions that are not addressed in this package.

Sincerely,
Laura Hall, Camp Director
301-934-8799

Policies and Procedures:
1. **Medical** - These concerns and topics are addressed on the 2013 Medical Procedures Page. Please speak to the camp director prior to enrollment about any concerns.

2. **Staff** - I am often asked about the camp staff. The questions vary. “How is the staff screened?” “Some of the staff seems very young?” The real question is “Are these people going to take care of my child?” I am a parent and when I invite someone to be on staff, I am inviting them to be a part of my own children’s lives. In addition to deciding if I want a person around my little darlings, I screen the staff in a variety of formal ways:
   a. voluntary disclosure statement
   b. criminal background check
   c. interview and application process (references)
   d. Our International Staff have had a police check and interview before we even meet them.
   e. Our administrative team keeps our eyes and ears open to monitor the staff continuously during the summer. My family and I live on site all summer.
   f. Anyone who behaves in a manner that is not beneficial to our camp community will not remain with us.
   g. Many of our staff members are former campers who have a long history at CSC.

3. **Special Concerns** - I cannot stress enough how important it is for us to know about any stress that your child may be dealing with. If we are aware of a death in the family, divorce, bedwetting, past abuse, emotional difficulties, anxiety about attending camp etc., we can work with your child to help ensure that he/she has a positive camp experience. We are professionals and respect you and your child. All personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

4. **Non-Custodial Parents** - In the event that a child’s parent does not have custody, we must have legal documentation in order to prevent the parent from checking the child out of camp. Please speak to us if this situation applies to your child.

5. **Keeping in Touch** - We encourage you to send mail to your child while they are at camp. Be sure to label the package with the child’s name and cabin number.

   CAMPER’S NAME, Cabin #__ Camp St. Charles P.O. Box 99 Issue MD 20645.
You would be surprised how much camper mail is accidentally sent to the Registration Office! All children love to get packages at camp. Information about “Sealed with a Kiss” care packages are included in this mailing. I encourage you to limit packages to 2 per camp session. The campers have limited space to store items. Treats to share with the cabin are a nice idea.

As a general rule, we do not allow children to make or receive phone calls while at camp. We feel that camp can provide a wonderful opportunity for an increase in independence and self-sufficiency. Phone calls can interfere with that development. In certain circumstance, we make exceptions and may allow calls in extreme situations. Please speak to the camp director if you have concerns.

More and more parents have asked about sending cell phones to camp. There are many reasons that this is NOT permitted. First, we want your child to have some practice making independent decisions to help them grow as individuals. We do not want expensive phones to be lost, stolen or fall in the water. We don’t have many outlets in each cabin for charging phones. Many cell phones can access the internet and our staff would not be able to monitor the sites campers visited and who they communicate with. We are concerned that influences that are in opposition to our mission would be streaming in and distracting campers from the chance to form genuine friendships with others.

We have worked with Bunk1.com for several years. This service will allow you to see your child enjoying the camp experience. Photo gallery access is included in camp tuition. Digital pictures are taken daily. You can even send your child an e-mail message. Your child may reply IF you choose to send bunk reply stationary with your email message. Campers then write on the bunk reply form, we fax it to bunk1 and they e-mail it to you. More information about Bunk1.com services is included in this mailing and you can reach Bunk1.com through a link from the camp website. Parents will pay separately for emails and ordering photo prints, as in the past.

6. Homesickness - We treat homesickness very seriously. It is not uncommon for a child to experience some amount of homesickness while adjusting to a new setting. Our staff is trained to spot and treat homesickness. The staff will also make me aware of any homesickness cases that we are working with.

We will notify you if your child is having a difficult time. Please let us know if you receive a sad note from your child. We will discuss the situation and work out a plan to help your child to succeed. We have helped many children through difficult spells of homesickness. The success of “beating” homesickness is an amazing boost to self esteem and a monumental achievement!

It is not uncommon for parents to receive a “sad” note early on during of the first week of camp. Chances are that the child wrote that note when they were not quite sure about how this camp business was going to work out. You are welcome to call us for a little reassurance about how things are going.

Most of the treatment for homesickness involves helping campers to connect with friends and to keep busy. It is hard to be sad when you are cuddling a bunny in the nature area or swimming during free time. Parents can help their homesick camper by letting their camper know that they are aware of their struggle and are cheering them on.
Please do not make an “early pick up deal.” I am referring to a parent telling a child that if they don’t enjoy camp, they can be picked up early. This may cause a child to decide that they want to leave at the first hint of friction. It is understood that you as the parent have the right to pick up your child early from camp for any reason. Parents are welcome to call and check on their children at anytime. In the case of extreme homesickness, we may recommend an early pick up from camp. However, it is very rare that a child is too homesick to remain at camp. It is far more common that a parent may struggle with their child’s homesickness.

7. **Campsickness** - This section is especially for all of you first time camp moms and dads out there! As you read above, we are pros at helping children through homesickness. However, if you have anxiety about your child being away from home, you may unknowingly be transferring those feelings to your child. For example, I have witnessed a number of children who were off to a great start with camp and then…..they got a letter from home. A letter from mom or dad that said “the house is so quiet without you” “I miss you so much, I want to cry,” “You can come home early if you miss me too much.” All of these statements may actually make your child feel guilty about enjoying him/herself! I am sure that this was not the intention of any of these well-meaning parents. Last, but certainly not least, do not write to your child about how “the dog has been wandering around the house, crying and looking for you.” Ouch! I would be ready to go home, if I read that!

If your child is experiencing homesickness at camp, hang in there and communicate with us as often as you’d like. We want to help you and your child navigate any homesickness and finish camp feeling confident and empowered by their experience.

8. **Visiting Sunday** - We encourage you to bring a picnic lunch and spend the day with us. We kick off the visiting day festivities with Mass. All campers will meet their parents at the basketball court area. Families may then walk to the mass area. You are not required to stay for Mass but you are encouraged to join us. After the Mass, you may sign out for the afternoon and go out for a meal together or stay at camp to visit. **Before you leave you must sign your child out.** This usually takes place in the mess hall. I encourage you to speak with your child’s cabin and team counselors immediately after mass. The staff will be waiting at their cabins so that you can meet them and find out how your child is doing.

You may use the pool and dock while visiting camp. Guests may also make a donation to our chapel renovation fund and take a turn on the Giant Swing!! You will need to follow the same rules that the children follow.

Your child may need some clothes washed and you are welcome to take them out to a Laundromat. However, you will end up spending most of your visit at the Laundromat. Many parents bring their child to camp with one week’s worth of clothing and then swap the dirty clothes for a second week of clothing on the visiting day. Refer to the packing list for tips on preparing for camp.

**Visiting Times:** Parents may arrive at noon. Arriving prior to that time can be disruptive. **Please do not turn on to Stella Maris Drive prior to 11:45pm. The gate will be locked and you will be asked to return later if you arrive early.** For the safety
of our campers, no one may drive on to camp property until the children are safely out of the way. Parents should say goodbye by 5pm.

9. **Problems on Visiting Sunday** - For some parents, visiting Sunday can be a challenge. I will give you the heads up on some issues that may occur.
   a. **Sneak Attack Homesickness** (typically a few children per session have a case like this.) Imagine that your child who has been writing home about what a great time he/she is having, is crying and hanging on to the car when you are ready to leave! This is a very short lived type of homesickness but it can be difficult for parents to deal with. Here is the solution, find one of your child’s counselors or any member of staff to assist you. Look for bright yellow shirts! Avoid a long discussion about the issue; reassure your child and go. We will be happy to give you an update about how your child is doing once you get home. Nearly 100% of children who have this “sneak attack homesickness” are having a blast within minutes of their parents leaving. You can call camp from your cell phone after you’ve left.
   b. **Child is having some other problem** - I want to keep this section very general. This is the kind of situation where a child mentions a problem that they are having. The first plan of action should be to talk to camp staff. We can offer some insight about how the difficulties began and/or what action has already been taken. If you have concerns or if the concern involves a member of staff, please speak to me, the Assistant Director of any member of the Administrative team. We can put our heads together to find a solution to the problem that will reassure your child and teach him/her about working through difficulties to make sure that he/she has a great camp experience. Though we hope that every child will have a smooth camp experience, we like to view the occasional problem as a potential life lesson for the campers.

10. **Check-In Day** - Please mark the dates and times for check in on your calendar. All the Check In Days are Sundays. **Check in takes place from 12 noon until 3pm.** When you arrive at camp, you will be greeted at the main gate by a staff member, who will hand you information about check in and direct you to park on the field. Each parent will have the opportunity to speak with the camp director and the camp nurse during check in. At this time, we will also ensure that your medical forms are complete. We encourage you to **retain a copy of the health form** (which should be mailed to the Camp at least 2 weeks prior to camp) and **bring it to camp, just in case.** If we don’t have the form on file, we will be asking you to complete another long form and have the doctor fax us the physical information on Monday. No child may remain at camp without the completed health history, immunization records and physical, it is Maryland law.

11. **Check-Out Day and Leaving Camp** - All Campers must be signed out with a member of camp staff when leaving camp. **Check Out is always a Saturday and takes place from 10am until 12 pm for our 2 week session, check out is Sunday from 12pm-2pm for our mini session (one week) campers.** On Check-Out Day, you may sign your child out at their cabin. If your child is going to leave camp property with anyone other than a custodial parent or legal guardian, we must have a completed Child Custody Form
(enclosed) on file. This policy is in effect at all times, including Visiting Sundays, Check Out Days and any other time that someone may need to pick up your child. Adults who have permission to pick up your child, through the Child Custody Form, will be required to present photo identification.

12. Packing for Camp- Please be sure to follow the Camp Packing List (enclosed). Campers use trunks, not suitcases. We love Everything Summertime trunks (formerly C&N Footlockers), they are indestructible. You may purchase a trunk from Everything Summertime via the link on our website. You may use a plastic tote or other lockable container to store your child’s things. The trunks are kept at the foot or side of each camper bed and should be strong enough to survive being sat on and stepped on. Label everything clearly with your child’s full name. You’d be surprised how often a child fails to identify his or her own shirt, towel, etc. You may wish to purchase labels through Mabel’s labels via the link on our website. They design wonderful adhesive labels that will stick to tee shirt tags, flip flops, toothbrushes and just about any other camp gear. The labels even stay on through the laundry. I label my children’s things with Mabel’s Labels.

We do not allow CD players, iPods, cell phones, video games, gum, water guns, money, valuables (beloved toys, expensive Yu-gi-oh cards, etc) or weapons of any kind. We will take and hold any of these items and will return them to the parents on the last day of camp. Children do not need money at camp! (Majors, 12 and 13 year old campers, will be given $20 spending money when they arrive at King’s Dominion so please do not give them additional money.)

Please do not send expensive clothing or bedding to camp. Items that are brought to camp may be misplaced and are likely to get dirty. Send your old towels, old sheets, older clothing to camp. We will have a lost and found area at the flag pole and at each cabin during check out. Please check carefully before you leave camp.

I hope that this information sheet will help you and your child to prepare for your summer adventure with us at Camp St. Charles! Feel free to contact us with any further question, concerns or clarifications!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laura Hall, Camp Director</th>
<th>Sheri Belisle, Camp Registrar</th>
<th>ALL CAMPER MAIL:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>301-934-8799</td>
<td>Newburg MD 20664</td>
<td>P.O Box 99</td>
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<tr>
<td>240-233-3106</td>
<td>(240)523-9437 (fax)</td>
<td>Issue, MD 20645</td>
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<tr>
<td>(240)523-9437 (fax)</td>
<td>301-576-5944 (fax)</td>
<td>(include campers name and cabin number)</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:csclaurahall@gmail.com">csclaurahall@gmail.com</a></td>
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PHYSICAL LOCATION OF CAMP (for your GPS)
15375 Stella Maris Drive Newburg, MD