

### **WHAT IS A CAMP COUNSELOR?**

A camp counselor is a lot like being a parent. You will be living with, and be responsible for, a group of campers, their safety and their daily routine i.e. wake up, cabin clean up, meals, hygiene, rest hour and bed time. A camp counselor is on call 24 hours a day for the duration of the summer and is responsible for the emotional and physical well-being of their campers. At Blue Ridge we describe a camp counselor as:

1. A reassuring parent
2. A strict disciplinarian
3. A teacher
4. An advisor
5. An entertainer
6. A humorist in a crisis
7. An active listener
8. A lead/assistant activity coach
9. An idol
10. A comforter
11. Preventative & safety conscious
12. Follower of Camp rules/policies and procedures
13. Effective communicator
14. Flexible/adaptable when necessary
15. Ready to guide and support campers during moments of social adjustment
16. Someone who is trustworthy, loyal and honest
17. Someone who is professional, organized, punctual and shows a sense of pride in the success of their activity area
18. Someone who shares their knowledge and expertise
19. Someone who reports problems/concerns regarding camper safety and well being to the appropriate administrator immediately
20. Someone who reports damages/repairs immediately
21. Someone who is selfless

During the summer you will find that you are required to take each of the roles on daily. Each day will consist of different challenges when working with children and you will need to be flexible within each individual situation. For example, 10 minutes before you are due to have time off a camper comes to you in an emotional state saying they miss home and their family, what will you do? You will need to be selfless and put their need to talk and be comforted before your desire to start your time off. You will need to actively listen to them and reassure them as a parent would, you will need to distract them with humor and share your experiences of missing home. There is no exact description of what a camp counselor is. It is safe to say that being a successful camp counselor involves assessing each situation, then decide which role described above would resolve the issue.

### **At Blue Ridge we feel a successful staff member displays the following characteristics:-**

1. Enjoys working with children and genuinely cares about their well-being
2. Always puts the needs of the campers/camp ahead of their own
3. Appreciates the outdoors
4. Has a positive outlook on life
5. Is honest, responsible and conscientious with a desire to carry out work assignments to the best of their ability
6. Is a team player
7. Is flexible and easygoing – even when the unexpected occurs
8. Has a good sense of humor and the ability to have fun with campers on their level
9. Has the ability to instruct the activity to which they are assigned with safety, patience and enthusiasm
10. Is a positive role model for children and takes this responsibility seriously
11. Respects people of all ages and backgrounds
12. Has the ability to enter a camper's world without giving up their own maturity

This is what we expect from all our staff. We reward hard work, honesty, loyalty and a real sense of selfless displays of behavior.

### **ACTIVE LISTENING**

As a camp counselor at Blue Ridge, a considerable part of your job is listening to campers. We believe that children need, want and should be heard by adults. Some of our campers will not be used to an adult taking such a keen interest in their lives and their feelings. Initially, they may be hesitant, cautious of talking to you until they feel safe and feel that you genuinely care about them and are really hearing them.

Active listening is a crucial part of your job. It will be a skill that will serve you well this summer and once campers feel validated knowing you genuinely care about how they feel and what they think, your ability to listen will make it easier for them to talk to you. When campers can talk about their feelings, they will be less likely to act their feelings out in different types negative or questionable behaviors. For example, if a camper is feeling upset or angry, one would prefer that they verbalize their feelings rather than act upon them by disregarding rules ?

As a camp counselor there are a variety of ways you can let campers know that you are actively listening. They are as follows:

1. Most importantly, stop talking and give the camper your full attention
2. Use body language to your advantage to make the camper feel as comfortable as possible – make eye contact, physically get down on their level
3. Make sure you concentrate fully on what the camper is saying so you understand their concern
4. Ask clarifying questions repeating some of the statements made by the camper
5. Talk in a private place -but not alone

As a camp counselor there are a variety of methods for encouraging conversation with campers. They are as follows:

1. Identify – help campers put their feelings into words
2. Ask – Invite them to talk to you by asking questions such as “what happened” but do not use forceful questions or physical force
3. Acknowledge and encourage feelings – Let the camper know that you understand what they are saying verbally and through your body language
4. Affirm – Give lots of positive feed-back to the campers throughout the conversation for expressing their feelings
5. Follow Up - It is crucial that you check back on the camper the next day, in a day or two, or even at the next meal, to make sure things are going better

## **CAMPER SUPERVISION**

At Blue Ridge, a camp counselor is on call 24 hours a day for the duration of the summer and is responsible for the emotional and physical well-being of their campers. A routine day at Blue Ridge would consist of the following:

### **WAKE UP TIME**

At the beginning of each day music is played over the P.A system to signal that it is time to wake up. We recommend that you wake up slightly before the wake up music so that ,as a team, all counselors are actively encouraging their campers to wake up. Your Head Counselor will also rotate through their Village to assist the wake up process in each cabin. Within each cabin you may find that some campers get out of bed more easily than others. We encourage you to try and make this process as fun and active as possible, for example, playing your own appropriate music. It is important that as counselors you monitor all campers during this time and communicate with each camper individually. This time can be used to ask them how they slept or what activities they are going to do that day. This is also a way of assessing the emotional well-being of your campers.

During wake up time it is important that all counselors ensure that all campers wash their face and brush their teeth, both before and after breakfast. It is helpful if the campers get into this routine as soon as they arrive at camp. Some campers will attend breakfast in their P.J's, however it is important, as their counselors, that you ensure that they change into different, appropriate clothing in preparation for their 1<sup>st</sup> activity period.

### **CABIN CLEAN UP**

During the 1<sup>st</sup> activity period there is a scored cabin inspection which determines in what order each cabin eats at each meal. Freshman/Junior Village completes their cabin clean up after breakfast and Teen Village do so before. You will be given time prior to the campers arrival to create "job wheels" or "clean up charts" which is a way of regulating the process. Within each cabin you will also find that some campers are more able and willing to contribute. This could be because they have never done it before and therefore don't know how .They may be of the attitude that they don't have to do it. There are a variety of methods you can use during these types of situations such as incentives, i.e. the cleanest cabin throughout the week gets an ice cream party, movie night, more flash light time.

### **MEAL TIMES**

This is one of the most important times at Blue Ridge where counselors should be at their most diligent with regard to camper supervision. Nutrition and hydration are extremely important especially with the highly active day and warm weather conditions here at Blue Ridge. It is crucial that every camper and counselor eats healthy balanced meals during the summer and as a counselor you must be observant and discreet in your monitoring of your campers food and drink intake. We advise that as a team of counselors you sit beside a different camper at each meal so that you are all aware of what and how much your campers are eating and drinking. It is also important that all counselors support the Head Counselors and Administrative Staff by maintaining appropriate noise levels during the meal and particularly during announcements as they are the tool we use to communicate what is going on that day , as well as any changes in scheduling.

We have already mentioned the importance of nutrition and hydration and how it is very important for the counselors and the campers to be drinking enough and eating balanced meals, it is also important the campers and counselors use the hand sanitizer positioned at the beginning of each serving area. All counselors should ensure that they and the campers use it before they collect their food.

### **ACTIVITY AREAS**

During activity periods at Blue Ridge, we expect our counselors to supervise and provide quality instruction. It is important that all counselors are aware of the variety of issues that can become apparent during activity time. For example, 1) bullying -campers can become isolated due to being made fun of or physically hurt. 2) homesickness- campers can isolate themselves and not participate in the activity.3) de-hydration - campers do not drink enough while participating in physical activities.

It is of great importance that all counselors attempt to address each issue or report it to the lead counselor in that activity area. It is the counselor's responsibility to make sure that all campers in their activity area are accounted for at all times. It is paramount that at the beginning of each activity period the lead counselor takes role using the role sheet and connects each name on the role sheet with a face from the group **and** finally do a head count. The Head Counselors will be rotating through the activity areas to ensure that all campers are accounted for and it is then that you report any missing campers or any additions to what is detailed on the master role sheet.

### **ACTIVITY TIMES**

During activity times campers often get caught up in the participation element of the activity and often forget to drink or do not drink enough. It is our responsibility to make sure all campers at Blue Ridge are hydrated. De-hydration can lead to a number of health issues such as headaches, nausea, and lack of energy. This,

combined with a hot climate, can lead to a number of heat related health issues. It is also our responsibility to ensure that all campers wear sunscreen and continue to apply it throughout the day. Each activity area is equipped with sunscreen packets and they are accessible for counselors to distribute. A number of activity areas require specific clothing, i.e., all sports activities require sneakers and socks to be worn in order to prevent injury, water activity may require water shoes. Similarly, it is our responsibility to ensure that the campers wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

At Blue Ridge, there are First Aid kits stationed at a variety of activity areas.

1. Climbing Wall
2. Ropes Course
3. Outdoor Skills
4. Auditorium
5. Cafeteria
6. Arcade
7. Arts & Crafts
8. Paintball
9. Waterfront
10. Sports Shed
11. Archery
12. Riflery
13. Skate park
14. Office
15. Boating
16. Go Carts

Any minor injury can be dealt with as per First Aid Training during orientation using the First Aid kits; however any major injury should be dealt with as per Blue Ridge Camp emergency procedures.

### ***REST HOUR***

Rest hour is also very important as it is time for both campers and counselors to relax, and rest, in preparation for the afternoon's activities. At Blue Ridge we use the rest hour for the campers to write letters home and we ask that all campers write home at least 2 times per week -every Tuesday and Friday.

Rest hour is also a time where issues such as homesickness, bullying, or clicks may become evident. As a team of counselors, it is **crucial** that you all are on the look out for indications that campers are homesick, being bullied or forming a click and exhaust all techniques in order to resolve each. Please report all of these types of issues to your Head Counselor and/or Lori or Joey.

### ***EVENING PROGRAM***

The Special Events Counselor/Head Counselor at some point during the summer will approach you to lead/assist an evening program activity. All other counselors are responsible for supervising their cabin at all times during the activity providing enthusiasm and contribution to the activity. It is very important that this time is not used for counselors to socialize with other counselors. At Blue Ridge we ask that counselors get actively involved in evening activities and strive to motivate our campers into taking part and having fun.

### ***BEDTIME***

At Blue Ridge, bedtime is one of the times of the day where most cases of homesickness become apparent. It is the time for winding down and a real opportunity for counselors to strengthen their bond with their campers. We encourage all counselors to use this time to try and connect with each of their campers on an emotional level. Since this is the time when homesickness is more commonly found, it certainly would be the best time for counselors to engage in conversation with their campers.

During the evening time it is vital that all campers take showers with soap and change their clothing. At Blue Ridge, all campers have their laundry done once per week and all counselors should ensure that their campers are changing their clothing and keeping their dirty laundry in their laundry bag.

During the time leading up to bedtime, some of the older age groups can use this time as shower time due to the later curfew (Freshman 9.00pm, Juniors 10.00pm and Teens 11pm). It is very important that counselors make sure all campers brush their teeth before lights out.

Bedtime is also a good time for counselors to assess the emotional well-being of their campers. We encourage all counselors to talk to each of their campers individually, ask them how they are, what parts of camp do they like, who are their friends, what activities they like, are they sleeping well, etc.

### ***SITTING O.D'S & THE ROLE OF THE HEAD O.D***

Every night, 1 or 2 counselors in each cabin are assigned as O.D's which means On-Duty. While these counselors supervise the cabin at night, other staff may have in-camp free time or off-campus free time away from the cabin. Being the O.D counselor is a serious responsibility. It involves being available in the

cabin from 9.00pm throughout the night. At Blue Ridge, the O.D schedule is posted on the notice board in the cafeteria. It is the counselor's responsibility to know when they are on duty. All counselors should expect to be on O.D between 2-4 times per week. If you find that you have a conflict with your O.D assignment, please see Lori or Joey to resolve this. Counselors may not swap O.D's or make changes to the O.D schedule without Lori or Joey's permission as there are many variables and factors involved in the making of the schedule.

Counselors who are not on O.D will be released when the Head Counselor feels the cabin is quiet and ready for bed. Counselors will not be released until that time. Please remain inside your cabin attending to your campers until your Head Counselor has dismissed you.

All O.D's should remain in their cabin at all times throughout their O.D. On this evening you will NOT be able to:-

1. Make phone calls on your cell phone inside/outside the cabin
2. Hang out in the staff lounge or the lodge
3. Sleep before permitted to by the Head O.D
4. Visit other counselors in other cabins
5. Leave your cabin/village/camp
6. Lie in bed with headphones or Ipods on
7. Absolutely no R or X- rated DVD's may be played in the cabins

O.D's should walk through their cabin to check on each camper every 15 minutes. While making rounds, O.D's should make sure that all is quiet and everyone is safe, secure and accounted for. Throughout this time the O.D must stay awake and not listen to any personal music device. We do not allow double bunking at Blue Ridge.

Every night, a Head O.D is assigned to the boys' and girls' village. The Head O.D is our in-camp night time supervisor after the Camp Directors/Head Counselors retire for the evening. The role of the Head O.D is to rotate through the cabins in the village every 15-20 minutes to ensure that all is quiet and counselors and campers are safe, secure and accounted for. The Head O.D is in radio contact with the Camp Directors at all times in case of an emergency. If you have any problems, no matter how small, please seek the help of your Head O.D as they rotate through the cabins.

All counselors must return to their assigned cabin by or before 12.30am. All counselors must be physically inside their cabin at that time. We ask that counselors remain quiet when passing through the front gate on returning to their cabin so as not to awaken local residents, campers and Camp Directors.

### ***CAMPER HEALTH & HYGIENE***

The health and hygiene of the campers at Blue Ridge is of great importance. This is one of the many times during the summer the counselor, you, becomes a "parent" figure. It is our responsibility to make sure that the campers are healthy and examples of good hygiene are being used and promoted throughout camp.

### ***INFIRMARY VISITS***

The Infirmary is a health center for campers or counselors who are genuinely sick or in need of first aid treatment beyond the counselor's capability as per first aid training during orientation. It is not a social gathering area for campers or counselors. The HIPPA Privacy Policy will be strictly enforced and all campers shall have PRIVATE time with the nurse or medical staff. All camper breakfast, lunch and dinner medication will be taken down by Infirmary staff to the canteen area. Your Head Counselor will have a list of campers who take meal time medication. We encourage counselors to identify which campers in their cabin take medication so that they can **discreetly** remind them to take it and ensure that they have done so. All staff medication will be kept in the Infirmary and it is the counselors own responsibility to make sure that they take their medication at the appropriate time. All counselors should ensure that they have coverage in their cabin and inform their co-counselor(s) before they themselves go to the Infirmary. At Blue Ridge all night-time medication is taken in the following order: Freshman Village will be collected by the O.D. and attend the Infirmary, followed by the Junior Village and finally the Teen Village. Should your camper need to stay overnight in the infirmary, please supply your ill camper with bedding, toiletries and overnight clothing.

All counselors must remain outside the Infirmary until called in by an Infirmary staff member. NO counselor can enter the Infirmary until instructed to by the Infirmary staff. Please be respectful of the medical staff and allow them to do their job expeditiously.

### ***DAILY DISCREET CHECKS***

At Blue Ridge we ask that all counselors pay particular attention to the following due to the terrain and large population of bugs in and around camp. Be aware of any bug bites on your campers legs or arms, be sure

to get them to the Infirmary if they increase in large numbers or look to be infected. Also keep a look out for any obvious rashes, cuts or scrapes as left untreated they can become infected very quickly. It is important to do this in a discreet manner and not embarrass the camper.

### ***IN-CAMP & OFF-CAMPUS TIME OFF & DAYS OFF***

#### **DAYS OFF**

At Blue Ridge we allow all counselors 1 day off per week with the exception of Staff Orientation and the last week of camp. This results in counselors receiving a total of 5 days off during the summer. During Staff Orientation you will be asked to submit a Day Off request indicating which day of the week you would like to take off. We encourage you to discuss this with your close friends and really take your time in submitting your request. We ask you to be flexible and to increase the likelihood of receiving the same day off as your friends it is better to be in different cabins. In some situations we are able to accommodate counselors who are in the same cabin with the same day off request. However this depends on a number of factors, for example, if someone in the cabin is an Activity Supervisor, Kitchen Staff or Office Staff, then they require more time out of the cabin for work purposes.

At Blue Ridge our activity program runs from Sunday through Friday and therefore it is likely that some activity specialists will receive Saturday as their Day Off. Once again, we ask that you take your time in deciding which Day Off you require to avoid periodic changes throughout the summer. Counselor assignments are arranged around the Day Off schedule and therefore sudden changes will require them to be completely re-written. We will allow for changes when exceptional circumstances prevail or any pre-arranged appointments have been discussed with the Directors before the summer commenced.

On Duty schedules are also arranged around the Day Off schedule and will involve counselors to be on duty in their cabins between 2-4 times per week. During the summer you will receive approximately 2 nights off "on-campus" and 2 nights off "Off-Campus". Time off will start as soon as you are released by your Head Counselor. They will not release you until your cabin is accounted for, settled down and quiet for the night. All cabin counselors are responsible for getting the campers to bed. Staff will be checked out anytime after 10pm and will be checked in by the Assistant Director anytime before 12.30am Sunday through Thursday and 1am Friday and Saturday. All counselors must be checked in and physically inside their cabins settling down, by these times.

#### **ON-CAMPUS TIME OFF**

Staff is welcome to use the following areas during their off time "on-campus":

1. Gymnasium
2. Weight Room (with a buddy only)
3. Games Room
4. Mail Office (for internet use)
5. Dance Studio
6. Auditorium

The following areas are off limits:

1. Staff Parking Lot
2. Staff Lodge
3. Kitchen
4. All Waterfronts
5. Excessive time in Cabins (O.D counselors must not be distracted)

All Staff **MUST** clean up each area they utilize before they leave

#### **OFF-CAMPUS TIME OFF**

All Staff are reminded that during their time off they are still representing Blue Ridge Camp and therefore must act appropriately. We are surrounded by a small residential community and ask that all staff leave and enter camp quickly and quietly especially late at night, as to avoid waking local residents or Directors. We also ask that all staff take a note of the main camp line 706-746-5491 in case of emergency during time off.

### **POLICIES**

**CURFEW:** There is a specifically assigned time for staff to return to duty every evening. All counselors must be in their cabins by 12:30 AM unless otherwise announced. All off-duty staff will sign out with the Head Counselor and sign in with the Head OD. If you are running late, you must contact the camp at 706-746-5491.

**NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS** are permitted on-campus at any

time. Any staff member found under the influence of any such items will be dismissed.

**INFIRMARY PROCEDURE:** Please follow all policies outlined in this Staff Manual. All staff members will follow the guidelines of the infirmary staff. All staff medications must be placed in and dispensed from the infirmary. Should any staff member be taken ill, please notify your Head Counselor before reporting to the infirmary. Do not rest in your cabin as you might be contagious. Any abuse of sick days or off-time may be grounds for discipline and possible loss of time-off at a later date.

**SMOKING:** Smoking is prohibited on-campus. You may only smoke during your free time in the staff lounge. Handling and disposal of cigarettes, lighters and matches must be done in a safe manner. Do not expose or supply any camper with these items.

**ABUSE:** Any form of physical, verbal or sexual abuse will not be tolerated. Please report any concerns to the Directors immediately.

**SALARY ADVANCES:** Any request for an advance in salary must be done in writing at least 3 days prior to the date needed. All advances will be given by check so allow time for the local bank to cash it. Advances cannot be requested during the last 10 days of camp. Please do not request more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of your salary by the last week of camp.

**ELECTRONICS:** Cell phones, laptops, cameras and other photography are prohibited in the cabin areas. Staff may use the Internet building near the office on their off-time. Blue Ridge Camp take absolutely no responsibility of unsanctioned internet usage by any staff member or camper. Camp facilities, campers and staff may not be publicized on any internet sites such as Myspace.com, Facebook and YOU-tube . Anyone who uses the likeness of Blue Ridge Camp or it's staff or campers is doing so at their own risk.

**VEHICLES:** All staff vehicles must be parked in the staff parking lot across from the staff lounge.

**FOOD:** Food is not permitted in or around the cabin areas. Do not confiscate camper food or property for your personal use. Do not take money from campers for purchases of any kind.

**PERSONAL BEHAVIOR:** Do not establish uncommon and inappropriate relationships with campers. Keep your relationships on a camper-counselor basis at all times. Do not mislead any camper into believing that your relationship is anything other than that. Profane language, risqué stories, songs or pictures are unacceptable. Keep your personal life private!

**ATTITUDE:** Please maintain a professional and positive attitude. Gossip, cliques and negative meetings can all be detrimental to camp spirit. Should you have any personal issues that need to be addressed, please communicate your concerns to your supervisor.

## CAMPER ARRIVAL

If you are a cabin counselor, you will be living intimately with your small group nearly 24 hours a day, and will come to know them and them to know you, very, very well. Remember that decentralized camping came into being to provide just this precise experience of living in a small group, where each member plays an important role and enjoys the feeling of counting as an integral part of his group, sharing in its work, play, joys, and sorrows just as in a close, well knit family.

First contacts are most important and will largely determine the attitude of the campers toward each other and you. It therefore behooves you to plan in some detail what you will do and just how you will do it during these first crucial hours and days. Most camps feel that a large share of this time should be spent in the small group, welding them together and building up a climate of oneness and loyalty which will instill in each the courage to go out and take his place with larger groups.

To guide you as to your conduct at the time of the campers' arrival, imagine yourself as a small child, leaving your parents, familiar surroundings, friends, and pets, perhaps for the first time, you would probably be overwhelmed by feelings of excitement and anticipation, tempered by fears of the untried and unknown, all without the support of family and friends. You would probably be asking yourself such questions as, "Will I like the camp, my counselors, and the other campers? Will they like me?"

Wouldn't it reassure you to have a cordial, friendly counselor greet you with an outstretched hand and a sincere smile on his face? Wouldn't you like to have him tell you his name and ask you yours, particularly your favorite nickname by which you want to be known in camp? Wouldn't it really make you feel warm inside to have him say, "Here's your bed Jimmy, and these are your cubbies and storage spaces for the summer? Bill here, will help you unpack and stow away your gear. You can get into comfortable clothes and come out and meet the rest of the gang then we'll take a tour of the camp to get the hang of it. We'll see where we're going to have a lot of fun together this summer."

The time just before lights out is a critical one and new campers need a little extra attention from you. Arrange an early bedtime for most of the group will be more tired than they realize from the day's emotional strain and excitement. It may be desirable to have them brush their teeth, wash their faces, put on their pajamas and perform other bedtime rituals before dark. Explain the procedure for rising and breakfast in the morning, and stress that lights out is the signal for complete silence with everyone in bed ready to go to sleep promptly so they can rise rested and fresh for a day of fun. You may want to tuck young children in and give them a reassuring good night pat. Take a little extra time this first night to show each that you are interested in him as an individual and tell them that you will be nearby where they can call you.

In camp, kids have the opportunity to explore ideas of group behavior and interaction. We must remember that the campers are setting behavior patterns which are new and which are more relaxed in camp than elsewhere. In the camp situation, campers should be directly involved setting the standards for their behavior. Any time youngsters are actively engaged in planning and setting standards for themselves, they will respond to the challenge placed before them.

The question most frequently asked during the pre-camp period is, "How do we discipline campers." Each of us tends to worry about the discipline problems that will occur, though they are rarely seen in our situation. The "child with a problem" is the exception, not the rule.

Group living in a democratic setting provides for children an opportunity to work out their own

problems and also to see how others react to situations. Each of us evaluates a situation differently. There will be a time when you feel you must discipline a child. How you carry off this discipline will depend on the seriousness of the offense, your mood, your relationship with the child and the child's relationship with you.

It is important that the counselor not take advantage of his position to rule his group by force. If a child needs a reminder so that his behavior becomes acceptable to the group, the discipline should be related to his area of wrong-doing. If a child rebels in his behavior during a morning activity and the counselor punishes him late in the day or the next day, the child is not always aware of why he is being punished.

To punish a child for a wrong-doing or inappropriate behavior is actually the easiest way out of a situation for an adult. When you punish a child you are saying, "Don't question my authority, and just do as I say." The meeting of the minds through quiet discussion and explanation will often bring about the desired change in behavior. Please remember that each camper reacts to a situation based on his own experiences.

If you feel that you can no longer control your temper or emotions with a camper, then discuss the matter with one of the directors immediately. Respect must be on a give and take basis; you must earn it and also give it. You will have respect and obedience from campers only if you deserve it.

### **USEFUL INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES FOR HOMESICKNESS**

The idea of having a homesick camper makes many counselors a little nervous, but most cases of homesickness won't ruin a camp experience, it can however, be seen as an opportunity for a camper to recognize feelings, learn how to talk about them and what coping strategies will help them work through them. However it is important to remember that homesickness left untreated or ignored, can affect a camper's camp experience and the fun they were looking forward to have.

We ask that you let a Head Counselor, Director or Assistant Director know if you have a homesick camper because many campers who are homesick write home telling their parents that they are sad and missing home. It is important that the Directors are aware of each case and know in advance so that they can explain to parents the steps that we are taking to help their child adjust to being away from home. This also enables us to give the parents a head's up and strategies they can use to help them help their child as well.

Campers can become angry and lash out, they can become quiet and isolate themselves or they can become extremely emotional. There are several techniques counselors can use during times like these to try and distract the campers from their thoughts of home. At Blue Ridge we have lots of bedtime story books which can be used before lights out. It is also advisable to verbally break down the summer into shorter parts so that the campers are not focusing on the lengthy 4 or 8 weeks. There are a number of events within the sessions that you can encourage the campers to focus on as a type of incentive to stay i.e. Six Flags, Spook Night, Color War, Teen Trips, July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks, activity rotations every 3 days, 40+ different activities to try and Water Olympics. Also remind them one of the reasons their parents sent them to camp was for them to become a little bit more emotionally independent and mature.

Campers who are away from home for the 1<sup>st</sup> time and arrive at camp not knowing anyone can display homesick type behaviors very quickly. We encourage you to find out if you have any campers in your cabin that are here for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. You can use introductory ice breakers to begin the interaction between your campers and perhaps buddy systems with campers who have been to camp before.

The following is an example of a letter sent to parents from another camp describing homesickness and messages we want to send to all campers whether they are new or veteran.

### **WILL YOUR CHILD BE HOMESICK THIS SUMMER?**

Do you dread getting a tear-spotted letter from your homesick child? The odds are that both you and your child have given homesickness some thought, even if you haven't talked about it.

Both 1<sup>st</sup> time and veteran campers can feel homesick. We care deeply for your children and therefore take homesickness very seriously. Psychologists define homesickness as "distress or impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home". For children, it is a powerful longing for and preoccupying attachment to home. Symptoms may include depression, withdrawal and anxiety, for some sleeplessness or "acting out" may also appear.

The specific causes of homesickness differ from child to child. Some general factors do exist, including experience, personality, family environment and attitude. Both younger campers in their 1<sup>st</sup> session at camp and older 1<sup>st</sup> time campers having little previous separation experience are susceptible to homesickness. So too are children with low self-esteem and those suffering from juvenile depression.

Family influence is a powerful factor; any negative messages from parents can predispose a child to homesickness. Allowing an "out card" ("Honey, if you don't like camp, we'll come and get you") gives kids permission to opt out. So too can a family argument, separation, divorce or other negative event adversely influence a child about to leave home. A child's attitude is often a primary factor in homesickness. If a child has low or unrealistic expectations about camp life, those feelings can become destructive.

The good news is that homesickness is curable; by working together, we can prepare your child to have a successful experience at camp AND to develop, practice and learn useful coping skills. Your task is to prepare your child for camp, while ours is to intervene if homesickness appears.

Here are some questions to consider in preparing your child for success at camp: does he/she feel capable of tackling new situations? Are they comfortable when they spend time away from home or with new kids? How do they deal with problems when they come up?

As with any life skill, practice helps! Encourage your child to sleep over at a friend's house. Each bit of enthusiasm for your child's summer at camp and each positive statement you make will create an environment for success in your child. Talk about all the great things they will be able to do at camp and about all the new friends they will make. Avoid saying how much you will miss them, that the house will be empty without them or that you'll come to camp and take them home if they are not happy.

All of these steps will help your child to successfully manage their transition from home to camp. We'll work with your child if they feel homesick at camp, using the same positive imaging statements, and helping them to develop stronger, more successful coping skills.

Homesickness is normal: it is seldom long lasting, and some very positive things can result from its demise. Taken from a developmental perspective, it gives children an opportunity to develop the skills they will need to cope with these and other negative feelings. This growth comes at a different rate for each child: it is not always immediate and rarely is it pain-free. It can be hard for us parents to know our children are homesick, and our natural urge is to intervene. The problem is that our intervention erases the opportunity for their growth.

A camp experience offers many lessons: how to paddle a canoe, how to live with others and how to recognize and deal with your feelings. This is a valuable lesson and what better place to learn it than in an environment full of caring and nurturing? If we form an alliance for the benefit of your child, we can give them a solid platform from which they can acquire these skills on their own, master them and gain a feeling of self-confidence and self-worth in the process.

At Blue Ridge we have had cases of homesickness that have worsened due to the fact that the camper used their cell phone to call home every night explaining how sad they were. We don't allow cell phones at camp because they allow the parents thousands of miles away to become the counselor instead of us. This camper is usually difficult to rescue and several have resulted in the camper going home. Our responsibility is to use techniques in an attempt to cure the homesickness while the Directors communicate with the parents explaining the steps we are taking to help their child.

The key to over coming homesickness is finding a distraction. We encourage counselors to exhaust every possible technique in order to help campers overcome their feelings of homesickness but be sure to report each case and remember that the Directors are always there to help.

## **WORKING AS A COHESIVE COUNSELOR TEAM**

By working as a team of counselors, you and your co-counselors will create a unified, supportive environment for your campers. From the 1<sup>st</sup> moment your campers arrive, it is important to display to the campers that you are a team and are all consistent in your approach towards the campers. Prior to the camper's arrival, it is also important that you all meet to communicate your goals, objectives and hopes for the summer along with how you want to work and what type of environment you will provide for the campers. We encourage that as a cabin, you establish objectives with regard to the following topics:-

1. Conflicts – How will you prevent campers playing counselors against each other? How will you resolve conflict between campers? How will you handle cabin meetings? How will you resolve counselor conflicts? **Remain unified in your approach within the cabin, keep consistent, be open and honest with each other away from the campers, compromise**
2. Meals – What are acceptable table manners? Where will the counselors sit? What behaviors are you going to be observant of? **Spread out at meal times, don't sit together, observe what the campers are eating at each meal, display and encourage good clean up habits**
3. Cabin Clean Up – What level of cleanliness will you encourage and expect? How are you going to motivate/educate your campers with regard to cabin clean up? How are you going to manage the process as a team of counselors? What should the counselor's role be? **Make the process as fun as possible, use music, incentives, spread out throughout the cabin and monitor camper involvement, don't yell instruction without involvement, show the campers how to do it**
4. Personal Property and Space – What are the expectations for sharing personal things? **No areas in the cabin are to be signed "Counselor only". Counselors are advised not to borrow personal belongings from the campers and allow campers to borrow their personal belongings - if anything were to go missing -the counselor would be liable**
5. Food – How will you manage food in the cabin? How will you as counselors ensure that cafeteria food is not taken back to the cabin? **The cafeteria will have snacks for the counselors/campers but this food must be eaten in the cafeteria or canteen area and not in or around the cabin**
6. Rest Period – What is appropriate behavior for campers and counselors during rest hour? What methods will you use as a team to ensure the campers are supervised at all times? What issues can become apparent during rest hour? **Counselors need to rotate through the cabin during rest hour to ensure that no horseplay, bullying or teasing is taking place. Establish a rotation if a counselor is taking a break, 1 can lie down for 20 minutes while the others rotate through the cabin making sure all campers are safe and accounted for**
7. Special Event/Evening Activity Participation – What is the counselor's role during special events/evening activities? **Counselors must supervise, participate, encourage, motivate and assist the lead activity counselors with control and clean up? It is the counselors responsibility to ensure that their cabin prepare an appropriate cabin activity for their group on each assigned Saturday**
8. Letters Home – How will you, as a team of counselors, ensure that the campers write home regularly? **Use down time to encourage the campers to write home, for example rest hour, use incentives... more flash light time if everyone writes at least 2 letters home per week**
9. Camper Health/Hygiene – How can counselors monitor their camper's health and hygiene during the summer? **As a team, discreetly check the campers toothpaste, shampoo and other toiletries to make sure they are being used, make sure the campers change their clothing after they shower and all dirty clothing goes in their laundry bag and not worn again. Physically check that the campers are changing their linens each week. Monitor campers for any obvious rashes, cuts grazes, coughs. Make sure the campers wash their hands before each meal or use the hand sanitizer**
10. Rainy Days – What fun activities/ideas do you have to keep campers active in the cabin or at activity areas? **If there is a sudden change in weather and activities are stopped for rain or campers are held in their cabins until it passes, organize fun indoor activities to keep them occupied until you are instructed to continue with regular activities. Be flexible and innovative; activity doesn't stop just because it rains. There are a number of appropriate indoor activities you can lead in the meantime, please ask for ideas or guidance**
11. Bedtime – How, as a team of counselors will you get the campers ready for bed? What techniques will you use? **You can use appropriate music, bedtime stories, letter writing and light conversation to calm the cabin in preparation for bed. All campers must sleep in their own bed; no double bunking is permitted at camp and counselors must never share a bed**

***with a camper at any time. Campers must not leave the cabin between the times of curfew and wake up. Counselors must remain INSIDE their cabin until they are released by their Head Counselor***

### **DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN THE CABIN**

As children grow, their emotions become more complex. At times their verbal skills may lag behind the intensity of their feelings or emotions. This can result in their acting out their emotions when they can't find any other way to describe how they are feeling.

Our job at Blue Ridge is to help support campers on their developmental path. It is important for us to recognize that every child is different and have different coping mechanisms. Some children are better at expressing their feelings or emotions than others due to those coping mechanisms, while others tend to be ruled by their emotions.

Our objective during the summer is to widen the distance between mood (how a child assesses the impact of their emotional and physical environment) and behavior (how a child responds to that environment). We can help campers redirect negative behavior by asking questions such as, "What did you hope to accomplish when you \_\_\_\_\_?" "How did it work for you?" "Do you see any other choices you could have made?"

The emotion that is very influential in this process is the camper's level of maturity which lies between their mood and the type of behavior they express. The maturity level of a 6 year old may or may not be different to a 14 year old. It is important not to assume that because a camper is 14 they are statistically more mature than all other campers who are younger. This is why it is so important for counselors to appreciate and be observant of the potential different maturity levels within their cabin because it will affect how they approach each individual camper.

### **LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES**

Logical consequences are our primary technique for assisting campers through the transition of moving from child-like behaviors to adult-like and accepting responsibility for their actions.

This technique can be used during a variety of different times throughout the summer with the underlying principle remaining the same. For example, during wake up time or cabin clean up, counselors should explain the rules governing the behavior. The campers should then be told that it is their choice to follow the rules or face the more and less desirable consequences associated to their potential choices. The counselors can use incentives as the more desirable consequence (candy party for top score of the week, 1<sup>st</sup> cabin to line up for the week, 15 more minutes at the social, canteen of their choice etc...). However on the other hand the less desirable consequence for a poor cabin clean up or a cabin who are late to line up because they didn't get up in time, could be cleaning up during rest hour, cabins re-inspected before being allowed into the social, cleaning up the canteen area. Using this technique allows the campers to make choices of their own free will, the campers learn to recognize and differentiate between the results of their decision making. They become accountable for their choices and in time begin to make wiser choices.

In conclusion, if we inform them of the consequences of their behavior in advance, then we are not really punishing them; they are accepting what their behavioral choices have brought upon them.

At Blue Ridge there are many consequences that are not appropriate and we ask that all counselors consult with their Head Counselor prior to enforcing a consequence. For example, we do not allow the withholding of food or shower time as a consequence for poor behavior or a poor cabin score. We try to relate the consequence to the type of behavior, for example a poor cabin score will result in the cabin cleaning during rest hour, an untidy dining table will result in the cabin helping the cafeteria staff clean the dining hall tables. At no time do we tolerate yelling, berating or physical contact of any kind.

We encourage you all to focus on an incentive system, and we can try to arrange any ideas you might have to praise your cabin for good behavior.

### **HOLDING A CABIN MEETING**

At camp, living in a cabin means being in close proximity to others for 4-8 weeks. Being a good cabin mate takes practice and time. Sometimes campers get into disputes with other campers for a number of reasons and under those types of circumstances a meeting between the 2 campers and you is often the best way to show the campers how to resolve their issue. In other cases, a meeting with the entire cabin is necessary if

you feel, as a team of counselors that there are a number of cabin issues that need to be addressed.

Whether a camper to counselor talk is being used or a cabin meeting, the fundamentals are the same. As the counselor, you provide the campers with a formula of appropriate behavior to follow. This begins with the notion that each person is entitled to their own perspective, and each person has the right to share that perspective. In other words, this means that only one person talks at a time, and during that time, the rest of the group listens. Gather the cabin together in a circle so that they are all on the same level and everyone can see and hear each other.

Sometimes it might be useful to have an object for the campers to hold to designate who gets to speak. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, try paraphrasing by re-stating the camper's narrative into your own words. This shows that you really care about their concerns and you were actively listening to what they had to say. This is a way of summarizing what you have heard and state the problem in a way that is objective and not judgmental.

Your next steps are to list the potential options in an attempt to solve the underlying problem. The important point to remember is to treat this as a brainstorming session so that the campers are contributing to the meeting. This is an effective way of letting the campers test their analytical skills by building a consensus within the group because they have to make a choice, as a group as to which option will solve the problem. Once an agreement has been reached, try the option and if it works, great, if not, repeat the process.

Once the problem is solved, make a point in congratulating the campers and their new, more mature behavior.

### ***DEALING WITH HAZARDS***

Camp can be a dangerous place. There are a number of natural and artificial conditions in and around camp that create potential hazards for both campers and counselors. Campers have been known to push things to the limits and physical hazards and adventurous campers lead to risk and with that possible injury.

At Blue Ridge our primary concern is the physical and emotional safety of the campers. We expect our staff to ANTICIPATE, ACT AND AVOID. Our job is to anticipate risks/hazards and act appropriately to avoid injury. We must always think a few steps ahead of campers at all times in order to prevent hazardous situations arising. If we see or sense a potentially dangerous situation, we should always take immediate, preventative action to reduce or eliminate the risk before anyone is injured.

### ***IDENTIFYING A HAZARD/DANGER***

Sometimes identifying a hazard is easy, for example darkness. Darkness is a hazard at camp and it is very easy for campers to trip in areas that are not well lit, on steps or exposed tree roots. In this type of situation all counselors should act preventatively by instructing campers to walk carefully, carry a flash light when walking after dark and consciously look out for anything that could be a trip hazard.

At Camp we have the more obvious risks such as waterfront activities, sudden weather changes, exposed tree roots, falling branches, electrical lines, top bunks, exposed nails in fences, beds and walls, water heaters and over use of electrical outlets. At Blue Ridge we do everything we can to provide awareness signs and enforces rules and procedures to remind campers and counselors of hazards. As staff, your job is to enforce these rules at all times.

We feel, through proper staff supervision, good judgment and a preventative attitude, staff should be able to anticipate risk and act accordingly to avoid injury or property damage.

### ***CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT***

Blue Ridge is a child-centered environment. We do everything we can to create a physically and emotionally safe, comfortable environment for all our campers. We use screening processes when hiring staff and hope that the staff we hire would not intentionally harm a child. It is our responsibility to prepare our staff to be able to detect examples of child abuse and inform them of the necessary procedures to follow.

During orientation you will be asked to watch a video detailing the topics and concerns relating to child abuse and neglect and then sign a form stating that you understand our policies and procedures that are strictly against all forms of child abuse and neglect. If you are ever unsure or have additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to approach a Camp Director immediately. There are a number of precautions counselors should take to avoid accusations of child abuse or neglect towards campers. These are as follows:-

1. Never use abusive or derogatory language with or towards campers or around campers
2. Always have at least 2 counselors present when supervising campers in the cabin during shower time and while they are changing their clothes. Always encourage campers to change their own clothes
3. Always respect a child's limit on being touched. Some campers might be "clingy" and welcome a hug, arm around their shoulders which is appropriate. We ask that all counselors make sure that any displays of appropriate affection are done in public. On the other hand, some campers are more distant and don't want to be hugged or shown affection and tend to tense up or move away from you. Please respect campers limits at all times.
4. Always be aware of verbal and nonverbal clues of discomfort
5. Never touch a child on areas where a bathing suit would normally cover. This is described in detail on the video you will be shown.
6. Never hit or display physically threatening actions towards a camper
7. Always remove yourself from situations where you feel stressed or close to losing control. Allow yourself a personal time-out away from the situation to regroup. You will experience campers who are particularly resistant or challenging, always take a personal time out, ask your co-counselors, Head Counselor or Camp Directors for help, and then approach the situation again.

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU DETECT, SEE, OR SUSPECT THAT A CAMPER HAS BEEN ABUSED**

1. Never over react or draw attention to a situation. This can cause additional issues such as suppressing the camper's disclosure or additional panic.
2. Never criticize or imply that the camper has misunderstood what has happened and never put words in a camper's mouth. Always make sure that you are actively listening to the camper to gain an understanding of the incident.
3. Reassure the camper and do not make the promise that you will not tell anyone. Reinforce that you are here to help the camper as are the Camp Directors. You can therefore promise to tell no one except the Camp Director.
4. Make sure you inform the Camp Director of the incident immediately and in private.
5. DO NOT discuss situations such as this with other counselors or campers

#### **COUNSELOR CONDUCT & CAMPER-COUNSELOR CONTACT**

##### **GUIDELINES FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN**

I understand and accept the following:

1. Counselors may not, under any circumstances, hit a child
2. Counselors may not use abusive or derogatory language with campers
3. Counselors need to ask for help
4. A staff member who encounters a particularly difficult child will seek the assistance of supervisory or administrative staff
5. In all dealings with campers, counselors should strive to **respond** as opposed to **react** to children at camp

##### **GUIDELINES FOR CAMPER-COUNSELOR CONTACT**

I understand and accept that when touching campers, the following guidelines MUST be followed:

1. Campers can only be touched on the hand, shoulder or upper back
2. I must never touch a camper against their will (Unless in the case of clear and present danger to the child)
3. I must never touch a camper if they appear to show discomfort, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally
4. I must only touch a camper in the company of other adults
5. I must never touch a camper if it was to have the effect of over stimulating the camper
6. I must never touch a camper in a place on their body that is normally covered by a bathing suit

##### **COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITY**

I understand and agree to the following:

1. I understand and accept that I am a **care-taker of children**
2. I understand that there is a clear **power difference** between myself and campers (money, mobility, authority, experience, knowledge)
3. I understand that inappropriate sexual contact with or physical abuse of a camper can have severe emotional and psychological effects on that camper that can last a life time and that this is a dismissible offense
4. I understand and accept that campers will not be subjected to "initiation" rites that are abusive in any manner
5. I understand and accept there will be a double coverage of campers by adults when they are changing
6. I understand and accept that younger children should be encouraged to change their own clothes
7. I understand and accept that campers will never be alone with a counselor in his or her cabin or any other area at camp
8. I understand and accept that a counselor will, under not circumstance, share a bed or sleeping area with a camper
9. I understand and accept that counselors will set limits with children who "cling" or hang on them

10. I understand and accept that counselors must not give back rubs
11. I understand and accept that counselors must not tickle or tease campers to the point that they are out of control
12. I understand and accept that wrestling matches are only permitted camper-camper as part of a supervised activity with a qualified coach
13. I understand and accept that overnights must have a minimum of two adult leaders with one being of the same gender
14. I understand and accept that the romantic lives of counselors under NO circumstances, be shared with campers
15. I understand and accept I have accepted a position for the summer involving the happiness and safety of children
16. I understand and accept that only counselors of the same gender are allowed inside cabins unless they are Infirmary staff or Administrative staff attending an emergency or specific camp business
17. I understand and accept that all male counselors working with adolescent females and female counselors working with adolescent males, need to be aware of the tendency for this age group to develop hidden or secret romantic feelings towards them

### **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

I understand and agree to the following:

1. I understand and accept that I must watch for signs of stress in myself and others as a way of maintaining a safe environment at camp
2. I understand and accept that I must help other staff who seem at risk of hurting or abusing campers by reporting it to a Director. I understand and accept that I must alert a Director of dangerous or "at risk" situations between campers and counselors
3. I understand and accept that I must ask for more supervision, intervention or support if I or another counselor needs it
4. I understand and accept that I must ask for help myself if I feel at risk of hurting, over-stimulating or abusing a camper.

### **WATERFRONT PROCEDURES & AQUATIC EMERGENCIES**

#### **STAFF USE OF AQUATIC FACILITIES**

No staff member may use any aquatic facility without a certified lifeguard with a ratio of 1 guard to every 10 staff. This ratio applies to all aquatic activities.

#### **WATERFRONT RULES**

1. Always enter and leave the swimming pool/waterfront area through the marked entrance
2. Be sure you are checked in at the buddy board before entering the water with a buddy of the same swimming ability, and check out before you leave the waterfront area
3. When in the water with your buddy, make sure that you are no more than 10ft away from them at all times. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH OTHER!!
4. No dunking or horseplay on the docks or in the water
5. No running on the docks or platforms
6. No diving off docks or swimming pool edges
7. Only swim within areas marked out by lifeline ropes
8. Only 6 campers on the diving platform at one time with one guard
9. Never swim under the docks or diving platform
10. Never play on the lifeline ropes
11. Lifeguards are there to protect your safety, never interfere with their job or distract them in any way
12. Respond immediately to BUDDY CHECKS

13. 2 loud long whistles = BUDDY CHECK – remain absolutely quiet, get with your buddy and raise your joined hands
14. Verbal announcement to - ALL OK – carry on swimming
15. 3 loud whistles = EVERYONE OUT OF THE WATER
16. Always take your personal belongings when you leave the beach including towels, clothing and trash

### **LIFEGUARDS**

1. Lifeguards should always report to the waterfront area equipped with a bathing suit, sunscreen and water bottle 5 minutes before each activity period so that campers will not be kept waiting or left unattended.
2. Lifeguards must always remain to their station/post until the last camper has physically left the water.
3. Lifeguards must never leave the Waterfront area until dismissed by the Waterfront Director.
4. Lifeguards must always stand at their post/station and watch their assigned areas, keeping rescue equipment close to hand and equipped with a whistle.
5. Lifeguards are responsible for all swimmers in their designated areas and should maintain and enforce all waterfront rules at all times to both counselors and campers.
6. Lifeguards should remain quiet during buddy checks and throughout each activity period complete random buddy checks i.e. “Hey, where’s your buddy?”
7. Lifeguards must be diligent at all times and not allow themselves to become distracted by conversation with counselors or campers.

### **AQUATIC EMERGENCIES (SWIMMING/BOATING)**

In the event of any Waterfront/Boating emergency, it is crucial to remain calm. All emergency procedures will be under the supervision of the Waterfront/Boating Director. In the event the Waterfront Director is not present at the Waterfront, the Assistant Waterfront/Boating Director or the nearest certified lifeguard will assume leadership of the procedure. Please assist them at this time and follow each instruction they give.

### **GENERAL PROCEDURES IN AQUATIC EMERGENCIES**

Three whistles at both Waterfront areas will signal either all swimmers out of the water or a major aquatic emergency. One loud short whistle will signal a minor injury in need of attention. All Lifeguards must follow the instructions of the Waterfront/Boating Director or Assistant Waterfront/Boating Director.

The Lifeguard designated to the area with the injured swimmer, will alert the Waterfront Director/Assistant Waterfront Director or land based counselor by giving one loud short whistle. At this time, the Lifeguard will maintain supervision of their area while reassuring the injured swimmer. On arrival, the Waterfront Director/Assistant Waterfront Director or land based counselor will assume control of the situation and identify the injury severity, nature and camper name and administer First Aid as instructed during First Aid Training during staff orientation.

Upon hearing the signal for a major aquatic emergency, all Life guards will clear their areas and guide campers away from the waterfront/beach areas. All Lifeguards/Counselors responsible for clearing each area must instruct the campers and staff to check out at the buddy board then move quickly but carefully as to avoid incidental injuries. All campers and staff must gather at the flag pole area near the Waterfront and the concrete area near the Skate Park at the Boating Waterfront area. Lifeguards/Counselors must instruct the campers to sit/line up in their cabin so that a head count can be completed.

The attending Waterfront Director/Assistant Waterfront Director will assume control of the situation and radio the Directors and Infirmary Staff to attend the scene. At this time they will report the nature of the injury, the severity and the camper’s name. All supporting Lifeguards will follow the instructions of the Waterfront

Director/Assistant Waterfront Director. The Directors will contact 911 for emergency services to attend the scene and send a designated staff member to the front gate to direct the ambulance to the most accessible place to attend to the injured person.

At this time, all campers and staff not involved in the emergency procedure will be moved into the Auditorium. Staff will lead an indoor activity and await instruction.

### **ACCIDENT/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AT AQUATICS**

Injuries and accidents can occur at any time. They can range in severity and nature from the scraped knee to a spinal injury. During orientation, you will complete First Aid training and with every situation you face, we ask that your actions follow the training delivered to you. However, each accident requires attention and an appropriate response.

### **BUMPS, BRUISES, SCRAPES – NON EMERGENCIES**

A counselor should locate the nearest First Aid kit and use its contents to treat the accident as per First Aid training during orientation. If at any time you feel the camper needs to attend the Infirmary, ask the assisting Counselor to escort them to the Infirmary to have it checked.

### **BEE STINGS**

Bee stings are not considered emergencies unless the person is allergic to stings. As a precaution, all campers with a bee sting should be taken to the Infirmary for assessment because many campers will not have been exposed to the bugs at camp before and may not be aware that they are allergic. Each First Aid Kit is equipped with non-sting swabs which can be administered straight away on route to the Infirmary.

In case of a severe allergic reaction, epi-pens are located in the 3 major areas camp. Only specially trained staff can administer these medications, but we can assist a camper or staff member to inject the epi-pen if they appear to be having a severe allergic reaction.

### **MORE SEVERE ACCIDENTS/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

#### **BLEEDING**

Uncontrolled bleeding can be life-threatening. In the event of severe bleeding, locate the nearest First Aid Kit to find gloves, and then apply direct pressure to the wound. Talk to the camper in a calm, reassuring manner and either send an assisting counselor to locate the nearest activity area with a radio to inform the Infirmary and Director to assist. If the wound can be elevated above the head level, this can be done to slow bleeding. Observe the camper for signs of shock or dizziness and continue to follow Blue Ridge emergency procedures. (See procedures section of the Manual).

In reference to any severe medical emergency at camp we ask that all assisting counselors remove all other campers from the accident area and encourage them to take part in another activity.

### **ALL CAMP EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

#### **FIRE**

In case of fire, the Mountain City Fire Department will be called. Until they arrive, all staff will employ the following response:-

1. Get all campers/staff out of the building. Do not try to save any personal belongings. Reassure the group and gather the campers/staff at least 100 yards away from the burning building.
2. Have one counselor in charge of the waiting group and complete a head count to ensure all campers and staff are accounted for. An extra counselor or camper then proceeds immediately to the Office or nearest activity area with a radio to inform the Directors and Office of the fire. Radios are stationed in the following areas:-
  - Infirmary
  - Office (Program)

- Office (Directors)
  - Climbing
  - Outdoor Skills
  - Waterfront Hut
  - Cafeteria (Back Office)
  - Boating Waterfront Hut
  - Ropes Course
  - Sports Fields
  - All Administrative Head Staff
3. At the same time, an extra counselor should notify neighboring cabins/buildings to have them evacuate and gather at the same point at least 100 yards away from the burning building
  4. All counselors must complete head counts of their cabin or activity groups to ensure everyone is safe and accounted for
  5. All counselors must inform Directors/Head Staff on their arrival so that this can be communicated to emergency fire personnel arriving at the scene
  6. All counselors must reassure the campers and ask that they remain calm and wait for further instruction from the Directors and fire personnel

### ***MISSING PERSON***

If you suspect that a camper is missing, immediately notify the Head Counselor assigned to your activity area or, if they are not close by, use the nearest radio to inform the Directors and Head Counselor. Head Counselors, while in communication with the Directors, will then begin a search consisting of the following areas:-

1. Boating Waterfront/Go Carts/Skate park/Staff Lounge
2. Sports Fields/Weight Room/Gym/Teen Lounge/Riflery/Archery/Tennis Courts
3. Waterfront/Auditorium/Cafeteria/Ampitheatre/Lodge/Infirmary/Outdoor Skills/Ropes/Paintball/Arts & Crafts/Camp Fire Circle
4. All Boys Cabins
5. All Girls Cabins
6. All bathrooms/laundry/office

Each area without a radio will be checked in person by the designated Head Counselor. At this time the Director will contact the lead counselor on all off campus trips to identify if the missing person is with the group. Throughout the search, each Head Counselor on checking an area will report their findings via radio to the Directors. All staff members and campers in contact with the missing person that day will be questioned by a Director or designated Head Counselor to determine when the person was last seen.

Once all activity areas have been checked and all off campus trips, if the missing person has still not been found at this point the Director will instruct the Waterfront/Boating Waterfront Director to take the lead in completing a deep water search of all Waterfront areas.

At this time, the Directors will contact the Mountain City Police Department and report the missing person. On the arrival of the Mountain City Police, all staff will follow their instructions and the camp program will continue as best possible.

### ***PUBLIC CONTACT***

#### ***UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS ON CAMP PROPERTY***

All staff is required to approach unfamiliar individuals entering Blue Ridge property. All staff must take the following precautions:

1. Approach the unknown individual, introduce yourself, ask if you can help them and what is the purpose of their visit to Blue Ridge. Make sure the office or Directors are notified by radio.
2. If the individual is lost or have entered camp property by mistake, direct or escort them out of camp and return to your activity. If you are the lead counselor, have the assistant do this
3. If the individual is visiting a Director, member of staff or delivering goods, please direct or escort them to the Office

If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unsafe approaching an unknown individual, please inform the nearest Head Counselor, or locate the nearest radio to inform a Director to attend the situation.

At no time should campers be left unsupervised in the area surrounding the unknown individual.

### ***PUBLIC RELATIONS***

All staff must remember, when in public places with campers or during their off-time, you are representing Blue Ridge. At

camp we are surrounded by local residents and are well known in the surrounding community. Please exercise good judgment and supervision of campers when on trips and remember that staff is responsible for the safety of their campers at ALL times. During the summer we organize all-camp trips off campus to various theme parks. Counselors are assigned small groups of campers while in the theme park. Counselors must not trade campers, switch groups, allow campers to roam in gift shops without supervision. Campers and counselors must stay together and act in an appropriate manner.

### **RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

At times during the summer, we may be subject to calls, visits or interviews by the media. This could be in response to a crisis or routine operation where Counselors are called upon to comment to outsiders who are seeking information. In any such case, the following rules apply:-

1. Blue Ridge Directors are the sole spokespersons for camp. They or their designated representatives are the only people who can speak for camp. All statements or comments made to the media or outside individuals will be done son by them.
2. Counselors, if pressed must respond "no comment". Do NOT make any statements "off record" or for "background only". If a counselor comes in contact with a member of the media or an outside individual, immediately escort them to the Office to a Director.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR SUMMER....**

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### **WHAT NOT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR SUMMER...**

Blue Ridge Camp has been nurturing campers for almost 5 decades and year after year we are faced with new experiences and challenges. In our experience, we feel that there are a number of things you can expect to take place during the summer and on the other hand many you should not expect to happen.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT....**

1. To meet incredible people who are dedicated to children
2. To make some of the best friends you will ever have
3. To learn a lot about yourself, others and how to work with children and adults
4. To teach new skills
5. To work hard
6. To have fun
7. To try new activities – and sometimes teach them
8. To experience living in a group setting
9. To be relied upon
10. To be outdoors and experience nature
11. To do some of the most embarrassing things you have ever done and enjoy it
12. To laugh
13. To cheer up a homesick camper
14. To feel overwhelmed at times
15. To ask for help
16. To be asked for help
17. To be extremely tired at times
18. To challenge yourself and others
19. To look forward to time off and then miss your campers when you take time off
20. To make a difference in the lives of children
21. To encourage and motivate others
  
22. To make mistakes
23. To put others needs ahead of your own
24. To be enthusiastic about all activities
25. To work with others who are possibly not as dedicated as you
26. To work with others who are extremely dedicated
27. To grow as a person
28. To be part of a team
29. To sound like a parent occasionally
30. To plan programs and events
31. To miss home and family
32. To follow rules – even when you don't necessarily agree with them
33. To be patient
34. To be a leader
35. To make memories that last a lifetime

### **WHAT NOT TO EXPECT....**

1. To be on vacation
2. To be bored
3. To have luxury accommodations
4. To have a lot of privacy
5. To have a lot of personal time
6. To leave unchanged
7. To have things always go according to schedule
8. To have your own needs met ALL the time
9. To experience leniency if found to endanger a child or not follow Blue Ridge Camp rules, regulations, procedures and in breach of contract
10. To receive a guaranteed bonus at the end of the Summer
11. Being a Camp Counselor at Blue Ridge is a difficult job; however you will get from camp exactly what you put into it. At Blue Ridge, we reward hard work, loyalty and a genuine display of the campers needs being put ahead of our own. If you are ready to give 110% to this job then you will experience the best summer of your life and create memories that you will never forget.

## **HEAD COUNSELOR/ACTIVITY SUPERVISOR**

At Blue Ridge Camp, the responsibilities of our supervisors include:

1. **Explaining expectations** – Clearly define your expectations. Periodically, review those expectations with your staff.
2. **Delegation** – Being a good supervisor does not mean doing it all yourself. Delegation has two benefits; first it will give you more time to do your job secondly, it gives your staff a feeling of worth and an opportunity to advance as a staff member
3. **Evaluating and improving performance** – Give those you supervise regular feedback – both positive, as well as constructive. If they need extra help, make sure you are visible and accessible to provide quick and thorough support.
4. **Dealing with problems** – It's important to stay calm – everyone makes mistakes. Help your staff find options to troubleshoot. If a problem exceeds your expertise or continues, see a Director for guidance.
5. **Modeling appropriate behavior** – We expect our supervisors to lead by example and uphold camp rules and procedures. A supervisor who does not, will find enforcing them very difficult.
6. **Recognizing and correcting inappropriate behavior** – Preventative measures are best. Some signs of potential behavioral problems are: fatigue, illness, stress and agitation. Utilize any tools at your disposal to catch and correct behavioral issues promptly. Do not allow them to grow into major issues.
7. **Be discreet** – It is not appropriate to gossip about an incident with other staff. Discuss all concerns privately. Our office is always available for discreet conversations.
8. **Offering help and support** – As a supervisor, make sure everyone with whom you supervise feels comfortable in asking you for help if they need it. If you have a day off, make sure you inform them of where to get help. It is also your responsibility to prepare the staff member who will be replacing you of what's expected of them as your replacement for the day.
9. **Orientation** – Assign staff various work assignments. Interview and evaluate staff to help determine who you would like to have in your village. Prepare for your Thursday evening staff meeting; the Job Analysis Form Is a good guide to work with. Orient staff to all cabin, village and facilities. Orient staff to all standards, policies, expectations and procedures. Direct staff to prepare cabins and facilities for camper arrival. Report any damage or needed repairs to the Directors and care staff. Prepare to meet and greet visiting parents.
10. **Camper arrival** – Coordinate greetings of campers upon arrival. Prepare first day unpacking and settling in. Check linen inventory. Check your daily medications list. Remove any medications from the cabins. Remove all cell phones from the cabins. Prepare an active evening program. Check through the cabins at bedtime for any issues of concern. Please inform the Directors of any such issues.