

4-H Camp Cell Phone Policy

4-H camp participants **are prohibited** from bringing cell phones or other electronic communication devices to 4-H Camp.

Bringing and using these devices is very disruptive to the camping experience in several ways.

1. For the protection of **all** camp participants, due to the prevalence of social media and the ability for most cell phones and other electronic devices to be used as cameras, these devices are not allowed at camp. This is an attempt to prevent unauthorized use or inappropriate photos being taken and/or uploaded to the internet.
2. Campers who experience mild home-sickness and have access to a cell phone will call home. Once that connection is made, the parents almost always end up coming to camp to take their child home. The same camper without access to that phone will be over their home-sickness in 24 – 36 hours and have a wonderful camping experience.
3. Other campers who do not have access to cell phones, but see others using them often feel as if they are being treated unfairly even though they are the ones who chose to follow rules. Seeing this can also incite home-sickness where it otherwise might not occur.
4. 4-H Camp is designed to be a place for youth to have a safe and fun learning experience away from home and their parents. Having direct contact with parents/family/friends throughout the week interferes with and even negates the developmental benefits that the camping experience is designed to provide.

The mailing address at camp is provided in the cover letter. Family and friends are strongly encouraged to send letters, notes, and care packages to camp. You may even consider mailing packages on Thursday or Friday before camp so that your child will have a package waiting for them the first day of camp when they arrive. We suggest you send your child to camp with self addressed, stamped envelopes for their use.

In the event of an emergency involving your child at camp, you will be contacted immediately. This is why it is important to list all the ways we can contact you on the health form and to list at least one emergency contact that we can call if we can't reach you immediately. Likewise, if there is an emergency at home and you need to get in touch with your child, you can call the 4-H center main number at any time to reach someone and get a message to your child.

Those who bring unauthorized cell phones to camp **will** have them confiscated and may be subject to disciplinary actions. Parents can pick up those cell phones when they pick up their campers on Friday, or they can come to the Extension Office the following week.

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, contact your local 4-H Extension Agent.

Please help us enforce this policy for the benefit of everyone and to ensure a fun, safe, and happy week at 4-H camp! We appreciate your cooperation.

Teen Counselor Guidelines

Possession or use of cell phones by campers is prohibited at camp. Teen Counselors may have limited access to cell phones based on Unit/Cluster preferences and only under the following guidelines:

- Teens will turn cell phones in to the 4-H Agent/Program Assistant or his/her designee at the beginning of the camp program.
- Cell phones will be labeled with the owner's name and kept in a secure location for the duration of camp.
- The 4-H Agent/Program Assistant or his/her designee, in cooperation with the Center Program Director will provide controlled, supervised access to the collected cell phones at a designated time and place during camp that is separate from campers and camp programs.
- Cell phones that are not turned in at the beginning of camp will be confiscated and the owner subject to disciplinary action according to the Code of Conduct and 4-H Center policies.

Points to remember:

- Units camping together need to agree on whether or not to allow teens access. If not then use "camp participants" instead of "campers" in previous letter.
- Center Program Director will assist with identifying area and time of use, however, supervision will be the Unit/Clusters responsibility.
- Adults should be encouraged to use their phones in designated areas and not anywhere, anytime.