

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS 2023

Cypress Lake

Below is important information that will be helpful in preparing to send your daughter to camp. Please take the time to read it thoroughly. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us!

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2023 Camp Dates

FOURTH TERM	FIFTH TERM	SIXTH TERM
Open: Tuesday, May 30 th Close: Sunday, June 11 th	Open: Thursday, June 15 th Close: Tuesday, June 27 th	Open: Friday, June 30 th Close: Friday, July 28 th

ONLINE COMMUNICATION & FORMS

Our online communication enables us to provide a wealth of information to you instantly!

Login to your secure online account and have access to the following:

- View daily camp photos and news
- Submit or print all your daughter's required camper forms (**Requested deadline for submission is 4 weeks before her term**)
- Send your daughter emails
- Create guest accounts for other family and friends so they may view photos and send emails
- Update your family contact information and camper's information
- Make a payment or review financial information and your daughter's canteen account
- Re-Register your daughter for next summer

To access your online account, go to campmystic.com then click "[News, Photos & Forms](#)." Please login or set your password by using the email we have on file for you. If you are unsure which email is on file, please contact us.

Note: In order to send emails to your daughter during the term, you will need to pre-purchase email credits called "CampStamps" through your online account. Only parents and their invited "guest accounts" may send emails. Emails received after 11:00am will be delivered the next day.

We do filter emails for G-rated language and content. Those deemed inappropriate will not be delivered.

OPENING DAY INSTRUCTIONS

The first day of camp is full of excitement and fun! Please read the instructions below for details on what to do Opening Day:

- Gates open at 9:30AM. Please arrive during your scheduled drop off time. If you have siblings, please arrive at whichever time is most convenient for you.

9:30AM – 10:15AM	Completed 2 nd and 3 rd grades
10:30AM – 11:15AM	Completed 4 th and 5 th grades
11:30AM – 12:15PM	Completed 6 th , 7 th , 8 th and 9 th grades

*Aides (10th and 11th graders) are welcome to arrive the day before Opening Day after 2:00PM.

- Drive up to the office to check in and get your camp name tag.
- Next, check in with the nurses. ALL CAMPERS MUST CHECK IN WITH THE NURSES BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE CABIN.
 - If your camper has medications, please turn them into the nurses. All meds must be given to the Infirmary on Opening Day.
 - We will have the Lice Clinics of America present on opening day to perform a thorough check of your camper's head. **In the event that they should find nits or lice, there will be a fee of \$250.00 for them to perform treatment.** Note: You may visit a Lice Clinics of America location 5 days prior to Opening Day to have your daughter pre-screened which would allow your camper to skip the head check line on Opening Day. You will receive an email of participating LCA locations a few weeks before Opening Day.
- Now it's time to go to the cabin! Your daughter's counselor will assist in taking you there and then help your daughter find her assigned bunk. We then encourage you to say "good-byes" as quickly as possible ([see Homesickness](#)). The counselors will help your daughter unpack, make her bed, and get settled in!
- Testing and tryouts for certain activities, as well as, activity registration will occur later in the afternoon on Opening Day.

THINGS TO DO NOW

- Please mail us your camp tuition fee balance by April 15th for 4th Term, May 1st for 5th term, and May 15th for 6th term. On your invoice, there is also an incidentals charge and Canteen deposit. The incidentals charge covers laundry expenses, Canteen snacks, tribe dues and the medical fee (covering up to the first \$500 of medical costs). The Canteen deposit should be adequate for toiletries, tribe clothes, and other miscellaneous expenses (cabin pictures, etc.). The unused portion of this deposit will be kept on your daughter's account and rolled over to next year. Campers in their final year will be given a cash refund.
- Contact our office by **March 1st** if you have any new or ongoing medical concerns that will affect your daughter's camp participation.
- Complete your daughter's required camper forms as soon as possible. This includes following: Travel Form, Participation Agreement, and Health History. **(A physician's physical is no longer required. All required forms are electronically submitted through your CampinTouch account).** Go to campmystic.com then "[News, Photos & Forms](#)" to access the forms online. Requested deadline for submission is 4 weeks before the first day of the term she will be attending.
- Make a bus reservation (if applicable). [See Transportation – pg. 6](#) for more information.
- To make your daughter's camp experience successful, it is important that you notify us now about anything specific the camp office or counselors need to be made aware of concerning your daughter: medically, physically or emotionally, including any family issues. Please call our office to inform us. Catie Eastland, (Director – Cypress Lake), Tweety (Executive Director), Betsy (Assistant Director), Mary Liz (Head Nurse and Director – Guadalupe River), or Catherine Kelm (Office Manager).
- Make hotel reservations today for camp closing: campmystic.com/local-information.

INFIRMARY

Better known as “Band Aid Box,” the Infirmary is home to our Registered Nurses. A local pediatrician is also on call and makes a visit to the Infirmary once a week.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE SUBMIT HEALTH HISTORY FORM ON TIME (4 weeks before camp). This form is filled in by the parent, not a doctor. The Health History Form can be found online by going to: campmystic.com then “[News, Photos & Forms](#)”.

*****WE MUST HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER’S HEALTH HISTORY FORM BEFORE SHE ARRIVES IN ORDER TO TREAT HER*****

Please read the following details regarding medications:

- The nurses are able to provide Tylenol, Advil, Dimetapp, Benadryl, and other over-the-counter medications to campers as needed. ***Please do not send over-the-counter medications to camp unless it’s a medication that your daughter needs to take daily.***
- SEND ONLY PRESCRIPTION MEDS OR MEDS SPECIFIC TO YOUR DAUGHTER’S NEEDS. **ALL** medications brought to camp must be entered on your daughter’s Health History form prior to her arrival, otherwise we will not be able to take and administer the medication to your daughter. Prescription medications must be in their original packaging, which identifies the name of the patient, prescribing physician, the name of the medication, dosage, and frequency of administration. Please place all medications in a Ziploc bag labeled with the camper’s name and cabin.
- The camp schedule is busy and demanding, therefore, we ask that should your camper take medication for ADD/ADHD she remain on her medication during camp to allow her the highest opportunity for success.
- If your daughter has been diagnosed or treated for depression, anxiety, self-mutilation (cutting), bipolar disorder, suicidal thoughts, or other psychological conditions, we ask that you call and discuss the situation with the Director to ensure the highest opportunity of success for your daughter.
- Post-swimming eardrops are provided, as well as prescription eardrops for ear infections.
- We urge all campers who wear prescription glasses or contacts to bring an extra pair with them to camp. Please turn in an extra pair to the nurses on Opening Day, where they will keep it in a safe place.
- Campers who wear retainers are urged to bring an extra one to camp. Please give the extra retainer to the nurses on Opening Day, where they will keep it in a safe place.
- Prescription Refills: If your child will need a prescription refill during camp, please mail it to Camp Mystic, c/o Band Aid Box in a timely manner.
- If you have specific questions regarding medication or concerns that our nurses need to be made aware of before camp, please call our office to visit with Mary Liz (Head of Infirmary).

General hygiene and good health habits are encouraged during camp. We encourage you to discuss with your daughter the importance of taking showers, changing clothes regularly, and changing bed linens once a week. (Laundry is washed once a week and returned to campers). Please note all items sent out in the laundry will be washed and dried all together – laundry bag included. Other helpful conversations include drinking a lot of water, using sunscreen, resting during rest period and **not** sharing hairbrushes, hats or water bottles.

PACKAGE POLICY

Our greatest joy is providing a valuable camp experience for your daughter. We want to focus on daily activities, our camp program, and the basics of life at Mystic. In an effort to maintain these high standards, please respect and inform grandparents and other family members of our package policy guidelines:

- **NO PACKAGES OF ANY KIND (BOXES, BUBBLE MAILERS, ETC.) SHOULD BE SENT TO YOUR CAMPER. ANYTHING LARGER THAN A TYPICAL ENVELOPE SIZE WILL BE RETURNED TO SENDER.** Only USPS mail and email through your CampinTouch account will be allowed.
- **NECESSITIES/IMPORTANT ITEMS:** If your daughter forgot something that she needs, call our office and we will help you with this.
- **CANTEEN GIFT BAGS** are available to send to your daughter from our store for your convenience, but this is completely optional. **LIMIT 1 GIFT BAG** per term. For more information about sending gift bags visit campmystic.com/giftbags. New items for this summer will be updated later this spring.
- **LETTERS, LETTERS, LETTERS!** This is the greatest gift you can send your daughter at camp. We encourage tons of letters from family and friends. It’s a wonderful way to keep in touch and learn more about your daughter’s experience at camp! The address for letters to camp should include:

Camper Name – Camper Cabin & Term
Camp Mystic Cypress Lake
186 Felix Fisher Rd S
Hunt, TX 78024

PACKING LIST

Uniforms are not required, except we ask campers to wear white outfits on Sundays. Please limit your packing to one trunk and one duffle bag. Mystic furnishes wooden 4-drawer nightstands for each camper. Bed measurements are: 76x30x14.5.

*****ALL CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS MUST BE MARKED WITH THE CAMPER'S FULL NAME*****

****THE LIST BELOW IS ONLY A SUGGESTION****

- ☐ 6 pairs of shorts (any color)
- ☐ 6 shirts (any color)
- ☐ 6 white shirts
- ☐ 2 pairs of white shorts
- ☐ 2 *pairs of tribe-colored shorts* (red or blue)
(New campers pack both colors)
- ☐ 2 white outfits for Sundays
- ☐ 3-4 pairs of pajamas
- ☐ 3 bathing suits
- ☐ 10 pairs of socks
- ☐ 10 pairs of underwear
- ☐ Sweatshirt or light jacket
- ☐ 1 casual dress or skirt – long terms only
(for dance with boys' camp)
- ☐ *Rain jacket or poncho*
- ☐ 2 pairs of athletic/running shoes
- ☐ 1 pair of shoes to wear to waterfront
- ☐ 2 beach towels
- ☐ 2 bath towels
- ☐ 1 *pillow*
- ☐ 2 sets of twin sheets and pillowcases
- ☐ 1 twin bedspread or quilt
- ☐ 1 *light throw blanket*
- ☐ 2 *laundry bags, large size*
- ☐ 1 *fan*

- ☐ 1 *flashlight*
- ☐ 1 *water bottle*
- ☐ 1 small extension cord
- ☐ *Sunscreen*
- ☐ *Toiletries*
- ☐ *Stationery and stamps*
- ☐ Past tribe letters
- ☐ Bible for Bible study/devotionals

Riding campers:

- ☐ 2 pairs of jeans or riding pants
- ☐ 1 riding helmet* (no bike helmets allowed)
- ☐ 1 pair of riding boots

Optional Items:

- ☐ *Swimming goggles*
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ *Small backpack or tote bag*
- ☐ Books (no magazines)
- ☐ Golf clubs*
- ☐ Guitar*
- ☐ Tennis racket*

***Mystic provides these items for activity classes, but campers are welcome to bring their own.**

Items in italics are also available in the Canteen.

ADDITIONAL PACKING NOTES:

- ALL belongings must fit in either the trunk or duffle. This includes fan, pillows, bedding, shower caddy, etc. No loose items please!
- To preserve our wholesome environment, we ask for all tops and bottoms to meet in the middle, and shorts/skirts/dresses to be a conservative length.
- New campers should bring 2 pairs of red shorts and 2 pairs of blue shorts so they have tribe colors, regardless of which tribe they draw. Tribe clothes are available to purchase at the Canteen.
- Red or blue shorts and plain white t-shirts are worn for tribe activities.
- White outfits are worn on Sundays. Campers are welcome to wear white shirts, shorts, skirts or dresses. We do not require anything specific. Please pack what your daughter is most comfortable wearing.

TRUNKS, CLOTHING LABELS AND HELMETS

- **For trunks**, we recommend: Everything Summer Camp (C&N Footlocker), 800-535-2057 or www.everythingsummerncamp.com ("Undergrad" model size suggested. Use code "trail333MY" for a discount). Other places to shop are [Kangaroo Cases](http://KangarooCases.com) (use code "MYSTIC" for a discount), Academy, or The Container Store. Please remember these trunks double as benches so get a durable one. Use trunks that are no wider than 32 inches.
- **For clothing labels**, we recommend these companies: [Oliver's Labels](http://Oliver'sLabels.com) (found on your camp-in-touch account), www.campstamp.com, www.bestnametape.com, and www.stuckonyou.biz. (a "Rub-A-Dub" pen works well, too!)
- **For riding helmets**, we recommend: Dover Saddlery (www.doversaddlery.com) or State Line Tack (www.statelinetack.com). All campers taking horseback riding are required to wear a riding helmet. Bike helmets are NOT allowed.

MYSTIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Below is a list of special requests, important camp policies, and additional reminders to be aware of before sending your daughter to camp.

Electronics Policy

- **ACCEPTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES – devices that play music ONLY**
 - Inexpensive MP3 players
 - Older generation iPods that do not have a touch screen
 - CDs and CD players
 - Disposable cameras are allowed
- **UNACCEPTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES – devices that have a camera, touch screens, WiFi capabilities, video or gaming features are not allowed**
 - Polaroid or digital cameras of any type
 - Go-Pro or video cameras of any type
 - Cell phones (even those with SIM card removed)
 - iPod touches
 - iPads
 - Apple watches or smart watches of any type
 - Kindles, Nooks, or any other eReaders

If you are unsure about what to bring or what not to bring, please contact our office.

1. **Please DO NOT bring the following items to camp:**
 - **NO Plastic Drawers or Dressers**
 - **NO Folding Chairs/Stadium Chairs or Hammocks (eg. Enos)**
2. We sincerely discourage campers from bringing expensive jewelry, clothing, etc. In the past they have created many problems related to borrowing, breaking, and losing of equipment. Campers may not have tattoos or wear body piercings (besides pierced ears) to camp.
3. Make sure the music and books your daughter brings to camp do not contain profanity or adult subjects. Inappropriate material will be taken up.
4. We discourage campers from bringing money to camp. The Canteen deposit is adequate for your camper's needs. Aides are able to draw from their account for Aides Day Off.
5. Campers do not leave the campgrounds with parents or friends during the camp term. The camp program runs most effectively when all campers stay at camp the entire term. Other than emergencies, any special situations requiring a camper to leave camp during the term must be approved by the directors prior to the start of camp. Your daughter's involvement in particular activities could be affected by her absence (eg., war canoe).
6. We have a "NO VISITOR" policy during camp. Parents, grandparents, other family members, friends and boyfriends are not allowed to visit during the term. Boyfriends will not be allowed at camp closing unless escorted by the camper's parents.
7. Mystic has a "NO GIFT EXCHANGE" policy. Please do not purchase gifts for your daughter to exchange with campers or counselors. This policy has been made at the request of the parents. We encourage big and little sis's to make cards or write special notes to each other during the term rather than exchange gifts.
8. **NO MATCHING cabin shirts, costumes, pajamas, or accessories are allowed.** We have cabinmate changes/additions up until the week before camp and would not want any camper to be left out. General themes (i.e. movie stars, anything tie-dye, patriotic, crazy hair, etc.) are allowed for the scavenger hunt. However, we ask that you please not create cabin shirts or ask everyone in the cabin to purchase a specific shirt, costume, or accessory.
9. Laundry will be sent out every week. Every camper must send her laundry (including bed linens) each time. Please visit with your daughter before camp about the importance of changing her clothes regularly. Because we use an institutional laundry service, we recommend that campers NOT bring expensive clothes to camp. REMINDER: Label all clothes and belongings with your daughter's full name.
10. Catholic Mass is available for Catholic campers once a week at Mystic. If you would like your daughter to attend Mass, please encourage her to do so before she arrives at camp.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays at Mystic are very special! We will provide a birthday cake for your daughter to celebrate with her cabin mates. This is also the only time a camper may get a phone call from her parents. We suggest parents call our office to wish their daughter a Happy Birthday at 3:45pm. If this time is not convenient for the parent, please call the office in advance to arrange another time.

TRANSPORTATION TO MYSTIC

*****PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY*****

1.) Driving your daughter to camp: Please arrive between 9:30am-12:15pm on Opening Day. After check in, you may unload your daughter's belongings at her cabin. To ease homesickness and the anxiety felt by some campers on Opening Day, we urge you to not stay long after bringing your daughter to camp. This will help us have the campers' full attention. Counselors are ready and eager to help make their bed, unpack, and get settled into the routine of camp life. Campers will then begin a day full of fun and scheduled activities.

2.) Charter Bus Transportation: Buses are available from Dallas, Houston, and Austin. We highly encourage your daughter to ride the bus if there is a departing location near you. Campers begin their camping experience on the bus. They will get to know girls from their town that they will recognize throughout their camp term. We have found riding the bus encourages new friendships and makes the transition from home to camp much easier. Older campers entertain the new and younger campers by telling funny stories, explaining Mystic traditions and teaching camp songs.

NOTE: By request of campers and parents, all beds are assigned before campers arrive. Exchanging of beds will be allowed after every camper in the cabin has arrived. **Please do not send a cell phone with your daughter on the bus.** Bus chaperones will have one if needed.

CHARTER BUS RESERVATION INFORMATION:

- 1) Make a bus reservation by mailing a check or sending payment via Venmo to the Mystic representative in Houston, Dallas, or Austin whose name and information is below. **We encourage you to secure your bus reservation early as spots fill up quickly.**
- 2) Write your camper's name and term on the check or in the transaction notes, along with your email address.
- 3) Campers need to wear shorts, nametag (mailed to you prior to camp), and bring a sack lunch with a drink.
*Reminder - No cell phones!
- 4) Campers may take one trunk and one duffle bag. Please use our provided luggage tags and attach them to your camper's trunk and duffle bag. **Please respect what the representatives and bus companies can accommodate on the buses. If you prefer shipping your luggage to Camp Mystic, use FedEx or UPS.**
- 5) The charter buses typically arrive at Camp Mystic by 11:00am from Austin and 12:30pm from Dallas and Houston.

<p><u>HOUSTON AREA BUS:</u> <i>Your check/payment is your reservation.</i></p> <p>VENMO: @Christy-Heno OR Mail \$150 check to:</p> <p>Mrs. Christy Heno 2922 University Blvd Houston, TX 77005 (713-305-7312) or teamheno@msn.com *Please include camper's name & term on check or in your Venmo transaction.</p> <p><u>RESERVATION DEADLINE:</u> 4TH TERM: BY APRIL 28TH 5TH TERM: BY MAY 19TH 6TH TERM: BY MAY 26TH</p> <p>Opening Day Departure Information:</p> <p>Meet at Memorial City Mall (parking lot B – located on Barryknoll behind the mall) by 7:00am to check in. Bus leaves promptly at 7:30am. Pack a sack lunch and drink.</p> <p>Note: Mothers wishing to chaperone the bus may contact Mrs. Heno. Chaperone's daughter will ride free (*mothers of first-time campers are ineligible to chaperone).</p>	<p><u>DALLAS AREA BUS:</u> <i>Your check/payment is your reservation.</i></p> <p>VENMO: @ashley-shull-3 OR Mail \$150 check to:</p> <p>Ashley Shull 4436 Glenwick Dallas, TX 75205 (214-415-0544) or ash102878@aol.com *Please include camper's name & term on check or in your Venmo transaction.</p> <p><u>RESERVATION DEADLINE:</u> 4TH TERM: BY APRIL 28TH 5TH TERM: BY MAY 19TH 6TH TERM: BY MAY 26TH</p> <p>Opening Day Departure Information:</p> <p>Meet at North Park Mall in front of Macy's (northeast corner on Park Lane at Central Expressway) by 6:00am to check in. Bus leaves promptly at 6:30am. Pack a sack lunch and drink.</p>	<p><u>AUSTIN AREA BUS:</u> <i>Your check/payment is your reservation.</i></p> <p>VENMO: @paigeriderp OR Mail \$50 check to:</p> <p>Paige Richards 6307 Mountainclimb Drive Austin, TX 78731 (512-740-7047) or campmysticaustinrep@gmail.com *Please include camper's name & term on check or in your Venmo transaction.</p> <p><u>RESERVATION DEADLINE:</u> 4TH TERM: BY APRIL 28TH 5TH TERM: BY MAY 19TH 6TH TERM: BY MAY 26TH</p> <p>Opening Day Departure Information:</p> <p>Meet at Austin Oaks Church, 4220 Monterey Oaks Blvd. by 7:00am for check in. Bus leaves promptly at 7:30am. Snacks and beverages will be provided on the bus. No need to pack a sack lunch.</p>
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3.) Flying to Camp - Transportation from San Antonio Airport: All campers arriving from out of state via airplane will need to be driven to camp by a parent, guardian, or transportation service. We recommend [Hill Country Limousine](http://HillCountryLimousine.com) (830-896-1429).

PARENT REPORTS, PHONE CALLS & LETTERS

PARENT REPORTS: While your daughter is at Mystic, you will receive reports from her counselors. These letters will update you on your daughter's learning experience and progress at camp. Please notify us immediately of any concerns that you may have about your daughter's stay. If a problem with a cabinmate, counselor, camp activity, etc. has come to your attention through your daughter's letters, we need to know right away. Please call our office and we will be happy to assist you.

- If parent reports need to be sent to anyone other than parents or additional addresses, please let us know.

PHONE CALLS: Our policy requests that campers not receive phone calls during the term. We ask that phone calls be limited to an emergency basis only. Please do not promise your daughter that you will call her at camp. A camper can be doing great, but when she hears the sound of a familiar voice from home, it can cause homesickness. LETTERS, LETTERS and more LETTERS are the best form of communication!

LETTERS: Whether it is your daughter's first time at camp, or she is a multi-year veteran, she will look forward to the letters she receives from her family. Though you won't be able to call or visit your daughter during her stay, we do encourage writing her lots of LETTERS! Yes, it takes time, but the old-fashioned handwritten letter from Mom or Dad can still make all the difference in the world to a camper.

Format for mailing letters:

Camper Name – Camper Cabin & Term
Camp Mystic Cypress Lake
186 Felix Fisher Road S
Hunt, TX 78024

Suggestions to get the most out of your written letters:

- 1) **MAIL YOUR FIRST LETTER BEFORE CAMP STARTS.** Your daughter will receive a letter during her first rest period on the second day of camp, when all mail and gift bags are delivered.
- 2) **WRITE FREQUENTLY AND KEEP LETTERS POSITIVE.** A good letter is newsy, upbeat, and encouraging. Your goal is to say a cheerful hello and give a positive report about life at home. You want to instill confidence and support for her growing independence. Ask questions about activities, cabin mates, big or little sister and goals for the term. You can also make a fun comment on a photo you have seen on our site and with any luck she'll answer them in one of her letters home! Please don't be concerned if she doesn't respond. To encourage letter writing to you, pack pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes and stationery in your daughter's trunk. (Mystic also promotes camper communication with parents through the traditional "Chicken Letter," your daughter's meal ticket into Sunday lunch).
- 3) **AVOID MENTIONING SAD THINGS** that your daughter can't do anything about while she's away at camp. Save bad news until you can talk to her face to face. If there is a major piece of bad news and you need to tell your daughter immediately, it would be appropriate to call and ask for Tweety, Dick, Catie, Mary Liz, Betsy, or Catherine. Together, we can decide the best course of action to take in informing your daughter of the news.
- 4) **WHAT DO I DO WHEN I GET A TEAR-STAINED LETTER?** Please remember the letter probably took at least two days to reach you, so chances are she is already over her sad situation and having a great time. This is a good time to write back and address the matter. If you would like, you can give us a call so we can visit with your daughter's counselors and get a better idea of how she is doing. Please realize that our call back to you may seem like it takes an eternity, but as soon as we have the pertinent information, we will call you. If your daughter is homesick, we would appreciate any insights you can give us about her, like if she responds well with an extra hug, for after all, who knows your child better than you, her parent. Just like the other upbeat, newsy and encouraging letters, you will want to add empathetic statements - words that show you understand how she feels.

Here is a sample letter:

Dear Suzie,

I got your letter today about how homesick you've been feeling. I could tell, just by reading the letter, how much those homesick feelings bother you. I remember we talked about homesick feelings being normal, but I guess we didn't expect them to be so strong. It took a lot of courage for you to write me about how bad you've been feeling. Thanks for letting me know. I'm hoping that you have talked to your counselor by now and that she has offered you some help. I will look forward to hearing from you again, and just remember that camp is already half over and before you know it, you'll be home. If you are still having some homesick feelings, do some of those things we talked about before camp, like staying busy, writing lots of letters, talking to your counselors and looking on the bright side. Remember, there are so many things that you do at camp that you can't do at home.

Fido says "hi" and is excited for a walk. I will take him out after I finish this letter. Daddy and I love you. We'll be there at the end of the term, just like we planned. Write again soon!

We're so proud of you for being so strong and can't wait to hear all about the wonderful things you have learned when we see you at the end of camp.

Love, Mom

This letter is only an example, but we hope it will give you an idea of where to start. If you receive a heart-wrenching letter, it's important to give your daughter **confidence** and **encouragement**.

HOMESICKNESS BEFORE CAMP

- Consider your daughter's level of interest in overnight camp. What sparked her interest? Has it endured, or have you had to do a lot of convincing? If your daughter goes to camp, will she be going for herself or for you? **Remember, children themselves are the best judges of when they are ready for camp!**
- Consider your daughter's previous experiences away from home. Has she spent at least a few weekends away from home? What were those separations like for her and for you?
- Consider your daughter's attitude toward camp. Is she excited or does she think that camp will be too difficult? Sometimes attitudes become self-fulfilling prophecies, so do your best to create positive expectations.
- Consider your family situation. Have there been recent stressful changes within the family? Have there been losses, unexpected separations or other changes within the family? Have you and your daughter adjusted to those changes? Are both of you ready to be apart? Please make us aware of any recent changes.
- Consider your own approach to camp. Encouragement is important, but make sure you're not being too pushy. It's normal to be nervous, but don't worry out loud.
- Be sure you send a clear message that camp is a good thing and you will both enjoy the time apart. Avoid sending mixed messages, like "I wish you weren't going" or "We'll miss you." Be firm and confident as opening day nears.

Besides being a normal developmental phenomenon, homesickness also has a silver lining. Remember, when your daughter misses home, it means she loves her parents!

Below, please find some of the best ways to prevent strong homesickness:

- Include your daughter in camp planning, so she has a sense of control.
- Talk with your daughter about homesickness, so she understands it is normal.
- Use a wall calendar to plan for camp and avoid unpleasant surprises.
- Put her length of stay in perspective, to help your daughter grasp the duration of camp.
- Reframe time to make the camp stay seem relatively short.
- Keep doubts to yourself so you do not make your daughter more anxious.
- Arrange for practice time away from home so you and your daughter get used to being apart.
- If possible, avoid moves and traumatic situations in the weeks before or during camp.
- Be truthful about stressful issues, to instill trust in your daughter.
- Provide your daughter comfort after negative life events so she is less worried at camp.
- Send your daughter a letter at camp before the first day, and write or email a couple of times a week with upbeat news.
- Do not make deals with your daughter, such as picking her up early from camp if she is not happy. Such bargains undermine your daughter's confidence and set her up for failure. Encourage her instead. If you have to make a deal, it is a good indication that your daughter might not be ready for camp. Please call us so we can discuss this situation.

HOMESICKNESS DURING CAMP

Although not every camper misses home while she is at camp, a little homesickness is common - especially for first-time campers. As a result, you may get some sad letters saying, "Please come get me now! I want to go home!" These letters can be tough on parents. In case your child misses home, or you get the "I'll die if you don't come get me" letter, here are a few insights:

- Homesickness has been around since camp began and we can treat it. We have had to deal with just about every case of homesickness known to a camper. That's part of our job.
- This, too, shall pass. Homesickness can last anywhere from a few hours to up to four or five days, but children do get through it. When they do, they experience tremendous feelings of self-worth and independence.
- Leaving camp is usually the worst answer. If you try to alleviate your daughter's feelings about missing home by picking her up, your child will learn "I can't make it at camp," or "When the going gets tough, Mom and Dad will rescue me." This is not the desired end to the camping experience.
- Stick it out. For the above reason, we ask you to see camp as a commitment both on your part and ours. Together we can provide an incredible opportunity for personal growth for your child.

Much of the above information on homesickness was found in The Summer Camp Handbook, written by Christopher A. Thurber, PhD and Jon C. Malinowski, PhD.

FINAL CHECKLIST

PREPARING FOR CAMP:

- ☐ Mail in camp tuition fee balance by:
 - April 15th – 4th Term
 - May 1st – 5th Term
 - May 15th – 6th Term
- ☐ Submit her online Health History, Participation Agreement, & Travel Form
- ☐ Make a charter bus reservation (if applicable)
- ☐ Notify Mystic office if arrival date and time is after 12:15pm on Opening Day, or if departure is before Closing Day
- ☐ Notify Mystic about any important matters regarding your daughter, if necessary

PACKING REMINDERS:

- ☐ No electronic devices with a touch screen
- ☐ Attach luggage tags to camper's trunk and duffle bag. *All belongings must fit in either the trunk or duffle bag. No loose items!

- ☐ Horseback Riding Helmet, jeans, and boots (if taking riding)
- ☐ Extra pair of prescription glasses, contacts, or retainer
- ☐ Label ALL clothes and belongings
- ☐ No expensive jewelry or clothing
- ☐ No money
- ☐ No food, candy, magazines etc.
- ☐ No Folding Chairs
- ☐ No Plastic Drawers
- ☐ No Hammocks

OPENING DAY:

- ☐ Gates open at 9:30am
- ☐ Drive to Office to check-in
- ☐ Stop at the nurse's station/turn in meds (before going to cabin)
- ☐ Head to the cabin and unload belongings
- ☐ Visit with counselors briefly, then say your goodbyes. Counselors are ready to get your daughter settled in!

“BE YE KIND, ONE TO ANOTHER” ~ Camp Mystic motto