

# Camp St. Matt's Behavior Policy

## Expectations

Saint Matthew's standard of care is that every child feels safe and secure while engaging in fun, structured games and activities. Camp is an extension of our school programs, and we are guided by our school's mission of nurturing mind, heart and soul in a Christian environment. We strive to build a child's self-esteem, character, and social skills while also setting reasonable, natural boundaries and consequences. We encourage self-discipline and require respect for others. When behavior issues arise, we work within the camp setting, utilizing all available tools to help the camper meet their needs. However, behavioral issues require not only camp counselors and team member intervention, but also support and reinforcement of camp expectations and boundaries from parents.

It is important that campers have clear boundaries and easy to understand expectations. Camp expectations are reviewed with all campers by Saint Matthew's staff members daily. Saint Matthew's utilizes a multi-step Behavior Policy consistently through Camp. Should a camper need to change a behavior, Saint Matthew's counselors always start with multiple gentle, helpful verbal corrections or redirections. These initial attempts at behavior change are always framed as positively as possible and often include asking the camper what they should be doing rather than only pointing out the infraction. If it becomes clear that verbal redirections are not helping the camper change their behavior, Saint Matthew's may issue consequences, including but not limited to, time out, loss of privileges, etc. Early pick up, suspension, or removal from the program can result if behavior that is not conducive to our mission cannot be rectified. Consequences for this type of behavior is determined on a case by case basis.

## Additional Behaviors that are not acceptable for Camp

- **Harassment, intimidation, teasing, and bullying** are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- **Physical Aggression (hitting/kicking/striking/pushing/biting/pinching/throwing items, etc)** is not acceptable behavior. We understand that sometimes emotions can be difficult to handle, but we cannot tolerate physical aggression. We work to encourage campers to express themselves verbally, approach counselors with issues they are having with other campers, or communicate their needs to a parent. Our primary priority is camper safety, and physical aggression puts other campers and staff at risk. Physical aggression is grounds for removal from camp for the day, week, season or permanently.
- **Inappropriate language, inappropriate subjects, racial slurs, derogatory language, etc** will not be tolerated.
- **Refusal to Comply with Requests:** Safety is our absolute top priority. This means that we must trust that all campers, when asked to do or not do something, comply with staff requests. Staff requests will *never* be unwarranted or without cause. Should it become clear that a camper repeatedly fails to comply with staff, they will be removed from activities or camp.

## Dismissal From Camp

Some children have needs that are beyond the scope of Saint Matthew's staff training and environmental structure. If we find that we are not able to properly meet a camper's needs, or if we determine that Saint

Matthew's is not the best environment for a camper, we may choose to remove them from camp. While this decision could be based on the camper exhibiting multiple, unchanged behavioral issues, it could also be because a child is not engaging well with their peers, is not ready to be away from their primary caregiver for the entire day, has developmental needs that our staff is not equipped to meet, is unable to adapt to our environment, or any other number of non-behavior related issues that we have seen arise over the years. We do not take removing a child from camp lightly, and only do so when we feel it is in the child's best interest, or necessary for the safety or operation of the camp. Should a camper be removed from camp, we will discuss with the parent whether they will be invited to reenroll in future years, or if removal from Saint Matthew's camps and activities is permanent.

### **Meeting the Needs of Campers**

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In addition to camp specific training, each staff member is required to complete the "Safeguarding God's Children" training. This is required by the Episcopal Diocese for all staff members who interact with children. This helps to keep all our children safe on campus and at school events on and off campus. The goal is to make our churches, schools and institutions safe places where each person is treated with care and respect.

### **We Appreciate Your Support**

Saint Matthew's strives to create a safe environment for all children and families enrolled in our programs. We want every person to enjoy their time here, which requires quick, consistent action when behavior is inappropriate or disruptive. When counselors, parents and campers all work together as a team, we have an amazing camp!