



CELL PHONE USE AT CYL

Camp is a wonderful opportunity for your children to be “unplugged” and we believe this approach to cell phone use builds trust, autonomy, and independence.

At CYL we have always taken the safety, well-being, and camp experience of our participants – your children – very seriously. We also know we cannot do this without your help and cooperation. With more youth using cell phones/tablets and other technologies we need to take appropriate action to ensure everyone's privacy.

When participants come to camp, they – and you- are taking a leap of faith, temporarily transferring primary care from you as their parents to us as camp leaders and facilitators. This experience is one of growth, yet a challenging aspect of camp life. As youth learn to trust other caring adults, they grow and learn, little by little to solve some of their own challenges. We believe this emerging independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp. This is one of the important ways your child develops greater resilience and personal growth. The separation from technology elevates the overnight program because campers can be fully present in the experience: interacting and developing friendships with one another and appreciating the outdoor activities we participate in throughout the week.

As parents and campers start to look towards their overnight stay with us this summer, the question of “can I pack my cellphone?” often comes up. While the answer is “Yes” we strongly encourage you to discuss with your child the benefits and advantages of being “unplugged” for the week. CYL has a very strict and supervised approach to the use of cell phones or other electronic devices.

CYL approach to cell phone and technology management:

All cell phones will be collected and kept in a safe and locked room under the supervision of our onsite Ontario Co-operative Association staff person. Participants will have access to their cell phones to communicate with their parents/guardian one-half hour prior to breakfast, 7:30 to 8:00am and one-half hour after dinner from 6:30 to 7:00pm. In addition, participants will have access to their phones when required for activities during the week as determined by their facilitation team.

In addition to cell phones the following devices will not be permitted at camp:

Laptops, Netbooks, Kindles, Nooks, Switches, or other electronic devices are not permitted at camp.

I understand this is a leap of faith for parents/guardians, but it is also a great opportunity for your children to grow and have a wonderful camp experience.

Some common questions we are asked:

“What if my child gets homesick? Calling home will make them feel better.”

We can appreciate your worry about your child getting homesick and spending time away from home. This is the case for some of our participants, and we spend a good amount of time on the first day addressing their concerns: we familiarize them with their cabins and common areas we'll be using to help them feel safe and secure in their environment. We'll also lead a number of get-to-know-you games, so that participants get to know one another right off the bat. We share a meal together, which is one of the fastest ways to make friends and overcome shyness often felt at the start of the week. At CYL we are intentional about the scheduling of activities, ensuring that each day is filled and so their focus is kept on having fun, while not overwhelming them with too much all at once. We find that all of this, on top of the individualized support our facilitators provide in overcoming anxiety and homesickness while away from home, greatly deter most participants desire to call home. Research has shown that calling home, in fact, worsens cases of homesickness because campers are reminded of the distance between them and home, and instead they leave the phone call more upset than before. Resisting the urge to call home is a part of overcoming homesickness and ultimately developing the independence we try to foster throughout the week! In addition to the scheduled time participants may reach out to one of the facilitators who will ensure they are able to contact you.

“I'm not comfortable with my child not having a cellphone”

While we respect your authority as the parent, at CYL we try to instill and develop a sense of independence and autonomy. We want the children to develop their problem-solving skills and to take their own personal steps into resolving situations that they encountered. We know that an overnight camp is a big step for all family members – family pets are even known to be grumpy when their favourite human leaves for a few days! – but please know that your child's physical and emotional safety is our utmost concern.

“How can I contact CYL if needed”:

Outside of the scheduled contact times emergency contact information is provided below for our CYL Director. Should we need to reach out to you we will contact you based on the information provided during the registration process.

All parents/guardians may contact Carol Fleming, Director of CYL anytime day or night at

Phone: 289-442-1433

Email: cfleming@ontario.coop

The CYL Director will reach out to the facilitation team on site with any questions or concerns you may have. If needed, we can arrange a call home during the day.

You will also have the opportunity to see pictures of your children throughout the week on our social media sites. We will be capturing all the fun participants are having and create a video each week. The video will be sent to you after the camp week has ended. Please click on the link for access to our social media sites <https://linktr.ee/CooperativeYoungLeaders>

Overnight camps are that much more fun when the camper comes racing home and spends dinner time sharing their stories and adventures with the family. Please contact us if you have any further questions or concerns.

Overnight camp is a magical time for all, and we look forward to working with you to achieve this goal!