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DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AN ALLERGY OR OTHER SPECIAL HEALTH CONCERNS AND NEEDS?

CAMP TAMAKWA'S POLICY

Camp Tamakwa takes very seriously its responsibility to care for its campers and staff in myriad ways, but most importantly, with respect to health and safety concerns. Recent years have seen a rise in the incidence of serious, sometimes life threatening, allergies, dietary restrictions and other health issues. Consequently, we have experienced increased inquiries about Tamakwa's policies in this regard.

Different camps have different philosophies about many issues; the issue of special health needs is no exception. Some camps make no individual accommodations with respect to individual food allergies and other dietary and special health needs or concerns. With respect to certain food products, other camps go to the opposite extreme of totally banning certain foods. Tamakwa's policy is somewhere in between. It is impossible to identify all of the individual and unique health and medical issues presented at every camp season. With a full recreational program in a wilderness setting such as ours, we cannot possibly accommodate every individual health restriction and medical need. We have had campers with peanut, tree nut, and other food allergies, diabetes, lactose intolerance, gluten free and other special diets, and campers with hearing and other such impairments. Some of these conditions are more serious than others, and some, as you know, even life threatening. It is Tamakwa's policy not to adopt one general protocol to address every health concern. Tamakwa's policy is simply that any significant allergies and/or other special health concerns and needs be addressed and resolved on an individual basis.

Peanut and Other Food Allergies

We make every attempt to reasonably accommodate campers with various food allergies. Indeed, many families select Tamakwa because of our protocols to accommodate food allergies and other dietary restrictions. Recently, when we expanded our kitchen facilities, we even constructed a special area to store supplemental food provided by parents for their campers with medically required dietary restrictions. Camp Tamakwa, like every other venue for children, has experienced a continual increase of children with various peanut and other nut allergies. We prohibit the serving of any known or identifiable peanut or nut products and ingredients within our food program in camp and on out of camp trips. We cannot however, guarantee to our camper families that every aspect of Tamakwa is absolutely free of any peanut or nut contamination whatsoever. But, everything we can reasonably control is free of nut products. As a replacement for peanut butter, we currently serve SunButter, a sunflower seed based product, and sometimes SoyButter as a substitute product and have found them to be very popular amongst campers and staff.

Decisions whether a camper with any potentially life-threatening allergy, be it peanut, tree nut, or otherwise, goes on a canoe or hiking trip will be made on an individual basis and may involve a parent or camp initiated consultation. Generally, the history, severity and sensitivity of the allergy, the age and awareness of the child, the comfort zone of the parents and child, and trip route, are factors considered in making tripping decisions.

(OVER)

ALSO, IT IS CRUCIAL THAT ANY CANDY, SNACKS, OR FOOD SENT UP WITH CAMPERS FOR THEIR TRIP TO CAMP DO NOT CONTAIN ANY PEANUT OR NUT PRODUCTS.

WHAT YOU MUST DO ABOUT ALLERGIES AND/OR SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CONCERNS

If your child has any allergy, dietary restriction, or other special medical condition or health concerns, you **MUST** make sure Tamakwa can adequately accommodate those specific needs. It is **imperative** that you immediately provide us with all information regarding any significant allergies, dietary restrictions, or health issues. This information must be provided **separate and apart** from the routine camp Health History Form required of all campers prior to camp. Please be sure to follow this checklist:

1. As soon as possible (and as far in advance of the camp session as possible,) please write us a detailed letter or e-mail communicating the specific nature of the allergy or health issue or concern. Given the needs of your child, provide us a comprehensive description: identifying the condition and any limitations; summarizing the history, nature and severity of the allergy or condition; appropriate treatment and medications; and a list of do's and don'ts, etc.
2. After this initial communication, on a need be basis, camp will respond and engage in a dialogue. Both you and camp must feel confident that Tamakwa remains an appropriate and safe placement for your child.
3. When necessary, a mutually agreeable protocol will be put into writing and made part of your child's medical file at camp.
4. Camp may request and/or require additional medical documentation.
5. For health conditions outside of camp's normal risk tolerance, we may require a signed release as a condition to permitting a camper to attend Tamakwa.
6. Alternatively, Camp Tamakwa reserves the right to determine it cannot accommodate a camper's individual needs.

There must be a candid disclosure by the camper's family of any significant health needs and concerns, and a candid disclosure by Tamakwa identifying what it can and cannot do to accommodate an individual camper's needs. If both the camper and family are comfortable with the protocol and accommodation of the special health needs of an individual camper, it will be communicated to all the necessary staff at Tamakwa (directors, physicians, nurses, section heads, counsellors, trippers, etc.).

Tamakwa prides itself on its ability to individualize certain needs. However, all special health needs and associated risks need to be knowingly assumed. Some risks can be assumed by both the camp and a camper's family and some cannot.

DISCLOSURE: It is also the absolute responsibility of each parent to let us know of any relevant information with respect to any emotional, physical, psychological or medical history or issues regarding your child to facilitate a positive summer camp experience. If we observe certain behaviours that are negatively affecting your child, or your child's peers and/or staff and no information was provided to us, we cannot address such issues appropriately and effectively. In the end, it is your child who will be negatively affected. Please be proactive by informing us of any potential behavioural issues or past conduct from any previous years at camp or school to help us render appropriate and nurturing care for your child. **IF YOUR CHILD TAKES REGULAR MEDICATION DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR AND YOU ARE CONSIDERING DISCONTINUING THEM FOR THE SUMMER, THIS MUST BE DISCUSSED AND APPROVED BY CAMP IN ADVANCE OF THE CAMP SESSION.**