

## Social Media and Communications Guidelines

**Purpose:** Protection of campers, staff, and volunteers.

These guidelines are for all camp staff (summer seasonal staff and permanent employees) as well as camp volunteers. All camp staff and volunteers can be viewed (correctly or incorrectly) as representatives of the Camp and Retreat Ministries of the Dakotas and Minnesota Conferences of The United Methodist Church (DK/MN UMC CAMPS), which can add impact to your public reflections on the organization (whether or not that is your intent). Because of this, our camps require that staff and volunteers observe the following guidelines when referring to the camp (its programs or activities, its campers, and/or other employees) in any/all social media communication platforms.

In general, DK/MN UMC CAMPS views social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube, etc.) positively and respects the right of staff and volunteers to use them as a medium of self-expression. But **for the protection of campers and yourself, we ask you to respect the following guidelines.**

**Photographs & Videos—DO NOT use your personal online accounts to post any photos or videos of campers.** DK/MN UMC CAMPS asks for, and must receive written permission from, each camper's parent/guardian to use camper photos/videos in written and online materials. Legal action can be taken against those who violate this policy. When taking photos, always avoid cabin/living/changing areas. Any photos/videos taken by a staff and volunteers may be given to the local campsite office to be posted on the camp's website and social media outlets. It will be up to the discretion of each campsite staff to decide whether to post any photos/videos. Camp Deans (primary leader) may use their discretion to share photos to specific UMC camping event sites provided they first check with the camp director to ensure parental permission has been granted.

**Use of Personal Social Media Sites—**When you work with campers, you have a *public persona* and become a role model for them. Please limit your personal social media public profile to information, comments, photos, etc. that are appropriate should a camper or parent view them. Be respectful of DK/MN UMC CAMPS (its employees, volunteers, campers, and its policies) in all social media postings, blogs, and other mediums of online communications. (Note: Although some social media sites may offer privacy settings, be aware that the Internet is a public domain. Staff and volunteers are expected to be aware of these guidelines regardless of their privacy settings.)

**Camp Logos—**DK/MN UMC CAMPS staff and volunteers are prohibited from using camp logos on personal social media pages or websites without written permission.

**Communication During Camp Emergencies—**In case of an emergency at camp, we have procedures in place to communicate with parents, churches, media, or any other outside groups. The Director of DK/MN UMC Camp and Retreat Ministries, the Camp Site Director, or designated representative will handle all media communications including communication with parents and/or churches as needed. **DO NOT post happenings of an emergency on your own social media profiles or sites.**

**Communication with campers after camp—**DK/MN UMC CAMPS does not allow further communication or continued relationships with campers outside of camp without documented permission from the parent/guardian. This includes but is not limited to text messages, phone calls, email, app-based platforms, or social media. **Camp staff and volunteers are NOT ALLOWED to give out personal information to campers** including phone numbers, email addresses, social media usernames, personal mailing addresses, etc.

DK/MN UMC CAMPS understands that interacting with campers after a camp session can be positive, as it helps to nurture and support the many ways participants experienced Christ, Creation, and Community while at camp. If communication with a camper is necessary after their camp session, DK/MN UMC CAMPS recommends channeling this through the local camp or lead Dean (primary leader). This type of communication between campers and staff/volunteers is acceptable insofar as it is a positive, healthy relationship for all parties and parents/guardians are fully aware. Camping's "golden rule" states that all interactions which occur between leaders and campers while attending camp must be done out in the open and in the company of other adults. Similarly, whatever communication takes place between leaders and campers via technology should be done in a way that allows other adults access to what is shared. This is for the safety and protection of staff and volunteers as well as for the safety and well-being of our campers. This also applies when campers under the age of 18 initiate contact with staff and volunteers.

**I have read and understand the above guidelines and agree to their terms.**

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Staff or Volunteer Signature

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Date