

Ohio 4-H Camp Cell Phone Policy

(Ohio 4-H Policy effective October 2015)

As a means of risk management, youth participants (campers and counselors) may not possess cell phones* during 4-H camp. Counselors shall not use cell phones (as alarms, music players, etc.) in their cabins at any time. Camp Program Directors have discretion for permitting camp counselors selective cell phone use during limited time periods, such as during out-posting, nature treks, or off-camp travel (field trips), or for other safety concerns where the use of two-way radios is not practicable. Camp Program Directors will determine consequences for possessing a cell phone. The State 4-H Office recommends a zero tolerance approach: If an individual is caught with a prohibited cell phone, they will be sent home at the family's expense.

*Camp Program Directors also have discretion for prohibiting other internet-enabled devices at their 4-H camps.

The Athens/Fairfield/Hocking/Pickaway/Ross County Camp Director recognizes the Ohio 4-H Camp Cell Phone Policy. However, Athens/Fairfield/Hocking/Pickaway/Ross County Camps will abide by the Tar Hollow Electronics Policy as we will prohibit other electronic devices as outlined below:

TAR HOLLOW ELECTRONICS POLICY FOR CAMPERS AND COUNSELORS

(Approved by the Ross Hocking Extension Camp Board 3/27/2014)

Cell Phones:

Campers and counselors shall **NOT** bring any kind of cell phone to camp. Cell phones do not have reception at camp, and their use as cameras is prohibited.

Music players:

Counselors and staff may bring music players, radios, and iPod type devices but only for use in the cabins as alarm clocks and for music. Counselors may use iPod type devices outside of the cabin only at dances where the counselors are serving in a DJ capacity.

In addition iPods may not be used to play games or in a cell phone like capacity for texting, photos, or internet purposes.

Other electronics:

Campers and counselors shall **NOT** bring any other handheld game, laptop, or other communications devices capable of accessing the Internet through Wi-Fi or another external network.

Cameras:

Campers may bring cameras to camp provided that they cannot upload pictures to the Internet. Due to the nature of camp programs, a disposable or inexpensive camera is highly recommended.

MESSAGE TO PARENTS:

We know in this high-tech era that it's difficult for youth to not be in constant contact with their families and friends via Facebook, texting, or cell phone calls. However, camp is a unique experience. The camp experience helps youth develop life skills including independence and self-reliance. Among the concerns that make bringing and using cell phones and other communication devices inappropriate at camp are:

- Concern that such expensive devices will be lost, damaged, or stolen. OSU Extension, camp, and staff cannot accept responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged items at camp.
- Inappropriate use of photo and video devices. We know from media reports that the ease of uploading *inappropriate* photos and videos is a concern. Cyber bullying is not permitted before, during, or after camp.

In addition, youth contact with home if they are suffering a temporary spate of homesickness at camp may cause the condition to worsen. We fully appreciate and respect the positive relationships our campers and counselors have with their families, but if they are to benefit fully from the camp experience, they must be encouraged to develop the skills of independence and self-reliance. If there is an emergency, or if we are concerned about the youth's well-being, we will contact the parents or guardians immediately. Campers are constantly in the company of other campers and counselors while at camp, and our camps are staffed with many caring adults, including an experienced camp nurse.

Thank you for your cooperation with our electronics policy.

