



Why does it matter if my child has an absence from camp?

- **Camper** – An absence from camp disrupts and diminishes the child's experience of camp in several ways. Time away means loss of involvement. Relationships built through common experiences and time spent together in conversation and activity are foundational to the growth opportunity for the week. When the child misses even some of this time, they've lost a portion of that common experience and its fruit. Neither are these isolated losses; many aspects of the program build upon the prior activities. Missing activities then leaves gaps in the week's programmatic progression (for example, songs and skits sets up Bible study which in turn sets up evening worship, or campfire dinner develops increased comfort levels leading to participation in the variety show). The child who has missed activities returns to camp feeling out of the loop, having missed out on the experiences others have had and less comfortable in embracing the coming activities. This all plays into a loss of personal development potential. The multi-day experience away from home provides children with self-confidence and esteem building opportunities as they make their own decisions and make their own way apart from their families. Having touch points with home takes away the child's sense that they are doing things successfully on their own. A final impact of camp is found in a child's ability to disengage from the routines of daily life and reset. This is often where the Spiritual impact is found. Just as it often takes adults a couple of days to settle into a vacation, children need to step away from the pressures and concerns of their regular obligations and relationships. In doing so, we are able to become refreshed and more clearly hear the truths of Scripture.
- **Bunkmate** – we've also noted significant ramifications for the bunkmate of campers who are absent, sometimes more than the absent campers themselves. Cabin groups are often set up based on multiple sets of pairs, and it becomes difficult for the remaining camper in the periods where their partner is gone, especially after having been looking forward to this week with their friend for the months leading up to it.
- **Cabin community** – Social development is one of the significant opportunities of the camp week. As the group gets to know one another and plans events and shares activities, the community loses the valuable gift the absent child adds to the community and vice versa.

- **Cabin counselor** – Knowing a camper's relationship with their counselor is a key component of the camp experience, the counselor is put in the difficult position of striving to make up for lost time with the camper who was absent as the counselor tries to fill the camper in on what was missed, and develop a relationship with less opportunities for engagement. In addition, the time spent waiting for the camper to be picked up and returned pulls the counselor from activity leading responsibilities and relational opportunities with other campers.
- **Why is there a charge for a camper absence?** – Coordinating camper pick-ups and drop-offs during the middle of the week creates extra work for Geneva's summer staff and office staff. We've hired additional staff to help with these situations without taking away from the experience for other campers.