

Dear Parents & Campers,

Hello from Summer's Best Two Weeks! The summer is getting closer with each passing day, and we can hardly wait for you to be with us! In the meantime, we're doing everything we can to get ready for the team competitions, challenging activities, wilderness trips, Bible studies, meets, and fun that will fill each term.

This letter explains some of what we're doing now and what we'll do this summer to help make SB2W the best possible experience for each camper. It also lays out some of what you can do – both now and in the days to come – to help us and your camper.

## *what we do*

## *what you can do*

### Details

**Communication.** We'll do our best to communicate all kinds of details about camp. You've already received an e-mail that explains how to take care of camp tuition. In the weeks to come, you'll also receive e-mails about:

- pre-ordering camp clothing (end of March)
- depositing money in your camper's store account
- completing camper health forms (end of April)

A little later this spring, you'll receive another letter with details about opening and closing days and what to pack. Our website, [sb2w.org](http://sb2w.org), has lots of information (including a copy of this letter), and someone is available to talk with you 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday at 814.629.9744.

Cover the details. These include:

**Paying tuition.** It is super-helpful to us when you pay your tuition promptly by the *April 1<sup>st</sup>* deadline. It also communicates that your camper is coming! If your plans have changed and camp is no longer a part of your family's plans, let us know ASAP so that we can try to fill that spot from our waiting list.

**Completing your camper's health form.** At the end of April, we'll e-mail you instructions for completing your camper's health form online. Please do this *at least three weeks prior to your camper's arrival*. This enables the staff in the clinic to best care for your camper.

### Assignments

**Cabin assignments** are made based on age and grade in order to better facilitate all of the programs, competitions, and activities at camp. We do our best to honor cabin-mate preferences when campers are close in age and when we're aware of the request well ahead of time. While we are able to honor about 95% of requests, there are occasions when meeting every request just isn't possible.

**Team assignments** are made to ensure that the Romans and Galatians (our two great teams) are competing with the same number of athletes. Siblings are always on the same team, but we're not able to make any promises about cousins or friends. We do our best to create a competitive environment because it provides such unique opportunities for our counselors to develop kids.

Please **email any cabin requests** that you have to [info@sb2w.org](mailto:info@sb2w.org). Requests made the week before your term are difficult to honor. Your camper can only request to have one or two other campers in the same cabin. It's easiest for us to make it happen when your camper requests just one other camper and that camper also requests your camper. If your camper and his or her friend don't end up on the same team, please understand that this can be a great thing. We desire to teach kids what it looks like to compete – to win and to lose – in a way that pleases God. The challenge of having a friend or cousin on the other team is an experience from which your camper can grow and learn.

### Food

Our team in the kitchen includes a registered dietician and cooks with years of experience. They prepare three incredible meals each day. Campers eat "family-style" with their cabin. We have worked to develop menus for campers with medical dietary restrictions, and we communicate with parents ahead of time to develop specific plans for individual campers. We work hard to make sure that every camper's body has the fuel it needs for two intense weeks at camp.

Please don't bring food of any kind for your camper's cabin, and never mail food to camp during a term. If you have a camper with medical dietary restrictions, please call the office to let us know by June 1<sup>st</sup>; then one of our staffers will reach out to you ahead of the summer to develop a plan to address the need. Sometimes bringing certain supplemental items (like gluten-free bread) can really help our kitchen staff care for your camper well. Also, please plan to connect with one of our staffers in the kitchen on opening day.

## Homesickness

### *what we do*

We do everything we can to make your camper's experience awesome. Homesickness, at times, is just a normal part of being away from home. Know that if your camper is struggling with homesickness, camp is a nurturing environment. Valuable growth comes as campers learn to conquer homesickness. They gain confidence in standing on their own two feet independent of their parents. Counselors and leadership staff (who have lots of experience in dealing with this) spend extra time with campers battling homesickness. We encourage them to jump into camp activities, enjoy their cabin community, and to write letters home. A few days into the term, we typically see homesick campers "turn the corner." In virtually every case of homesickness, we will advise you as a parent to trust in the resilience of your child and his or her ability to finish the term. Even when it is hard, making it to the end of the term is a really big accomplishment – it's something that we can all celebrate together on closing day.

## Medication

Our health clinic is staffed by professionals who volunteer their time to care for kids. These registered nurses and doctors tirelessly care for campers during their stay at camp. In addition to distributing daily medicines, our nurses are typically the first ones to get a look at campers' bumps and bruises. They treat those and, when necessary, arrange for transportation to a doctor's office or hospital. If campers are ever taken off-site for medical treatment, we get in touch with parents. Similarly, if campers spend the night in our health clinic because of illness, we reach out to parents to keep them in the loop.

## Writing

Each day our team in the camp office sorts through hundreds of letters to make sure that each one ends up in the hands of the right camper. On Sunday in the middle of the term, campers will write a letter home in order to get into lunch – so you should hear from them at least once! We will also make regular posts on our Facebook page to give parents a taste of what's going on at camp. Go to [Facebook.com/SummersBest](https://www.facebook.com/SummersBest) to "like" us. Check back during your camper's term to see what's happening!

### *what you can do*

Encourage your camper. With your words or letters, let them know how proud you are of their fortitude. Please don't make promises like, "If you don't like camp, just write and I'll come and pick you up." Giving campers an "out" encourages them to give up. And if a camper believes that going home is up to him or her, overcoming this can become insurmountable. If you get a sad letter, please recognize that it was probably written during "down-times," such as rest period, when campers might wrestle with homesickness. If you have concerns during the term, reach out to the office. We want to work with you as parents to help your camper overcome homesickness. Please avoid asking to talk to your camper on the phone – that can be a major hurdle in your camper's progress. Together, we can turn this struggle into a positive memory of victory. This achievement can be valuable for your camper's life growth and confidence.

Please submit your camper's health form online *at least three weeks prior to arrival*. Making us aware of medical situations ahead of time enables our clinic staff and counseling staff to best care for your camper. If your camper is on daily medications, please bring those to the health clinic *in their original packaging* on the opening day of camp. Campers may not keep any kind of medication outside of the health clinic. If there are meds (like daily vitamins) that your child can do without for two weeks, please just leave them at home. Less time in line at our clinic is more time for everything else in camp!

We encourage you to send your camper personal *letters* rather than packages. Letters are more significant as they give a unique opportunity to encourage and connect. Share positive news about what's going on outside of camp's gates. You can also send your camper with pre-addressed envelopes in hopes of receiving more regular correspondence. In order to minimize interruptions and maximize the camp experience, the SB2W phone is not available for camper calls. We are not staffed to handle incoming e-mail or fax correspondence either.

We'll be in touch via e-mail in the weeks to come. Our next letter should be in your mailbox by the middle of May. Feel free to reach out with questions at any time. We are excited to see you soon!

#### **2017 SB2W TERM SCHEDULES**

SUMMER ONE: Thursday, June 15 to Friday, June 23

FIRST TERM: Sunday, June 25 to Friday, July 7

SECOND TERM: Sunday, July 9 to Friday, July 21

THIRD TERM: Sunday, July 23 to Friday, August 4

FOURTH TERM: Sunday, August 6 to Friday, August 18

FAMILY WEEKEND: Friday, August 18 to Sunday, August 20