

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY: Every camper, staff and volunteer has the right to be safe at camp. Silver Lake will make every reasonable effort to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all at camp. All camps in Ontario are governed by their local Public Health Unit which establishes guidelines for key aspects of camp including the kitchen, waterfront and accommodation. In addition, Silver Lake is a longstanding, accredited member of the Ontario Camps Association which sets minimum standards that far exceed those set by Public Health. The full accreditation standards can be found here – <https://www.ontariocampsassociation.ca/about/standards/>

Reading standards is one thing, but here's how we put those standards to practice as part of our commitment to creating positive camp experiences:

FOOD COMMITMENT: Mealtime is an extremely important part of our camp life. It is one of the few times in the day when we slow down long enough to have conversations with one another! Meals are also when we gain the energy that we need to take on the day's many activities. The kitchen is run by staff who have completed an accredited Safe Food Handling program. Kitchen staff and volunteers work hard to accommodate food allergies, dietary restrictions and keep a special eye out for picky-eaters – all of which are addressed with sensitivity and caution. Silver Lake is a nut free camp.

INCLUSION COMMITMENT: Silver Lake strives to be a place of inclusion for everyone, regardless of race, religion, social or economic status, gender and sexual orientation.

The Inclusion Program facilitates the inclusion of children with special needs into the regular program with campers their own age. This gives an opportunity for those requiring more attention and care to participate and allows for learning and growth within the entire camp community.

We also provide our facilities and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to providing people with disabilities, to the best of our ability, the same opportunity to access our facilities and services.

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp has a Campership Fund that provides financial assistance for children who would otherwise be unable to attend camp because of financial constraints. There is an application / dispersal process. Please contact the camp office for further details.

SAFE SPACE COMMITMENT: All campers have the right to feel safe at camp! Bullying behaviour is “an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm” (national Australian definition of bullying). We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour at Silver Lake either between campers, adults and campers, or adults. Our zero tolerance policy on bullying will be reviewed with each cabin at the beginning of each camp session. At this time (at home), campers should be encouraged to report any bullying that they are subjected to or witness.

As part of our staff orientation, Silver Lake thoroughly trains and equips staff with appropriate information regarding provincial legislation, reporting requirements and procedures. In addition, each staff person will be provided with information and best practices to prevent child abuse, bullying, exploitation, other mistreatment or violence from occurring. All Silver Lake staff and volunteers are required to have police checks and references before working at Silver Lake.

WATERFRONT COMMITMENT: Who doesn't love swimming.....especially on hot summer days! Campers are very well supervised during swim times by staff who are certified lifeguards through the National Lifesaving Society. Campers, with the exception of Mini Camp and Camp 1 campers who only swim in the shallow end, are scheduled to take a swim test when they first come to the waterfront. If a camper does not pass the swim test (or opts not to take the swim test), swimming is only permitted in the shallow end of the pond while onsite or with a lifejacket on at all times when on outtrips. Lifejackets are mandatory for all campers & staff while using canoes, kayaks or paddleboats.

HEALTH COMMITMENT: All Silver Lake staff are First Aid Certified and are trained to address routine illness or injuries (upset tummy, headaches, scraped knee etc.) Parents will be notified if the Camp Director feels it is necessary for the camper to be picked up early due to his/her illness or injury. In the event of a more serious injury or illness, a camper parent will be called. Vehicles are also on site to transport a child to a nearby health care center when needed.

Any time we (yes, even us adults) venture away from home, we can feel a certain level of anxiety or homesickness. It is healthy to feel a degree of homesickness because it means that your child is attached to you – this is a very good thing! We also want campers to have fun and enjoy the full camp experience. Staff receive training on techniques to prevent and respond to homesickness. Very few campers need to leave camp due to homesickness. However, if a camper is inconsolable parents/guardians will be notified and consulted about how they would like to proceed.

COMMUNICATION COMMITMENT: Our number one priority is tending to the needs of campers while on site, but we also want to communicate with you in an authentic and meaningful way during that time. We will keep you up-to-date on any special circumstances; weather warnings, outtrip cancelations/delays etc. If you need to contact camp while your camper is onsite you can call the camp office (519-422-1401), the kitchen (519-44-3200) or send an email to fun@slmc.ca

We appreciate the trust you have placed in our camp! As you can see, safety of campers is of paramount concern and we are continually reviewing our policies and practices to ensure the foundation and framework is in place for campers to have incredible experiences at camp!