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## PARENT GUIDE

### WHY IS IT THAT CHILDREN LOVE CAMP SO MUCH?

It's the buzz of making new friends and gathering a small mountain of email addresses and phone numbers. It's the excitement of telling your family and friends what you did while you were there – the wall you climbed, the wave you surfed, the song you sang. These are precious times for your children. They store up memories that will remain with them for life. And they learn how to push themselves to levels they never thought possible, without ever feeling unsafe or insecure. They also enjoy inter-acting with adults in a new, positive way – in short, it's a home away from a home, and a lifestyle that invigorates and challenges.

### HOW IS THE CAMP ORGANISED?

Horizon Irish Summer Camps are styled on the world-famous American Summer Camps, which are renowned for their effectiveness and enjoyment. We have a Camp Director, two Assistant Camp Directors, an Administration Manager, and two Senior Group Leaders. We also have Group Leaders and Activity Instructors supporting the campers on a day-to-day basis. We have teams to take care of transport and catering. Our management teams bring experience and training to the camp. They attend refresher training courses on a regular basis and the importance of teamwork is emphasised at all times, particularly as we aim to illustrate to the campers the value of working in a team.

### CAN YOU RECOMMEND A PROGRAMME FOR MY CHILD?

It all depends on what your child is interested in. We would recommend that you ascertain what your child is keen on pursuing during their summer camp – their answers will dictate which camp they should attend. For example, if they like Surfing, they will want to go to Westport on the west coast, which is a haven for surfers. Rather than focusing on which one they should go to, we suggest they go to the one that best caters for their tastes. And with special Collection Points all over Ireland, you needn't worry about the headache of transporting your child to the camp. Whichever one they choose, we guarantee they will have a great time.

### ONCE THEY GET THERE, CAN THEY CHANGE THEIR PROGRAMME?

Absolutely no problem, as long as a place is available and the parents agree. We strive to be flexible, and, yes, campers do like to change from time to time. We also find that campers like to extend their stay for another few days, which we try to cater for also, if space permits and parents agree. Campers must discuss this with their Group Leader who will arrange for contact to be made you, the parents.

### HOW MUCH POCKEY MONEY?

Pocket money is needed to buy postcards, souvenirs, and for visits to the tuck shop, which sells toiletries and a small range of drinks and snacks. The shop also carries some Camp memorabilia – t-shirts, and the like. About €50 per week is the guideline we give.

### WHAT IS CAMP LIKE FOR A FIRST-TIMER?

The key to settling in quickly at camp is busy, busy, busy – from morning until night. This throws the child into the middle of camp life, and they make friends through the activities, evening entertainment, and special events. This is our policy to ensure that new campers don't experience homesickness or loneliness. You needn't worry on this score.

### WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE TO ENROL MY CHILD?

Parents know best, but we find that the younger the child, the easier they settle into camp. Campers as young as eight generally make the transition to camp life without any bother. All we ask is that campers arrive keen to immerse themselves in camp life. We will do the rest – good food, fun activities, and genuine care for their wellbeing. All your child has to do is get involved and look forward to the spin-offs such as new friends, new skills, and great memories.

### DO MOST CAMPERS TRAVEL TO CAMP WITH A FRIEND?

No. In most cases, campers come alone without knowing anyone else there. Some campers express how much easier it is to make friends when they are not accompanied by friends from home – but either way works, as we strive hard to break down barriers through the activities and events.

### CAN I CONTACT MY CHILD ON CAMP?

Yes, any day you wish. You can contact us by telephone, fax or email. However, we have a policy of asking campers to leave their mobile phones at home – it helps to create the feeling of escapism. They won't need the phones. We will mind them well, and they can ring home from the Camp phone.



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#### WHAT ABOUT HOMESICKNESS?

There might be a small touch of homesickness in the early days. Our advice to parents is to minimise contact with your children during this period, though you may find this hard. But, trust us, it helps them to settle in quicker, and our instructors will work hard at getting them involved with other campers and in the many activities. In no time at all, they will be smiling and enjoying themselves.

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#### WHAT ARE THE DORMITORIES LIKE?

They are clean, but no-frills, accommodation. They are checked and cleaned every day. Campers are responsible for their own personal space. Staff members sleep nearby to campers, with additional nighttime security patrols. We supply all bedding.

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#### WHAT SHOULD CAMPERS BRING, CLOTHES-WISE?

It's camp, so casual wear is the way to go. Shorts, jeans and t-shirts are very popular. If you have some old clothes with a tear here or a rip there, you might find them very useful during activities. It's about getting down and dirty, having a ball, and the last thing you want to be worried about is your designer label gear. So we suggest you leave it at home.

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#### IS THE FOOD GOOD?

Yes. The diet is varied and balanced, as we believe that campers need to eat well to have energy for their fun-filled stay. We cater for vegetarians and any other special dietary requirements, once we're told beforehand. Food is always varied with plenty of salads and fruits available. If you have any specific queries, do not hesitate to contact us.

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#### WHAT WHEN IT RAINS?

We play on. We just put on some raingear and proceed as usual. Campers love the ruggedness of a day out in the rain, so we wouldn't dare deny them the thrill! But don't worry, we will make sure they stay warm and don't pick up colds or flus.

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#### WHAT ABOUT SECURITY AT THE CAMP?

We have 24-hour CCTV at Wilson's and supervised security at Horizon House. We have procedures to deal with security and safety and these will be outlined to campers when they arrive. All centres have patrols operating through-out the night. Group Leaders always sleep in rooms adjacent to campers dormitories.

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#### ARE THERE RULES?

We don't like to have too many rules, but we insist that all campers contribute to the atmosphere of mutual respect. Our Code of Conduct covers behaviour in relation to obeying safety instructions, use of alcohol and cigarettes, theft, interaction with other campers. We try to nip problems in the bud – before they are even problems – and it is rare that we would have send a child home.

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#### WHAT IS SUPERVISION LIKE?

The Group Leader is the main contact point for campers during their stay. He or she sleeps adjacent to campers dormitories and act like an older brother or sister, a shoulder to lean on, a confidante. Campers are obliged to remain on camp unless accompanied by a member of our staff. On trips to places such as local towns, tourist attractions, or parks, our staff maintain a constant presence.

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#### HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH HYGIENE?

All younger campers are supervised daily for personal hygiene and older campers are encouraged to do so when it is deemed necessary! While this is the direct responsibility of the Group Leaders, in practice it's a responsibility shared among all our senior staff. It is camp policy for everyone to take a daily shower.

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#### WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL INFORMATION?

It is very important that we have full details of a camper's medical history, special needs or personal circumstances. Medical questionnaires are included in the Camp Welcome Pack and we ask that these are sent back as soon as possible. Every centre has a senior welfare officer and first-aiders on duty 24 hours a day.



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### MY CHILD IS PROBLEMATIC AT SCHOOL / HOME - WILL CAMP HORIZON BE A GOOD IDEA?

The first thing we would ask is that you notify if he or she is having problems. Once we know that, we can help them to settle in. We find that we are able to show problematic campers a good time, and we make a special effort that every child enjoys the stay. We would hope your child will have a good experience with us here, and might even benefit long-term from the positive environment. However, we do not pay refunds to any child who is sent home due to behavioural reasons.

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### HOW DO WE SELECT OUR STAFF?

Our Staff Recruitment & Training Policy conforms to the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland, which is the Government-approved standard for recruitment and training. This means that all staff, when appointed, are offered contracts of employment subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period. A formal induction period is followed and documented. Further reviews of staff performance take place during the period of employment. Staff are continuously assessed in practical skills, technical knowledge and teaching ability. Each staff file contains a copy of all National Governing Body certificates and awards held by that instructor.

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### SENIOR STAFF

Our Camp Directors are experienced people who manage the teams who run our operations. Everyone at Horizon is committed to making the camp experience as enjoyable as possible for all our guests.

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### GROUP LEADERS

Every camper who comes to Horizon is allocated a Group Leader, who, in effect, acts like an older brother or sister. The Group Leader is with the group at all times, ensuring that their stay is everything they expected it to be. This gives campers the security of knowing a responsible adult whom they can turn to at any time. The Group Leader is ever-present, but is also careful not to crowd the space of the campers - the group will be allowed to interact freely and form strong friendships and bonds.

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### WHAT ABOUT SAFETY PROCEDURES?

Health & Safety and Risk Assessments, for all aspects of our operation, are updated regularly and are available for inspection when visiting the centre. We offer 24-hour supervision, so you can rest assured that your children are constantly monitored. The Centres themselves are secure entities within the Westport Woods Hotel complex and the Wilson's School Complex. Our staff are highly-trained. Upon arrival at our Centre, all participants receive a fire safety briefing, where all emergency exits and meeting areas are pointed out. Procedures for evacuating the buildings are also rehearsed at this point. This is followed by an emergency fire drill that includes everyone.

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### HOW DO THE ACTIVITIES WORK?

All campers enjoy a selection of high and low energy activities, depending on their age, choice of programme and ability. We also offer specialist holidays so campers can spend more time (normally 2-3 hours per day) on one particular activity such as Surfing, Top Gear, Multi-Media Mania, Xtreme Adventure, Stage & Dream, and Pony Camp. Our daily activity programme is designed to cater for younger campers' needs for guidance & supervision, whilst accommodating older campers' desire for self-expression and the freedom to choose. We offer loads of activities on a daily basis.