

School Counsellor Newsletter



School Camp: benefits and challenges

Edition Ten

Education outside of the Classroom (EOTC) provides students with a range of contexts to develop the key competencies, explore their values and the values of others, and apply learning across the curriculum.

School camps can bring on all sorts of feelings for students. I am sure that for many of us school camps have formed part of life long memories of school and yet for others, they are something we may seldom think about. As views and feelings about camp are individual and varied it could be useful to check in with your son/s as to what they are looking forward to about camp and anything they may need support with.

What does your son hope to achieve on camp? It could be any of the following:

- Fun!
- Trying something new
- Celebrating his time in Year 7 or 8
- Challenging themselves to try something they think they cannot do
- Spending quality time with friends
- Being in the outdoors
- Building confidence
- Developing teamwork skills
- Making the most of leadership opportunities
- Understanding the importance of trust
- What else?

To do: It could be useful to talk to your son about his hopes for

personal growth at camp. You might use the list above as a guide and try to pinpoint one or two main goals for camp. This might help your son to enjoy the experience and challenge himself if he is unsure. If the goal is particularly challenging for him you could link back to previous newsletters and plan for how your son might use positive self-talk or a growth mindset to support him. You could also talk about past camp experiences and how he was able to accomplish things on that occasion.

What is your son feeling unsure about for camp? It could be any of the following:

- What the food will be like
- Who to go to when parents are not there
- Who will be in different bunkrooms
- Spending several days away from home and family
- Sleeping in a different place
- Being challenged to do activities which are outside their comfort zone
- Being in the outdoors away from a city
- What else?

To do: Check in with your son if they have any worries or concerns about camp. Rather than just saying "It'll be okay and there's nothing to worry about" it could be more useful to plan ahead so that they have some strategies for coping at the time. By asking your son exactly what worries them, together you can come up with

some helpful approaches which could include breathing tasks, mindfulness, distraction activities, support from friends and teachers and setting specific goals. For example, if your son is nervous about sleeping somewhere different you could pack a small something from home he is familiar with which will help him get to sleep. A specific goal could be to use this less and less by the last night of camp. It is important to acknowledge your son's concerns and plan for them to be present at camp but also plan ahead so that he feels supported. If you have specific concerns it would be useful to contact your son's homeroom teacher.

What did your son think about camp?

To do: Don't forget to reflect on your son's goals and challenges at camp, talking about what he was able to learn about himself and how he can use these skills in other situations. Also, what is he still working on and how can you continue to support him so that he can achieve his goals? Whilst it is fresh in his mind it could also be a good time to set goals for the next camp!

Jenelle Hooson

Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim
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