

## **Dear Summer Camp families –**

After five weeks of “Safer at Home,” it’s clear that we’re making our way through many challenges, as a community. The Covid-19 Task Force and our school’s Board of Directors plans to review all available information on Monday, May 18th and make a preliminary decision about whether/ how to have Summer Camp programming, which will be announced after that time. The current tentative start date for GBMS Summer Camp programming is Monday, June 15th.

We’ve been heartened to hear from many of you about how your children are looking forward to camp this summer - we are, too! We’ve been planning for and working on Summer Camp 2020 since this winter. And, when the virus shutdown our school in March, we hoped that time would provide us with some clarity about this summer. While I’d like to say that we have all the answers to all your questions, there are still many unknowns about the upcoming weeks and months.

Based on many calls, webinars, Zoom meetings and conversations with public health experts, epidemiologists, and government officials over the last month, we know that camp this summer isn’t going to be “normal.” What won’t change, though, is our commitment to your camper. We know that Great Beginnings Summer Camp is a great, local camp for your child to unplug, explore nature, and play outdoors. After this difficult spring, we are even more committed to this summer.

Despite the safety protocols we plan implement this summer, we promise that – if our camp is in session - our counselors will make your child feel welcome at camp and connect them with new and old friends. Providing that public health experts give us the okay AND we feel it’s safe to do so, we’ll have a modified camp this summer with those values in mind.

That being said, we have made some decisions to address Covid-19 safety recommendations for your child, our staff, and your family at camp this summer. We’ve used the requirements currently in place for “essential worker” childcare as a guide to develop our plan.

## **SCHEDULING**

We typically offer flexible daily scheduling, because we know it’s the most convenient thing for you. This summer, though, we recognize that it’s more important to limit your child’s potential exposure to others, and so we won’t be able to offer “Camp Cool-Down” aftercare. All of our camps will be from 8-4pm, and we will plan for staggered drop-off and pick-up times.

For 2020, at the Springhill campus, all campers will attend four days a week (for any number of weeks) in groups of no more than 10 other children with two counselors. We will place an emphasis on having the same counselors and CITs throughout their week at camp. As an added bonus, this consistency will provide a boost for new friendships!

We are still developing guidelines for the elementary-aged Yurt Camp.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

We haven’t yet determined if we’ll be able to use the van safely this summer for our Yurt Camp. Based on current guidelines, mixing campers and staff together in close quarters in a van wouldn’t be permitted. However, we know that things will change in the coming weeks and months, and we hope that transportation will be possible for this summer. Should we have to cancel our transportation

program, we'll coordinate a pick-up/ drop-off schedule to make it as convenient for you as possible. We'll make a final decision on transportation as summer approaches.

## **PROGRAM**

We know that the most important part of camp is the time campers spend playing and exploring with their group, and that won't change. We're considering operational changes we may have to make to our program, such as eliminating group games, and modifying certain activities so we can clean and sanitize activity equipment appropriately.

We've thought through many other details and plans related to all parts of camp, from activities to registration policies to staffing, so please note the FAQs below for lots more information. If you read through everything and have a question we haven't yet thought of, please let us know! We'll keep FAQs updated as we hear and learn more.

Our goal is to create the best summer camp experience possible, balancing safety and new regulations, and we hope that your child (and you!) will benefit from a little bit of normalcy before school starts again this fall. Here's what you should do to be a part of Summer Camp 2020:

- If you're already registered for Camp Cool-down aftercare, we will process refunds/ credit.
- If you haven't registered for Summer Camp 2020, register online today! As a reminder, any camp tuition paid for this year is good forever, no matter how plans change.

Please know that while we're tentatively moving forward with all of our camp plans, we're continuing to monitor and adjust, knowing that it's still possible that we'll have to cancel camp this summer. Nothing is more important than the physical and emotional safety of our GBMS family. We hope that with lots of thoughtful planning and the guidance of experts, we'll be there for you as soon as we can.

Thanks,

Gennifre Hartman, on behalf of Great Beginnings Summer Camp

## **Q&A GBMS Summer Camp & Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

### **1. Can you tell me about your medical staff? What are their qualifications?**

- Our Summer Camp staff at GBMS is supervised by Gennifre Hartman, a licensed Wilderness First-Responder. The majority of our camp's lead staff are certified as Wilderness First-Aid providers, and the rest are all certified in First-Aid and CPR.
- Because GBMS is a licensed facility, our staff not only know how to treat sick (or injured) students, but they are also able to recognize early signs and symptoms of illness. They have a plan in place for sick children, and are additionally able to protect other students should another child get sick.
- We also plan to implement a daily health screening and form for all campers.

### **2. What medical resources are close to your campus?**

- At GBMS, along with onsite medical procedures, there are many resources available, such as Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, close by.

- Our day camps operate on our campuses and the Yurt Camp has short hiking excursions. However, medical resources are within an hour of any daily camp destination.

### **3. There are many organizations publishing information and recommendations on COVID-19. What protocols and procedures will you follow if COVID-19 is on campus? What parties are influencing summer camp decisions?**

- The World Health Organization (WHO), the CDC, the Federal Government, State Officials, and many others are all constantly publishing information about COVID-19. Our Summer Camp is evaluated the following resources:
  - The Montana State Department of Health: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/aboutus/news/2020/phasedreopening>
  - The American Camp Association: <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus-information-camps>
- Alternate plans are currently being developed if the data/ recommendations change during this summer. Some of the ideas we are discussing are below, in conjunction with the recommendations in the Covid-19 Child Care link below:
- Recommended by the Department of Public Health and Human Services: <https://covid19.mt.gov/Portals/223/Documents/4.14.20%20FAQ%20-%20Child%20Care.pdf?ver=2020-04-17-115417-123>
  - Toddler & Preschool Camps (Springhill campus):
    - Ensure where possible that children are kept in cohorts, keeping the same children together and avoiding groups/cohorts contacting one another.
    - Whenever possible, keep the number of children and providers in each group at 10 or less.
    - Where possible, prioritize keeping family units in the same group (i.e. 2 yr. old and 4 yr. old from the same family would be in the same group).
    - Where possible, limit the total number of children in any one facility to 24.
    - Offer outdoor play in staggered shifts.
      - If multiple groups are outside at the same time, they should have a minimum of six feet of open space between outdoor play areas or visit these areas in shifts so that they are not congregating.
      - Avoid use of play structures. Always wash hands and any items used (i.e. balls) immediately after outdoor play time.

### **4. Is remote learning an option for the summer?**

- At GBMS, we will not be having a remote learning option this summer. While eLearning is great in some capacities and for some programs, remote learning will not give campers the experience

and supervision they signed up for. It is relatively easy to live stream a lecture by a teacher. But how can you replace multi-person discussions, physical activity sessions, and the social environment of a summer camp? You can't. The in-person bonds and friendships that students make are often what has the most long-lasting impact and memories.

**5. What happens if my last day of school is extended later into the summer due to coronavirus? Do you have any other options and will you allow me to start a program later in the summer?**

- At GBMS, our camp is organized into 10- weekly sessions. If there is space available, we will allow you to change sessions in the case of a school year extension without a fee. Please note, while there may be additional sessions in the summer, the late summer sessions are often the busiest and there is a chance your preferred week will sell out. If you think this is the case, carefully consider the timing of what you are currently registered for or will register for and consider a later session now.

**6. I am nervous to sign up now. If I decide to wait, what is the latest I can wait in order to register?**

- At GBMS, there is a full refund available 30-days prior to the camp start date. This has been shortened to 20-days prior to the camp start date because of the unpredictable nature of Covid-19 programming decisions.

**7. How will GBMS keep me updated with any changes or new information?**

- At GBMS, our goal is to keep you informed about how we are closely monitoring the development of COVID-19. As always, we will follow the protocols set in place with city, state and federal guidelines. We will keep you updated with any developments, including refund policies, as soon as the information becomes available via email and online.
- Our Board of Directors is going to review all available information on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> and make a preliminary decision about Summer Camp programming which will be announced at that time.
- The current start date for GBMS Summer Camp programming is Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. A full refund for the first week will be available until Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Summer Camp resources:**

Planning for a modified summer program:

- [a resource from the American Camp Association.](#)

Public Health:

- [Recommendations for child care](#), including a daily checklist for care facilities and a communication template [available for download]
- [Child daily health screening form](#) (downloadable MS Word doc)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- [COVID-19 and Kids](#)

- [Interim guidance for K-12 schools](#)

COVID-19:

- The CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- The WHO: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
- The FDA: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>