

2023

Parent/Guardian Guide to Sleepaway Camp at **Camp Bette Perot**

girl scouts 
of northeast texas



972-349-2400 | 2008 An Co Rd 458 | Palestine TX 75803

Camp is an incredible time of friendship, discovery, growth, independence, and fun memories to last a lifetime. Girl Scout camp builds girls of courage, confidence, and character through community life outdoors.¹ We can't wait to welcome your camper to camp this summer!²

Success at camp begins with you, and the information in this guide will help you prepare.

If you have any questions about sleepaway camp, please call us at 214-770-1452 or email us at camp@gsnetx.org.

¹ACA CR.2.1

²ACA CR.2.4

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BEFORE CAMP

REQUIRED PAPERWORK

☐ **Camper health profile online via CampDoc³**

After registration, you will receive an email from CampDoc with a username and instructions for completing the profile. The profile includes:

- Emergency contacts and health insurance
- Health history, dietary needs, allergies, medications, mental needs, emotional needs, social needs, and special needs (no physical exam form required)
- Immunization records
- Buddy request
- Camper agreement

☐ **Medication form from CampDoc**

After completing the medications section of the camper health profile.

Please print the Medication form and bring with you to camper check-in.

For assistance with CampDoc, please contact them directly via their website: CampDoc.com

☐ **Camper Release Form - gsnetx.org/camperrelease**

Bring this form with you to camper check-in so we know who to release your camper to on closing day.⁴ Please bring an additional copy for subsequent check-ins if your camper is attending multiple sessions.

EXPECTATIONS OF CAMPERS IN THE CAMP SETTING

Camp staff have intentional plans to create a welcoming, positive, and constructive environment for the entire camp community, and this environment is critical to the value of camp. At Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas, we live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law, we value diversity and inclusion, and we are committed to creating a culture of belonging for all.⁵

The following expectations are essential to the particular environment we support. Please discuss these with your camper and ensure that camper and caregivers can commit to meeting the expectations.

- Camper will abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

On my honor, I will try: To serve God* and my country, To help people at all times, And to live by the Girl Scout Law. (*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.”)

I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

³ACA AD.11.1

⁴ACA CR.23.1

⁵ACA CR.1.1

- Camper will neither participate in nor tolerate bullying of others. Camper will immediately inform camp staff as soon as they become aware of any bullying.
- No electronic devices may be brought to camp, including but not limited to cell phones, laptops, tablets, or cell watches. All electronics must be left with caregiver(s) at camp check-in. If this policy is violated, the device will be held by camp staff until the end of the session, and GSNETX cannot be responsible for lost or damaged electronics.
- Camper will be responsible for their personal belongings, hygiene, and general wellbeing at camp. This includes adhering to any usual dietary needs and medications.

Camp staff work hard to help campers adjust to cooperative camp life and have a successful week, and in most cases challenging behavior can be suitably resolved. Please note: GSNETX reserves the right to dismiss a camper from camp early, at family expense and without refund, if participation is deemed unsafe due to environmental, physical, emotional, or other endangerment to themselves, other campers, or staff.

INCLUSION

While the world is rapidly changing around us, girls often process their emotions, experiences, and identities in the camp environment. Girl Scouts strives to foster an inclusive environment – we recognize that campers may come to Girl Scout camp (especially at the middle school level) and express their identities differently than they do at home. It is not our policy to educate campers on gender identity – but it is our practice to support the use of the Girl Scout’s preferred name and pronoun. While we do not ask campers to identify their pronouns, we will respect our Girl Scouts’ requests. Parallel to the school environment, our staff will affirm their identity and maintain focus on positive camp experience.

PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

Success at camp starts with you! Knowing what to expect and encouraging your camper to adapt to challenges she may experience can help her get the most out of her time at camp. You are encouraged to consider the following expectations prior to camp:

Is your camper ready for Summer Camp? Review this list to ensure camp readiness⁶

- Camper wants to come to camp.
- Camper is willing to camp in rustic outdoor environment. (Sounds, weather, darkness, wildlife)
- Camper has successfully spent nights away from home and can get herself to sleep at night.
- Camper wants to eat, sleep, and play in a diverse group environment that offers limited opportunities for time alone.
- Camper can manage her own belongings and hygiene, including bathing, toothbrushing, hair care, and dressing in activity-appropriate attire (swimsuit, for example).
- Camper and caregivers are committed to girl remaining at camp the entire week and working through any feelings of missing home that arise – our staff are ready to help your girl succeed.
- Please consider how you can help build your camper’s readiness for camp over the coming months.

Camping progression

- Camp activities progress by age and beginning with girls going into 5th grade, they will have choices of activities to participate in throughout the day.⁵

⁶ACA AD.32.1

- Girls going into 5th grade will be housed in Raccoon Ridge, the platform tent unit. The tents have wood floors, wood support frames, heavy canvas roofs and sides that can be rolled up or down as needed, and beds equipped with bed nets, cubbies, and twinkle lights.

Independence means no direct communication during camp

- This is a chance for girls to have independent adventures, to keep in touch through mail, and to reconnect with family at the end of the week. Girl and caregivers must be comfortable forgoing all direct contact for the week (no phone calls, email responses, or other direct updates).
- Please do NOT tell your camper they can call home during camp, even if they begin missing home.

New friends and old friends

- Most girls attend camp for the first time without a friend they already know, and counselors work to foster friendships in camper groups.
- We are fortunate to host a diverse community at camp, and campers can expect the opportunity to live and play with girls and leaders who are different from one another (differences may include geography, family structure, race and ethnicity, culture, appearance, ability, interests, and more).
- For girls attending with a favorite buddy, the buddy request can be made in CampDoc and we make an effort to accommodate ONE mutual buddy request in the same grade level where possible, but buddy requests will not be guaranteed. Housing assignments are carefully made to support a healthy camp living environment for the group. You can help your girl by encouraging her to make new friends in their unit, and please do NOT assure your girl that she will be housed with a particular person. If a girl is only willing to attend camp on the condition that her housing assignment is guaranteed, we would like to suggest family or troop camp at Camp Gambill instead, where camping groups determine their own housing assignments.
- All campers have opportunities to see their favorite campers of different ages during the week.

Working through missing home

- It is not uncommon to experience missing home in a new environment, and campers can successfully work through challenging feelings to enjoy camp to the fullest.
- If your girl is nervous about missing home, you may want to brainstorm how she can tackle any feelings about missing home that arise during camp, such as by:
 - Asking a friend or counselor for a hug, high-five, or holding hands
 - Focusing on the things at camp she is excited about
 - Writing feelings in a journal or a letter
 - Practice communicating needs with a trusted adult
 - Saying a favorite poem or song
 - Remembering that she is courageous and strong and recalling times she has used courage and strength to overcome challenges
- Please remind your girl that she will stay the entire week, and do NOT tell her she can leave early.

No technology at camp

- Camp is a chance to disconnect from technology and connect with community and the great outdoors.

- Cell phones, tablets, computers, e-readers, smart watches, or similar electronic devices are not permitted at camp.

No visitors during camp

- Family and friends do NOT visit camp while the camp program is in session.

Summer camp in Texas is hot

- Camp days are typically sunny and hot, and we still have lots of fun even when we are hot.
- We make use of sunscreen, shade, and having a rest in cabins or tents during the hottest part of the day.

DIETARY NEEDS

Dietary specifications are included in the health profile completed via CampDoc. Our camp kitchen can accommodate general dietary needs such as vegetarian, gluten free, nut free, or dairy free. Please be advised that food is prepared in shared processing space. If your camper has more sensitive dietary needs, please contact us at camp@gsnetx.org prior to June 1 to see how we can accommodate her.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMODATIONS

If religious accommodations are needed at camp, please contact us at camp@gsnetx.org to make plans before your camper arrives.

CAMPER MAIL

Mail time is a favorite each day! Families are encouraged to send letters to their camper throughout the week, and planning ahead makes this possible. Mail can be sent in these ways:

- Drop off mail in the designated bin at camper check-in (when leaving camp property), marked with camper name and delivery day (Monday through Thursday).
- Send mail via USPS, marked with camper name and camp address (found on cover of this booklet). Consider sending early to ensure timely delivery.
- Send email via Bunk1 (send Sunday through Wednesday for timely delivery Monday through Thursday.) Bunk1 details are shared at camp check-in.

The best mail is newsy, encouraging, and dwells on the fun things your camper is doing at camp. Please avoid sharing information that may be disruptive to a camper's adjustment at camp, such as any bad news or language about the house being too quiet, the dog not eating while camper is gone, etc.

All mail should fit into envelopes – please do NOT send packages, food, gifts, or money. Save the gifts and treats to enjoy after camper pick-up!

CAMPER PACKING LIST (*print out the list and check off items as you pack. Campers manage their own belongings at camp. Please include your camper in the packing process.)

- Please note that camp lasts 6 days, however we request 7 of certain items in case an extra is needed.
- Please bring comfortable, modest clothing that can withstand getting dirty outdoors.
- When planning hairstyles for camp, please be aware that safety helmets, worn for some activities, must fit snugly onto the head. Ensure camper hairstyle allows a helmet to fit properly onto the head.
- All belongings should be clearly marked with full camper name.

Clothing

- ☐ 7 t-shirts (must cover shoulders)
- ☐ 7 pairs shorts (with inseam at least 3")
- ☐ Long sleeve shirt
- ☐ Jeans or pants: 2-3 pairs for Bette Perot
- ☐ 1-2 pairs of pajamas
- ☐ 7 pairs of underwear
- ☐ Swimsuit (one-piece or modest two-piece that covers the stomach)
- ☐ Swim shirt, swim shorts, optional
- ☐ 7 pairs of socks (plus 1-2 pairs tall socks, optional, to wear with boots)
- ☐ 1-2 pairs of tennis shoes with closed toes and heels
- ☐ Sandals that strap onto your feet (like Chaco or Teva) or aqua socks, optional
- ☐ Flip flops to wear in showers, or use the sandals above
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Raincoat or poncho
- ☐ Headscarf, if desired

** Some younger campers benefit from having each day's clothing packed in a zip top bag labeled with the day.*

Linens

- ☐ Swim towel
- ☐ Bath towel
- ☐ Laundry bag
- ☐ Pillow with pillowcase
- ☐ Twin-size sheet set
- ☐ Blanket or sleeping bag

Toiletries

- ☐ Medications (in ziptop bag with camper name and medication form, turned in at check-in)
- ☐ Ziptop bag or small toiletry bag for carrying items to the latrine
- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Comb or brush
- ☐ Ponytail holders as needed
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Shampoo and conditioner, travel-size
- ☐ Shower cap, if desired
- ☐ Sleeping bonnet, if desired
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Menstrual supplies as needed
- ☐ Sunscreen and Insect repellent (in ziptop bag with camper name)

Other items

Required:

- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Flashlight or headlamp and extra batteries
- ☐ Mess kit (spoon, bowl, plate, and cup in mesh bag)

Optional:

- ☐ Swim goggles, swim cap
- ☐ Boots with a heel (boots available in all sizes at our barn)
- ☐ Stationery (stamped/addressed envelopes, paper, pen)
- ☐ Small comfort object (such as a stuffed animal), book, card game, camera
- ☐ Religious items if needed (please see note about religious accommodations on pg. 6)
- ☐ Family photo
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Bandana (for a variety of uses)

** Please limit your packing to the items included on this list.*

Luggage to bring and how to pack

- ☐ Backpack (used to carry belongings around camp) with water bottle and other personal items
- ☐ Duffle bag with all clothing and toiletries
- ☐ Laundry bag with all linens

** Campers carry their luggage over rough terrain to their cabins or tents, so rolling suitcases and trunks are not manageable.*

Do not send⁷

- Money – no place to spend it
- Snacks, candy, or drinks – all food during camp is provided
- Mosquito netting – bed nets are provided in platform tents
- Jewelry – risk of loss
- Clothing related to alcohol or drugs or that contributes to an exclusive environment for other campers/staff
- Technology (cell phones, tablets, computers, iPods, e-readers, cell phone watches, or similar electronic devices) - strictly prohibited
- Tobacco, electronic smoking devices, alcoholic beverages, other drugs, firearms, and fireworks – all strictly prohibited

⁷ACA AD.16.1

CAMP SAFETY

Safety of our campers is a top priority and camp staff are trained in emergency procedures.

- Access to camp properties is limited to campers, staff, certified program providers, volunteers, and delivery vehicles.
- GSNETX camp properties are equipped with a security gate that will remain closed.
- In the event of an emergency affecting a camper, camp directors will notify the camper's emergency contact on file.

CAMP COUNSELORS AND STAFF

- At GSNETX we work hard to hire a diverse group of staff from our local communities and internationally from around the world. We believe girls greatly benefit from learning and working closely with those who are different from themselves. All camp staff undergo a rigorous application and interview process, must pass a thorough background check, and complete training on camper safety, first aid, mental health, and more.
- Girls are facing lots of challenges and our camp counselors are trained to create a positive group environment, facilitate teambuilding, foster inclusion, and support independence. At least two un-related female counselors will reside in each cabin at Camp Bette Perot. This aligns with GSNETX Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

CAMP ARRIVAL

THINGS TO BRING TO CAMPER CHECK-IN

[Camper Release Form](https://gsnetx.org/camperrelease) - gsnetx.org/camperrelease

Medications (including inhaler or Epi-Pen) with medication form from CampDoc

Camper medications must be:

- Clearly marked with camper name
- In original container (Prescriptions must be labeled and prescribed for person taking)
- Unexpired
- Placed in a ziptop bag labeled with camper name
- Accompanied by medication form (printed from CampDoc)

Please do not bring occasional over-the-counter medications to camp, except for daily allergy or similar medications.

Medications will be kept with the camp health supervisor and administered as specified, except rescue medications which will be kept by your camper or your camper's counselor.

- Camper luggage (backpack, duffel bag, and laundry bag)
- Any mail you are dropping off (please see aforementioned details on mail)

CHECK-IN FOR CAMPERS

Camp Bette Perot

214-770-1452

2008 An Co Rd 458

Palestine, TX 75803

Camper check-in at camp is

from 1 pm to 2 pm on arrival day.

Please arrive during this time window to facilitate a positive start to the camp week for your camper.

Campers arrive after lunch, please ensure your camper has eaten lunch before arriving for check-in.

Please be prepared to wait in your vehicle for the check-in process.

The check-in process includes:

- Brief camper health screening for temperature and head lice
- Submitting medication form and medications, if applicable
- Submitting camper release form
- Dropping off camper and luggage
- Dropping off any mail you have brought

In order to prevent head lice transmission at camp, campers are screened for lice during the check-in process. If lice or nits are present, check-in for that camper is delayed for treatment off property by parent/guardian, and they can return to camp in 24 hours with successful resolution.

Families unload their camper and luggage and then say goodbye at the center of camp, and families depart camp from there. Camp starts immediately as campers join their group and move into cabins and tents. Families do NOT visit camper living spaces or tour camp.

HOW TO FIND CAMP

Camp Bette Perot

Take TX-19 South from Athens (21 miles) or TX-19 North from Palestine (14 miles). Turn west onto An. Co. Rd. 459, where there is a camp sign on the west side of the highway just south of the turn. Travel 2 miles until the road Ts and turn left onto An. Co. Rd. 458. Drive 0.5 miles to camp entrance on the left.



DURING CAMP

Campers will be busy with camp life as soon as they arrive. The first day, they get to know the other girls and counselors in their cabin or tent, tour camp, get their camp t-shirts, sing songs, become familiar with our dining hall routine at dinner, and enjoy camp traditions at opening campfire. The week goes by quickly!

TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP

- Morning wake up
- Flag ceremony and breakfast
- Morning activities
- Lunch
- Turtle time (rest) then Kaper time
- Afternoon activity
- Trading post and Free time
- Afternoon activity
- Flag ceremony and dinner
- Sunset time
- Evening activity
- Showers, flashlight time, and lights out

Girls experience independence in our safe and supportive camp environment. The week at camp is centered around the horses with a trip to the barn being the highlight of each day. Campers can also swim, shoot archery and slingshots, join in a ropes course challenge, try their hand at leatherworking, make a tie-dye t-shirt, and wilderness exploration.⁸ The camp activities progress by age and as girls grow through the program they get fun new opportunities.

SENDING EMAILS AND VIEWING PHOTOS WITH BUNK1

We work with Bunk1 for email delivery to campers and to share camp photos with families. Information about Bunk1 will be provided at camper check-in.

Emails - For a small fee, family members can send emails to campers to be distributed during daily mail call Monday through Thursday. Please be aware that campers do NOT have access to respond to emails.

Photos - We take photos during the week to provide families with a glimpse of camp life, and these can be viewed for free. We know you are eager to see a glimpse of your camper enjoying camp life! We will make every effort to provide three photos of each camper, including a group photo of their unit. We aim to begin posting photos Monday evening, but sometimes photos are delayed. Please be assured our staff's time is focused on your camper rather than on the camera.

If you do not want your camper's photo taken at camp, you must email camp@gsnetx.org at least one week prior to the start date of the session to inform camp staff. Please include your camper's full name and dates of attendance.

MISSING HOME

Missing home is a natural part of adjusting to a new environment, and our camp staff are here to help campers succeed through any feelings of missing home that arise. We support feelings of missing home from campers in the following ways:

- Comforting her feelings
- Teaching strategies for self-soothing and adapting to challenges
- Engaging her with friendships and fun

⁸ACA AD.33.1

- Addressing any problems that are upsetting the camper

Missing home is generally resolved within the first 1-2 days of camp.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

Routine minor complaints, such as headaches, stomachaches, scrapes, and bruises, are handled by our camp health supervisor, and caregivers will NOT be notified. In the event of major illness or injury, you will be contacted. Examples of health situations that result in caregivers being contacted include:⁹

- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Fever over 100°F for more than four hours
- Any injury or illness requiring transport to a medical facility
- Any injury or illness involving a stay of more than four hours in health care
- Any specific symptoms that concern staff, such as ongoing vomiting
- Menstruation that begins for the first time at camp

In limited cases, a camper must be picked up early due to significant illness or injury.

COVID PRECAUTIONS

As with any activity in a group setting, participants are inherently at an increased risk for exposure to any communicable disease. In the event a camper becomes ill while at camp, the camp health supervisor will contact you to arrange an early pick-up for your child. These are GSNETX's current planned practices regarding COVID-19. Final practices regarding Covid-19 will be put in place closer to camp and all registered campers will be notified if there are any changes.

FAMILY EMERGENCY

If you have an emergency and need to reach camp, please contact the Camp Director at (214)770-1452.

CAMP DEPARTURE

PICK-UP OF CAMPERS

Camp Bette Perot
2008 An Co Rd 458
Palestine, TX 75803

Pick-up is 1 pm to 2 pm on closing day.

BRING TO CAMPER PICK-UP

- Driver license matching the camper release submitted at camp check-in.

Families meet campers at the center of camp. Families do NOT visit camper units or tour camp.

⁹ACA HW.8.1