

April 8, 2019

## IMPORTANT PINE HILLS CAMP INFORMATION

Dear Parents,

As a Christian camp, we place the utmost value on the dignity of human life, and with the recent measles outbreak in southeast Michigan (with 39 new cases since March 13), we believe that the safest approach this year is to ensure that everyone at camp is protected. For some who develop measles, the disease is self-limiting, but there is a significant risk of death or serious complication, particularly to vulnerable persons such as infants, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems. With many extended family members dropping off and picking up their campers, as well as some mothers of infants on senior staff at Girls' Camp, we have determined that the risk is too great for us not to take some action this summer.

In collaboration with our camp medical director and other trusted Christian healthcare providers in our community, with much prayer and discussion, we have decided that **every camper and staff (including service teams) at Pine Hills Boys and Girls Camps for summer 2019 must be protected against measles. This year, we are only requiring the MMR vaccine, and we will review the situation annually. This will require evidence of immunity with the MMR vaccine or documented history of measles disease, as detailed below.** We apologize for the delay in communication, since many of you have already registered and paid for camp, but this is an emerging and growing concern with new measles cases being reported each week.

While we are aware that some families have chosen to defer, or decline the vaccination of their children, with the recent outbreak of measles, this highly contagious illness would spread more easily in a confined environment such as a camp with 24/7 communal living.

Our primary concern is that measles is transmitted before most individuals are aware that they are sick. People are contagious for 4-5 days before experiencing any symptoms, and it may take 21 days after exposure for symptoms to appear. Exposure can occur from being in the same air space as a contagious individual within two hours of them leaving that space, or touching the same object (such as a door handle) up to two hours later. 90% of individuals who do not have immunity to measles will become sick if they are exposed. The camp leadership team and our medical advisors are confident that the MMR vaccine is safe. For those concerned about vaccine origins, a helpful source of information is a statement issued in 2005 by the Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Life, which upholds that the risk to the child outweighs any potential cooperation with evil in using a vaccine that was not originally made in an ethical manner. (For further explanation of the disease and risks, please see: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/measles>. The Vatican document may be found here: <http://www.immunize.org/talking-about-vaccines/vaticandocument.htm>)

**At the recommendation of our medical director, here are the options we are able to offer:**

1. If your child has already received two doses of the MMR vaccine, or has a documented history of measles diagnosed by a healthcare provider, **we will need a copy of his or her immunization record.** This record should be emailed to:
  - Girls' Camp: Hallie Raney at [hallie.raney@gmail.com](mailto:hallie.raney@gmail.com) **no later than July 28**
  - Boys' Camp: Peter Benjamin at [pjbenjamin39@gmail.com](mailto:pjbenjamin39@gmail.com) **no later than May 26**
2. If your child has only received one dose of the vaccine, we request that he/she receive an additional dose **at least two weeks prior to camp. For Boys' Camp, the deadline for this additional dose is May 26, and for Girls' Camp, the deadline is July 28.**
3. If your child has never received the MMR vaccine, you have the following options:
  - Have your child receive at least one dose of MMR (preferably two doses separated by 28 days). The vaccine must be given at least two weeks prior to camp. For Boys' Camp, **the deadline is May 26**, and for Girls' Camp, **the deadline is July 28.**
  - Withdraw your child from camp for 2019. We will issue a full refund if you make this decision. \*Because the Girls' Camp typically has a waiting list, if your daughter will not attend camp we would like to know **NO LATER THAN JUNE 1.**

***We are unable to make any exceptions to the guidelines above.*** Please recognize that this is due to our belief about the dignity of all human life, and our mission to uphold and protect that for as many people as possible.

If you have additional medical questions or need to obtain the vaccine, we can recommend a few Christian providers in the area, including Emmaus Health in Ann Arbor and Mercy Christian Health in Ypsilanti.

Any further communication may be sent to [phcgirls@gmail.com](mailto:phcgirls@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Debbie Herbeck, Pine Hills Girls' Camp Director  
Pete Burak, Pine Hills Boys' Camp Director

In consultation with and at the recommendation of:

Dr. Rusty Chavey  
Dr. Roger Anderberg  
Dr. Dominic Perrotta  
Dr. Jennifer Berkowski  
Dr. David Thorrez