

Is Camp Right for My Camper?



Great question! There are a few ways to help determine if Brigadoon Village is a good fit for your camper and their needs.

Our camp sessions are open to campers aged 7-18, with a couple of exceptions (noted below) for programs where campers can engage more effectively at an older age.

Does My Camper Fit the Mandate of the Program?

Each of our camp sessions serves a health condition or life challenge. You can find a brief description of each of these below:

- **Camp BELIEVE:** a camp for kids ages 9-18 impacted by a parent/guardians's mental illness.
- **Camp Brainiac:** a camp for kids who are living with neurosurgery conditions.
- **Camp Braveheart:** a camp for kids who have a congenital or acquired heart condition.
- **Camp Carpe Diem:** a camp for kids living with epilepsy.
- **Canadian Cancer Society's Camp Goodtimes:** a camp for kids living with or beyond cancer.
- **Camp Guts & Glory:** a camp for kids with an IBD diagnosis (Crohn's, colitis) or who have an ostomy, cecostomy, or ileostomy.
- **Camp JoinTogether:** a camp for kids living with a diagnosis of a Juvenile Arthritis condition and who are followed by a rheumatologist.
- **Camp Kedoopse:** a camp for kids ages 9-18 who are experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one. Campers who have lost a close connection in the recent past will be prioritized.
- **Camp Lots-a-Wata:** a camp for kids living with kidney disease or requiring a kidney transplant.
- **Camp See-Ya:** a camp for kids who are blind or visually impaired.
- **Camp Silly-Yak:** a camp for kids living with a diagnosis of Celiac Disease or who have been advised by a medical professional not to pursue further Celiac Disease testing.
- **Camp Trailblazers:** a camp for kids living with a craniofacial difference (from birth or later in life).
- **Camp Treasure Chest:** a camp for kids living with asthma (who actively use medications to control the condition,) an anaphylactic allergy, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, or primary ciliary dyskinesia. Other lung conditions will be considered.
- **Camp Whatcha Say:** a camp for kids who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Maritime Adventures Camp:** a camp for kids diagnosed with a bleeding disorder (Hemophilia and carriers, platelet disfunctions, factor deficiencies, von Willebrand disease, etc.).

Not sure if your camper's condition fits into one of these mandates? Please feel free to get in touch with us at camp@brigadoonvillage.org or (902) 332-1544.

We also offer a variety of teen programs:

- **Spring Teen Retreat:** open to any camper ages 13-18 who fits the mandate of one of our camp sessions. This is open to both new and returning Brigadoon campers.
- **March Break Leadership Camp:** open to any returning Brigadoon camper ages 13-18 interested in/able to participate in leadership development sessions to help them learn to be more effective leaders in their communities.
- **Summer Leadership Program:** open to returning Brigadoon campers ages 15-18 who have demonstrated leadership skills and a strong interest in being role models for other campers within the camp environment. This camp program requires a two-week commitment and an additional application.
- **Junior Counsellor Program:** open to former Brigadoon campers who have graduated from the camp program and are interested in becoming more involved in camp as a staff member or volunteer.



Is My Camper Ready?



Being away from home at overnight camp for the first time can be exciting and overwhelming. At Brigadoon Village, it's important to us that we set each camper up for a successful experience with us, which is much more likely if we know that they're ready!

Brigadoon programs are open to campers aged 7+. However, age is one of many ways to know if your camper is prepared for their first overnight camp. We encourage families to consider the following when deciding if overnight camp is suitable for their child this summer:

Can your child take care of their hygiene and get dressed independently?

We expect young campers to need their counsellors to remind them to brush their teeth and take showers, but they must know how to do these tasks independently when prompted. Working with your child to increase their independence in these areas will help them succeed and feel more confident in the camp environment.

Has your child had successful sleepovers away from home?

These could be nights spent at a friend's house, a grandparent's, or another relative's house. The key is at someone else's home, away from their typical caregivers. Chat with your camper to determine how positive and successful the experience was. Did your child enjoy it? Were they able to sleep? Did they show signs of high anxiety (some anxiety is perfectly normal!)? If it went off without a hitch, not just once but a couple of times, you know your child can sleep away from home. This won't necessarily prevent homesickness, but it allows you to discuss it with your child.

Does your child have experience with babysitters at night who have successfully put them to bed?

If no one besides you or a close relative has ever put your child to bed, they probably won't appreciate experiencing this for the first time at camp. Bedtime is the most stressful time of the day for children away from home, as they associate it with the routines they've built with their family members.

Can your child successfully navigate new situations?

Suppose your child has been able to adapt to new teachers or coaches, a classroom full of unfamiliar kids, new after-school activities, or a move to a new school. In that case, these are all indications that they can get into the groove of camp successfully. We anticipate your child will come to camp with typical camper anxieties. It is important that campers also come with the ability to label their feelings and communicate those with staff so they can assist campers with strategies to navigate new situations.

Can your child get along well with others?

While we anticipate camp will provide our campers with many opportunities for social skill development, your child must be comfortable with basic skills like:

- Taking turns
- Sharing with others
- Understanding how to take others' feelings into consideration

Camp is a great environment where campers can further develop these important skills if they come with some understanding and experience. We expect some conflict but want to ensure that campers have practiced these skills at home first to interact with minimal additional support from staff.

Can Brigadoon Support My Camper Effectively?



While reviewing our camper applications, we gather information related to campers' mental health, personal care/hygiene needs, and behaviour support needs to determine whether or not we can support them through a successful camp experience.

Our typical camp ratio is 6:1, meaning there are six campers to each staff member. This is as much staff support as we can guarantee during camp sessions. If you're not sure whether your camper can thrive in a 6:1 ratio, it is possible that a camp experience might not be the right fit for your camper this year.

Also, if any of the below apply to your camper, camp may not be the right fit for your camper:

- The camper requires support with their hygiene, toileting, or dressing needs. A Personal Support Worker must accompany the camper to camp in these cases.
- The camper requires support which requires lifting or transferring from a mobility device. A Personal Support Worker must accompany the camper to camp in these cases.
- The camper will consistently require more support than a 6:1 ratio can support. This could be because of medical needs, behaviour support needs, mental health support needs, etc.
- We aren't confident that a camper is well or medically stable enough to engage in the camp experience meaningfully. Spending all week in our Medical Centre isn't the best way to experience camp.
- We aren't confident that we will be able to ensure a camper's ongoing health and safety during the camp experience. This could be based on having complex medical needs, a history of self-harm behaviour, risky decision-making, or suicidal ideation.
- We aren't confident that we will be able to ensure a positive camp experience for the other campers in the cabin group based on previous aggressive or bullying behaviours, which may impact another camper's experience.

Depending on the circumstances, camper families may be encouraged to apply in future years when the camper may require less support to have a successful camp experience. On the other hand, due to changes in circumstances, campers who attended camp previously may not be a good fit in the coming years.

If you'd like to discuss this further or have more questions about whether camp is a good fit for your camper, please don't hesitate to contact us at (902) 332-1544 or camp@brigadoonvillage.org.

