



## 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 which campers will be able to engage in more effectively at an older age.

### Does their circumstance or condition fit the mandate of the program?

Each of our camp sessions serves a specific camp session or life challenge. You can find a quick description of each of these below.

- **Camp BELIEVE:** open to any camper ages 9-18 who has a parent/guardian with a diagnosed mental illness.
- **Camp Brainiac:** open to any camper who has/had a neurosurgical condition requiring surgery.
- **Camp Braveheart:** open to any camper who has/had a congenital or acquired heart condition.
- **Camp Carpe Diem:** open to any camper with a diagnosis of epilepsy or other seizure disorder.
- **Camp Clots-of-Fun:** open to campers with hemophilia (a/b,) platelet dysfunction, rare factor deficiencies, Von Willebrand disease and carriers of some of these conditions.
- **Camp Goodtimes:** open to any camper who has/had a cancer diagnosis.
- **Camp Guts & Glory:** open to any camp with an IBD diagnosis (crohn's, colitis) or who has an ostomy, cecostomy, or ileostomy.
- **Camp JoinTogether:** open to any camper who has a diagnosis of a Juvenile Arthritis condition and who is followed by a rheumatologist.
- **Camp Lots-a-Wata:** open to any camper living with kidney disease or who has required a kidney transplant.
- **Camp See-Ya:** open to campers with vision loss, feel free to reach out for more specific guidelines.
- **Camp Silly-Yak:** open to any camper with a confirmed diagnosis of Celiac Disease or who have been advised by a medical professional not to pursue further Celiac Disease testing. We will confirm diagnosis and/or medical guidance.
- **Camp Solace:** open to any camper ages 9-18 who is grieving the loss of a loved one. Campers who have lost a caregiver or immediate family member will be prioritized.
- **Camp Trailblazers:** open to any camper with a craniofacial difference, whether from birth or acquired later in life.
- **Camp Treasure Chest:** open to any camper with asthma (who is actively using medications to control the condition,) an anaphylactic allergy, bronchiecstasis, cystic fibrosis, or primary ciliary dyskinesia. Other lung conditions will be considered.
- **Camp Whatcha Say:** open to any camper who is Deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Maritime Adventures Camp:** open to any camper who has a diagnosed bleeding disorder, including Sickle Cell disease.

Not sure whether your camper's condition fits into one of these mandates? Please feel free to get in touch with us at [camp@brigadoonvillage.org](mailto:camp@brigadoonvillage.org) or (902) 229-3060.

You also might be wondering about our teen programs:

- **March Break Leadership Camp:** open to returning Brigadoon campers ages 13-18 who is interested in/able to participate in leadership development sessions which will help them to learn to be more effective leaders in their communities. These campers should be able to manage their medication administration fairly independently, require little behaviour support, and be ready to take on some additional responsibilities.
- **Summer Leadership Program:** open to returning Brigadoon campers aged 15-18 who has demonstrated leadership skills and a strong interest in being a role model 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?

We know that being away from home at overnight camp for the first time can be both 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 and up, however we know that age isn't the only way for you to know if your camper is ready for their first overnight camp. We encourage families to consider the following when deciding if overnight camp is right for your child this summer:

### Can your child take care of their personal hygiene and get dressed on their own?

We expect young campers to need their counsellors to remind them to brush their teeth and take showers, but it's important that they know how to do these tasks on their own when prompted. Working with your child to increase their independence in these areas will help them to be much more successful 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 that it is at someone else's home away from their typical caregivers. When they come back from the sleepover, 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 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 opens the door for 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 time of the day that is often most stressful to children who are away from home, as they associate it with the routines they've built at home with their family members.

### Can your child successfully navigate new situations?

If your child has been able to adapt to new teachers or coaches, a classroom that is full of unfamiliar kids, new after-school activities, or a move to a new school, these are all indications that they will be able to 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 be able to 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, it is important that your child is comfortable with basic skills like:

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

We believe that camp is a great environment where campers can further develop these important skills, as long as they come with some understanding and experience of them. We expect some conflict but want to make sure that campers have practiced these skills at home first so they can interact without much additional support from staff.

## Can Brigadoon Support My Camper Effectively?

During the process of reviewing our camper applications, we gather information related to campers' mental health, personal care/hygiene needs, and behaviour support needs in order to determine whether or not we are able to support them through a successful camp experience.

Our typical camp ratio is 6:1, meaning that there are 6 campers to each staff member. This is as much staff support as we can guarantee during any camp session. 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, we may not be able to support your camper at camp this year.

- The camper requires support with their personal hygiene, toileting, or dressing needs. In these cases, a Personal Support Worker will need to accompany the camper to camp.
- The camper requires support which requires lifting or transferring from a mobility device. In these cases, a Personal Support Worker will need to accompany the camper to camp.
- It appears that 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 can't feel confident that a camper is well or medically stable enough to meaningfully engage in the camp experience. We don't want campers to have to spend their week in the medical centre!
- We can't feel 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, history of self-harm behaviour, risky decision making, or suicidal ideation.
- We can't feel 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 in order 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 years to come.

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 get in touch with us at (902) 229-3060 or [camp@brigadoonvillage.org](mailto:camp@brigadoonvillage.org)