

CAMP WAUPACA  
CAMP DISCIPLINE  
By Mike Euer

To Begin With...

Have a successful first meeting  
They'll look you over  
They'll talk you over  
They'll work you over  
Be ready! Do not be to friendly.

Be Prompt

Begin the class promptly.

...And Be Prepared

No plan is perfect. Have alternate plan and materials to fill unexpected gaps. Plan so that all boys will have enough work for the whole meeting. Keep the boys busy.

Be Impartial

Be Fair!

No pets--or at any rate, don't be obvious about it. Give each a chance to gain recognition in a good way. Boys will usually accept the individual differences that are always present in a group of campers. They will respect your "special handling" of behavior -- but only if you apply "special handling" of behavior of all boys. As you well know, boys are different. They cannot be treated alike.

Avoid Interruptions

Have a unit and course of study.

When your class has started working on a project avoid interrupting them. Unnecessary interruptions create distractions. This can lead to trouble.

Reprimand in Private

You don't appreciate being "called down" in front of your peers. Neither do your campers. Show them the same courtesy that you would expect.

Skin Your Own Skunks

This may be strong language but cabin and class discipline is primarily your job. The office will help -- but seek assistance only when you really need it.

Be Consistent

If behavior is considered unacceptable one day -- this same behavior must be unacceptable every day. Do not let it depend upon your mood. Some days we are more, or perhaps less accepting. But pity the poor boy who doesn't know your mood.

No Politics

Don't try to win boy's acceptance, approval, etc. by compromising on the things they know to be established standards. Be flexible for a purpose, but NOT to win votes. "I hope the boys respect me." Likeing comes with respect.

Don't Delay

If an office conference seems advisable arrange one as soon as possible. Don't let discipline problems drag out. See what needs to be done and take the necessary action.

Look For Potential Trouble Spots

Have a wide range of attention and see everything -- but don't look too hard at the insignificant. Again be fair, but don't be a bear.

It is good to observe a boy in action before taking over a class.

Focus on a Boy's Strong Points

Frequently the behavior problem at your meetings is a boy seeking attention. Keep away from punishments that push him further out of the group. "You can't sit with us until you know how to act properly." or "No game for you today" tends, in the long run to force this boy to be a greater show-off than ever. Try to find his strong points and focus on these. Talk with him. Have friendly conversations, but don't moralize. Help him to achieve.

It Takes Time

There are in-between steps from undesirable behavior to good behavior. A boy may stop hitting with fists, but may bully with words. You're making progress. We have a tendency to rush to much.

Use Common Sense

If you are uncertain what to do in a particular situation use your common sense. Have confidence in yourself. Trust your judgement. If you do, your boys will.

Listen.

Learn to listen. Walk around the camp when no activities are taking place -- talk to boys and listen to them. You can learn much about your boys from these chats. Be sure to listen to their side of any troublesome situation. They will respect you for recognizing their right to be heard.

Don't Threaten Anything

You can't carry out... and better yet, don't threaten. Act. Words mean little to boys -- they hear so many. Give them the security of knowing exactly where they stand. Certain behavior -- certain result. There is no need to talk about it.

Have a Routine

Have a routine in your cabin and class. Routine gives boys security and establishes precedents and policies. If there is an established way for doing all the little things in the cabin or class program, asking questions, clean-up, working on projects, etc., decisions do not constantly have to be made which take the leader's time from the primary business of teaching. Routine minimizes arguments between boys which contribute so much to poor control situations.

Use Your Voice To Advantage

It can sooth or enthuse. Project your voice but keep it calm and rich.  
Naver attempt to speak over a noisy situation.  
Ask yourself this question..."Who does the most talking in your class?"  
If you do, you are talking too much.

Understand Fads....in

dress  
hair styles  
language  
idols  
social customs  
smoking  
drinking  
etc.

You may be appalled by some of the things that are accepted social customs of youth today. It is not our function to belittle these mores. Do enforce camp policies, but do not try to change the world. So be flexible. Don't make a "federal case" against a socially acceptable activity -- even if YOU don't approve.

Recognize Behavior

Accept behavior for what it is and what it is trying to achieve:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Attention              | The expression of resentment (You have said |
| Affection              | or you have done.)                          |
| The expression of fear | The expression of insecurity                |
| Showoff                | etc.  |

Try to fill his need in another way so that a boy will not have to use unacceptable behavior to gain his ends. You can not all ways help every boy. Do not worry about it. Learn to stand their misbehavior a little bit more.

Don't Argue

After all, what is there to argue about. If you are merely enforcing a camp rule, there is no place for argument. Do not be drawn into one. The more you argue the more it seems a challenge to the boy to see if he can beat you at arguing. Discuss -- don't ever argue. Show cause and subsequent effect, but do not try to defend the policy you are enforcing. Make it simple.

Know How Boys Learn

Of course you know how boys learn. But review and review. Think through your weekly experiences. Are they geared to the interests and abilities of the boys in your class.

Know Your Boy Leaders

Know and build rapport with key boys in the group.

Try Not To Take Unacceptable Behavior As A Personal Affront

This may be difficult but the behavior is not really directed at you. You may be the recipient, but to the boy you epitomize the authority against which he feels he must fight. Reject the behavior; but not the boy.

If You Expect Difficulty Try

Purposeful ignoring.

Anticipation when an instance is likely to arise (move over near him).

Using accessory authority -- such as strong leaders in the group.

Giving the boy personal support at points of transition from one activity to another. Having an immediate conference alone with the boy should a problem arise.

Develop Camp Standards. (With the boys.)

but be sure you are not just imposing your own standards. Also, be sure that the standards of behavior are within reach, that there are not too many of them, and that they are well understood by all boys. Give boys help in knowing what to do as well as what not to do.

Have a Place For Everything

and INSIST that everything be kept in its proper place. This helps to eliminate the confusion of constantly looking for the "Rope", the "Ball" or the "life jacket".

Who's Perfect?

Don't expect your cabin to be perfectly self-controlled all the time but let your boys feel you expect it to be. Even adults find it difficult to be attentive at all times.

Do as I say but do not do as I do is too often heard. Many boys have no idea of what things cost, or care. We should teach conservation of materials.

Don't Ridicule.

Ridicule means to tear down the real worth of an individual in both his eyes and in the eyes of the world. You have no right to do this. Indeed, no man has this right. As Camp Counsellors we work to build good in boys. Recall how you have felt when anyone has ridiculed and shamed you. You might have felt like striking out blindly to defend your self. Boys often feel the same way. If they feel like striking out and don't, they suffer. If they do strike out, you suffer. Don't create this situation.

Also...

Give boys the opportunity to "save face" when they are in a tight spot.

And...

try not to create situations that encourage boys to lie.

Did you do this or Did you take this - not the way.

Be Ready For Emergencies!

Think through possible emergencies and how to meet them BEFORE they happen...

If a boy is sick

If a boy faints

If a boy has a bloody nose

If a boy gets cut

If a boy has an "accident"

Above all -- act as if you are used to having these things happen.

The boy will react as you react. You may be scared to death -- act quickly, but quietly and calmly. Take the boy to the nurse.

No Deals!

Don't make deals to gain control -- no bribes! Loss of privileges may well be the natural result of poor behavior and privileges and responsibility the result of good behavior, but -- "I'll let you go two minutes early," "Candy tomorrow if you are quiet", or "I'll give you a badge if you'll stop talking" or bribes. They may bring about a temporary lull but the boy will be waiting to see what your next "deal" will be!

Be Positive...

and give sincere praise. See to it that every boy has some success each meeting. The opportunities are limitless. Just a word or two of praise. a wink, or an appreciative smile. This works. Try it.

Never Punish in the Heat of Anger and Know Where to go for Help...

Understand the disciplinary procedure in camp. Know where to go for help. Don't be afraid to seek help when you really need help. Know what to do with that ONE boy you are not able to handle.

Always be Looking For New Ways

Sometimes we hear, "We've tried everything with that boy -- nothing works." Don't always believe it. Punishment may not have worked. Look for new ways. This is the job of Counselling -- it is not only facts and projects.

Don't Punish the Group.

Don't punish the cabin or class for the misbehavior of one, but do use peer social pressure to encourage good behavior.

Plan for Specific Occasions.

Plan specific rules and behavior for the class or cabin for specific occasions -- such as:

Study trips

Programs

Parties

Cabin Night

Camping Trips

Follow Up.

Follow up your pre-plan for the specific occasion with -- "Ways you were satisfied with your behavior at class time?" "Could we have done anything differently to make it even better?", etc.

Cabin Responsibility

If the Cabin participates in an activity as a Group (meeting, study, trip, etc.) hold the cabin as a group responsible for its behavior. This is not punishing the group for the behavior of some, but is recognizing that the cabin as a corporate group has a responsibility as well as do the individual members.

Give Directions Clearly.

Be sure the members of your class or cabin understand what they are to do in a class or cabin activity. Check to see that the directions are clear --- really clear. A good technique is to ask different members of the group to repeat all or part of your instructions. Don't take the obvious for granted. It's not always obvious to boys.

Provide Opportunities for Boys to Excel.

Provide activities which afford the boy an opportunity to excel in something he can do well. We all desire to be noticed. If a boy cannot gain recognition in a good way, he'll find another way!

Alternate Kinds of Activities

Plan your day (or meeting) in such a way that there are alternation, quiet study periods with periods of activity. This tends to alleviate tension which is often the cause of confusion.

Show a Sense of Humor.

Let the boys know that you are a good-natured, cheerful, and heppy individual and capable of laughing with boys and at yourself.

Be Firm

If boys were able to completely govern themselves, they would no longer be children. Give them ample opportunity to make decisions, but step in with a firm decision when the situation calls for action.

So...

Don't be afraid to stand your ground if behavior is not acceptable. Boys will respect you for this.

Be a Ham!

Let it be known that poor behavior is not acceptable in your class or cabin by dramatizing your reaction to poor behavior -- be a real ham actor!

Plan Ahead for That Rainy Day

When the sun is shining plan ahead for that rainy day.

Limit the number of boys engaged in any one activity. (This eliminates roughhousing.)

Control the number of boys who go out into the rain. Boys must be kept dry and can not be allow to play in the rain or wear wet clothes.

No athletic equipment should be used in the cabins.

No parties unless a previously planned activity.

Consider Physical Comfort of Boys

If there is evidence of excessive yawning, general inattention, frequent trips for drinks, giggling, or restlessness, etc., look for ways to relieve physical discomfort.

Keep your meeting room well ventilated.

Keep your meeting room and outside area free from trash or litter.

Eliminate outside disturbances whenever possible.

Stimulate boy cooperation in keeping the area attractive.

Provide a wide variety of activities.

When the Meeting or Class Starts

Set the climate of the meeting by the manner in which boys come into the area and leave the area.

They Are All Different...

So above all, don't demand that every boy achieve the same academic standard. Organize your program to have boys engaged in work at their own levels of expectancy.

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It will take time

Constantly re-evaluate your teaching technique

Look for new ways

Don't work alone. Get others on your team

You'll certainly need the help and cooperation of other counsellors -- and the office

Know yourself -- your own feelings

If you had had the same experiences and background as the misbehaving boys - would you act much differently?

NOTES: