Gender & Sexual Diversity Policy

Camp Tapawingo is committed to being a welcoming, affirming, and safe space for all campers and staff, including those of diverse gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. This policy reflects the United Church of Canada's affirmation that gender and sexuality are gifts of God and that all people are made in the image of God.

Camp Tapawingo opposes discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation and actively works to eliminate sexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in all camp practices.

Guiding Principles:

Affirmation of Identity: Every camper and staff member has the right to identify and express their gender authentically.

Safety & Dignity: All campers deserve physical, emotional, and spiritual safety.

Privacy: Personal information, including gender identity, is confidential.

Equity: Camp structures and systems will not reinforce binary gender assumptions.

Inclusion: Camp Tapawingo will offer options, within space and staffing limits, to ensure all campers feel welcome and included.

Cabins/Sleeping Arrangements

Camp Tapawingo will offer a gender-inclusive cabin, whenever possible, for any camper who wishes to opt in. This cabin welcomes campers of all gender identities and expressions. Cabin Leaders and campers will be invited to select the cabin option that best supports the camper's comfort, privacy and safety. During registration, campers may select a first-choice cabin and a second-choice cabin, including the gender-inclusive option. We especially encourage campers who wish to stay with siblings, cousins, or friends who use different pronouns to consider the gender-inclusive cabin. Campers may also choose to stay in a gender-specific cabin if that is their preference.

Campers may stay in the cabin that aligns with their affirmed gender identity. No camper will be required to disclose private information to justify their choice.

Changing Areas and Privacy

Camp Tapawingo ensures that all campers have access to private, safe changing spaces, following practices used at other United Church camps. Campers may change in:

- washroom or shower stalls
- pop-up changing tents
- or their sleeping area with curtains/partitions where available

Extra time will be built into schedules for changing before/after swimming and at other times of day to support comfort and privacy.

Washrooms and Showers

Camp Tapawingo provides:

- a gender-inclusive washroom
- private shower stalls
- clear signage outlining privacy expectations

Campers may use the washroom that aligns with their gender identity.

Cabin Supervision

Staff are assigned to cabins based on experience, maturity, and ability to support diverse campers. Staff gender identity does not restrict which cabin they may supervise. Staff will maintain appropriate boundaries and follow United Church Camping Standards for supervision and safety.

Camper Support and Communication

Caregivers will be invited to share any relevant information about their camper's needs (e.g., privacy, sleeping arrangements, pronouns). Camp Tapawingo will maintain confidentiality and respect the camper's autonomy regarding disclosure. Only staff working directly with the camper will be informed in order to better support that camper. Staff will check in regularly with gender-diverse campers to ensure comfort and safety.

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Discrimination

Camp Tapawingo has **zero tolerance** for:

- targeted or intentional misgendering
- harassment
- bullying
- discrimination based on gender identity, expression, or sexual orientation

Incidents will be addressed immediately following United Church Camping Standards and camp safety protocols.

Parent/Guardian FAQ (Key Messages)

Why does Camp Tapawingo have a Gender & Sexual Diversity Policy?

Camp Tapawingo is part of the United Church camping tradition, which affirms that every person is created in the image of God and deserves safety, dignity, and belonging. Our policy ensures that all campers, including every expression of gender and identity, can participate fully and safely in camp life.

How are cabin placements decided?

Campers may choose from the following cabin options:

- gender-specific cabin
- gender-inclusive cabin

Campers and caregivers select the option that best fits the camper's comfort and identity. Friend or ally requests are also considered.

What is a gender-inclusive cabin?

A gender-inclusive cabin is a standard cabin option open to all campers, featuring:

- mixed-gender groups
- private changing spaces
- trained staff
- the same supervision and safety standards as all other cabins

This model is already used successfully at several United Church camps.

Where will my child change clothes?

All campers have access to private changing options, including:

- curtained or partitioned areas inside cabins
- washroom stalls
- pop-up changing tents
- shower stalls

Campers are never required to change in front of others. Cabin groups receive age-appropriate guidance on privacy and respect in a body positive, non-sexualized manner.

Where will my child sleep?

Campers sleep in their chosen cabin type. Within each cabin:

- campers sleep in individual bunks
- Cabin Leaders sleep in the same cabin
- privacy expectations are posted and reviewed at the start of each camp

How is supervision handled in gender-inclusive spaces?

Supervision is based on training and maturity, not staff gender. Staff are trained in:

- inclusive language
- privacy and confidentiality
- preventing and responding to bullying
- supporting gender-diverse youth

Staff maintain clear boundaries and follow United Church Camping Standards.

How does the camp handle washrooms and showers?

Camp Tapawingo provides:

- a gender-inclusive, single washroom
- private shower stalls
- clear privacy rules

Campers may use the washroom that aligns with their gender identity.

Will my child learn about gender or sexuality at camp?

Camp Tapawingo does not provide formal instruction on gender or sexuality. However, we do teach:

- respect
- kindness
- anti-bullying
- inclusion

These values are part of our Christian identity and camp culture.

What if my child has questions or feels uncomfortable?

Campers are encouraged to speak with:

- their Cabin Leader
- the Camp Director
- any other member of the camp staff

We check in regularly and respond promptly to concerns.

How does the camp handle bullying or harassment?

Camp Tapawingo has zero tolerance for:

- misgendering (when targeted or intentional)
- name-calling
- exclusion
- harassment
- discrimination

Incidents are addressed immediately, with caregiver communication as needed.

Will my child be “outed” to other campers or families?

No. All camper information is confidential, including gender identity, pronouns, or other personal information. Staff will not disclose this information without the camper's consent, except when required for safety.

How can I support my child before camp?

You can:

- review cabin options together
- talk about privacy expectations
- practice advocating for needs (e.g., "I'd like a private changing space")
- share any relevant information during registration