

Ramah Day Camp

מחנה רמה יומי



RAMAH DAY CAMP IN CHICAGOLAND
2023 Summer
Staff Handbook

Last Updated: April 2023



WELCOME TO THE RAMAH DAY CAMP IN CHICAGOLAND SUMMER 2023 TEAM!

Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland is a community and a family. Every summer we become a vibrant, active *kehillah* (community) where our campers have fun, build skills and form friendships that last a lifetime.

We believe that campers learn best through active experiences and understand Jewish culture by experiencing it. Your behavior as a Jewish role model is crucial in order for us to accomplish this goal.

We strive to live out our 4 core values:

1. *Osher* - Joy: Camp Ramah is fun!
2. *Tzmicha* - Growth: Camp Ramah facilitates educational exploration, skill-building and identity-formation.
3. *Shiluv* – Inclusion: Camp Ramah is a safe, welcoming, open-minded and respectful community.
4. *Ksharim* - Connection: At Camp Ramah we make friendships that last forever.

A strong partnership between campers, parents and staff is crucial in order to strengthen our value-based Jewish community and to ensure the health and safety of all our campers and staff members.

This Summer Staff Handbook details our policies, community standards, camper care expectations, staff guidelines, emergency protocols and expected pre-summer activities to ensure you have a successful experience as a staff member at Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland.

Together we know that we will have an impact on the Jewish community and we are thrilled you are our partners in this work together.

B'shalom,



Talia Derman
Director



Dina Greenberg
Assistant Director



RAMAH DAY CAMP IN CHICAGOLAND

2023 Summer Staff Handbook

A. OVERVIEW OF CAMP RAMAH & HANDBOOK

1. Our Mission
2. Our Core Values
3. Our Workplace (Camp!)
4. Professionalism
5. Summer Leadership Team
6. About This Handbook

B. OUR EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

1. Anti-Discrimination
2. Reasonable Accommodations
3. Anti-Harassment
4. Reporting Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation
5. Retaliation Prohibited
6. Employment at Will
7. Employment Eligibility Verification & Background Checks
8. Feedback and Discipline
9. Investigation
10. Leave of Absence
11. Termination
12. Resignation
13. Pay
14. Tipping & Gratuities

C. CAMP COMMUNITY STANDARDS

1. Personal Appearance
2. Drug & Alcohol Policy
3. Smoking
4. Prohibited Items
5. Use of Technology
6. Religious Life
7. Sexuality
8. Facilities & Equipment

D. CAMPER CARE

1. Anti-Abuse Policy
2. Risk Management
3. Camper Coverage
4. Camper Nutrition
5. Camper Suicide Indications
6. Discipline
7. Language
8. Prohibited Activities

E. SECURITY & EMERGENCIES

1. Campus Security
2. Emergency Protocols
3. Medical Emergency
4. Missing Campers
5. Severe Weather
6. Fire
7. Active Shooter

F. PREPARING FOR THE SUMMER

1. Staff Agreement
2. Key Dates
3. Forms & Documentation
4. Staff Training
5. Daily Camp Schedule
6. Daily Attendance



A

OVERVIEW OF CAMP RAMAH & HANDBOOK

A. 1. OUR MISSION

Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland and Camp Ramah in Wisconsin offer vibrant experiences – filled with camp fun and friends – that build Jewish lives and Jewish leaders. Our holistic communities inspire our campers and staff to see themselves in the ongoing renewal of our rich Jewish heritage.

A. 2. OUR CORE VALUES

Campers splashing in the pool. The entire camp gathered for Talents with Talia. Lots of singing and dancing. And even more laughter. These are the joyous sights and sounds of summer at Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland. It's what happens when you mix a phenomenal staff and a magnificent setting with hundreds of kids emboldened to live their best lives. Because nothing makes us happier than making Camp Ramah every camper's happy place.

<p>אושר Osher - Joy</p>	<p>צמיחה Tzmicha – Growth</p>	<p>שילוב Shiluv – Inclusion</p>	<p>קשרים Ksharim - Connections</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun! • Pride • Happiness • Excitement • Ruach - spirit • Love of camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational growth • Skill development • Confidence / identity development • Jewish toolkit • Leadership • Independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe spaces • Meeting every camper where they're at • Open-mindedness • Respect • Welcoming environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community • New friendships • Post-camp network • Year-round connection to camp and friends • Mentorship • Relationship to Jewish practices

A. 3. OUR WORKPLACE (CAMP!)

Ramah means a lot of things to our community — educational space, friends, summer memories, etc. — but for each of us it is a professional workplace. We hope you find your employment with us rewarding and a source of personal satisfaction. Together we know that we will have an impact on the Jewish community and we are thrilled you are our partners in this work together.

A. 4. PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism at Ramah means abiding by a code of ethics that governs our work. Professionalism includes:

- **COURTESY:** speaking and acting in a manner respectful of the dignity, time, and feelings of others.
- **DEMEANOR:** acting at all times in a manner consistent with the goals and principles of Ramah, an educational institution.



- **ATTITUDE:** your willingness to help, even in tasks outside the narrow definition of your job, for the good of the camp community.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** respecting the privacy of personal information.
- **APPEARANCE:** dressing in a manner appropriate for the religious and educational goals of Ramah.

A. 5. SUMMER LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland is led by:

- Director, [Talia Derman](#)
- Assistant Director, [Dina Greenberg](#)
- Office Manager, [Ilisa Brown](#)

Our camp leadership team looks forward to working with you this summer. Please feel free to reach out directly to any of the above individuals prior-to or throughout your time as a staff member at Ramah.

A. 6. ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

NOTHING IN THIS HANDBOOK, OR ANY OF RAMAH'S RULES, POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT, CREATE ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT OR ANY AGREEMENT, OR ANY PROMISE OR GUARANTEE OF ANY PARTICULAR BENEFIT OR TERM OR CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT. RAMAH MAINTAINS THE RIGHTS TO CHANGE, RESCIND, REVOKE OR TERMINATE THESE POLICIES/PROCEDURES, IN WHOLE OR PART, AT ANY TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE IN ITS SOLE DISCRETION.

The Summer Staff Handbook (the "Handbook") is a compilation of personnel policies, practices and procedures currently in effect at Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland (collectively, "Ramah") for summer seasonal staff.

The Handbook is designed to introduce you to Ramah, familiarize you with Ramah policies, provide general guidelines on work rules, benefits and other issues related to your employment, and help answer many of the questions that may arise in connection with your employment.

This Handbook is not a contract of employment, and does not create a contract of employment, express or implied, guaranteeing you any specific term of employment, nor does it obligate you to continue your employment for a specific period of time. All Ramah staff are employed at will, meaning that just as you can terminate your employment at any time for any reason, so too can Ramah. The purpose of the Handbook is simply to provide you with a convenient explanation of present policies and practices at Ramah. This Handbook is an overview or a guideline. It cannot cover every matter that might arise in the workplace. For this reason, specific questions regarding the applicability of a particular policy or practice should be addressed to the Director of Operations.

Ramah reserves the right to amend or modify any of the policies in this Handbook at any time and for any reason without advance notice, to the fullest extent permitted by the law.

Please read this Handbook and keep it for future reference.



B

OUR EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

B. 1. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Ramah is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to a workplace environment that encourages growth and respect for all current and prospective employees based upon job-related factors such as their educational background, work experience, and ability to perform the essential functions of the job. As required by applicable law, it is the policy and practice of Ramah to prohibit any form of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, citizenship status, marital status, veteran or military status, and any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Ramah complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment, subject to exemptions for religious organizations and/or associations under applicable federal and state law. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff and recall, leaves of absence, compensation and training. Ramah prohibits discrimination that violates this policy even if it does not violate the law.

B. 2. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

As required by applicable law, Ramah will make reasonable accommodations for (a) the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee with a disability, (b) the pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical and/or common conditions of an employee or applicant, and (c) the sincerely held religious beliefs of an employee or applicant, unless undue hardship would result.

Subject to applicable law, for reasons related to pregnancy, childbirth, and/or related medical or common conditions, Ramah (i) will make reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants; (ii) will not impose a reasonable accommodation on an employee or applicant who did not request one and who chooses not to accept Ramah's proposed reasonable accommodation; (iii) will not require an employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided; and (iv) will reinstate an employee who no longer needs a reasonable accommodation, unless undue hardship would result.

Applicants and employees requiring a reasonable accommodation must promptly contact the Director of Operations and request an accommodation. Accommodation requests should be made in writing, if possible. Managers who are notified of an employee's or applicant's accommodation request should immediately contact the Director of Operations. The applicant or employee and the Director of Operations, and other members of management, as appropriate, are expected to engage in a dialogue regarding the individual's request and to attempt to identify and implement a reasonable accommodation, if appropriate and available.

B. 3. ANTI-HARASSMENT

Ramah prohibits harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, veteran status and any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Prohibited harassment includes all unwelcome behavior (including but not limited to unwelcome actions, words, jokes, comments, touching, derogatory remarks and/or visual displays) based on a protected characteristic where the purpose or effect of the behavior is to create a hostile, abusive or intimidating environment, or where the behavior otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities. Ramah prohibits harassment by and against employees, applicants for employment and third parties with whom employees



may interact as part of their job duties. Ramah prohibits harassment that violates this policy, even if it does not violate the law. Ramah expressly prohibits the use of any Ramah resources – including email – to harass any employee, applicant or other individual on the basis of a protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; (b) an individual's submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting that individual; or (c) the purpose or the effect of such conduct is to substantially interfere with the affected individual's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

While it is not possible to identify all acts which may constitute sexual harassment, sexual harassment prohibited by this policy may include but is not necessarily limited to:

- unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors (including circumstances in which a person in authority promises an employment benefit in return for a sexual favor or withholds an employment benefit for refusal of a sexual favor);
- the posting and/or dissemination of sexually explicit, suggestive or graphic materials (such as pictures, graffiti, posters, calendars or promotional materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic);
- jokes, stories, comments, innuendos, gestures, noises (including whistling or catcalls), expressions or "kidding" or "teasing" of a sexual nature or that is sexually oriented;
- commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, sexual deficiencies or sexual experiences;
- unwanted touching of a person's body, clothing or hair (including, for example, touching, pinching, patting, kissing, hugging, grabbing, rape, sexual battery or attempts to engage in any of the foregoing);
- leering at a person or blocking a person's path; and
- bullying, name-calling or other hostile or offensive action taken against another person because of that person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or the status of being transgender.

B. 4. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT OR RETALIATION

Applicants and employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed any type of prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation (the last as described below) are encouraged to immediately report it. In order to encourage promptness and privacy, reports of discrimination or harassment may be made to any of the following persons:

- Your Direct Supervisor
- Director Talia Derman (312-690-8306 or tderman@ramahday.com)
- Director of Operations Scott Topal (312-690-8326 or stopal@ramahwisconsin.com)
- Executive Director Jacob Cytryn (312-690-8322 or jcytryn@ramahwisconsin.com)
- Ramah Wisconsin Board President (president@ramahwisconsin.com)
- National Ramah Director Amy Skopp Cooper (amy@campramah.org)

Any supervisor or manager who witnesses, becomes aware of or learns of conduct which may constitute prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation (the last as described below) must immediately report the matter (to an individual described above).

All allegations of prohibited discrimination, harassment and retaliation will be promptly investigated. Complaints of and investigations into such reported conduct will be kept confidential to the extent possible under the circumstances, as deemed appropriate by Ramah. However, some disclosure may (and likely will) be necessary for Ramah to effect a meaningful investigation and appropriate remedy.

Employees are expected, and required, to cooperate fully and in good faith in making any report of, or participating in an investigation into, alleged prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation. This includes but is not necessarily



limited to participating in requested interviews, obtaining and providing requested documents or other evidence. An employee's failure to cooperate generally will be considered a violation of this policy.

B. 5. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Ramah prohibits retaliation against an employee, applicant or third party because they made a report of alleged prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation or participated in an investigation into such alleged conduct. Employees are encouraged to report behavior they think constitutes prohibited retaliation, and supervisors and managers must report possible prohibited retaliation that they witness, become aware of or are told of, in the manner provided in the Reporting Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation section of this policy.

B. 6. EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

Ramah is an at-will employer, and either Ramah or the employee can terminate the employment relationship with or without cause, at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Nothing in this Handbook or in any document or statement from Ramah, written or oral, shall limit Ramah or the employee's right to terminate the employment relationship at-will.

B. 7. EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION & BACKGROUND CHECKS

Ramah is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

Each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility and may be required to periodically submit updated documents.

In addition, all staff members consenting to a background check being conducted prior to the start of the Season.

B. 8. FEEDBACK & DISCIPLINE

Supervisors have the right to discipline employees and/or take corrective action in cases of poor performance, violation of Ramah policy or procedure, or in situations of inappropriate behavior. This progressive disciplinary policy serves only as a general guideline. Ramah reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of progressive discipline depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense, as determined at Ramah's sole discretion, and as such, corrective action may not be progressive in every case. Ramah reserves the right to skip any and all of the steps outlined below at its discretion. While Ramah remains at all times an at-will employer, we strive for a collaborative working relationship with all of our employees.

- **Corrective Feedback:** Corrective feedback is spoken recognition that an employee needs improvement. This feedback will be administered by your supervisor during the performance of your daily job duties and the annual performance review.
- **Verbal Warnings:** Verbal warnings are spoken recognition that an employee has not improved following corrective feedback. A written copy of the oral warning notice will be kept in the employee's personnel file.
- **Written Warnings:** Written warnings are written recognition that an employee has not improved following corrective and/or verbal feedback. The supervisor gives a written record of the warning to the employee. A copy of the written warning will be kept in the employee's personnel file.
- **Termination:** Employees who violate Ramah's policies or procedures may have their employment relationship with Ramah terminated with or without advance warning depending on the nature of the offense. Employees may also be subject to termination for poor performance, misconduct or gross misconduct, at the sole discretion of Ramah.



B. 9. INVESTIGATION

Camp Ramah reserves the right to search employees or anyone else entering our property while performing services for us. These searches extend to property, equipment, and storage areas, including but not limited to clothing, personal effects, vehicles, buildings, rooms, facilities, offices, parking lots, desks, files, cabinets, bags and equipment or any other area or article on our premises. This right to conduct an inspection may happen at any time, with or without additional notice. Employees are required to cooperate fully with and assist in these investigations if requested to do so. If an employee does not cooperate with an investigation or we find something inappropriate, illegal or stolen in the possession of an employee after an investigation, that person will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

B. 10. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At various times during the summer, staff may not be able to attend camp (for college orientation, family life cycle events, etc.). You must receive written approval from Director Talia Derman at tderman@ramahday.com.

A staff member's salary will be pro-rated if the staff member arrives takes a leave of absence during the summer.

B. 11. TERMINATION

Employees who violate Ramah's policies or procedures may have their employment relationship with Ramah terminated with or without advance warning depending on the nature of the offense. Employees may also be subject to termination for poor performance, misconduct or gross misconduct, at the sole discretion of Ramah.

When staff members are terminated from employment, if they are under the age of 18, their parents will be notified by the camp and the camp will discuss the matter, as well as issues related to transportation from camp, with their parent(s) or legal guardian. For staff members over the age of 18, the camp will only speak with their parent(s) or legal guardian when said staff member provides the Executive Director with written permission.

It is our general policy that when a staff member is terminated from employment the staff member is notified, assisted in packing, and then departs camp as soon as possible, usually in less than an hour. If the staff member resides in a camper cabin, the living area will usually be empty during the packing time. Staff members will not be permitted to see or be in touch with their campers upon being notified of their termination prior to their departure.

The cost of travel from the camp, or any changes to travel, will be borne by the staff member exclusively. Compensation will be prorated for the number of days the staff member worked, and reduced by the cost of transportation changes paid by the camp (e.g. return tickets, change fees, etc.). A final paycheck will be mailed to the staff member's permanent address on file.

B. 12. RESIGNATION

If you decide to resign as an employee from Camp Ramah, we request that you provide us with as much advance written notice as possible. Your notice of resignation should be in writing and should be submitted to the Director.

B. 13. PAY

Salary checks will be mailed to your home address on file at the end of the camp season after all end-of-summer requirements have been met, based on the amount/terms in your staff agreement.

A staff member who chooses to break their contract and leave camp early or who is terminated, will receive a pro-rated salary.



B. 14. TIPPING & GRATUITIES

Camp Ramah summer staff agree not to accept gratuities or tips from relatives or guardians of Ramah campers. Parents wishing to honor staff members are invited to donate to camp in honor of said staff member.



C

CAMP COMMUNITY STANDARDS

C. 1. PERSONAL APPEARANCE

As a Jewish camp, we believe in personal autonomy within the framework of our tradition. Camp Ramah requires each member of our community to dress in a way that reflects respect for the educational environment of camp. Although camp is an informal environment, we expect our *tzevet* to look and dress professionally appropriate at all times.

Guidelines for appropriate clothing at camp for both campers and staff:

- Staff must wear a camp-provided Ramah Day Camp in Chicagoland t-shirt daily.
- Please be aware that, in keeping with our values of *tzniut* (modesty), all *tzevet* are required to wear a shirt at all times, when in public. Bare midriiffs and underwear may not be visible. Clothing that is see-through or revealing of body parts that are intended to be covered is prohibited.
- Modest and appropriate swimwear is expected in the pool.
- Closed toe shoes are required for active camp programs.

During times of the day when we aspire to a higher level of *k'dushah* (holiness) during meals heads should be covered with a kippah or hat. [This applies to all those who identify as males and to those who identify as females who have taken this minhag upon themselves.]

Questions about appropriate clothing choices should be directed to a Rosh Eidah, the Program Director or the Director.

PIERCINGS: Staff members are not permitted to wear tongue rings, eyebrow rings, or any body piercings other than ears or nose, during the camp day.

TATTOOS: Depending on the tattoo, staff members may be asked to cover it during the camp day.

C. 2. DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY

Ramah is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace free from substance abuse.

To the extent permitted by applicable law, Ramah prohibits the following conduct:

- the use, sale, purchase, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or transfer of any illegal drug or alcohol on Ramah property, during an employee's work hours, while operating a Ramah owned or leased vehicle or while an employee is otherwise engaged in any business on behalf of Ramah;
- reporting to work, working or otherwise engaging in business on behalf of Ramah while under the influence of, or otherwise impaired by, any illegal drug or alcohol;
- testing positive for an illegal drug or alcohol when requested to undergo testing by Ramah; refusing to submit to testing when requested; refusing to cooperate with testing or inspection procedures; or attempting to alter, altering or substituting any specimen provided or to be provided for testing.

Ramah reserves the right to search, as permitted by applicable law, Ramah property (including but not limited to Ramah-issued desks, workstations and offices) and personal property (including, but not limited to, purses, briefcases, clothing, personal belongings and vehicles) brought onto Ramah premises. Employees should not expect privacy with respect to items brought onto Ramah premises. Violation of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including



termination of employment, as deemed appropriate by Ramah at its sole discretion and as permitted by applicable law.

The following definitions are used for purposes of this policy.

- “Illegal drug” means any narcotic, depressant, stimulant, hallucinogen, cannabinoid or other substance subject to the federal Controlled Substances Act, which is not lawfully prescribed or not lawfully obtained by an employee under federal law, or which is being used in a manner inconsistent with a lawful prescription. However, nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the lawful use of marijuana, consistent with applicable state law, off of Ramah property and outside of work.
- “Alcohol” includes, but is not limited to, distilled spirits, liquor, beer, wine, malt liquor or any other intoxicant used in or as a beverage.
- “Under the influence” includes, but is not limited to, when employees manifest symptoms that decrease, lessen or otherwise negatively impact the individual’s performance of the duties or tasks of their position, including, but not necessarily limited to, symptoms of the individual’s speech, physical dexterity, agility, coordination, demeanor or irrational/unusual behavior; (ii) manifests disregard for the safety of the individual or others or for data privacy or security or is involved in an action which causes damage to a person or property; (iii) disrupts business operations; or (iv) exhibits carelessness that results in an injury to the employee or others.

Employees who become aware of any potential violations of this policy are encouraged to report that information to their supervisor or the Director. Members of management who become aware of any potential violations of this policy are required to report that information to the Director.

C. 3. SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited in all locations on the Ramah Day Camp property and at all times while at work for Ramah Day Camp.

C. 4. PROHIBITED ITEMS

- **WEAPONS:** Knives or any dangerous items brought to camp by campers should be confiscated and brought to the Director’s Office. Toy weapons of any kind, including large water guns, are also forbidden in camp and should be brought to the Director’s Office. Their presence is not conducive to the environment we are trying to create at Ramah.
- **PETS:** Pets are not permitted on camp grounds without the prior approval of the Director.
- **CANDLES:** Candles should never be used, under any circumstances. Flashlights should be used as needed.
- For campers as well as staff members, these items are also prohibited: fireworks, inline skates, silly string, water balloons, paintball guns, large boom boxes, laser pointers, water guns, scooters, and music with sexually explicit or violent lyrics. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. If you have any questions regarding items not listed above, please feel free to contact the Director.

C. 5. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Ramah’s communication and computer systems are intended for business purposes. This includes the computers, related hardware, software and networks as well as telephone, voicemail, e-mail and internet systems. It is important that all Ramah employees use good business judgment when using Ramah’s communication and computer systems. Any personal use of Ramah’s communication and computer systems must not interfere with performance or operations, subject to applicable law.

Ramah strives to maintain a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. Therefore, Ramah prohibits the use of its communication and computer systems for bullying, harassing, discriminating, or engaging in other unlawful misconduct, in violation of Ramah’s policies against discrimination and harassment.



Ramah reserves the right to withdraw usage privileges at any time and in any manner deemed appropriate by Ramah, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law.

Employees do not have a personal privacy right in any matter created, received or sent from the Camp's electronic or telecommunication systems. An employee's password is personal and should not be shared with other employees.

Ramah reserves the right to access its communication and computer systems and obtain the communications within the systems, including past voicemail and e-mail messages, without notice to users of the system, when Ramah deems it appropriate to do so, in accordance with applicable law. Further, Ramah may review Internet usage of its computer systems. The reasons for which Ramah may obtain such access include, but are not limited to: maintaining the system; preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse; assuring compliance with software copyright laws; complying with legal and regulatory requests for information; and ensuring that the Ramah's operations continue appropriately during an employee's absence. Accordingly, employees should not expect that their voicemail or e-mail messages, or access logs, are private or confidential.

Abuse of the communication and computer systems provided by Ramah may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy.

- **CELL PHONES:** In order to preserve the camp environment as one that is largely free of technology, the following guidelines are in place regarding cell phones:
 - Staff members should only use their cell phones during the camp day in case of emergency.
 - Staff members are not allowed to share their cell phones with campers, including siblings, during the camp day.
 - Campers are not allowed to have devices that have a screen, or that can connect to the internet during the camp day (exception is on the bus to/from camp).
- **COMPUTERS:** Camp Ramah has a number of computers that provide e-mail and browsing access in the Office. These computers are intended for business purposes.

C. 6. RELIGIOUS LIFE

- **KASHRUT:** Keeping kosher is an exercise in *k'dusha* -- living a holy life -- by establishing and protecting a uniquely sensitive relationship between human beings and their food. Keeping kosher is an important part of the entire Ramah experience. You, as a role model for the campers, a *dugma*, have the responsibility of creating an environment in which the laws of kashrut can be observed, both inside and outside of the dining room:
 - To protect the kashrut of the camp kitchen, no private food may be brought into the Kitchen.
 - Campers and staff members are asked to only bring dairy or pareve (no meat) lunch/food into camp. Prepared foods may not be brought into the camp unless they are certified kosher.
 - If you have any questions regarding kashrut, please direct them to the Director.
- **EGALITARIANISM:** We embrace egalitarian Judaism and strive to promote and live communal and personal Jewish lives which reflect equal opportunity and participation among all individuals.
 - Both men and women are counted for a minyan and are welcome to perform all ritual functions.
 - Males are obligated to wear a head-covering (kippah or hat) during meals, study, and prayer.
 - We encourage females to cover their heads and wear tallit and tefillin as well and have additional sets of tefillin in camp.
 - Discussion and programming throughout the summer will promote these values as part of our broader educational mission for this expressed purpose.

C. 7. SEXUALITY



- **SEXUAL BEHAVIOR:** Concerning sexual behavior, Judaism has much to teach. Camp is an opportunity to teach campers the *kedushah*—sanctified nature—of sexuality and its place in Jewish life. The following is a brief review of Camp Ramah policies:
 - Staff members’ sexual behavior and romantic relationships are a purely personal and private matter. They are not to be shared with campers.
 - Romantic relationships (even if not sexual) between staff members and campers are strictly forbidden and are grounds for termination of employment.
 - Sexually explicit conversation is not appropriate in or around campers. Pornography or any sexually explicit literature is not permitted at camp.
 - Staff members should not engage in public displays of affection, whether romantic or platonic, in the presence of campers.
- **SEXISM:** Expressions of sexism – behaviors or verbal expressions that discriminate inappropriately against individuals on the basis of gender – are not acceptable.

C. 8. FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

- **PROGRAM MATERIALS:** The distribution of materials for camp programs represents significant resources and coordination. Please use only the supplies and spaces that you have been given permission to use.
- **CAMP PURCHASES:** All requests for purchasing equipment, supplies, and other needs for activity areas and eidah programming must be approved and will be processed by the Office. Any expense for which you want to be reimbursed must be pre-approved by the Office Manager, Program Director or Director. No expense will be reimbursed without prior approval and a receipt.



D

CAMPER CARE

D. 1. ANTI-ABUSE POLICY

The camp environment provides the setting for close contact between campers and staff members. This closeness is one of the special aspects of camp. These relationships are encouraged, nurtured, and often form the backbone of the Ramah experience. With such closeness, special care must be taken and sound judgment used to avoid even the slightest appearance of improper conduct. Such improper conduct, or abuse, falls under five main categories. Abuse of any kind is grounds for termination of employment.

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Never under any circumstance, may a staff member lay a hand on a camper – either as a serious consequence or as a playful gesture (including hitting, giving a “wedgie”, or other forms of physical encounters). Such gestures can be subject to many interpretations. If you feel angry—walk away, find a friend, count to ten, or run a few laps around camp. You may never touch a child inappropriately or in anger.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** This common form of abuse can often leave deep scars, as fear and distrust replace the comfort and trust we try to build. Be careful of threats, jokes, and of the way you speak to both campers and other staff members. Never insult or make fun of a person’s physical appearance, personality, or ability (e.g. “You idiot”, or “Are you deaf or something?”). We advise calling campers by their first names and being exceptionally careful when employing nicknames. Before using any nickname for a camper, a staff member should receive verbal consent from the camper and make sure that the nickname is both appropriate and not demeaning of the camper.
- **VERBAL ABUSE:** A staff member may never yell, curse at, or threaten a camper. Working at camp is a tough job. If you feel frustrated or pushed to your limits, walk away. Do not yell, curse, or swear. These actions communicate a message of being out of control. As with psychological/emotional abuse, the scars are invisible, but are often irreparable (see also Obscenity).
- **SEXUAL ABUSE:** Romantic or physical relationships between staff members and campers are strictly forbidden, and are grounds for termination of employment. It is crucial to the legal and professional functioning of camp that this line not be crossed. Each staff member is responsible for his/her actions and the possible implications of those actions. Use good judgment when it comes to physical closeness. It is your obligation to avoid putting yourself in a one-to-one situation with a camper that might be misunderstood or taken out of context. Staff members should avoid language and any other behavior that implies any type of sexual innuendo.
- **NEGLECT:** There will be campers with whom you will immediately “bond” and ones with whom you might need more time to connect. All campers deserve equal time and attention. Neglect is often an unintentional form of abuse, but can be just as damaging as the above four.

D. 2. RISK MANAGEMENT

Always be aware of the health and safety implications involved in any programming, use of any facilities, and in camper behavior during unstructured time. Be vigilant about camper-to-camper behavior and individual camper behavior. For example, during free play watch for campers engaging in dangerous activities or games, such as throwing stones. Managing risk is also modeled through our own actions such as wearing appropriate footwear around camp (e.g., athletics, rain/cold, hiking in the woods). Keeping our campers safe and minimizing injury is a constant and essential part of your job as a staff member.



D. 3. CAMPER COVERAGE

There always needs to be at least one counselor present who has a formal relationship to those campers (i.e., running a specific class or working with that group/eidah). Campers may never be left alone without supervision by a counselor. Coverage means actively supervising and engaging with the campers.

D. 4. CAMPER NUTRITION

Staff members should be aware of the eating patterns of their campers. If you have concerns about a camper displaying signs of a potential eating disorder, communicate the information to your Rosh Eidah.

D. 5. CAMPER SUICIDE INDICATIONS

We take all conversation, threats explicit or implied, or indications of suicide very seriously. If you suspect a camper or staff member is talking about, thinking about, or threatening suicide, stay with the person and send for the Summer Site Director of Camper Support or Director.

D. 6. DISCIPLINE

To function, a community sets rules and standards to govern different aspects of life. The rules pertaining to any activity area in camp should be clearly communicated to campers before activities begin. If a camper behaves inappropriately, what follows are logical consequences, not punishment.

Remember that the purpose of these logical consequences is to modify camper behavior, not to randomly punish. Consult with your Rosh Eidah any time a behavioral intervention is being considered.

D. 7. LANGUAGE

Refrain from using obscene language and discourage its use by your campers. Find another way to verbally express your frustration, anger, or surprise.

D. 8. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

- **PRANKS:** Pranks teach campers that it is fun to vandalize property and that hurting people is an appropriate form of recreation. This is not what we are trying to teach our campers. A prank is destructive and can be cruel. Pranks are not permitted in camp. They are contrary to our educational goals and will be addressed with severe logical consequences for both campers and involved staff members.
- **ALTERING HAIR:** Campers are not permitted to alter their hair while at camp.
- **PIERCING:** Campers are not permitted to pierce ears or other body parts while at camp.



E

SECURITY & EMERGENCIES

E. 1. CAMPUS SECURITY

The health and physical safety of our camp community is our number one priority. To ensure as secure an environment as possible for our community, the following protocols regarding safety and security are in place:

- The perimeter gate is locked at all times (except for during arrival and departure). Only identified individuals are allowed onto the camp property.
- All staff must wear a camp issued t-shirt and identification card at all times.
- All staff and campers will undergo emergency training.

E. 2. EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

It is critical that all staff members become familiar with the camp's emergency procedures. Policies relating to emergencies in camp will be discussed in greater detail during Staff Week.

There are telephones in the business office. In case of emergency, these phones or your personal cell phone can be used to dial 911.

E. 3. MEDICAL EMERGENCY

There is a medical professional at camp at all times when camp is in session. In case of emergency, campers or staff members should call the Marp (Infirmary) immediately.

Give the emergency location, type of medical emergency and name of injured party(ies).

E. 4. MISSING CAMPERS

If you are concerned that a camper is missing, first check in all areas where the camper might go, don't forget all of the activity areas. After that, check with the camper's friends to see when and where they last saw the camper.

If after 5 minutes you have not been able to locate the camper, notify the Rosh Eidah. The Rosh Eidah will notify the Director and a search protocol will be activated. Quiet discretion is most important in maintaining calm in the camp while locating the missing camper.

E. 5. SEVERE WEATHER

In the instance of severe weather, staff members should make sure that all campers and staff remain inside a building. Staff members should stay with campers during such periods. It is imperative that people remain inside during severe weather.

When it is safe to move about the Camp following severe weather, the Director will sound the "all clear".

Policies relating to severe weather and other emergencies will be reviewed in greater detail during Staff Week.



E. 6. FIRE

Watch for fire dangers! Be certain all campfires are thoroughly extinguished.

In case of fire, ensure the safety of all around you, then notify the Office. Give the fire location, and if possible type of fire (grease, electrical, paper, etc.). For small, non-electrical fires, take the nearest fire extinguisher and try to put out the fire.

Upon hearing the fire signal (siren or horn), all campers and group staff are to go to the basketball court, where they are to gather by group. All other staff members are to report to the tennis court. Attendance is to be taken immediately.

E. 7. ACTIVE SHOOTER

When a hostile person(s) is actively causing death or serious physical injury or the threat of imminent death or serious physical injury to person(s) on camp grounds, the following procedures should be followed:

- **CALL 911:** If communication is available, call 911
- **RUN:** Run away from the threat if you can, as fast as you can. Do not run in a straight line. Keep vehicles, bushes, trees, and anything that could possibly block your view from the hostile person(s) while you are running.
- **HIDE:** Go into the nearest building to seek shelter.
 - Close the blinds or curtains if possible.
 - Stay away from the windows.
 - Turn off lights and audio equipment.
 - Barricade yourself in your location with beds, shelves, equipment or anything you can push against the door.
- **FIGHT:** The last option you have if caught in an open area outside may be to fight back.



F

PREPARING FOR THE SUMMER

F. 1. STAFF AGREEMENT

All staff are required to have an e-signed agreement on file in the CampMinder system.

F. 2. KEY DATES

- Monday, June 12, 2023 – Staff Week Begins
- Sunday, June 18, 2023 – Camper & Parent Orientation
- Monday, June 19, 2023 – First Day of Camp
- Tuesday, July 4, 2023 – Camp Closed (Independence Day)
- Friday, July 14, 2023 – Last Day of First Session
- Monday, July 17, 2023 – First Day of Second Session
- Friday, August 11, 2023 – Last Day of Camp

F. 3. FORMS & DOCUMENTATION

Required forms and documentation ensure that we have all of the proper information to care, support and legally employ you. Completing the following forms is a condition of your employment:

- **STAFF AGREEMENT:** Log into your CampMinder account. navigate to Forms and Documents and select your Staff Agreement. Your signed staff agreement assumes that you will be available to perform the position for which you were hired during the exact dates specified in the agreement and that you agree to abide by the policies as enumerated this Summer Staff Handbook.
- **DATE OF BIRTH:** Please go to "Update Contact Information" in your CampMinder account and confirm/enter in your birthday. This is required in order to process your employment agreement with the camp.
- **I-9:** The I-9 form must be completely filled in and returned to our office with acceptable proof of your eligibility to work in the United States. Again, you may upload, mail or fax form. Only new staff members are required to complete an I-9 form.
- **W-4 IRS WITHHOLDING FORM:** All new staff members are required to fill out this form. Again, you may upload, mail, or fax in the form.
- **HEALTH FORMS:** State Law requires that each person (including any dependents) in camp have a complete and current written medical history and physical examination (the physical must have been within the past 14 months). To access these forms please go to the Forms and Documents Page in CampMinder. You will need to input your information online. You may then choose to print out the doctor's physical form, take it in, have them sign it, or use your doctor's physical form and submit that instead. We will also need a copy of your vaccination records. Please make sure all components of the medical form are completed form by May 1, 2023. Please include a photocopy of your Health Insurance Card. All staff are required to be covered by personal health insurance.
- **WORK PERMIT (Staff Under 18 Years Old):** For all staff whose 18th birthday is on or after June 12, 2023 you must have a parent sign the form and return it to us with a copy of your birth certificate and social security card. This form enables Camp Ramah to obtain the required State of Illinois work permit.
- **CURRENT PHOTO:** This photo will be used for your summer badge identification card.



F. 4. STAFF TRAINING

Before camp begins, staff members participate in Staff Week from Monday, June 12, 2023 through Friday, June 16, 2023. Staff Training will take place from 9:00AM to 4:00PM at Ramah Day Camp daily.

This is also an opportunity for staff to develop collegial relationships, learn about child development, group dynamics and safety.

Staff Week training is required. If you are unable to attend part or all of Staff Week, please contact Director Talia Derman at tderman@ramahday.com immediately.

All staff members are also involved in ongoing staff training sessions throughout the summer.

F. 5. DAILY CAMP SCHEDULE

The camp day begins with the first bus pick-up at about 8:00 AM and ends with the last drop off at about 4:30 PM. The work day varies with the length of each route. Your responsibility as a staff member begin from the moment you arrive at the bus, until you are dropped off daily.

F. 6. DAILY ATTENDANCE

Based on your staff agreement you are expected to attend camp daily in-person. If you are unable to attend camp due to sickness or for any other reason, you must email Director Talia Derman at tderman@ramahday.com and attendance@ramahday.com prior to 7:00AM (so that alternative bus counselor and group counselor arrangements can be made).

Ramah Day Camp

מחנה רמה יומי



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