

## **PREPARING FOR a SUMMER at RAMAH DAY CAMP in NYACK 2015**

This guide has been designed to describe day-to-day life at the Ramah Day Camp in Nyack. We want to ensure that your summer at camp is as pleasant and rewarding as possible and that you fully understand what is expected of you. Please note that you are responsible to know all of the information included in this guide. Please read it carefully.

*The information included in this guide is presented in alphabetical order.*

### **Abuse:**

The camp environment provides the setting for close contact between campers and staff. The closeness this ongoing contact brings is one of the special aspects of camp. These relationships are encouraged, nurtured and often form the foundation of the Ramah experience. With such closeness, special care must be taken and sound judgment must be used to avoid even the slightest appearance of improper conduct. Any form of child abuse is grounds for immediate dismissal. Types of such improper conduct or abuse include:

**Physical Abuse** ~ Never, under any circumstances, should a staff member lay a hand on a camper either as a reprimand or even as a playful gesture. Such gestures can be subject to many interpretations. Even the most playful gestures may leave a black and blue mark. If you feel yourself getting angry, walk away, find a friend or get your supervisor's help, but never touch a child.

**Psychological/Emotional/Verbal Abuse** ~ Threatening a child with violence or other mistreatment, intimidating a child, or other forms of verbal abuse can cause a camper to fear and distrust a staff member rather than build the kind of trust and comfort desired. At some point during the summer you might feel yourself being pushed to your limits. If this happens, **WALK AWAY**. Never curse, scream, belittle or threaten a camper.

**Abuse:** (Continued on page 2)

## **Abuse:** (Continued from page 1)

**Sexual Abuse** ~ Romantic and/or sexual relationships between staff members and campers are strictly forbidden. It is crucial to the best interest of the campers and proper functioning of camp that this line never be crossed.

**Neglect** ~ The campers who come to Ramah Day Camp in Nyack are entrusted to your care. It is your responsibility to know where they are at all times and to ensure their safety. All of your campers are equally deserving of your time, attention and care.

## **Advances:**

Staff may get advances on their salary after two weeks of work as long as the advance does not exceed the amount that has been earned, minus taxes. Please fill out forms in the camp office to obtain an advance.

## **Air Conditioners:**

Small room air conditioners may be installed. You must have Michael Edelstein's permission before installing an air conditioning unit. He will determine if the electrical service is sufficient to carry the load. No unit may exceed 5000BTUs. There will be a \$125 charge (per room) to pay for the additional energy costs. This charge will be deducted from your salary.

## **Arrival:**

**Every staff member is required to complete the online staff arrival form via CampMinder.** Please [click here](#) to login to CampMinder and then navigate to the "Forms & Documents" section. Residential staff members are expected on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 between 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. (non-residential staff members have a modified staff week schedule). When you arrive at camp, please proceed directly to the registration area to receive your room assignment and registration information. Transportation to camp on June 23<sup>rd</sup> is provided from the local airports and the Jewish Theological Seminary, but must be reserved in advance using the online form. If you are arriving late to camp due to extenuating circumstances (school requirements, etc), it is critical that you receive approval from us. Please e-mail our Assistant Director, Rabbi Ami Hersh: [ami@campramah.org](mailto:ami@campramah.org) with regards to these potential

conflicts. Please note that while our office is happy to contact car services and arrange airport pick-ups for staff arriving late to camp, **we will not cover the cost of the car service.** This policy is in effect for staff leaving early as well.

## **Bedding, Linens and Laundry: (Resident Staff)**

Staff must bring their own blankets, linens and towels. Coin-operated washers and dryers are available in camp daily (except Shabbat).

## **Body Piercing:**

Though body piercing is not prohibited by Halacha, it is strongly discouraged. Earrings are permitted in camp but we do require that our male staff limit this to studs. No other body piercing or tattoos are allowed. If any other parts of your body are pierced, all jewelry must be removed before your arrival at camp.

## **Camp Vehicles:**

Camp vehicles may be driven only by camp drivers. Please do not ask us to borrow the camp cars. For your convenience, the camp driver will drop off and pick up staff at designated stops (the Mall, Nyack, etc.). You will be notified when this service is available and will be asked to register in the office. Space in camp vehicles is reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Cars in Camp:**

All staff members who drive a car to camp must register their vehicles via the CampMinder form prior to arriving at camp. You will receive an ID decal that must be placed in your vehicle's windshield. **FOR SAFETY & SECURITY REASONS, ABSOLUTELY NO CARS MAY BE DRIVEN ONTO THE MAIN CAMP PROPERTY OR ONTO THE ATHLETIC FIELDS/POOL SIDE OF CAMP.** CIT's (Students entering 12<sup>th</sup> grade) **are not permitted** to have cars at camp.

## **Clothing:**

Because Ramah is a religious community, appropriate and “modest” dress is required at all times. Staff members are not allowed to wear clothing that advertises alcoholic beverages, cigarettes or other inappropriate messages (such as “Coed Naked” shirts). Halters, two-piece bikini bathing suits, tank tops (spaghetti straps) and midriff-baring shirts are not permitted. We ask that you use discretion and sensitivity when choosing your Ramah wardrobe.

Your clothing for the summer should include shorts, T-shirts, sneakers, a hat, a windbreaker and rain gear. A sweatshirt is advisable for some evenings. Shabbat attire should include a skirt or dress for female staff (shirts with spaghetti straps are not permitted), and chinos (no jeans) for male staff. Please don't bring very expensive clothing to camp.

## **Community Relations:**

Staff members are asked to be sensitive to the people in the communities near camp. Each staff member represents Ramah in his or her dealings with members of the local communities, as well as behavior off camp grounds.

## **Commuting Staff Members:**

Commuting staff (who are not bus counselors) are expected to arrive at camp by 8:45 a.m. and **may not leave earlier than 4:15 p.m.** (after the buses have departed).

When there is an evening program (Zimriyah and trips), all staff members are expected to remain in camp until the conclusion of the program. Please review the enclosed camper calendar and mark your calendar accordingly.

Commuting staff members are welcome to stay for dinner on certain evenings provided they register for the meal by 10:00 a.m. Staff children must sit with their parents. Commuting staff are kindly asked to refrain from removing food from the chadar ha'ochel for family members at home.

# **Contracts, W-4, Form I-9, Working Papers and Voluntary Disclosure Statement:**

Please login to your CampMinder account and navigate to the "Forms & Documents" section to see if you have any outstanding paperwork that needs to be submitted. If so, please complete this paperwork **immediately**. If you have any questions regarding these online forms or are having difficulty logging into CampMinder, please e-mail us at: [info@ramahnyack.org](mailto:info@ramahnyack.org).

## **Curfew:**

There is a camp curfew that everyone is required to observe. Curfew insures that you will be awake, alert and healthy throughout the summer. Commuting staff members are required to leave camp by 11:00 p.m. For all residential staff members, curfew is at 1:00 a.m.; you must be in your building by the time of curfew. From 11:00 p.m., all noise in or outside of the buildings must cease. Quiet time is a right to which anyone who wishes rest or sleep is entitled. Members of the opposite sex are permitted in your room as long as the door remains open.

## **Dining Room:**

Judaism teaches that eating is a sacred act. When we eat we strive to demonstrate that human beings are capable of a high degree of conduct and self-discipline as well as a sense of gratitude to God for our food. Please remember the following guidelines:

Meals are sanctified by the recitation of brachot before and after eating. If you are not sure of which blessings to recite or how to recite them, please ask for help. Please help your campers to understand the importance of reciting brachot before the meals and Birkat Ha'mazon afterwards by treating the recitation of blessings with respect and seriousness.

- All males (and females, if they wish) must wear a kippah or hat during mealtimes.
- All staff and campers should conduct themselves with appropriate dignity during mealtimes. Playing with food or throwing food is not allowed.
- Please make sure that no outside food is brought in the chadar ha'ochel.

We strive to make the dining experience at camp as pleasant as possible. Please help us achieve this goal by noting the following:

- All resident staff members are required to be at breakfast.
- Due to the large number of people eating lunch, we schedule three lunch shifts. Our youngest campers eat during the first shift and older campers eat during the second two shifts.
- There are no table assignments for breakfast and dinner.
- We ask everyone's cooperation in helping to clean up after each meal. This includes clearing your table and being sure not to throw away unused paper goods.
- All meals are served on paper goods. You may not take paper goods to your room.
- Proper attire is required in the chadar ha'ochel. Bathing suits are not permitted and shirts and shoes must be worn at all times.
- All staff members, including commuting staff joining us at dinner, must remain in the chadar ha'ochel until Birkat Ha'mazon is recited.

## **D**rugs & Alcohol:

Marijuana, narcotic and hallucinatory drugs, including stimulants and depressants, are forbidden in camp at any time. Automatic dismissal is the consequence of the use, possession or being under the influence of drugs. All camp employees may be subject to drug testing with or without notice prior to the beginning of the camp season and throughout his or her term of employment. Refusal to submit to such testing will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

The consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden while at camp. As with drugs, automatic dismissal is the consequence of possession or being under the influence of alcohol. *Purchasing alcohol for a minor is grounds for automatic dismissal!*

The camp may search employee lockers, desks, cabinets, purses, vehicles, packages, cases and other personal effects of the person of any employee, where there is a reasonable basis or probable cause to believe that the employee is in possession of, and/or concealing drugs, alcohol, stolen property, or property possessed or concealed without

authorization upon the premises and/or on the employee's person and to take possession of such items where so found or discovered.

**There are no second chances for violation of the Drug and Alcohol Policy.**

## **E**qual Employment Opportunity Policy:

Ramah Day Camp, in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, provides equal opportunities to employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or mental or physical disability.

## **F**ire Prevention:

Since every building in camp is constructed almost entirely of wood, the fire department has expressly forbidden smoking in or around all buildings. Anyone who violates this rule places the entire camp in danger. **No halogen lamps may be brought to camp.** The dormitory buildings are equipped with automatic fire alarm systems. If there is a fire in any dormitory building the alarm will automatically be sounded and the Police and Fire Departments will automatically be called. If a fire should occur outside a building, locate the red pull-box style fire alarm in the dormitory buildings and pull the handle. This will immediately notify the Fire Department and Police. Fire drills will be held throughout the summer. Procedures will be reviewed during orientation. Fire extinguishers are located throughout the camp. Please familiarize yourself with their locations. **There is absolutely no playing with fire extinguishers.**

## **G**uests:

Each week, a small number of guests (friends and family) join us for Shabbat. If you would like to invite guests, please note the following policies:

- Reservations are accepted on a first come, first served basis. Please note that our accommodations are limited and we regrettably cannot accommodate all requests. Please do not invite a guest without checking availability first. You can check on availability by visiting the Business Office.

- Guests must follow all camp policies. Please make guests aware that Shabbat at camp begins at 7:00 PM. All guests must be checked in prior to Shabbat. Guests are also required to attend all tefillot and camp programs.
- Single guests may stay in our staff accommodations. You are responsible for finding an open room for your guest. Please note that all single guests must be entering seniors in high school or older.
- Married couples/family housing is available (though very limited).
- We ask that you pay for your guests before their arrival. Please visit the Business Office to make a payment. Single guests (living in staff accommodations) are charged \$50. Married couples/families are charged \$75 per person, \$50 per child.
- Please inform your guest that the camp does not provide bedding.
- To reserve now, please e-mail: [guests@ramahnyack.org](mailto:guests@ramahnyack.org)

## **Harassment and Sexual Harassment:**

Camp Ramah recognizes that a person's right to freedom from discrimination includes the opportunity to work or study in an environment untainted by harassment. Offensive speech and conduct are wholly inappropriate and intolerable to the harmonious relationships necessary for the operations of the camp program. Harassment has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment and may unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance, which could adversely affect an individual's employment opportunity.

Harassment includes all unwelcome advances, written or verbal innuendos, threats, insults, or disparaging remarks concerning a person's gender, national origin, race, creed, color, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, physical or mental disability, or religious beliefs that are offensive to a person associated with the camp program.

Examples include verbal harassment (epithets, derogatory comments, demeaning jokes, slurs, threats, etc.), physical harassment (assault, unnecessary touching, impeding or blocking movement, physical interference with normal work or movement, etc.), and visual harassment (derogatory or demeaning posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, gestures, etc.).

In addition to the above, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment AND/OR submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is the basis for or a factor in any employment decision affecting the individual.

Any employee who has a question or concern regarding any type of discrimination or harassment is encouraged to bring it to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the camp director.

Any individual, who is found to have harassed another individual, will be subject to discipline. Persons that have been exposed to harassment are encouraged to report the harassment to the camp director. Supervisors that become aware of unlawful harassment or inappropriate behavior must report the incident to the camp director.

## **Health Related Matters and Insurance:**

Our Mirpa'a (infirmary) is staffed by three nurses. We do not always have a doctor on staff. Nurses are available daily (Monday-Friday) from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Staff members with medical questions are asked to see a nurse between 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 – 4:30 p.m. If a staff member feels too ill to work, s/he should visit the nurse at 8:30 a.m. to get permission for a sick day. During evening hours, an EMT is on staff to handle medical emergencies, but please note that the mirpa'a is closed.

The nurses will determine if a visit to a nurse practitioner and/or doctor is necessary and will make the appropriate arrangements. If you are under the age of 18, our nurses will speak with your parent(s) as well. When emergency treatment is necessary, we use the facilities of Nyack Hospital. Camp personnel will not be treated in the emergency room unless authority is granted by the Director, Assistant Director, or our medical staff.

Staff members are covered for secondary health and accident insurance up to \$1,000 after bills are submitted to your personal insurance company. **Camp coverage is secondary only. Staff members are required to have primary health coverage and to provide a copy of your card along with your medical form.**

## **Hebrew:**

At camp we aim to create a Hebrew-speaking environment. Please try to use as much Hebrew as possible during the course of the day. During the summer, Ulpanim have been scheduled which will offer suggestions on how to incorporate more Hebrew into the camp program.

## **Identification Cards:**

All staff members will be issued an official Ramah identification card. You should carry this card whenever you leave camp, whether on a camp trip, a night out or a day off. The Ramah identification card helps to insure greater safety of our staff during the summer and includes contact information and phone numbers in case of emergency.

## **Kashrut:**

All food brought into Ramah (including food for your personal use) must be Kosher and have a hechsher (symbol of rabbinic supervision). Questions regarding Kashrut should be directed to Rabbi Ami Hersh.

## **Nuts and Peanuts:**

Ramah Nyack is a tree nut/peanut aware facility. There are children and staff with life-threatening allergies and we ask all staff to abide by this policy. Please do not bring any products to camp with nuts and peanuts (including “traces” or items manufactured in a nut facility). Most chocolate candy (including all Elite products), granola bars and bamba are not permitted. Please adhere to this policy at all times.

## **Mail:**

Outgoing mail may be dropped in the designated box in the office. Incoming mail will be placed in the mailboxes in the office. The camp address is:

**Mail: Ramah Day Camp in Nyack  
P.O. Box 807  
Nyack, NY 10960**

**Deliveries: Ramah Day Camp in Nyack  
Christian Herald Road  
Nyack, NY 10960**

## **Maintenance and Housekeeping:**

We are fortunate to have a dedicated maintenance and housekeeping staff. If you have any maintenance or housekeeping needs, complete a form in the main office. Requests for repairs are picked up frequently during the day. Please be patient; requests for repairs are handled as expeditiously as possible.

The maintenance and housekeeping staff are not available to clean private rooms and buildings. Resident staff members are expected to take care of their own quarters and bathrooms. Many rooms and buildings have been refurbished at great expense. Please take care of them. Please do not write on the walls and do not use any kind of tape when hanging things; use thumbtacks only. You will be held financially responsible for any damage (including repainting graffiti) to your quarters. Your quarters will be inspected prior to your moving in and before you move out.

The housekeeping staff will clean the staff dormitory bathrooms once a day. These include the bathrooms in Gould, Tzion, New Dorm, Hope, Bet Shalom and Ramot Ramah. All public bathrooms used by children and staff will be cleaned at least twice a day.

Be sure to keep rooms free of garbage. Garbage should be brought out to the trash cans along the walk every day before 4:00 p.m. Plastic bottles should also be brought out to the appropriate recycling containers by 4:00 p.m. as well.

## **Medical Forms:**

All staff members must have a completed and signed medical form on file in CampMinder (including full immunization records). It is a requirement of the New York State Board of Health and the National Ramah Commission. Please submit your medical form by May 15 through your CampMinder account.

## **O**rientation Week:

Orientation week, Shavua Hachana, is an integral part of the camp experience for returning and new staff. Shavua Hachana provides a wonderful opportunity for socializing, recreation and preparation for the camp season. Since we try to build staff cohesiveness during staff week, all resident staff should plan on remaining in camp (including evening hours) for our entire orientation. Resident staff will go out one evening during staff week.

## **P**erformance Evaluation Process:

Ongoing discussions regarding your job performance will be scheduled during the course of the summer. Evaluation and frank discussion are essential to your growth as a staff member. We encourage you to take notes, ask questions and listen openly during these evaluations. Your supervisor will submit a written evaluation to the camp administration at the conclusion of the summer. During the sixth and seventh weeks of camp, our director will be available to meet with you individually and review your performance.

## **P**ersonal Property:

You are permitted to bring personal items such as electronics, refrigerators, fans, etc. with you to camp. Weapons/firearms are not permitted in camp. Personal sports equipment other than archery equipment may be brought to camp. Please note that Camp Ramah is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal property. Absolutely NO PETS may be brought to camp.

## **S**ecurity:

**ALL STAFF MEMBERS MUST WEAR THEIR NECK CORDS, CARRY THEIR ELECTRONIC KEY CARDS AND THEIR RAMAH ID CARD DURING CAMP HOURS.** There will be security personnel wearing camp security shirts at the entrance to the Gould parking lot 24 hours a day/7 days a week, and walking around camp during the camp day. All visitors to camp (including contractors) must sign in at the security booth and will be given a proper identification badge. If you see anyone without proper identification, please contact security personnel or the camp office immediately.

# Shabbat:

Shabbat is an important part of the Ramah experience. A summer at Ramah is a wonderful time to explore your Jewish identity and to strengthen your commitment to a Jewish way of life.

Resident staff must be at camp for four Shabbatot and are encouraged to stay at camp for all Shabbatot. With that in mind, we ask that you review Ramah policy in regard to Shabbat observance:

- There will be an eruv around camp.
- Shabbat guests must arrive in camp on Friday afternoon before 6:30 p.m.
- Friends and relatives may not visit on Shabbat. Visitors arriving on Shabbat will be asked to leave.
- No vehicles may enter or leave camp on Shabbat.
- Smoking, instrumental music, radios and stereos are not permitted on Shabbat.
- Telephones (including cell phones) may not be used on Shabbat.
- The use of electricity in your personal living quarters is at your own discretion. The decision to use electricity must take into account the religious lifestyle of those in or near your room.
- Lights will be kept on in all public areas throughout Shabbat.
- The swimming pool and other recreational facilities will be available on Shabbat afternoon.
- We require everyone who is in camp for Shabbat to be at tefillot.
- **Important Notes:** Camp will be completely closed down at 4:30 p.m., July 2 thru 7:00 p.m. on July 5. Home hospitality will be available on a limited basis.

## Signing In and Out of Camp: (All Staff)

Please swipe your own electronic key card whenever you leave or return to camp. Even if you are traveling in a group, we ask that each individual person swipe his or her own card when entering and leaving the camp property, so that we can account for who is in and out of camp. Card readers are located on either side of the gates attached to the keypads and keycards will be required when entering or leaving the camp grounds.

# **S**moking:

**Smoking is prohibited anywhere on camp grounds and is cause for immediate dismissal.**

# **S**ocial Networking:

Ramah views social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), personal Web sites, and Weblogs positively and respects the rights of tzevet to use them as a medium for community building and self-expression. If a tzevet member chooses to identify him or herself as an employee of Ramah on such internet venues, readers of such web sites or blogs may view him or her as an official representative or spokesperson of Ramah. In light of this possibility, we require that all staff members adhere to the following guidelines when referring to camp, our programs, our campers and employees in a blog or web site:

1. Please do not discuss any camper or post a picture of a camper on any social networking website or blog.
2. Please be cautious and appropriate when writing to campers.
3. We ask that you consider what you are writing or posting in general when it comes to your experiences at Ramah. Please remember that anything you put on a site can be read by our campers, parents, community rabbis and prospective families. If your posting pertains to camp, then what you say reflects upon us and impacts Ramah's reputation. While employed by Camp Ramah, you may not use your site to disparage the camp, campers or other employees of camp,
4. Information about any member of the Ramah community that is private, personal or confidential cannot be posted.
5. Do not use blogs or social networking sites to discuss conduct that is prohibited by Ramah policies, including, but not limited to, the use of alcohol and drugs, sexual behavior and bullying.
6. Please do not use the camp logo.

For your own protection, we want to remind you that anything you put on the internet can be viewed by anyone in the world. When you post inappropriate pictures or behaviors, these depictions are viewed by

others including prospective employers and parents. Please note that similar to what colleges and other employers have adopted in their hiring practices, Camp Ramah may review the written and visual content of your social networking weblog or public internet domain. Any content deemed inappropriate for working with children may result in termination of employment.

## **Staff Activities:**

Staff activities at camp are enjoyable and diverse. We will try to offer something for everyone, including sport leagues, volunteer opportunities outside of camp, craft workshops, and a staff play. Please take advantage of what we have to offer.

## **Swimming Orientation:**

Every member of the counseling staff is required to attend the swimming orientation given by our Waterfront Directors.

## **Tefillot:**

Ramah is a religious community, which strives to enable all staff and campers to grow in their commitment to Jewish observance throughout the summer. Regular prayer is a crucial part of serious Jewish life. Therefore, all staff members are required to attend a camper minyan each day. We attempt to create an environment in which everyone in camp is comfortable with tefillot and can learn and grow from the experience of regular prayer.

There is a daily staff Shacharit service. Every residential staff member is required to attend minyan on a rotating basis, according to a posted schedule. Mincha/Ma'ariv minyanim are held daily. All male staff members (and females if they wish) must wear Tallit (or Tallit Katan) and Tefillin to the staff and camper minyan.

## **Telephones:**

The Camp telephone number is: (845) 358-6240. Our fax number is (845) 358-6284. Please remember the following guidelines when making calls:

- Only camp-related calls can be connected through the switchboard. During early morning hours (8:00 a.m. – 10:00

a.m.) and afternoon hours (3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) only emergency phone calls can be made.

- When the office is closed, incoming calls will be sent to voicemail. An emergency number is listed and should only be used in the event of an emergency. Emergency messages will be given to you as soon as possible. Non-emergency messages will be given to you by breakfast the following morning.
- There are phones located in every building for calls within camp.
- **Use of cell phones, text messaging, Facebook, Twitter (etc.) is prohibited during the camp day.**

## **T**ips / **G**ratuities

Ramah is a vehicle for Jewish education, and members of our staff are professionals. As such, we do not permit our staff members to accept gratuities of any sort.

## **T**isha b'Av

Tisha B'Av is a unique educational experience for the Ramah community. All residential staff are required to remain in camp for Shabbat and Eicha reading. Staff may not leave camp on Saturday night (July 25<sup>th</sup>). Staff may leave camp on Sunday morning (July 26<sup>th</sup>), after tefilot.

***TODAH RABAH!***  
***THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS SUMMER!***