



CAMP RAMAH IN WISCONSIN & RAMAH DAY CAMP CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Overview

Camp Ramah in Wisconsin & Ramah Day Camp (“Camp Ramah”) pride themselves on providing children with a positive and enriching Jewish camp experience filled with fun that never stops and friendships that last a lifetime. Camp Ramah also recognizes the importance of Mental, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual Health (MESSH) of individuals in our community and strives to create thoughtful, intentional, inclusive, diverse and supportive environments.

Camp Ramah is deeply committed to fostering a camp environment where physical and emotional safety are maintained at all times, and created this Child Safety Policy and its companion Staff Safety Policy as part of that commitment.

The Child Safety Policy applies in-season and off-season at all Camp Ramah locations and during all programming, including on camp trips and in camp vehicles, and to all members of the Ramah community, including campers, staff, board members, volunteers, contractors, vendors, caretakers and guests. We ask all members of our camp community to review the Child Safety Policy and commit to doing their part to honor the policy and its spirit. Ramah staff will receive annual training on the Child Safety Policy and the Staff Safety Policy to ensure familiarity and compliance with best practices for abuse prevention.

Camp Safety Team

Our safety process is guided by the Camp Safety Team, a group of dedicated staff members who have been entrusted to oversee our abuse prevention efforts and to receive and respond to reports of harm affecting the camp community. The Camp Safety Team seeks to arrive at decisions by consensus.

The members of the Camp Safety Team for summer 2025 are:

- Executive Director, Jacob Cytryn
- Director of Operations, Robin Anderson
- Ramah Wisconsin Assistant Director, Dr. Adina Beiner
- Ramah Wisconsin Director of Camp Wellness & Inclusion, Lauren Fleischman
- Day Camp Director, Talia Derman
- Day Camp Assistant Director, Dina Greenberg
- On-site Camper Care Professional
- On-site Medical Professional (Physician or Nurse)

In addition, the Camp Safety Team is responsible for:

- Conducting an annual review of the Child Safety Policy and Staff Safety Policy to ensure its compliance with best practices
- Advising the Executive Director on procedural and policy questions that have child safety implications
- Establishing education and training curriculum for staff

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Expectations for Staff

Staff Screening and Education

We make efforts to screen and hire staff that can embody the joyful spirit of camp without compromising the degree of professionalism and judgment needed to maintain a safe and healthy camp environment. (For purposes of this policy, staff includes full-time, part-time and seasonal employees, as well as volunteers.) Before campers are entrusted to their care, staff must complete a background check in accordance with applicable laws, affirm their commitment to our safety policies and receive training on abuse prevention and our reporting and harm response procedures.

Zero Tolerance for Abuse

Camp holds staff to the highest standards. Staff are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or grooming behavior with campers. To review the full scope of our behavioral expectations for staff, please refer to our Staff Safety Policy.

Relationships Between Staff and Campers

Romantic or sexual relationships between staff and campers are strictly prohibited even where the camper is 18 years of age or older and/or the parties are close in age. This means that no romantic or sexual words, acts, or suggestions can occur between them. If a camper makes romantic or sexual advances or suggestions toward staff, staff are directed to report the incident to the Camp Safety Team. If a staff member crosses this line, they will be dismissed immediately.

Physical Contact Between Staff & Campers

Camp Ramah does not prohibit all physical contact between staff and campers. The appropriateness of physical contact between staff and campers will vary by age, stages of childhood development, and the context in which the physical contact occurs. Verbal interactions and directions should replace physical contact whenever possible. Appropriate physical contact may include a handshake, a fist bump, a high five, a side hug or comforting a distressed child by picking them up or providing a hug. Camp Ramah expects that when physical contact between staff and campers occurs it is done either (1) with the child's consent and in the presence of another staff member; or (2) when necessary to interrupt dangerous conduct.

Staff Reporting Expectations

Camp requires staff to promptly report to a supervisor or member of the Camp Safety Team if they have reason to believe, whether based on first-hand or second-hand information, that any of the following have occurred:

- A staff member has violated the Staff Safety Policy
- A camper has violated the Child Safety Policy
- A staff member has harmed or poses a risk of harm to campers
- A camper has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a fellow camper
- A camper poses a risk of harm to themselves (including suicidal ideation, self-harm or substance abuse)
- A camper has experienced abuse or neglect outside camp

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Mandatory Reporting By Law

In general, mandatory reporting laws, which vary from state to state, deem certain professionals mandatory reporters and require them to report suspected child abuse and maltreatment to government authorities. Camp Ramah staff are obligated to know and comply with the legal mandatory reporting requirements of the state in which the camp where they work is located. For more information on the mandatory reporting laws for Illinois and Wisconsin, and staff reporting policies more generally, please refer to the Staff Safety Policy.

Behavioral Expectations for Campers

Campers are expected to use good judgment and common sense, treat fellow community members and camp property with respect, and avoid causing harm.

Appropriate Communication is Required

All members of the Camp Ramah community are expected to be careful and mindful of the language they use and how they communicate at all times.

The following communication will not be tolerated at camp:

- Language that teases, belittles or shames
- Language that threatens
- Language that is explicit
- Language that is lewd and/or makes any sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendos or gestures

Bullying is Prohibited

Bullying will not be tolerated at camp, and reports of bullying will be taken very seriously by staff and the Camp Safety Team.

Bullying is aggressive behavior, often repetitive, involving a real or perceived power imbalance that is intended to harm another person physically or emotionally.

Bullying can be **physical** and include unwanted physical contact, threat of physical contact or the use of physical force intended to cause harm.

Bullying can be **verbal** and include threats, insults, teasing, slurs, spreading rumors and intentionally socially isolating someone.

Bullying can be **sexual** and include unwanted touching, sexually suggestive comments and gestures, sexting, spreading rumors or illicit images or threatening to do so and intentionally invading someone's privacy.

Bullying can be **cyberbullying** and include the use of electronic communications and social media to threaten, insult, tease, embarrass, harass, share illicit or embarrassing images or spread rumors.

Bullying can happen **among friends** and, even when intended playfully, can cause harm.

Explicit Material is Prohibited

Explicit material, photos and videos, including pornography or other inappropriate content, are prohibited.

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Sexual Activity Between Campers is Prohibited

Camp understands that romantic relationships between campers are likely to happen. Displays of physical affection (such as lap sitting, hand holding and hugging) between campers are allowed, so long as they are consensual. However, sexual activity (such as sexual touching, intercourse, oral sex and other sexual behavior) between campers is not allowed at camp, even if consensual.

Consent means there is a mutual agreement between the parties to engage in physical contact, and that the agreement is clear and arrived at knowingly and voluntarily. Consent that is coerced is not voluntary. Consent to one kind of physical contact is not consent to any other kind of physical contact. Consent can be withdrawn at any time under any circumstances.

By law in the state of Illinois, a person under the age of 17 is not capable of consenting to sexual activity. By law in the state of Wisconsin, a person under the age of 18 is not capable of consenting to sexual activity.

Alcohol and Drugs are Prohibited

Camp is an alcohol- and drug-free space. Campers are prohibited from possessing, consuming, or being under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances at camp.

Leaving Camp without Authorization is Prohibited

Campers must not leave camp, or separate themselves from staff on a camp trip, without prior authorization.

Reports of Camper Misconduct

Making a Report

Campers who have experienced, witnessed or learned of a harm or potential harm affecting themselves or others are encouraged to report it to the Camp Safety Team or other trusted staff. Should a camper wish to contact a caretaker before making a report, the camper should alert a member of the Camp Safety Team or other trusted staff.

Campers who are experiencing emotional distress are encouraged to seek support from the Camper Care Team, which is led by Dr. Audra Kaplan, the Director of Camp Wellness and Inclusion.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against a camper for reporting a harm or potential harm is strictly prohibited. Anyone who engages in retaliatory behavior may face disciplinary action.

Camp Safety Team Response to Reports of Policy Violations by Campers

In responding to reports of possible violations of the Child Safety Policy by campers, the Camp Safety Team will be guided by the following process.

Support

Upon learning of a report of harm, the first priority is the safety of all affected campers and the camp at large. The Camp Safety Team will take immediate steps to ensure the physical and emotional safety of any affected campers.

Report

The Camp Safety Team will work with staff to ensure that any external reporting obligations are promptly met.

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Communicate

The Camp Safety Team will determine what information about a given situation can be shared, and with whom, balancing the community's interest in transparency and the privacy interests of the affected parties. Staff should exercise discretion and consult the Camp Safety Team before engaging in communication about any report.

Investigate

The Camp Safety Team will undertake an inquiry to learn what happened. Depending on the nature of the report, the Camp Safety Team may use staff or external partners to conduct the inquiry.

Interviewing Campers

Gathering information about an incident may involve speaking with campers. Should the Camp Safety Team elect to have an external partner participate in the inquiry, caretakers will be notified and invited to be present. Caretakers will not be allowed to interfere with or record interviews. Caretakers who decline to allow their camper to participate in an interview must be aware that the failure to participate may prevent the Camp Safety Team from learning relevant information and may impact the Camp Safety Team's decision about whether the camper may remain at camp.

Confidentiality

The Camp Safety Team appreciates the privacy interests at stake when responding to reports of harm affecting campers. The Camp Safety Team will treat any report as highly sensitive, sharing it on a need-to-know basis. Reports to the Camp Safety Team cannot be treated as confidential, however, as there may be instances where a report of harm warrants further action, including reporting to an outside agency to comply with state and local law, or alerting a camper's caretakers.

Disciplinary Decisions

The Camp Safety Team will use the information learned during the inquiry to make decisions about disciplinary actions. Campers who violate the policy may face disciplinary action ranging from a warning to dismissal from camp. Campers may be dismissed from camp if they are found to have violated the Child Safety Policy, pose a danger to themselves or others or if they require a level of supervision that camp is unable to safely provide.

Dismissal Procedures

If it is determined that a camper needs to be dismissed from camp, the camper's caretakers will be notified and expected to make arrangements to promptly pick the camper up from camp. The camper's caretakers will be responsible for all transportation expenses incurred and will not receive a refund for any period of the summer for which the camper did not attend.