

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER



We do our best to create wonderful experiences for everyone at Camp Ramah. While most of this takes place at camp and during the summer, we believe there are some things that can start at home and to do this, we need your help! When campers hear the same messages at camp that they hear at home they will know that we are working together in order to help them have their most successful summer. We can achieve this by collaborating on camper goals and expectations.

Please take a look at the topics below and talk through the themes with your campers before the first day of camp. We acknowledge that some of these topics can be challenging and/or uncomfortable. A few pointers to make it easier:

- Your kids are listening, even if they don't acknowledge it.
- These don't have to be sit-down, face-to-face conversations. They can happen in a way that is comfortable for you and your child. You know them best.
- It doesn't have to happen all at once, you can do this over a period of time.

The Camper Care Team is always here for you and your family with the goal of supporting the best camp experience possible!



INDEPENDENCE

Camp provides a unique opportunity for young people to learn and foster their independence. Our staff are always available to support campers, we also expect that campers can take care of their own basic physical needs (at age-appropriate levels) as well as:

Hygiene and Self-Care:

- the importance of good physical health and maintaining basic hygiene
- social expectations around cleanliness and how to maintain basic hygiene
- brushing teeth, showering, brushing hair, using deodorant
- help your child understand that bathrooms and showers are different than they are at home, help your child understand ways that they can manage their discomfort around this

Keeping Track of Their Belongings:

- kids that are part of the packing process have a better understanding of and respect for their belongings
- help them understand that if they misplace something, there are things they can do to try and find it
- how does your child react when they have misplaced something meaningful?
- are they bringing a comfort item (stuffed animal, pictures, blanket)? How might they feel if it gets lost or damaged at camp?

Self-Advocacy

- How can your child voice their needs and concerns to their counsellors in a manner that is respectful and clear?

ATTENTION, LISTENING & FOLLOW THROUGH

Please encourage your kids to listen to their counsellors and activity staff. Whether it be about rules, expectations, directions or safety, these are in place for everyone's safety, wellbeing, and enjoyment.

Remind them that it is okay to get frustrated, please also remind them of the strategies that they find useful when they do feel that way.

LIVING IN A COMMUNITY

One of the most meaningful parts of camp is the opportunity to share a living space with friends. The camp experience fosters an environment that promotes respecting others, understanding how to share space, and learning how to navigate conflict with peers.

Sleep:

Help them understand that going to bed and falling asleep will look and feel different at camp than it does at home. Remind them that they have been successful before, on sleepovers or while traveling. Help them remember strategies that they can use to self-soothe at bedtime if sleep is difficult.

Personal Space and Quiet Time:

Remind them that not everyone has the same feelings about personal space and that they need to be respectful of others who feel different.

We have rest time throughout the day where campers can relax and recharge in the cabin. Remind them how they like to relax, recharge and feel grounded. If they like to read, journal or draw, please send them with materials that will help them.

Bathing:

Camp is a much more rugged environment than home or school. This includes our shower-houses which have individual, private shower stalls. We expect campers to act respectfully and honor each other's privacy even in these communal settings. Discuss respecting other camper's physical boundaries, and encourage your child to speak up to a counselor if their own boundaries have been crossed.



THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

We strive to create an inclusive environment, it is one of our core values. Our community includes individuals from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. While some campers arrive at camp already knowing many others, there are some that don't and are looking to create new bonds and friendships. It is the expectation that all campers demonstrate behavior that is kind and inclusive.

Social Comfort Zones:

Remind your child that there have been times that they have been the new person, how they felt and how it felt to be included. Remind them ways that they can show leadership and kindness through branching out of their social comfort zone.

Peer Influence:

Help your child understand the importance of being an upstander rather than a bystander. How can they take action when they see that someone is being mistreated? How can they safely intervene and ask for help when needed?

Respecting Differences:

Camp Ramah in Canada's inclusive environment includes people of all genders, we respect and honor everyone's preferred pronouns. Teasing or bullying another child based on wherever they fall on the gender spectrum is unacceptable.

We have a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment of any kind: discuss with your child the importance of showing kavod (respect) to every single peer, counselor, and community member just as they would at home or in school. Camp is a place where everyone should feel safe and seen.

Body Safety and Personal Boundaries:

Help your child understand their own limits to friendly touch and personal space. It can also be helpful to have ways of telling others that their space has been invaded.

While physical affection (hugging, holding hands, cuddle puddles, etc.) between campers is a common and enjoyable part of the camp social environment, please let your child know that respecting others' boundaries, whether in the context of friendships or romantic relationships, is extremely important at all times.

Campers should understand camp's safety policies regarding personal boundaries, including not sitting on the lap of a staff member, only one person being in a hammock at a time, and only one person laying down on a bed at a time. Staff will discuss these policies with campers, but it will be helpful if families start these discussions at home, too.



WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP ON THESE TOPICS. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT US ANYTIME AT NAOMI@CAMPRAMAH.COM.