



There are some rules and policies at Camp that we consider to be non-negotiable, in that breaking of these rules and policies could result in a staff members' dismissal from camp. The rules that fall into this category are in place to ensure the physical health and emotional well-being of everyone at camp, the most important and essential role of a Camp Staff is to ensure the safety of our *Campers and each other*.

We believe that close and trusting relationships between campers and staff are the backbone of the Ramah experience. We also believe that these relationships need to be appropriate with proper boundaries in place.

In some cases when appropriate relationships and boundaries are not maintained, it is classified as abuse. As a Staff Member, you are expected to use special care and sound judgment to avoid even the slightest appearance of impropriety. If a Staff Member is suspected of **purposely and intentionally** harming a camper, Camp Ramah will do the following:

1. Complete a preliminary investigation into the incident. This may include speaking to the campers and/or staff involved and possible witnesses.
2. Inform the parents/guardians of the individuals impacted. This may also include a phone call to the Staff Members' family if the staff is under 18.
3. Make a report to the local Children's Aid Society. The local CAS will make their own determination on whether or not to complete an investigation.
4. Based on consultation with the local CAS and other professionals, Camp Ramah may also be obligated to make a report to the Ontario Provincial Police.

In the event that we need to follow these steps, Camp Ramah will do its best to ensure privacy and confidentiality for everyone involved wherever possible.

We do not want to have to engage in any of the steps outlined above. To further protect our staff, we are including definitions and examples of abuse. We are also committed to training our staff on these topics during Pre-Camp.

Child Abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect. It also addresses a pattern of abuse and risks of harm.

1. **Physical abuse** is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cuts, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse. **In a camp context**, this also includes things like wedgies, noogies and purple nurlples. There is no excuse for this behaviour and "my staff used to do that to me" does not make it acceptable.
2. **Neglect** occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child



alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused. **In a camp context** this means that you are not allowed to withhold food or activities from a camper as a form of punishment. It also means that if a camper shares a medical issue, it needs to be attended to at the earliest possible time.

3. **Emotional Abuse** is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

In a camp context this also includes not attending to or responding to any of the behaviours listed above after you have witnessed it or it has been reported to you. Emotional Abuse is also called **verbal abuse** and is classified as language that is meant to demean, embarrass, insult or isolate a child. The volume or tone of how you speak does not matter in this case. You need to watch your words.

4. **Sexual Abuse** occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because he or she wants to please the adult or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, and allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution. **In a camp context**

- a. Staff and Camper: Staff should not touch a child in a sexual manner or part of their body under any circumstances. If you are concerned for their health, please take them to the Health Centre
- b. Staff and Camper: Although you may be only a year apart and in the same high school, staff are in positions of authority and this can be considered pressure or coercion, a form of abuse.
- c. Staff in front of Camper(s): Exposing children to sexual content is abuse. This includes speaking to campers about romantic and/or sexual experiences. This also includes any sexual or intimate activity that happens in front of campers.

***the above definitions are adapted from Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies**
<https://www.oacas.org/childrens-aid-child-protection/what-is-abuse/>