

# Camp Ramah in New England



**Elevate your summer!**

## **Bunk Request Procedures**

*Shalom* Ramah Families,

We know that bunking is a very emotionally charged process for many camp families. Camp is about friends and the bunk is where this starts. Over the years, we have learned that no matter the bunk in which your child is placed, he/she will have a great camp experience. Still, we also know that children (and sometimes adults) react very emotionally when they do not get all of their requests. We would like to set expectations realistically from the outset so that when bunk assignments are released, everyone will be prepared to accept the results.

Here are some things to consider when filling out the online form: When making bunk assignments, we aim to make campers as happy as possible while balancing many logistics and the desire to create a positive social environment for each individual *tzrif* (bunk) and *edah* (division). We have to take into account many variables, including overall numbers, one session vs. full summer campers, new vs. returning campers, geography etc. We also seriously consider our staff observations about positive and negative social dynamics and relationships from previous summers. Overall, the process of assigning bunks is quite complicated and requires a great deal of time and thought.

Please give us 3 names of campers in the same grade and same session (first, full or second) with whom your child would like to share a bunk. We will do our best to honor your request by bunking your child with at least one of your child's preferences, provided they are in the same session. If we are unable to bunk your child with any of the campers he/she requested for some reason, we will contact you to discuss the circumstances further. To further clarify:

- It is perfectly OK if your child does not have any bunk requests! Many returning and new campers do not have any requests. We will make sure to place your child in a bunk that will be a great fit for him/her.
- We will do our best to bunk your child with at least one of their requests. If we cannot, we will call you. Once we fulfill the one request, we feel that ensuring that everyone else receives one request and our discretion to build the best bunk dynamic are the next priorities. When you

**[www.campramahne.org](http://www.campramahne.org)**

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sign up for camp, you must be willing to accept the result that you might only get one of your bunk requests.

- There is much confusion every year over the principle of bunking full session campers in one bunk and single session campers in a separate bunk. People often think that previous years' bunking patterns are indicative of future years. This is not the case. One year we might bunk all the full summer kids together and another year there may be mixed bunks. This may change several times over the years. The reason for this has to do primarily with numbers and bunk size. If the maximum number of campers in a bunk is 14, and there are 18 full summer campers, it is unlikely that we will bunk all the full summer campers together. However if there are 12-14 or 24-28 full session campers, it is likely that we will. These numbers fluctuate from year to year.
- Do not assume that just because you were with a group of people in previous years that you will necessarily automatically be with them again. You should put your top three friend requests down without any assumptions.
- Twins – we are blessed to have many twins in camp. Every family has a different approach when it comes to bunking twins together or not. If you want your twins to be bunked together, then you must put it on the bunk request form. They do count as a bunk request. It is a good idea to discuss your bunking priorities with Talya Kalender, Director of Camper Care, if you have twins.
- Bunk Request Chains – every so often campers try to form bunk request chains. They organize a chain where each person requests only one person and they try to link their preferred group together. Those of us who do the bunking recognize a chain when we see one. Chains do not help us create fair bunking situations. In fact, chains may be exclusionary to other kids who want to be with kids in the chain. Please ensure that your child does not participate in “chains.” We reserve the right to break up a chain and bunk kids in social groups that deem appropriate without necessarily giving each camper at least one request.
- If there is one person that really is your child's BFF and this is the only person that he/she wants to be with, it is ok to list only one person. Additionally, if there are only two people he/she wants to request, that is fine too. The point is, don't let your child put a random third person on his/her form and then be upset if he/she get only that person and not his/her actual BFF.
- We do not refund camp tuition if you decide to withdraw your camper because they did not get any requests or because you are dissatisfied with the bunking assignment.
- While part of the camp experience is living in a group situation and getting to know a variety of people, we recognize that sometimes there is an individual that you feel your child absolutely cannot be bunked with. If that special circumstance does exist, please contact Talya directly prior to the bunk request deadline. We will be happy to discuss the specific situation.

• *Nivonim* – *Nivonim* is a unique experience that allows for many opportunities for our campers to take leadership positions in camp and to be the creators and drivers of *ruach* (spirit) for the entire camp. Even the style of living is different. Our *Nivonim* campers live in *K'far Nivonim* consisting of a girls' and boys' building. Each building has four camper rooms and two staff rooms. The *Nivonim* program is designed to foster the development of relationships between all the campers in the *edah* (division), and a new sense of unity and identity for the *edah*. In this spirit, we do not take room requests in *Nivonim*. The staff will work to create great room combinations putting some old friends together but also mixing in new people. We are confident that, as in the past, this will foster great *edah* unity. *Nivonim* graduates will tell you that it is not important what room you live in or with whom you live. It's not an accident that *Nivonim* graduates will, for the rest of their lives, identify themselves not by their bunk or room but by their *Nivonim* year.

Thank you in advance for your help with this process. We aim to create a wonderful *edah*-wide community and it is always helpful to be positive with your camper. Whether your camper is new or returning, we are confident they will build deep and lasting friendships each and every summer!

*L'hitraot B'Palmer* (See you in Palmer),



Rabbi Ed Gelb  
*Director*



Josh Edelglass  
*Assistant Director*



Talya Kalender  
*Director of Camper Care*