

# מחנה רמה בניו אינגלנד



מדריך למשפחות  
FAMILY HANDBOOK  
Kayitz 2017

# IMPORTANT DATES

*Kayitz 2017*

	DATE	TIME
Health History & Parent Authorization due	Monday, April 3	
Immunization Form & Physician's Exam Form	Wednesday, May 3	
Transportation Forms due	Wednesday, May 3	
Full and First Session and Kochavim Aleph Campers Arrive	Tuesday June 27	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Kochavim Aleph Campers Depart	Sunday, July 9	10 a.m. - Noon
Kochavim Bet Campers Arrive	Tuesday, July 11	10 a.m - Noon
First Session and Kochavim Bet Campers Depart	Sunday, July 23	10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Visiting Day	Sunday, July 23	11a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Second Session and Kochavim Gimel Campers Arrive	Tuesday, July 25	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Kochavim Gimel Campers Depart	Sunday, August 6	10 a.m. - Noon
Kochavim Daled Campers Arrive	Tuesday, August 8	10 a.m. - Noon
Full and Second Session and Kochavim Daled Campers Depart	Sunday, August 20	10 a.m. - Noon

*Shalom* Ramah Families,

Every year as spring slowly reveals itself, we, in the Ramah world, begin to quicken our pace, increase our excitement and can feel the joy of approaching summer. We are here to help make this a great *kayitz* (summer) for each *hanich* (camper). Please contact us if we can be of help. We have wonderful *yoetzot* (parent liaisons) who are easily accessible during the summer. However, always feel free to reach out to me directly by phone or email.

As I mentioned in [my recent letter on security](#), we will be updating you on our policies for 2017 a little later in the spring. We have also changed our opening day procedures for this *kayitz* which I described in a separate email. [Click here if you would like to review this information.](#)

I highly recommend reading the entire family handbook. Below, I am highlighting a few key points that I think are especially important. The rules are primarily for the safety of our *hanichim* (campers), to uphold some of our basic Jewish principles and to create a warm community. I am asking you to review these points with your children to help ensure our success.

- We pride ourselves on being a warm and welcoming community at Camp Ramah. We are fortunate to have people who have many different identities and experiences who attend our camp. We have always taught these values both formally (through staff and camper training programs) and informally at camp and continue to do so. We want to make a clear statement that we are a safe, welcoming and embracing home for members of the LGBTQ community. Our staff and board of directors have been emphasizing LGBTQ inclusiveness as we are privileged to have or expect to have a broad representation from within the LGBTQ community in our Ramah family in the coming years.
- In a more general sense, I think it is helpful to tell your children that they will meet all types of people at camp. Some of these people will become their lifelong friends and some of them they will just be friendly with. They should do their best to be

inclusive of others and to be kind and patient and to take into account other people's feelings. If they need help with a particular person, they should reach out to their *madrichim* (counselors) or their *yoetzet*. You should also tell them that Talya Kalender (our Director of Camper Care) and I want them to come to us if they are having any problems. It is good for your children to develop these self-advocacy skills. We, of course, also spend a lot of time watching social dynamics and the *madrichim* (counselors), with advice and input from us, work on *tzrif* (bunk) unity and building friendships.

- We are thrilled to be opening our new *chadar ochel* (dining hall). We believe the added space, air conditioning and new cooking technologies will enhance the eating experience. We would like to emphasize that our *hanichim* share in the responsibility of keeping the dining room clean and that we need to always remember to treat the kitchen staff with respect. In general, we try to teach our *hanichim* that they share in the responsibility to keep their *tzrifim* (bunks) and the camp grounds clean.

- Luggage Trucks -- For those who are required to use our luggage service, we appreciate your cooperation. For those of you who have the option to use this service, we want to encourage you to do so. The handling of massive amounts of luggage on opening and closing days requires us to assign many staff members to support this process. Utilizing the luggage service allows us to have more of our staff available to our *hanichim* during these transition times.

- Food at camp -- For both *Kashrut* and health (primarily food allergy safety) reasons, we do not allow campers to bring any food to camp. Even after my plea last year, we still have camper families who are not following these rules. We have a sacred trust to provide both a totally Kosher and food safe environment. We have many campers who have very serious food allergies. Please help us keep our campers safe by not bringing or sending any food to camp. We will confiscate and give away any food brought by campers to camp. We will treat violations of this rule as a disciplinary matter.

Each *hanich* receives canteen and snacks throughout the *kayitz*. Sadly, we have had some *hanichim* break in and steal from our canteen and storage areas. For some reason, *hanichim* don't always recognize that stealing from camp is stealing. Please remind them to respect camp's and other people's property. If a *hanich* is ever hungry, they can talk to their *madrish* or any other camp staff-member and we will make sure they have something to eat!

- We would like to emphasize our *Shabbat* dress code. Simple, modest, somewhat nicer-than-everyday clothing is appropriate dress for *Shabbat*. We recommend nice pants, shorts or a skirt, with a nice shirt, or a dress. Jeans, jean shorts, t-shirts, prom dresses, and strapless or formal gowns are not acceptable. Backs and midriffs must be covered.
- Visiting Day 2017 – We love welcoming everyone to our summer home on Visiting Day! We are working on a robust and fun Visiting Day schedule for our full session campers, first month campers who wish to stay, and guests. First session camper pickup is from 10 – 11 a.m. Visiting Day is from 11-3:30. There will be a special *Hanukat Habayit* (Dedication) ceremony at the new *Chadar Ochel* (Dining Hall) at 11:30. We will be offering *chugim* (activities) during the day. Everyone is invited to a free BBQ lunch. Our *Tikvah* Program will be hosting a *tekes* (ceremony) at 2:30. Our *Nivonim* families are invited to a special program in *K'far Nivonim* at 3:30. We want to encourage people to stay to partake in the festivities, but if you wish to leave camp you still may do so. Look for more details in a separate email later this spring.
- Full Summer Campers and Intersession -- Over the last few years, some families have been confused about whether we expect them to take their campers out of camp during that time period. We feel that the full session camper time between sessions is fun and meaningful. We have a robust program and we would prefer the kids to stay. If you have a need to take your campers out during that time period, you may, but please let us know at the beginning of the summer. If you do take them out, they need to go home at the end of visiting day and return with the second session campers on Tuesday, July 25, between 11 and 1.

I realize that the listing of rules can feel a little negative and that camp should be fun. The health and safety of the *hanichim* is the most important thing to us. Of course, we are planning many amazing things for this *kayitz* and we will have lots of fun! Thank you so much for entrusting us with your children. We look forward to an exciting *kayitz*.

*B'Shalom,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Gelb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "E" being particularly large and stylized.

Rabbi Ed Gelb  
*Director*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. PACKING INFORMATION</b>	6
LUGGAGE	6
LUGGAGE TRUCK FOR DC/MD-AREA FAMILIES	6
WHAT TO PACK: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT	7
CRNE CLOTHING FOR PURCHASE	8
SHABBAT WARDROBE	9
טלית ותפילין (TALLIT AND TEFILLIN)	9
SPENDING MONEY	9
WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME	10
LAUNDRY	11
LOST & FOUND	11
<b>II. HEALTH CARE AT CAMP</b>	13
GENERAL INFORMATION	13
HEALTH CARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	14
HEAD LICE	15
MEDICATIONS	15
XRAY / LAB TESTS	16
DENTAL WORK	16
EYEGASSES	16
SPECIAL DIET	17
HEALTH INSURANCE	17
ACCIDENT INSURANCE	17
<b>III. OUR COMMUNITY &amp; THE CAMP EXPERIENCE</b>	19
INCLUSION AT CAMP	19
BUNK REQUESTS	19
CLEANLINESS & CLEAN-UP	20
BEHAVIOR IN THE TZRIF (BUNK)	20
APPROPRIATE ATTIRE	21
FOOD AT CAMP	21
CANTEEN	21
CAMPER BIRTHDAYS	21
RELIGIOUS POLICY	21
שבת (SHABBAT)	22
תפילות (T'FILLIT)	22
עברית (IVRIT/HEBREW)	24
בר/בת מצוה (BAR/BAT MITZVAH) PREPARATION	25
CURFEWS	25
LIVING IN NATURE	26
אתגר (ETGAR) OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM	28
GRATUITIES	29
VISITING POLICY AND VISITING DAY	29
GUESTHOUSE	30

<b>IV. CAMP COMMUNICATION</b>	31
<i>YOETZOT</i> : OUR PARENT LIASONS	31
CAMPER MAIL	31
PACKAGES	32
E-MAIL	32
TELEPHONING CAMP	33
FAXES	34
WEBSITE, BLOG, AND FACEBOOK	34
COMMUNICATION FROM CAMP TO FAMILIES	35
<b>V. CAMPER BEHAVIOR, SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE</b>	37
HOMESICKNESS	37
DISCIPLINE POLICY	37
GRAFFITI & VANDALISM	39
THE BOUNDARIES OF CAMP	39
ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY	40
<b>VI. WITHDRAWAL OF CAMPERS</b>	43
<b>VII. THE HISTORY OF THE “ROO”</b>	44
<b>VIII. PACKING LIST</b>	46



# I. PACKING INFORMATION

## LUGGAGE

Pack in two duffle bags or soft trunks. Some people also pack items like towels and sheets in a flat plastic container that can fit underneath a bed. Please limit your luggage to only 2 duffle bags or soft trunks and this optional flat plastic container. All campers' luggage, including campers who arrive by car, should be labeled with the camper's full name and bunk number.

For campers who will be flying to camp and/or sending luggage on the luggage truck from Washington, DC, Boston, or CT or on the bus from NJ, NY, & CT, we will mail bunk tags in June for first-month campers and in July for second-month campers. You must label your campers' luggage with those tags.

## LUGGAGE TRUCKS

We are pleased to once again offer the following luggage truck services this summer.

### **DC Area**

Luggage drop-off will be available for opening day at B'nai Israel Congregation in Rockville, MD. For the end of first session, the opening of second session and closing day, luggage drop-offs and pick-ups will be available at B'nai Israel Congregation and Congregation Olam Tikvah in Fairfax, VA.

**\*Please note that the 2017 luggage truck service is required for any campers flying to/from camp on our 6/27, 7/23, 7/25 and 8/20 group flights.**

### **Boston Area**

There will be luggage drop-offs and pick-ups at Temple Israel in Sharon, MA and Temple Reyim in Newton, MA.

## **Connecticut**

There will be luggage drop-offs and pick-ups at Beth El Temple in West Hartford.

**For complete information about the Luggage Trucks**, log-in to your Campminder account: <https://ramahne.campintouch.com/v2/login/login.aspx>. Go to your “forms and documents” page and refer to the luggage truck information document that applies to you. You must reserve this service as part of completing your online transportation form, which is due May 3rd.

## **WHAT TO PACK: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT**

A suggested clothing and equipment list is enclosed. (See pg. 46.) Recommendations are based on laundry being done on a ten-day cycle at camp. It is important to label everything brought to camp so that misplaced items can be returned.

When planning your child’s clothing needs, please take into consideration variations in temperature. We encourage campers to wear a hat during outdoor activities. It can also be quite cool sometimes and temperatures have fallen into the 40’s at night and early in the morning. It is critical that your child brings waterproof rainwear: a coat or poncho with hood or hat and boots.

Summer camp is a place to leave the worries of social pressures and fashion behind. Please pack appropriately for your child. At camp, clothing should be casual and comfortable. Clothing worn at camp must not be revealing or suggestive. Clothing with alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sexual content or inappropriate language or content will not be permitted.

We ask that campers wear modest and appropriate swimwear at camp. Please bring one piece swimsuits or tankinis. Bikinis of any kind are not allowed to be worn at camp. Bikinis with a t-shirt on top are also not acceptable swimwear at camp.

Closed toe shoes are required for active camp programs and walking about on rough terrain.

Limited electrical outlets are available. Please limit the number of fans, radios, lamps and clocks brought to camp. Hair dryers are allowed as long as they are unplugged immediately after use.

If your child does not require shaving cream for shaving, please do not send shaving cream to camp. If your child does require shaving cream, please send appropriate amounts only.

**LABEL EVERYTHING!** Please identify each item of clothing, shoes, outerwear, and all belongings with your child's full name. Labeling with initials is not sufficient in helping us determine to whom a lost item belongs. For your convenience, [there is a link in your Campminder account](#) to order self-sticking, waterproof labels through Oliver's labels.

Please put the bunk tags provided by camp on your child's luggage.

## **CRNE CLOTHING FOR PURCHASE**

Each camper will receive a camp t-shirt when they arrive at camp on the first day. Each camper will also receive a special עדה (*edah/division*) t-shirt created by their צוות (*tzevet/staff-members*) at the end of each מחזור (*machzor/session*). Additionally, צד ב' (*Tzad Bet/B-Side*) חניכים (*hanichim/campers*) will receive a jersey or t-shirt for their "Yom Roo" sports team during the מחזור (*machzor/session*) in which they compete.

Additional items are optional to be purchased at your expense. We will be opening our new on-line camp store later this spring. Additionally, Camp Ramah clothing can be purchased at camp on the opening and closing day of each session, and on visiting day.

## **שבת (SHABBAT) WARDROBE**

Simple, modest, nicer-than-everyday clothing is appropriate dress for שבת. We recommend nice pants, shorts or a skirt, with a nice shirt, or a dress. Jeans, jean shorts, t-shirts, prom dresses, and strapless or formal gowns are not acceptable. Backs and midriffs must be covered.

## **טלית ותפילין (TALLIT AND TEFILLIN).**

Female campers of בת מצוה (*Bat Mitzvah*) age and older are encouraged to bring טלית (*tallit*) and תפילין (*tefillin*) to camp. Male campers of בר מצוה (*Bar Mitzvah*) age and older are required to bring טלית (*tallit*) or טלית קטן (*tallit katan*) and תפילין (*tefillin*) to camp and use them during morning תפילות (*t'fillot/prayer services*). Please make sure your male young adult packs them.

Please make an extra effort to label your camper's טלית (*tallit*) or טלית קטן (*tallit katan*) and תפילין (*tefillin*), and טלית (*tallit*) bag so we can identify them if they are misplaced at camp.

Male campers of all ages need to make sure to bring enough כיפות (*kippot*) for use throughout the summer. (We suggest at least four.)

## **SPENDING MONEY**

Camp is a cash-free environment. We include “spending money” for use on camp trips, etc., in our camp fees. מדריכים (*Madrichim/counselors*) will distribute this money to their campers at appropriate times during the summer (on the morning of a trip, etc.). Money for a camp t-shirt and “Yom Roo” jersey (for our *Tzad Bet* campers) are also included in our fees. Camp Ramah cannot be responsible for any money that a camper brings to camp and loses.

## WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

Camp Ramah can not guarantee, and is not responsible for, the safe return of expensive or breakable items. Please leave the following items at home:

- expensive clothing and jewelry
- kindles or other e-readers
- electronic gaming devices
- expensive cameras
- Items of sentimental value, such as family heirlooms, grandparent's טלית (*tallit*) or תפילין (*tefillin*)
- Cash

The following items are NOT PERMITTED at camp:

- Computers or tablets
- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- Video cameras
- Bicycles and skateboards
- Fireworks (including sparklers)
- Weapons, including pocket and hunting knives, alcohol, cigarettes and illegal drugs, are considered contraband and are not permitted in camp.

**Please note that any device that can access the internet is not allowed at camp, even if the internet function is turned off. (This includes most ipods, mp3 players, and kindles.)**

Ipod shuffles, mp3 players, or Kindles that do not have internet capability are allowed.

If any of the above items are found in a camper's possession, they will be confiscated and returned at the end of the session.

**Absolutely no food is allowed in camper bunks.** Camp Ramah provides kosher, healthy and plentiful food as well as numerous snacks. Every camper has plenty to eat at camp. In

addition to concerns about kashrut, we have campers and staff-members at camp with serious food allergies, and so we must have complete control of all food items served at camp. We ask all parents to help us abide by this important policy.

Parents of campers with specific dietary needs should consult with our staff so that we can store and provide any special items.

Any food sent to camp will be confiscated and given away to a local food shelter.

## LAUNDRY

We recommend that you pack clothing for your child for 10 (ten) days. Laundry is done weekly off-site and is returned within three days. Your child will not be washing his/her own clothes. Please pre-wash all new clothing prior to sending it to camp, and **please be sure to label all clothing with your child's first and last name**. Labeling clothes is critical to ensuring that lost clothes can be returned to your child. Please do not send your child with any clothing that can't be laundered normally (ex. dry-clean-only).

## LOST & FOUND

It is essential that all belongings are labeled with your child's first and last name so that they can be returned if they are misplaced for any reason. Throughout the summer we make exhaustive attempts to return lost items to their owners. However, it seems no matter how hard or how often we try, we are left with heaps of campers' possessions on our hands. Camp Ramah's Lost and Found is located in the *מֶרְכָּז* (*mercaz*). At the end of the summer, we will return items deemed valuable if they are labeled with a camper name to you by mail, at your expense. Please encourage your child to take responsibility for her/his possessions, and to participate actively in identifying personal items during the packing up process at the end of the session.

Please note that Camp Ramah assumes no responsibility for wear and tear or for loss or damage to campers' clothing, other personal equipment, or baggage.

## II. HEALTH CARE AT CAMP

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Both the camp nurse and מרפאה (*mirpa'ah*/health center), are on call 24 hours-a-day during camp sessions. Camp physicians staff sick-call hours daily.

Our aim at camp is to provide your child with a continuation of the consistent care s/he receives at home. Please be certain to complete our medical forms fully, and to list all the medications your child is taking, or any special conditions of health, diet or personal habits that affect your child. The more complete information you provide, the better we can care for your child's physical and mental health.

If your child requires an EpiPen or has significant food or environmental allergies, we require that you send a copy of your physician's allergy action plan to camp BEFORE your child's arrival.

Should the state of your child's health change, or should your child be exposed to any communicable diseases during the three weeks prior to camp, please inform the camp office.

A physician's report is required attesting to your child's health, based on a complete examination during the 12 months preceding the camp season. Please make certain that a parent/guardian fills out and signs the appropriate part of the form and that the physician completes the remainder. NOTE: The vaccines that are required by Massachusetts regulations are listed on the camp medical form.

**No camper will be accepted into camp without the required vaccinations and a completed medical form (including immunization records). If a camper arrives at camp without a medical form and/or all required immunizations, s/he will be sent home.**



[Click here](#) to read a letter from Rabbi Gelb, Talya Kalender, and Dr. Karen Farbman that reviews all of our allergy protocols and expectations.

## HEALTH CARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Our medical and nursing staff is trained to focus on the health of all our campers. Our staff responds to any identified medical or emotional issues, provides excellent care and communicates promptly with parents and guardians as necessary. Upon their return home, we suggest you check in with your child and, if there are any changes in, or concerns about, their health, you contact your personal medical professionals and also communicate with us. We look forward to continuing the caring partnership we value as caretakers of your children.

The **מרפאה** (*mirpa'ah*/health center) staff will contact families if:

- your child spends the night at the health center  
(example: with fever)
- your child has to leave camp for any medical reason  
(example: to get an x-ray)
- your child has had multiple complaints of the same illness
- your child needs to start a prescription medication  
(example: antibiotic)
- your child is diagnosed with a concussion
- your child needs stitches

If your child is checked into our health center prior to 10:00 PM, you will be contacted that evening. If your child is checked into our health center late at night, you will be contacted as soon as possible the next day.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, the local emergency medical services will be contacted, and/or transportation will be provided to a local hospital. A Camp Ramah staff member will always accompany children to the hospital.

## HEAD LICE

It is important that your child be screened for head lice by medical professionals, or by you if you know how, prior to coming to camp. Campers are screened upon their admittance to camp. If a camper arrives at camp with nits or a live infestation they will either be sent home (if they live close-by) or isolated in the *מרפאה* (*mirpa'ah*/health center) until no nits are found on the camper. Campers will not be allowed into the bunks with nits or a live infestation. Camp may hire a nit-picker to care for campers with lice. **Any campers who arrive at camp with lice, requiring treatment by our staff, will be charged a \$300 treatment fee.**

For more information on head lice, including preventative measures, you can log on to [WWW.HEADLICE.ORG](http://WWW.HEADLICE.ORG), the official website of the National Pediculosis Association.

## MEDICATIONS

All camper medications and vitamins must be stored at and dispensed from our *מרפאה* (*mirpa'ah*/health center). In our on-going commitment to meet the needs of our campers who require medications or vitamins at camp and comply with strict state regulations regarding medication dispensing for summer camps, we will once again be working with CampMeds Inc., a pre-packaging medication program founded by a former camp nurse. CampMeds has been servicing the camping industry for over 10 summers providing the convenient service of dispensing, packaging and shipping medications directly to summer camps.

Your child's safety is very important to us and having a partner like CampMeds will insure that your child gets the right medication, the right dose at the right time. CampMeds coordinates all of the details so that your child receives their medication safely on their first day of camp without missing a dose.

For complete information, including the few exceptions when

CampMeds is not required, please log-in to your CampMinder account: <https://ramahne.campintouch.com/v2/login/login.aspx>, go to your “forms and documents” page and refer to the “CampMeds Information Packet.” You must register for this service 30 days before your child arrives at camp. **We will charge families a \$100 fee if a camper who takes medication is not registered with campmeds.**

## **X-RAY / LAB TESTS**

Children who need x-rays or lab tests will be taken to local hospital (usually Baystate Wing Hospital in Palmer, an affiliate of Baystate Medical Center). The hospital will be given the parents’ insurance information to cover the cost of the procedures.

## **DENTAL WORK**

Please attend to your child’s dental needs before camp. We do not have a dentist in camp. In the event your child needs dental treatment, we will arrange a visit and transport them to a local dentist. Camp Ramah will pay for the cost of the work at the time of the visit. In turn, we will bill you. It is your responsibility to reimburse camp this expense upon receipt of the bill. Camp accident insurance does not cover dental work.

## **EYEGLASSES**

Children who wear eyeglasses should bring an extra pair with them to camp, labeled with their full name. Please include a copy of your child’s eyeglass prescription with his/her medical form. We recommend eyeglasses with shatter-resistant lenses. In the event your child requires the services of an eye-doctor, we shall arrange transportation to a local practitioner. Camp Ramah will pay this bill for the work done at the time of the visit. In turn, Ramah will bill you. It is your responsibility to reimburse camp this expense upon receipt of the bill. Camp insurance does not cover the repair or replacement of eyeglasses.

## **SPECIAL DIET**

If your child has medically confirmed dietary restrictions or allergies, please note this on their Medical Form and on the camper's application. Requests for vegetarian entrees must also be noted on the Medical Form. Campers must understand that this request is for the entire time s/he is at camp, and not an alternative for individual meals.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

It is required that you submit a photocopy of the front and back of your insurance card to the camp on the Parent Authorization form. If your prescription card is separate from your insurance card, please be sure to submit a photocopy of both.

Families will be billed directly by Camp Ramah for medical treatment, prescriptions, optometrist, dentist or orthodontist visits.

## **ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

Camp Ramah carries accident insurance, which covers all campers. This is SECONDARY, supplemental insurance coverage only. It pays for those expenses or portions of expenses NOT covered by health insurance carried by the camper's own family. The insurance carried by the camper's family is applied to any medical expenses before the camp's insurance. Our insurance does not cover eyeglass repair or replacement and/or dental work. In the case of an accident, the following steps must be taken to ensure proper handling of insurance payments:

1. All doctor bills will be mailed to you directly. Hospital bills may be sent either to you or your insurance company.
2. Please process all bills through your insurance company first.
3. After you have heard from your insurance company,

please forward a copy of the original bill and a copy of either the official payment statement stating the portion of the bill your insurance company has paid, or a copy of the denial of the claim, to the camp office.

Do not pay the unpaid difference yourself. Our insurance company will only reimburse the health care provider.

4. Our insurance company will pay the unpaid difference (up to \$1,000.00 per occurrence).

Please take care of all bills promptly and keep accurate records. The deadline for submitting bills to our insurance company for reimbursement is December 15th. In the case of illness, you are responsible and must look to your health insurance coverage for payment since Camp Ramah's policy only covers accidents.

# III. OUR COMMUNITY & THE CAMP EXPERIENCE

## INCLUSION AT CAMP

Camp Ramah in New England is committed to the value of inclusion, founded in the Jewish ideal that teaches that we were all created *B'tzelem Elohim*, in God's image. At Ramah, we work hard to ensure that each member of our community is respected, supported, valued, and empowered to participate in all aspects of camp life. All campers and staff at Ramah learn the importance of inclusion, and are asked to uphold these values by respecting and valuing all members of our community, regardless of ability or disability.

We are supportive of our campers, no matter their sexual orientation or preference. Our intention is to make sure that everybody feels comfortable within the camp community including those who identify as LGBTQ. Camp can sometimes assume hetero and gender-normative behavior and identity which may make some campers and staff uncomfortable. To minimize this as much as possible, we emphasize sensitivity to the diversity of our community in everything that we do.

At Ramah, we work together to create an inclusive, accessible community for all.

## BUNK REQUESTS

The bunk request form is activated in your CampMinder account once your child is fully enrolled. This form is due on April 3, 2017. Please note that campers in *Nivonim*, *Kochavim* (Mini-Sessions) and *Amitzim*, and participants in *Tochnit Avodah* (Voc-Ed) do not complete bunk request forms.

[Please click here](#) to read our bunking letter which explains our procedures in great detail, and also includes important suggestions to consider when completing your child's bunk request form.

## CLEANLINESS & CLEAN-UP

Every member of the Ramah community is responsible for the cleanliness and maintenance of themselves and the camp. Campers and staff are encouraged to be conscious of their personal impact on the environment – be conscious of litter and pick it up. It is up to the entire camp community to keep Camp Ramah clean and beautiful.

In order to assist campers and staff, bathrooms will be cleaned twice a week by staff from an outside agency hired by camp.

Inspections of camper bunks will be made daily by the **ראשי עדות** (*Rashei Edot/Division Heads*). Emphasis is placed on the cleanliness of bunks and belongings. Respecting and protecting the natural environment is one of the primary educational goals of Ramah. On several occasions during the summer, staff and campers participate in **נקיון הכיכר** (*Nikayon Hakikar*), a cleaning of all of our fields and outdoor locations, in preparation for **שבת** (*Shabbat*).

## BEHAVIOR IN THE **צריף** (*TZRIF/BUNK*)

The **צריף** (*tzrif/bunk*) is a place where all of its members must feel comfortable. **חניכים** (*hanichim/campers*) must act in a friendly and respectful manner at all times with their friends and bunk-mates, as well as with their **מדריכים** (*Madrichim/counselors*).

Campers should be mindful of each other's privacy and behave with modesty and respect. Campers are not allowed to sleep in each other's beds or shower together in the same stall. Campers are not allowed to disrupt someone who is sleeping or to invade someone's privacy in the bathroom or shower.

No photographs are permitted to be taken inside a **צריף** (*Tzrif/bunk*).

## APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Please review the “what to pack” section on pg. 7 for more information.

Please be aware that, in keeping with our values of צניעות (*tzniut/modesty*), all campers are required to wear a shirt at all times, when in public outside of their צריף (*tzrif/bunk*). This includes male campers, except for when swimming or at our אגם (*agam/lake*).

## FOOD AT CAMP

Campers eat meals communally in the אוכל חדר (*Hadar Ochel/Dining Hall*). **There is absolutely no outside food allowed at camp.** (Please see pg. 10.) We provide delicious and healthy between-meal snacks for any campers who want them. Our מדריכים (*Madrichim/counselors*) are trained to be aware of what kids are eating (and not eating).

## CANTEEN

Canteen food and drinks are distributed to campers twice a week. Canteen costs are included in your camp fees.

## CAMPER BIRTHDAYS

Every camper with a birthday during the camp season will receive a freshly baked cake for a bunk party. Camper birthdays are in our database and this is taken care of automatically. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's יועצת (*Yoetzet/Parent Liason*) to schedule a phone call with their child on his/her birthday.

## RELIGIOUS POLICY

Camp Ramah in New England observes שבת (*Shabbat*) and



כשרות (*kashrut*) within the framework of Conservative Judaism. We are respectful of the pluralistic nature of the Conservative Movement. All services are egalitarian.

## **שבת (SHABBAT)**

With sundown on Friday afternoon, the hectic pace of the week is transformed into a serene, spiritual and joyous time for the camp. Staff and campers observe a traditional שבת (*Shabbat*). All members of the community observe positive commandments, and refrain from writing, using electronics, hair dryers, musical instruments, etc. שבת (*Shabbat*) is a day of rest for all of us, as well as a day of special programming.

The following activities are encouraged on שבת (*Shabbat*):

- Singing, learning, walking, hiking, reading, dancing, swimming, sports, talking with old friends, talking with new friends, relaxing, eating, storytelling, star-gazing.

The following activities are prohibited on שבת (*Shabbat*):

- Turning on or off lights, listening to MP3 players, wearing a smart-watch, writing, drawing, painting, building, playing musical instruments, fixing things, breaking things.

שבת (*Shabbat*) at Ramah has a magical intensity that can only come from an entire community engaged in the beauty of the day. When we ask campers why they keep coming back to camp, שבת (*Shabbat*) is always one of the first things they mention. The *ruach* (spirit) of שבת (*Shabbat*) is one of the most indelible memories of the Ramah experience.

## **תפילות (T'FILLOT)**

Every morning, we begin our day with תפילות (*t'fillot*/prayer

services). These early moments of reflection and discussion help create an atmosphere of religious curiosity and excitement in our community. Our prayer services are molded to fit each different age group and are always focused on making prayer relevant and meaningful for our campers. With the ongoing help of counselors and other staff, campers will leave Ramah with greater abilities for synagogue participation and leadership.

On Friday afternoons, a quiet peace comes over the camp and then the entire camp community gathers together to welcome קבלת שבת (*Shabbat*) through song and prayer as we *daven* שבת (*Kabbalat Shabbat*) together. This is a particularly special experience, as it is one of the few times during the week that the entire camp gathers together.

At Camp Ramah in New England, males and females are treated equally in all Jewish ritual matters. Women are counted for a מנין (*Minyan*) and are eligible to read תורה (*Torah*), הפטרה (*Haftarah*) and איכה (*Eichah*), and to lead all religious services and rituals. Female campers are welcome to bring טלית (*tallit*) and תפילין (*tefillin*) to camp.

**Males are obligated to wear a כיפה (*Kippah*) or head-covering during meals, study and prayer.** Females may elect to cover their heads during those times, but they are not obligated to do so. During תפילות (*t'fillot*/prayer services) on שבת (*Shabbat*), we require a כיפה (*Kippah*) rather than a hat. Out of respect, when wearing תפילין (*tefillin*), one must wear a כיפה (*Kippah*).

Males over the age of בר מצוה (*Bar Mitzvah*) must wear a טלית (*tallit*) and תפילין (*tefillin*) during תפילות (*t'fillot*/prayer services) on weekday and Sunday mornings, and a טלית (*tallit*) on שבת (*Shabbat*) morning. Females over the age of בת מצוה (*Bat Mitzvah*) may elect to do so. Anyone, male or female, who is leading תפילות (*t'fillot*/prayer services) or participating in

the תורה (*Torah*) Service, must wear a טלית (*tallit*) and a כיפה (*Kippah*) or head-covering.

## עברית (*IVRIT/HEBREW*)

At Camp Ramah, we take seriously our commitment to עברית (*Ivrit/Hebrew*) language, and expect all staff, regardless of position, to actively further the mission of making camp a place where עברית (*Ivrit/Hebrew*) is commonplace. We achieve our goals in Hebrew not only through our formal Hebrew curriculum, as implemented in our עברית/תרבות ישראלית (*Ivrit/Tarbut Yisraelit/Hebrew/Israeli culture*) פרק (*perek/period*) each day, but also through singing in Hebrew, dancing to Hebrew and Israeli music, and taking extra care that certain words and phrases only be said in Hebrew. We make announcements in the חדר אוכל (*Hadar Ochel/Dining Hall*) and during תפילות (*t'fillot/prayer services*) exclusively in Hebrew.

מאה מילים (*Meah Milim*): We've put together a list of the 100 most common מילים (*milim/words*) that we strive to use only in עברית (*Ivrit/Hebrew*) at camp. Throughout the summer, our חניכים (*Hanichim/campers*) and מדריכים (*Madrichim/counselors*) encourage one another to use the *milim* on this list exclusively in עברית (*Ivrit/Hebrew*). And the Meah Millim initiative doesn't stop with specific words — we use this program as a catalyst for including more עברית (*Ivrit/Hebrew*) in our everyday lives at camp.

We do not expect that anyone come to camp with these מילים (*milim/words*) already learned or memorized. We do not want any חניכים (*Hanichim/campers*) to feel pressured to “study” before coming to camp! We will all be learning and working on these מילים (*milim/words*) together at camp this קיץ (*kayitz/summer*).

And who knows, we might just have some special swag to give to חניכים (*Hanichim/campers*) who make great use of these מאה מילים (*Meah Milim*) this קיץ (*kayitz/summer*) at camp...!

[Please click here](#) to read more about our מאה מילים (*Meah Milim*) program and to see the complete list of מילים (*milim/words*).

## מצוה בר/בת (BAR/BAT MITZVAH) PREPARATION

If your child will become מצוה בר/בת (*Bar/Bat Mitzvah*) this upcoming Fall (September through December), we will be happy to provide a tutor to help aid in his/her preparations. If you would like your child to receive this tutoring, you must indicate so on your child's Education Form. David Offit, our Director of Programming, will be in touch before the summer begins to help coordinate our tutoring with your child's preparations at home. If you would like to be in touch with David before then, please e-mail him at [davido@campramahne.org](mailto:davido@campramahne.org).

Please make sure that your child brings a CD/MP3 recording and a copy of the Torah portion with him/her and any special instructions from the מצוה בר/בת (*Bar/Bat Mitzvah*) teacher. **Please remember that this practice material may not be on an ipod touch, which is not allowed at camp, but rather on an ipod shuffle or MP3 player that cannot access the internet.**

Please note that we can only review what your child has already learned; we cannot teach new material.

## CURFEWS

Campers have a full day of activities and programs. Rest is essential for growing children, and staff need some time in the evening to relax after a 14-16 hour day. Therefore, it is imperative that your child understands that when lights are out at night they are to remain in their bunks. Night excursions and raids are not

allowed at Camp Ramah. Counselors plan bunk time activities before lights out with their campers.

This policy is very strictly enforced -- both for the safety of your children and the staff. Campers who are not able to abide by this rule will not be allowed to remain in camp.

## **LIVING IN NATURE**

We are blessed to have a beautiful hundred-plus acre facility with a forest, river and lakes. Living in nature brings some possible situations about which we want to make sure you are aware. We cannot list every scenario, but here are a few things that we think are important to share.

**Bats** -- Bats are a normal part of nature and eat many mosquitos. There are specific guidelines from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in regard to bat exposure.

Here are the three scenarios in which the Massachusetts state epidemiology office (using CDC guidelines) routinely recommends rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP):

1. When someone sees a bat bite or scratch on him/her.
2. When someone wakes up and finds a bat flying in his/her room, since bites can be “silent” and the presence of a bat in the room is not theoretical.
3. When a bat is found in a room with an infant/young child/person with a disability, since that individual cannot give a reliable history regarding possible exposure.

Therefore, in the event a bat is discovered in a bunk, the counselors have been trained to remove all campers immediately and to contact senior staff immediately. If there is a bat discovered in your child’s bunk, we will contact you directly.

We continue to contract with Braman Pest Control, a southern New England company in business for over 120 years, and their bat specialist, to inspect our bunks in the fall and spring to ensure

as best as possible that there are no nests in the bunks and that there are no holes into which bats might be able to enter.

**Trees** -- There are many trees on our property. We take seriously the risk of a tree falling and each spring bring a tree-care specialist to inspect the trees in the inhabited footprint of camp. We remove any trees that are identified as being at risk.

**Wildlife** -- There are raccoons, skunks, occasional foxes and a rare bear among other wildlife that we can see at camp. Almost always these animals are only seen well after campers are in bed and pose no threat. When any of these animals (except bears) try to take up residence in or around our buildings, we trap them and relocate them. Our bear experience has been limited to seeing one eating blueberries by the river near the guardhouse several summers ago. The guard is equipped with an air horn. If a bear were to head to inhabited areas, we would contact the police (which we would do in any general bear sighting) and move everyone inside.

**Insects and bugs** -- There are mosquitoes and ticks in our environment. Please send plenty of bug spray with your child. Our **מדריכים** (*Madrichim/counselors*) will remind them to apply the repellent daily. Additionally, our **מדריכים** (*Madrichim/counselors*) will remind the campers to self-check for ticks when they shower.

**Sun** -- Please send your children with hats and sunscreen to prevent sunburns. Our **מדריכים** (*Madrichim/counselors*) will remind the **חניכים** (*hanichim/campers*) to put on sunscreen daily and to reapply as necessary.

**Tornadoes** -- In case of a tornado warning, we have a detailed procedure to shelter everyone in camp in one of our basements. We drill this procedure during staff week.

## אתגר (ETGAR) OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM

אתגר (*Etgar*) is the Hebrew word for “challenge.” Our *Etgar* Program is a series of adventures that are designed to give our oldest campers new experiences in the great outdoors and to challenge them both mentally and physically. The *Etgar* Program is also designed to teach our campers about environmentalism and Judaism’s connection to טבע (*teva/nature*).

Here is a summary of the אתגר (*Etgar*) program at Camp Ramah in New England for קיץ (*kayitz/summer*) 2017:

**Magshimim** (campers entering 8th grade) will participate in a raft-building and team-building exercise at camp run by Adventure In Adventure Out, a wonderful outdoor adventure company, during the **second session** only.

**Bogrim** (campers entering 9th grade) will go Funyaking on the Deerfield River during the **second session** only. Waivers will be sent to parents directly.

**Machon** (campers entering 10th grade) will go on a two-day/one-night overnight camping trip during the **first session**.

חניכים (*hanichim/campers*) will participate in עדה (*edah/division*)-wide programming as well as have some choices of activities. Sign-ups will be sent in the spring.

**Nivonim** (campers entering 11th grade) will participate in a three day/two night overnight camping trip. The עדה (*edah/division*) will camp out in tents at a campsite that can accommodate the entire group. Each day is being planned to challenge our חניכים (*hanichim/campers*), build עדה (*edah/division*) unity and provide adventure.

There will be no *Etgarim* offered during *Kishroniyah*.

## GRATUITIES

We do not accept tipping for our staff. Counselors at Camp Ramah are engaged in an important educational enterprise. They are dedicated to this task. If you appreciate the service your child receives at Camp Ramah, we encourage you to make a contribution to the CRNE Scholarship Fund or *Tikvah* Fund in honor of a staff member. All staff-members are notified of such contributions.

## VISITING POLICY AND VISITING DAY

We have one Visiting Day for full-summer (8-week) campers. There is no Visiting Day for single-session (4-week) campers. Visiting Day is **Sunday, July 23rd, 2017**.

**On Visiting Day, pick-up time for first-session campers will be from 10 AM-11 AM.** You will be asked to sign out your child with his/her bunk counselor.

**Visiting Day will begin at 11 AM and will last until 3:30 PM. So parents of full-summer campers are asked to arrive at camp at 11 AM or later. (Parents of both first-session and full-summer campers are welcome to arrive at 10 AM.)** You will be asked to sign out your child with his/her bunk counselor, and we require that you return before 3:00 p.m.

We love welcoming everyone to our summer home on Visiting Day! We are working on a robust and fun Visiting Day schedule for our full session campers, first month campers who wish to stay, and guests.

There will be a special *Hanukat Habayit* (Dedication) ceremony at the new *Chadar Ochel* (Dining Hall) at 11:30 a.m. We will be offering *chugim* (activities) during the day. Everyone is invited to a free BBQ lunch. Our *Tikvah* Program will be hosting a *tekes* (ceremony) at 2:30. Our *Nivonim* families are invited to a special program in *K'far Nivonim* at 3:30. Look for more details in a separate email later this spring.



Families are permitted to take campers out of camp. We encourage families to stay to partake in the festivities, but if you wish to leave camp you still may do so.

We welcome younger siblings, other relatives, and friends to join in the Visiting Day program. Anyone who has recently been exposed to a communicable disease should not visit the camp. Please remember that Visiting Day is for campers; staff members are “on duty” and cannot receive guests until after noon.

If you cannot visit camp on Visiting Day, please make sure that your child’s *Yoetzet* is aware of this. Campers who will not have guests will be paired with another family or a staff member and will be encouraged to call home on Visiting Day. If you cannot visit camp on Visiting Day, and you want your child to go out of camp with another camper, you must contact the camp office beforehand in order to give permission.

All visitors to camp on days other than Visiting Day require the approval of the Camp Director. Our experience has shown that these visits can be disruptive to the camp program and may negatively affect your child (as well as other campers who do not have visitors). We will only be able to accommodate a request for a visit under very compelling circumstances and well in advance of the visit date. Please do not show up at camp without prior approval.

## **GUESTHOUSE**

On a limited basis, guest rooms at Camp Ramah are available for rent for families and other guests who wish to visit overnight or stay for Shabbat. Approval of your request is subject to the Director’s discretion and room availability. Please contact Mindy Goldstein, *Director of Annual Campaign and Alumni Relations*, at [MindyG@campramahne.org](mailto:MindyG@campramahne.org) to request a reservation.

## IV. CAMP COMMUNICATION

### **YOETZOT: OUR PARENT LIASONS**

Each עדה (*edah*/division) has a יועצת (*yoetzet*) who is an adult who functions as that *edah*'s primary parent liason. You will be given the cell-phone number of your child's יועצת (*yoetzet*) in an e-mail from Rabbi Gelb the night before camp begins.

If you have a concern in the spring, before your child's יועצת (*yoetzet*) has been assigned, please feel free to contact Talya Kalender, our Director of Camper Care, at [TalyaK@campramahne.org](mailto:TalyaK@campramahne.org).

Over the summer, if you need to call camp with a concern, please be sure to give your child's bunk number and explain your situation as clearly as possible. We will work with you to ensure your concerns are promptly addressed!

We ask that you direct any questions or concerns to your child's יועצת (*yoetzet*), rather than contacting your child's מדרִיך (*madrich*/counselor) or עדה ראש (*Rosh Edah*/Division Head) directly.

**Please always free to contact Rabbi Ed Gelb or Talya Kalender during the summer**, if you feel your child's יועצת (*yoetzet*) is not able to help address your concerns. Rabbi Gelb and Talya are always available to help any parent or member of our camp community!

### **CAMPER MAIL**

Kids love to receive mail! We strongly encourage frequent letter writing as a means of parents and children staying in touch during the summer. Due to our rural setting it can take many days to get mail to and from Camp Ramah.

Send letters to:

Camper's Name  
Camp Ramah in New England  
Bunk # \_\_\_\_  
39 Bennett Street  
Palmer, MA 01069

Encourage your child to write to you by including self-addressed, stamped envelopes in their luggage. Campers (up through our entering 9th graders) are required to write to parents twice a week.

**Campers should bring at least eight stamped and addressed envelopes to camp (or 16, if they are full-summer campers).**

It's a good idea to give your child extra stamps, paper, envelopes, and a list of addresses. If you do not hear from your child by the 7th day of camp, please call your child's *יועצת* (*yoetzet*).

All mail to the camp office between June 8 and August 21 must be addressed to Camp Ramah, Main Office, 39 Bennett Street, Palmer, MA 01069. Mail sent to our Norwood address is subject to lengthy forwarding delays.

## PACKAGES

We generally prefer that no packages be sent to camp. If you need to send your child something, please alert your child's *יועצת* (*yoetzet*) and please be considerate and limit the size and frequency of packages sent to camp. Please note that we open all packages prior to your child's receiving it. **No food of any sort is allowed to be mailed to campers.** We will remove all food and items deemed inappropriate (waterguns, etc.). If you have any questions about the appropriateness of an item you wish to send, please be in touch with your child's *יועצת* (*yoetzet*).

## E-MAIL

Campers can receive e-mail but DO NOT have access to the

Internet, and therefore, cannot reply via e-mail. E-mailed messages are printed and delivered daily, except on our *Yemei Meyuchad* (special days when our specialty staff are off – usually Tuesdays or Wednesdays) and **שבת** (*Shabbat*).

You can e-mail your campers through your on-line Campminder account. The e-mail service will be activated on June 25th. Please visit <https://ramahne.campintouch.com/v2/login/login.aspx>, log-in to your CampMinder account and click the “email” link towards the bottom of the page. Each parent who has a Campminder login e-mail may send 5 free e-mails to each child per week. The system will prompt you to purchase additional “camp stamps” to send more e-mails if you desire.

Further instructions regarding e-mail will be e-mailed to you just before the start of camp. This will include information on how to give other people, such as grandparents, access to e-mail your child.

## **TELEPHONING CAMP**

Camp is an opportunity for campers to develop independence and to mature in a supportive environment. We want our campers to engage with their fellow campers and with their counselors.

**Campers are not permitted to bring a cell-phone to camp.**

**As of 2017, this policy also applies to our Nivonim campers.**

After many years of feedback from our *Nivonim* campers about how stressful it is to have phone time, we have decided to end this practice. The **חניכים** (*hanichim/campers*) felt that interacting with the outside world for an hour a week was very disruptive and they would often have trouble rejoining the group afterwards. We ask parents of *Nivonimers* to set expectations with your camper on how often you want to receive a letter. If you find that you are not receiving enough communication, please contact your **יועצת** (*yoetzet*) who will happily help.

Campers are not allowed to call home. If it is urgent that you speak with your child, please leave a message with your child's *יועצת* (*yoetzet*) or with the office. The camp telephone number is (413) 283-9771. The *יועצת* (*yoetzet*) will contact you to arrange a call with your child, if appropriate. The *יועצת* (*yoetzet*) is always present for the return call. The camp will arrange for phone calls to be returned to the caller at the earliest opportunity. (In cases of real emergency, every effort will be made to contact you as soon as possible.)

The camp utilizes an outside emergency answering service on *שבת* (*Shabbat*). This lasts from approximately 3:00 p.m. on Friday to 8:30 a.m. on Sunday morning. This answering service is also in effect during the week (Sunday-Thursday) from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 a.m. when our camp office is closed. During these times, please call only in case of emergency and ask the service to contact the camp immediately. Non-urgent messages left with the answering service are retrieved at 8:30 am daily, except *שבת*.

## FAXES

We will accept incoming personal faxes on our summer fax number: 413-283-6661. Please be sure to put the recipient's name and bunk number on each fax sheet. Faxes are delivered daily, except on our *Yemei Meyuchad* (usually Tuesdays or Wednesdays) and *שבת* (*Shabbat*).

## WEBSITE, BLOG, AND FACEBOOK

We will post daily photo-galleries on our web-site: [www.campramahne.org](http://www.campramahne.org) throughout the summer. (The password is **Summer2017**.) The direct link to our photo-galleries is: <https://campramahne.smugmug.com>.

We post photo galleries of every *עדה* (*edah/division*) on every

regular day. (We do not post new photos on **שבת** (*Shabbat*), and our photographer has one additional day off every week.). We do our best to ensure that there are regular photo updates that showcase as many different campers, and as many different camp activities, as possible.

We also encourage parents to visit our blog:

[www.ramahblog.org](http://www.ramahblog.org) for daily news of camp **פעולות** (*peulot/* programs), special events, reflections from **צוות** (*tzevet/staff-* members) around camp, and lots more. Both our blog and web-site are updated multiple times every day, so please check them often for updates on happenings at camp.

We will also be posting multiple daily updates, including photos, on our private Facebook page. We encourage parents to “friend” our Facebook page, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/RamahPalmer> to be a part of this on-line community. For any parent who is not on facebook, feel free to contact the Ramah Office to obtain a generic “Ramah Parents” log-in.

Once a week (usually on Tuesday) we will post a weekly video update. This special 4-7 minute video will contain video footage from across camp from the previous week, including footage from special events such as an **עדה** (*edah/division*) play. We will post the weekly video on our website, blog, and Facebook page.

## **COMMUNICATION FROM CAMP TO FAMILIES**

In addition to regular updates on the website, you will get important informational emails and mailings during the summer about visiting day, end of session transportation, activities at camp, etc. Please open these immediately and read them. The summer seems to move so fast and we want you to know what’s happening in a timely manner.

E-mail has proven to be a fast, timely, efficient, and cost-saving means of communication, especially during the summer. Many

messages will ONLY be sent via e-mail. Please be sure the camp office has accurate e-mail addresses in order to enable us to communicate with you. Notify the camp office if your e-mail address changes.

# V. CAMPER BEHAVIOR, SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

## HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is a normal part of the adjustment that many children will make while away from their homes and families. At Camp Ramah we are sensitive to both the campers who are experiencing homesickness, and to their families who miss them. We work hard to support families through this adjustment. The overwhelming majority of campers adjust quickly to camp.

Letters sent home early in a camp session may relay strong feelings of homesickness during this transitional period. This is normal. If you ever receive a letter that you are concerned about, please contact your child's *yoetzet* (יועצת).

We encourage parents to read [this article](#) on “Managing and Minimizing Homesickness” and to review these strategies with your child.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Camp Ramah's discipline policy is designed to create a safe environment at camp, and to help children develop self control and assume responsibility for their actions.

Clear and consistent, age appropriate rules and limits are established at camp. Any disciplinary measure used will relate to the child's specific actions and will be handled in a timely fashion. No physical punishment, humiliation, scare tactics, or controlling measures are allowed. No methods associated with food deprivation or extended isolation are allowed.

If a child's behavior is chronically disruptive, even after reasonable measures have been made to assist the child in adjusting to the camp setting, parents will be contacted by camp staff to determine if the child is able to continue at camp. Staff will always work



toward developing a cooperative plan of action to maximize a camper's chances of success at summer camp. If disruptive behavior continues, the camper may be dismissed from the camp program.

Camp Ramah reserves the right to immediately dismiss a camper from the summer camp program without prior warning.

The following actions may result in the immediate dismissal from camp:

- Physical, sexual, or verbal abuse.
- Leaving the camp grounds without the permission of the Camp Director
- Smoking
- Possessing weapons or firearms
- Vandalism (including graffiti) or pranks or activities that destroy camp property
- Abusing fire extinguishers
- Disrupting someone who is sleeping
- Invading someone's privacy while they are in the bathroom or shower.
- Self-harmful behaviors
- Sexual activity (including sex, oral sex, or behavior that the camp cannot take responsibility for)
- Camp Ramah in New England has zero tolerance for the use by any camper of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances

It is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable.

The Camp Director and/or *yoetz* (yoetz) will be in touch with the parent/guardian directly if there are discipline issues. Camp tuition is non-refundable in case of a camper's early departure due to discipline or behavior issues.

## GRAFFITI & VANDALISM

All campers and staff are responsible for maintaining the physical condition of camp. Any vandalism or destruction of camp property by members of the camp community will result in damages assessed and charged to the camper's family, and possible expulsion from camp. **Any damage to the property, including graffiti, will be paid for by the campers' families.** (Repainting bunks and/or bathrooms costs between \$200 - \$800.) Fire extinguishers may never be discharged except in case of fire.

## THE BOUNDARIES OF CAMP

Campers may not leave the camp grounds at any time except on camp-supervised trips or programs. Violation of this rule is grounds for dismissal. Campers may not ever go beyond the basic boundaries of the camp grounds: 'צד א' (*Tzad Aleph/A-Side*), 'צד ב' (*Tzad Bet/B-Side*), and 'מחנה ג' (*Machaneh Gimel*). To be more specific: campers may not ever go beyond the *Eruv* that surrounds camp, the train tracks, or *K'far Nivonim* without the express permission of their ראש עדה (*Rosh Edah/Division Head*), and accompanied by a counselor. This rule means that campers are not permitted to go to the "train bridge" in the woods behind camp.

In order to ensure the observance of שבת (*Shabbat*), on שבת (*Shabbat*) campers and staff are not permitted to go beyond the *Eruv*.

(NOTE: An *Eruv* is a boundary that allows Jews to carry needed things in public on שבת (*Shabbat*), marked around much of camp with wooden poles connected with string.)

# **ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

## **I. Introduction**

It is the goal of Camp Ramah in New England to promote a camp that is free of child abuse and neglect. To achieve our goal, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated. We have provided a procedure by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with if experienced or reported by campers and staff.

Because Camp Ramah in New England takes allegations of child abuse and neglect seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of child abuse and neglect. Where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

## **II. Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect**

The following are some examples of conduct that may constitute child abuse and neglect:

- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

The striking or other physical or sexual abuse of campers is grounds for immediate dismissal. Verbal abuse or harassment of campers is also grounds for dismissal.

## **III. Complaints of Child Abuse and Neglect**

If any of our campers believes that s/he has been subjected to child abuse and neglect by staff or another camper, the camper has the right to file a complaint with our organization. This may be done in

writing or orally.

1. All staff shall immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect. The report shall be made either to the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families or to the Director of CRNE.
2. The Director of CRNE shall immediately report suspected abuse or neglect to the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families.
3. The Camp Director shall notify the Board of Health if a 51A report alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the recreational camp for children or during a program related activity is filed. The 51A report itself shall not be forwarded to the Board of Health.
4. CRNE will cooperate in all official investigations of abuse and neglect alleged to have occurred at the camp, including identifying parents of campers currently or previously enrolled in the camp who may have been in contact with the subject of the investigation.
5. CRNE will ensure that an allegedly abusive or neglectful staff person does not work directly with campers until the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families investigation is completed.

If a child reports, or we suspect, abuse or neglect at home, the Director of CRNE would contact the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families to determine our reporting responsibilities.

#### **IV. State and Federal Remedies**

In addition to the above, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies.

1. Massachusetts Department of Children & Families:

Central Office:

600 Washington Street

Boston, MA 02111

(617) 748-2000

2. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

Boston Office:

One Ashburton Place, Suite 601

Boston, MA 02108

(617) 994-6000

Springfield Office:

436 Dwight St., Room 220

Springfield, MA 01103

(413) 739-2145

This camp must comply with regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and be licensed by the local board of health.

## VI. WITHDRAWAL OF CAMPERS

**The camp reserves the right to expel any camper or staff member whose actions we determine to be detrimental to the camp or to themselves.** If a child is expelled due to violating any conditions stipulated in this Family Handbook or due to inappropriate behavior, no refund will be provided. If a child is withdrawn for medical reasons, tuition will be refunded, pro-rated, for the number of days at camp minus the withdrawal fee (\$750 for full season campers, \$500 for single session campers, \$250 for mini-session campers). Withdrawal due to a medical condition that was not disclosed on the medical form may result in expulsion without a refund.

For more information, please see our discipline policy on pg. 37.

**THERE ARE NO REFUNDS FOR VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWALS OF CAMPERS.** Voluntary withdrawals include, for example: child is homesick, parents are child sick, change in family plans, family vacations and promises made by parents to withdraw the child after a “trial period at camp”.

## VII. THE HISTORY OF THE “ROO”

The Palmer Fighting Roo is our beloved camp mascot. We have a Roo פּרֶק (perek/period) every day, and we celebrate Yom Roo twice a summer when our ‘צד ב (Tzad Bet/B-Side) campers play a day of competitive sports against Camp Ramah in the Berkshires. The Roo appears frequently on t-shirts, jerseys, signs, and even on last year’s *Kishroniyah* mosaic project. (*Kishroniyah* is a special specialists-in-residence week for our ‘צד ב (Tzad Bet/B-Side) campers.)

But what is the Roo and why do we have a mascot?

The origins of the Palmer Fighting Roo are completely grassroots. And, as is often the case with history, there are competing accounts of who actually came up with the idea. In the summer of 2013, a few veteran counselors decided that what Camp Ramah in New England needed was a mascot. Although we had been playing sports against other camps for years, we never had an official mascot! After batting around a number of different suggestions, this group of counselors settled on the idea of the Palmer fighting Roo, both because it was original (how many teams do you know what a Kangaroo Mascot?), and because of the connection to the Hebrew word *ruach*, meaning spirit. Now, we don’t just have tons of *ruach* at Camp Ramah, we have ROO-ach!

The Roo quickly caught on, and before long the Roo had an official design, shirts for sale for staff-members, and even a few different chants and songs. The official Palmer Fight Song is now sung regularly, especially loudly and enthusiastically on Yom Roo, before getting on the buses to go to Ramah Berkshires:

When it comes to Ramah camps  
If you ever had to choose  
The choice would be obvious  
We’re the Palmer Fighting Roos (Roo! Roo! Roo!)

From A-Side to B-Side

Our ROO-ach leads the way  
So go! (fight!) go! (fight!) go! (fight!) go!  
Roos will win the day!

As with most camp traditions, the Palmer Fighting Roo has quickly grown from an idea by just a few staff members having fun, to an integral part of camp culture. More than anything, the Roo demonstrates the tremendous influence that everyone in our camp community, specifically our college-aged staff, has to affect culture and change at Camp Ramah.





# CAMP RAMAH IN NEW ENGLAND SUGGESTED CLOTHING LIST

Please label ALL items with first & last name!!

**This list is intended as a suggested packing list. It is not necessarily required to bring every single item on this list. Please feel free to adjust for your child(ren) and contact us with any questions.**

## **PLEASE PACK:**

*TALLIT* or *TALLIT KATAN* (required for men past their *Bar Mitzvah*/  
encouraged for women)

*TEFILLIN* (required for men past their *Bar Mitzvah*/encouraged for women)

12-14 T-shirts

10-12 Pairs of shorts

3 Sweatshirts

4 Long-sleeve or flannel shirts

14 Pairs of socks

5 Pairs of pants/sweatpants/leggings

15 Sets of underwear

4 Pairs of pajamas, including 1 warm pair

3 Swimsuits

2 Baseball caps or sun hats

Raincoat

Warm Jacket

4 Kipot (required for boys)

5-7 Bras / sports bras (if applicable)

## **FOR SHABBAT:**

2 Pairs of khaki pants or nice shorts (no denim)

4 Collared shirts

4 Dresses or skirts and blouses (full back / midriff covered / NO OPEN  
BACK OR STRAPLESS DRESSES)

1 Sweater

## **FOOTWEAR:**

1 pair rain boots

1 pair sneakers

1 pair beach shoes / flip-flops

1 pair shower shoes

1 pair Shabbat dress shoes or sandals

**TOILET ARTICLES:**

Toothbrush case  
3 toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Deodorant  
Sunscreen  
Bug spray  
Shampoo / conditioner  
Soap or body wash  
Soap dish  
Comb / brush  
Drinking cup  
Shower caddy  
Hair products  
Hair ties  
Nail clipper  
Orthodontic retainer (if applicable)  
Feminine hygiene products

**BEDDING & LINEN:**

4 Bath towels  
2 Warm blankets or comforters  
2 Wash cloths  
3 Hand towels  
1 Laundry bag  
2 Twin sheet sets  
2 Beach towels  
1 Pillow

**FOR B-SIDE CAMPERS (rising 8th to 11th grades) FOR YOM ROO:**

5 Pairs of athletic shorts  
Sports bras  
Cleats if planning to participate in a field sport  
(soccer, ultimate frisbee or softball)  
Swim cap if planning to participate in swimming

**FOR FIRST SESSION MACHON CAMPERS (rising 10th graders)  
AND ALL NIVONIM CAMPERS (rising 11th graders), FOR ETGAR  
(OUTDOOR ADVENTURE) TRIPS (see pg. 28):**

*These items are recommended but not required:*  
Lightweight sleeping pad  
Fleece jacket or heavy sweater

Lightweight hiking pants (fast-drying material)  
Long john top & bottom  
Warm hat

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

2 WATER BOTTLES labeled with name  
STAMPS, PAPER, ENVELOPES & LIST OF ADDRESSES for letter  
writing

1 Shoe bag

Sleeping bag

Flashlight & batteries

Umbrella

Extra eyeglasses

Contact lenses & solution

Books

Inexpensive camera

Athletic equipment (tennis racket, balls, baseball glove)

Musical instruments (non-electric)

Backpack

String bag

iPod Nano or similar\*

Kindle Paperwhite or similar\*

\*NO DEVICE THAT HAS THE CAPABILITY TO CONNECT  
TO THE INTERNET

**SPECIAL NOTES:**

1. PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY FOOD per camp policy.
2. CASH IS NOT NEEDED AT CAMP. Please do not send any with your child. Camp is not responsible for any cash that is sent to camp.
3. Please be sure to label ALL clothing with your child's first and last name! (Initials are NOT sufficient for us to identify lost items found around camp.)
4. Please be sure to label ALL items, including duffel bags, *Tallit*, *Tefillin* and *Tallit* bags!
5. Please only pack clothing that can be laundered.
6. Please pre-wash ALL new clothing and break in new shoes prior to bringing them to camp.

Please contact us at 781-702-5290 if you have any questions.  
*Todah rabbah!*

# CAMP RAMAH IN NEW ENGLAND IS WINTERIZED FOR YEAR-ROUND, KOSHER RETREATS!

Our beautiful site, in the hills of central Massachusetts, sits on a large, clean lake, with 100 acres of fields and woods. The site includes an indoor recreation center and complete sports, waterfront and program facilities. Our facility includes covered and open outdoor assembly areas, informal lounges, seminar/break-out rooms, a new gymnasium, performance and fitness facility, a beautiful state-of-the-art *Bet Midrash*; (three buildings containing a well-stocked Judaic library, synagogue, classrooms and meeting rooms), and more. As of 2017, we have a brand new winterized and air-conditioned *Chadar Ochel* (Dining Hall). Overnight winterized accommodations provide lodging for over 150 people. Camp Ramah in New England is the perfect setting for conferences and retreats for Jewish and secular organizations and groups.

Our winterized sleeping accommodations include a 6-room modern guesthouse with private bathrooms; the *Tikvah* Village, comprised of four large cabins with bathrooms and a lounge; the *Tikvah* Building, a modern residence with six bedrooms; two new large bunks with bedrooms and restrooms for 80 students and winterized rooms in our Infirmary.

We have comfortably hosted groups from across New England and further away, including University Hillel's, Jewish Day Schools, Regional Educator Assemblies, Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, regional USY encampments, alumni meetings; large group Family Camping, secular professional organization meetings and retreats and synagogue *Shabbat* weekends.

Camp Ramah in New England is the perfect venue for overnight and weekday conferences, meetings, seminars and training sessions, retreats, and team-building. Let us work with you to create a program that will enhance and promote the goals of your program or institution.

Please contact Ed Pletman for information:  
[edpletman@campramahne.org](mailto:edpletman@campramahne.org) or (781) 702-5290 x102.

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS TO  
**CAMP RAMAH IN NEW ENGLAND**  
PALMER, MASSACHUSETTS

**FROM MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE: PALMER EXIT #8**

Turn left after onto Route 32 North. Continue on Route 32 for about 4 miles to Rondeau's Dairy which is on the left. Make sharp left turn. Continue for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile past the lake (on your left). Take first right fork to campgrounds.

**FROM BOSTON AND WORCESTER:**

Massachusetts Turnpike West to Palmer Exit #8. Follow directions above.

**FROM ALBANY AND SPRINGFIELD:**

Massachusetts Turnpike East to Palmer Exit #8. Follow directions above.

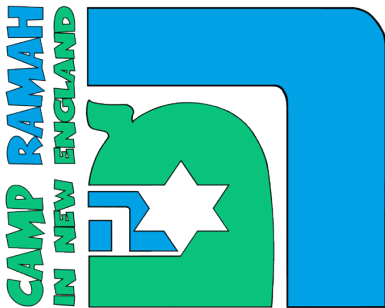
**FROM HARTFORD, NEW HAVEN AND SOUTHERN CT:**

Interstate 91 North thru Springfield, MA.

Exit 8 off of Interstate 91 is Interstate 291 in MA.

Take 291 to the Massachusetts Turnpike East (right turn onto the Massachusetts Turnpike). You enter the Mass Turnpike at Exit #6 - continue to the Palmer Exit #8.

Follow directions above.



**Winter address:**

1206 Boston Providence Highway  
Suite 201  
Norwood, MA 02062  
781-702-5290  
Fax: 781-702-5239



**Summer address:**

39 Bennett Street  
Palmer, MA 01069  
413-283-9771  
Fax: 413-283-6661

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