



SUMMER SAFE

by Alcalaw

CAMP RAMAH IN WISCONSIN & RAMAH DAY CAMP CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Overview

Camp Ramah in Wisconsin & Ramah Day Camp (“Camp Ramah”) pride themselves on providing children with a positive and enriching Jewish camp experience filled with fun that never stops and friendships that last a lifetime. **Camp Ramah is deeply committed to fostering a camp environment where physical and emotional safety is always maintained.**

Campers are expected to use good judgment and common sense, treat fellow community members with respect, and avoid causing harm. We ask all members of our camp community - staff, campers and families - to review this policy and commit to doing their part to honor the policy and its spirit.

The Child Safety Policy applies at all Camp Ramah locations in-season and off-season and to all members of the Ramah community, including campers, staff, board members, parents, volunteers, contractors, vendors, parents and guests. Ramah staff will receive annual training to ensure familiarity and compliance with the Child Safety Policy and best practices for abuse prevention.

Camp Safety Team

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

The members of the Camp Safety Team for summer 2024 are:

- Jacob Cytryn, Executive Director Camp Ramah in Wisconsin & Ramah Day Camp
- Scott Topal, Director of Operations Camp Ramah in Wisconsin & Ramah Day Camp
- Talia Derman, Director Ramah Day Camp
- Dina Greenberg, Assistant Director Ramah Day Camp
- Dr. Adina Beiner, Assistant Director Camp Ramah in Wisconsin
- Dr. Audra Kaplan, Director of Camp Wellness & Inclusion Camp Ramah in Wisconsin
- Seasonal Camper Care Professional (LCSW or Psychologist)
- Resident Medical Professional (Physician or Nurse)

In addition, the Camper Safety Team is responsible for:

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

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Expectations for Staff

Staff Screening and Education

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

Behavioral Expectations for Staff

Camp Ramah holds staff to the highest standards. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse, grooming behavior and romantic or sexual relationships with campers, including those who are 18 years of age or older, are prohibited.

Staff Reporting Expectations

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

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

Camp Ramah is a Mandated Reporter. Staff are obligated to comply with legal mandatory reporting requirements.

- In **Illinois**, all Ramah Day staff members must review the [Illinois DCFS Manual for Mandated Reports](#). Reports of suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect may be made directly to the [Illinois DCFS](#). There may be cases in which the DCFS may not be the appropriate reporting body, in which case the appropriate governmental agency should be notified. Members of the Ramah Day community are encouraged, but not obligated, to notify the Camp Director or the Camp Safety Team after making such a report.
- In **Wisconsin**, law (48.981(2)) requires that any mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen by the person in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected, or who has reason to believe that a child seen by the person in the course of professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur, make a report to the [Vilas County Courthouse](#). Members of the Camp Ramah in Wisconsin community are encouraged, but not obligated, to notify the Camp Executive Director or the Camp Safety Team after making a report.

These policies protect all individuals, who in good faith report an episode of suspected abuse to the DCFS or Vilas County or the Camp Safety Team, from any form of retaliation.

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Behavioral Expectations for Campers

Members of the Camp Ramah community are required to conduct themselves at all times in an appropriate and respectful manner.

Appropriate Communication is Required

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

The following communication will not be tolerated at camp:

- Language that teases, belittles or shames
- Language that is lewd and/or makes any sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendos or gestures
- Explicit sexual material, including pornography, photos, videos or other explicit material

Bullying is Prohibited

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

Bullying is aggressive behavior, often repetitive, involving a real or perceived power imbalance that is intended to harm another person physically or emotionally. Bullying can be **physical** and include unwanted physical contact, threat of physical contact or the use of physical force intended to cause harm.

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

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

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

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

Physical Contact Between Campers & Staff

The appropriateness of physical contact will vary by age, stages of childhood development, and the context in which the physical contact occurs. Verbal interactions and directions should replace physical contact whenever possible.

Camp Ramah does not prohibit all physical contact between staff and campers. Appropriate physical contact may include a handshake, a fist bump, a high five, a side hug or comforting a distressed child by picking them up or providing a hug. Camp Ramah expects that physical contact between staff and campers be done either (1) with the child's consent and in the presence of another staff member; or (2) when necessary to interrupt dangerous conduct.

Sexual Activity Between Campers is Prohibited

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

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

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

Interactions Between Campers and Staff are Prohibited

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

Alcohol and Drugs are Prohibited

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

Reports of Camper Misconduct

Making a Report

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

Retaliation Prohibited

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

Camp Safety Team Response to Reports of Policy Violations by Campers

Reports of possible violations of the Camper Safety Policy by campers will be responded to by the Camp Safety Team, which is committed to responding promptly and thoughtfully using trauma-informed practices. In doing so, the Camp Safety Team will be guided by the following process.

Support

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

Report

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

Communicate

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

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Investigate

The Camp Safety Team will undertake an inquiry to learn what happened. Depending on the nature of the report, the Camp Safety Team may use staff or external partners to conduct the inquiry. The inquiry may involve interviewing the affected camper(s) and any other potential witnesses, as well as gathering and reviewing documentary and physical evidence. The parties will be advised of the outcome of any such inquiry, but no written report detailing the process will be provided.

Interviewing Campers

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

Confidentiality

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

Disciplinary Decisions

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