



Camp Ramah in the Berkshires

שומרי ילדים

Shomrei Yeladim

Child Safety Policy

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Child Protection - Mission and Policy Explanation	3
Definitions	4
Scope of Policy	7
Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children	7
Interactions with Campers	9
Language and Communication	10
Physical Spaces	12
Peer to Peer Relationships	14
Drugs and Alcohol	14
Transporting Children	15
Training	16
Staff and Volunteer, Engagement and Hiring	18
Policy Dissemination and Affirmation	20
Child Safety Committee (CSC)	21
Reporting	24
Suspected Abuse Reporting Requirements	24
Policy Compliance and Violations	25
Supporting Victims and Survivors of Child Abuse	28
Third Party Use of this Policy	30
Appendix	31

This child safety policy was approved by the Ramah Berkshires Board of Trustees on 5/20/2024. As the policy is reviewed each year, the committee will continue to implement additional practices and make changes as needed.

We ask everyone to be patient and vigilant as our staff, board, parents, guests and volunteers are trained to comply with these new policies and procedures. Throughout this process, please notify the Child Safety Committee if you notice a program, activity, or interaction that is non-compliant with this policy so that we may ensure our new policy is understood by everyone.

In addition, we encourage the entire Ramah Berkshires community to read the policy and participate in one of the various training opportunities. It is our intention that this policy will fulfill our goal that Ramah Berkshires is a physically and emotionally safe environment for all. Please share your questions and feedback with the Child Safety Committee at childsafety@ramahberkshires.org.

Child Protection – Mission and Policy Explanation

Mission Statement

Ramah Berkshires is a vibrant summer camp community, where children grow in a beautiful and safe setting, surrounded by life-long friends and nurtured by spirited role models. From sports to the arts, swimming to outdoor adventure, camp is infused with the best of the traditions and values of Conservative Judaism: love of mitzvot, Hebrew language, and the land and people of Israel; commitment to inclusion and Tikun Olam; and the joy of learning and prayer.

Ramah Berkshires aims to provide children with a positive and enriching Jewish camp experience. We are deeply committed to protecting the young people in our community so they feel safe at all times and we strive for the highest standards towards protecting them from abuse. With that goal in mind, we have created “*Shomrei Yeladim* - שומרי ילדים Guarding our Children,” a child safety policy.

This policy applies to all members of the community: all campers, staff, board members, parents, volunteers, and guests.

This policy is meant to be a fluid and evolving document and represents our aspirations in relation to safety matters. As time passes and we learn from our collective experiences and the practical nature of the policy’s implementation, its parameters may need to be altered -- such change is a healthy process that will enable those charged with safeguarding our children to be responsive to altered circumstances and to the practical needs of our community.

Definitions

For the purpose of this statement:

Camper refers to any child enrolled at Camp Ramah in the Berkshires from *Gan* (birth) – *Gesher* (entering 11th Grade).

Child refers to any person from birth until 18 years old.

Community Member refers to Ramah Berkshires' parents, board members, volunteers, staff, campers, guests, visitors.

Staff refers to any employee of Ramah Berkshires, full, part-time, contract, year-round or seasonal, child or adult.

Sexual Abuse is any occurrence in which an adult engages a child in sexual activity. Sexual activity may include but is not limited to:

Contact behavior:

- Kissing
- Fondling
- Masturbation
- Oral sex
- Penetration of the vagina, anus, or other orifice by a penis, finger, or other object or body part
- Other sexual contact, e.g., stroking or massaging a child's thigh

Non-contact behavior:

- Sexual communication (whether verbal or written, including by telephone, text message, email, or social media)
- Voyeurism (spying on private or intimate behaviors, such as those involving undressing, nudity, bathing, or sexual activity)
- Exposing a child to pornography or other sexually explicit material
- Exposing part or all of an adult or child's naked body (except as necessary for caregiving or medical purposes)
- Appearing unclothed in front of a child
- Exploiting a child by prostitution and/or pornography
- Any activity intended to abuse, degrade, arouse, or gratify sexual desire

Sexual activity between children can also be abusive; some indicators might include:

- A significant disparity in age, development, or size
- If one child is in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the other
- If one child is sleeping or unconscious
- Anytime coercion is used
- Anytime there is not consent between both parties

Physical Abuse occurs when someone inflicts non-accidental physical force that has a substantial risk of causing, or does cause, bodily injury or emotional trauma. Physical force between children can also be abusive.

Emotional Abuse is defined as acts toward a child that cause or have a substantial likelihood of causing harm to the child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development. Emotional abuse might include, but is not limited to, restricting a child's movement, discriminating, blaming, belittling, denigrating, threatening, scaring, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying.

Neglect is the failure of a responsible person to provide for a child's basic needs or to protect from harm to the degree that the child's health, safety, or well-being are threatened.

Grooming is when an adult uses seemingly innocent behaviors to gain the trust and cooperation of a child, establish a relationship with a child, the child's family, or the community, for the purposes of their own sexual gratification or feelings of power. Such behaviors may include but are not limited to: the giving of preferential gifts to a child, asking a child to keep a secret, seeking the attention of a child, spending an increasing amount of time with a child, being overly physical with a child, inappropriate interactions with a child in person or via electronic devices or social media, the testing or ignoring of professional boundaries or rules.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions. The bullied individual typically has trouble defending him or herself and does nothing to "cause" the bullying. Bullying behaviors may be persistently directed at the target based on one's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, physical appearance, sex, or other distinguishing characteristics. Bullying behavior is not limited to children and adolescents; it can also occur among the adults in children's lives.

The following types of bullying are most often seen among children and adolescents:

- **Verbal**—includes name-calling; insults; making racist, sexist, or homophobic jokes, remarks, or teasing; using sexually suggestive or abusive language; threats of violence; and offensive remarks. This is the most common form of bullying.
- **Physical**—includes hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, scratching, spitting, other physical aggression, and damage to or taking someone else's belongings.
- **Relational/Social**—includes spreading true or untrue stories about someone, excluding from social groups (social isolation), and being made the subject of malicious rumors.

- Electronic—any type of bullying that is carried out via an electronic medium such as text messaging, cell phone calls, pictures or video clips via mobile phone cameras, e-mail, chat rooms, social networking sites, and other websites.

Reporting - There are two types of violation reporting:

1. **Policy Violations** are those actions by individuals that either accidentally or intentionally breach or disregard the expectations for behavior and conduct delineated by this child safety policy, whether or not they rise to the definition of abuse. Policy violations can be reported to any member of the community or by confidential form or email.
2. **Suspected acts of Child Abuse** or maltreatment must be reported directly to the Statewide Central Register and may also be reported to the Camp Director and/or the Child Safety Committee.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all activities under the auspices of Ramah Berkshires whether at the property in Wingdale, NY or at other locations both in-season and off-season.

Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children

Identifying and minimizing risk

Ramah Berkshires will provide practical guidance and/or training to all residential members of the Ramah Berkshires community about acceptable and unacceptable behavior with children in order to minimize the risk of child abuse occurring during Camp and/or at all Ramah Berkshires sanctioned events.

In addition, all members of the Ramah Berkshires community are required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with being a positive role model (*Dugma lshit*) for children and other adults. It is a violation of this policy to neglect, sexually, physically, or emotionally abuse a child, or groom a child for such abuse.

Conduct and Behavior

Physical Contact

Nurturing touch is an important part of healthy child development. **This policy does not ban all physical contact between adults and children, but rather limits such contact to the parameters listed below.**

Appropriate Touch

The appropriateness of physical contact will vary with different ages, the context of the interaction, and the stages of childhood development. **Key principles regarding touch include: child consent and ensuring that at least one additional adult is present.**

Child Consent

Before touching, whenever possible, it is best to “check first” with the child, when developmentally appropriate and within context. For example, “Can I give you a hug?”

An adult intending to pick up or hug a distressed child should first ask the child if that is acceptable to him or her and respect the child’s response.

In the Presence of Other Adults

Whenever possible, the touching of a child should always occur in a public space with more than one adult present.

Whenever possible, when picking up a child in distress there should be two adults in the room; the individual picking up the child and one additional adult.

Several touching policies apply for all interactions with children:

- Appropriate physical contact areas may include: shoulder, upper back, arms, hands.
- Other forms of touch in an appropriate context may include: a hand shake, a fist bump or high five, side hugs, or comforting a distressed child by picking him/her up or providing a hug.
- Whenever possible, verbal interactions and directions should replace physical contact.
- A hug initiated by a child may be appropriate at a moment of happiness (or sadness). For example, a child may wish to hug a member of the staff to express that sentiment after winning a game. Such hugs or other similar types of expression should always be expressed in public, and never in private.
- A child's development and age must be accounted for when considering if contact is appropriate.
 - Nurturing touch may be appropriate especially during moments of distress in order to provide comfort.

Inappropriate Touch

Under no circumstances should a Ramah Berkshires community member have physical contact with a child that could be considered or result in sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect of a child, as defined in this policy.

Examples of inappropriate touch include contact that:

- Includes touching genitals, breasts, thighs, or buttocks or would appear to a reasonable person to have a sexual connotation or purpose.
- Is in private, in a one-on-one setting, or otherwise out of sight of other adults.
- Is initiated against the wishes of the child.
- Includes the touching of body parts that would normally be covered by a bathing suit.
- Is intended to cause pain or distress to the child, including physical punishment.
- Is overly physical and may include roughhousing, tickling, wrestling or carrying children, rubbing or massaging back or shoulders.
- May include lap sitting (depending on age and circumstance).

Staff and any other adults should gently block and redirect a child who attempts to touch them in an inappropriate or sexual manner. They should discourage children from inappropriate expectations of touch in a gentle manner, being mindful to avoid embarrassing the child.

Staff and other adults should gently but firmly set boundaries when children seek excessive, inappropriate, and/or sexual attention and obtain support services for children who continually struggle with these boundaries. Any child who continues to struggle with these boundaries should be brought to the attention of the Camp Director or Director of Camper Care.

Additionally, all staff and other adults in camp should be mindful of the child's behavior and actions, taking notice of behaviors that may be outside of the standard expectations for a child that age, possibly including signs of distress or acting out. These behaviors may be suggestive of past abuse or of a child needing additional support regardless of their past. Such behaviors should be brought to the attention of the Camp Director or Director of Camper Care as soon as possible.

Campers who are dysregulated and acting in dangerous ways

A dysregulated child is one who is acting in physically unsafe ways towards themselves or towards others, has been verbally instructed to stop the conduct, and has refused to follow such or other adult instructions.

In addition to the guidelines of appropriate and inappropriate touch listed above, in situations where staff or another adult in camp is addressing a dysregulated child, the following guidelines apply:

- An adult may touch the child in order to redirect or physically move them from the situation.
- Before touching the child, the adult should tell the child of their intentions and ensure that there is an additional adult present.
- As in all cases of appropriate physical touch, areas where physical contact may be appropriate include: shoulder, upper back, arms and hands
- Whenever possible contact should only occur when there are at least two adults present.
- If the situation above occurs, it must be documented including: details of the event that occurred, who was involved, the outcome, and any other relevant details.

The exceptions above are intended to keep the individual child and/or other children/staff safe.

Interactions with Campers

All interactions with campers are to take place in spaces that are ideally both **observable and interruptible**. This includes, but is not limited to, bunks and/or spaces with windows and/or, unlocked doors. A situation where an adult is with a camper one-on-one should be avoided whenever possible. Even when

multiple campers are present, it is always preferable to have more than one staff member or adult present.

In addition to all of the previously described guidelines, the following additional guidelines apply if an adult is in an unavoidable one-on-one interaction (where an adult is alone with a camper):

- If a one-on-one situation is unavoidable, it is preferable that the room or bunk door be open or have an unobstructed window view with clear visibility into the room. If the door must be closed, it should be unlocked and the adult should not physically be between the child and the room's exit.
- In the exceptional case, if one knows in advance of a specific reason one must be alone in a space with a camper, then that staff member should notify their supervisor or another staff member when the interaction starts and completes.

To reiterate the larger point: if at all possible, an adult should not be in a space or situation where they are alone with a camper.

Language and Communication

As adults, when we are communicating with children, both the words we choose and how we say them can be nurturing and supportive. Language and communication can also be destructive and hurtful. **All members of the community should be careful and cognizant of the language used at all times, and especially when we speak to, and/or are in the presence of, children.**

All Ramah Berkshires community members, including campers, staff, parents, board, volunteers, guests, and visitors must refrain from making any sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendos, behavior, or using inappropriate language with a child or in the presence of a child.

In addition:

- Communications with campers should include language that is encouraging, respectful and confidence-boosting.
- Adults may not use language that teases, belittles, or shames a child. Adults should never ask a child to keep a secret.
- Adults should never share with campers explicit sexual material including: pornography, photos, videos, or other explicit media.

Inappropriate language/conversation may include, but is not limited to:

- Excessive Cursing
- Using lewd or sexually suggestive language

- Initiating questions about a camper’s sexuality, or any other conversation with a camper about their sexual life
- Comments about the way a camper looks, is dressed, or about their body (Note: this does not include staff speaking to a camper about the camp’s Clothing Expectations Policy compliance.)
- Information about the staff member or other adult’s intimate behaviors, relationships, desires, or body
- Revealing inappropriate details about the staff’s personal life to a child
- Communication with a camper (including, but not limited to, text messages, emails, social media messages) containing inappropriate or sexually suggested language

In addition to abiding by these guidelines, we expect our staff members to prevent campers from using this sort of language or engaging in this sort of behavior. Peer to peer guidelines can be found in our B-Side Behavioral Agreement and Parent Handbook.

The following guidelines apply to staff and other adults in camp:

- In the rare event that a counselor is required to communicate with a camper via email, text message, or social media, an additional staff member or parent/guardian must be copied on the communication. This not only protects the camper, but also protects the staff member.
- Staff members who have Ramah Berkshires email accounts must communicate with campers using these accounts (*not from personal email accounts*) or Ramah Berkshires social networking profiles (*e.g., not personal Facebook or other social media accounts*).
- The posting of photos or other images of campers may not be posted on personal social networking accounts or disseminated in any way, other than official Ramah Berkshires communication.
- All adults should not and all employees of camp may not accept social media “friend” requests from a child utilizing a personal social media account. The tagging and inclusion of names on social media sites is to be avoided.

Additional information on communication can be found in the Camp Ramah in the Berkshires *Social Media Policy*, Appendix A.

Photography

Ramah Berkshires actively promotes photography for sharing with current camp families, archival and promotional purposes. We also acknowledge that images of children may be used inappropriately or illegally. The following rules apply to photography *and* videography of children at Ramah Berkshires:

- Permission from the child and the child’s parents/guardian must be obtained prior to the public posting of any photographic images or video recordings taken of children at Ramah Berkshires.

- This includes images and recordings used for promotional purposes including, but not limited to, the Ramah Berkshires website, the Ramah Berkshires Facebook page, the Ramah Berkshires Instagram account, CampInTouch photos page, annual report, press releases, promotional flyers and other electronic or printed means of communication.
- This permission may be obtained through an annual permission/consent form.
- No photography may be conducted inside bunks, changing areas, or bathrooms.
- Images of children may not include identifying personal information such as: full name, address, phone number.
- Any image (digital or other) of a child, taken with permission, but which unintentionally reveals private body parts, violates these rules.

Physical Spaces

Ramah Berkshires is made up of 365 acres of land and over 125 buildings. (A complete list of physical spaces at Ramah Berkshires can be found in Appendix B.)

There are several types of buildings at Camp. Included here are child protection policies for buildings in general, as well as specifics related to the most commonly used buildings by campers at Ramah Berkshires.

As a general principle, staff should not be alone in any enclosed space with a child.

All interactions with campers are to take place in spaces that are ideally both **observable and interruptible**. This includes but is not limited to bunks and/or spaces with windows and/or, unlocked doors.

Bunks

- Staff beds should be separate from camper beds.
- Campers may not co-sleep in each other's beds or in staff beds.
- Bunk living necessarily entails nudity when dressing and showering. Therefore, staff must prevent campers from violating each other's boundaries during these activities.

Bathrooms

- Counselors should shower at separate times from campers.

- There should always be two or more counselors in the bunk during camper shower time, if staffing permits.
- Counselors may not walk around nude or partially nude and should refrain from walking around or sleeping only in underwear.
- If the bunk has urinals, it is best-practice for a counselor to always use a stall, but required for counselors when a camper is at the urinal.
- No one from the camp community is permitted to use a bunk's bathroom or shower unless they live in that specific bunk (The exception is once a summer on Visiting Day, visiting family members may use their child's bunk's bathroom).

Shmira in Bunks

- Rosh *shmira* must conduct random spot checks to make sure staff and counselors are accounted for and acting appropriately until there are multiple staff in each bunk at curfew.
- Staff are not permitted to visit other bunks at night unless assigned to *shmira* for that bunk.

Offices

Campers and staff are not permitted to be alone together in an office with the door closed unless there is a window on the door or another way for anyone walking by to see into the office.

Staff Housing/Guest Cottages

Staff Housing and Guest Cottages must be locked when vacant. No staff members should have campers in their bunks.

Agam (Lake)

Although the *agam* is not an enclosed space, we are aware that it falls into a special category where campers are in an increased vulnerability due to a more revealed state of dress. Staff must be hyper-vigilant in ensuring the *agam* remains a respectful, appropriate, and safe space.

Mirpe'ah (Infirmary) (commonly known as the "Marp")

- Medical staff should avoid one-on-one examinations wherein only one adult is in a closed room with a child. If this is not possible, the examination door must be unlocked and other marp staff should know about the examination and be able to enter the room at any time.
- Ideally, interactions between staff/campers should either be in the public space or, if behind a door, with more than one staff member present. Alternatively, camper-staff interactions could be behind a door that is ajar and unlocked, or with a screen or window open for viewing.
- Whenever possible, two adults should be on site at night to avoid having only one adult present with a camper.

- Medicine cabinets must be locked at all times when they are not being accessed.

Off-site trips and Overnights

- Campers are not permitted to go off on their own individually and must be supervised by staff or with at least one peer at all times for their own safety.
- Like bunks, staff who must sleep in the same room as their campers, must sleep in separate beds or locations within the space.

Peer to Peer Relationships

Ramah Berkshires seeks to promote and foster healthy childhood and teen peer to-peer relationships. We are committed to preventing emotionally and/or physically harmful peer interactions. Ramah Berkshires does not seek to ban physical contact between peers and requires all campers entering 8th grade and up to sign a *Code of Sexual Conduct*, Appendix C.

Prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexually explicit language
- Bullying
- Sexting
- Online bullying and harassment
- Unwanted physical contact
- Sexual pressure and/or coercion
- Stalking

Ramah Berkshires staff will be expected to ensure that campers do not engage in these behaviors, and will be expected to report such behavior to a supervisor immediately.

Drugs and Alcohol

The supply of drugs or alcohol to children is a criminal offense and is prohibited at all Ramah Berkshires sanctioned events. Similarly, it is prohibited for adults or teens to interact with children while under the influence or in possession of drugs or alcohol. During the summer, all staff -- including those over 21 -- are prohibited from consuming alcohol and drugs while on the Ramah Berkshires property or when out of camp for a night or day off.

Transporting Children

Outside of the Marp Driver or a driver assigned to a Ramah Berkshires sanctioned field trip, staff and other adults in camp are not permitted to transport children alone or as a group, other than their own children, to or from Ramah Berkshires. A second staff person accompanying a solo camper at all times is ideal. Documentation must be made on departure and return time and parents should be notified.

Training

Ramah Berkshires will require all staff members, all members of the Child Safety Committee, and all volunteers who regularly interact with children to complete an annual Child Safety training. In addition, members of the Board of Trustees and any in-camp guests will also be required to complete training prior to their involvement with camp. Ramah Berkshires will offer related annual training and educational opportunities to children, teenagers, parents, and other interested community members.

- Ramah Berkshires' staff, including summer staff, Child Safety Committee members and regular volunteers working with children who begin their duties mid-cycle will be expected to complete a modified training at the time they begin their duties, and subsequently complete the entirety of the training at the next available session.
- Before arriving in camp, all staff interacting with children must sign an affirmation that they have read and will abide by the Ramah Berkshires Child Safety Policy before engaging with children. Summer staff will sign the affirmation along with their employment contract. Training should be completed within one month of beginning their employment or beginning their activities with children.

These trainings will be consistent with the frequency outlined in the following training chart:

Training Chart

Group	Frequency	Content	Coordinator
Year-Round staff	Annual	Educational Sessions, On line or in-person affirmation	CSC
Summer Staff	Annual	Educational/training sessions pre-summer or during staff week, On-line or in-person affirmation.	Camp Directors and/or Director of Community Care and Inclusion
Parents	Annual	Educational Sessions, On line or in-person affirmation	Director of Community Care and Inclusion

Summer Guests & Scheduled Visitors	Pre-visit	Educational/training sessions, Online or in person affirmation	Year-round staff
Board of Trustees	Annual	Educational/training sessions, Online or in person affirmation	CSC Chair
Child Safety Committee Members	Annual	Educational/training sessions, On-line or in person affirmation	CSC Chair
Maintenance Staff	Annual	Educational/training Sessions, On-line or in person affirmation	Year-round staff
Vendors & Subcontractors	Annual	Educational/training sessions, On-line or in person affirmation	Year-round staff

Staff and Volunteer Engagement and Hiring

Hiring and Screening

The objective of the Hiring and Screening section of this policy is to ensure that all staff and volunteers who will interact with Ramah Berkshires children are appropriately vetted so that Ramah Berkshires can provide a safe and nurturing environment for all of our children.

All staff and volunteers, and those applying to become Ramah Berkshires staff or volunteers, will be required to read and acknowledge receipt of this policy prior to commencing their responsibilities at Ramah Berkshires. In doing so, these individuals affirmatively demonstrate their understanding of, and agreement to adhere to, this policy.

Ramah Berkshires will discuss the child safety policy with applicants during the interview. Discussing child protection at the interview will both provide Ramah Berkshires with important information about the applicant's views on child protection and communicate to the applicant Ramah Berkshires' value and commitment to keeping campers safe.

Interview Process and Screening

The basic screening program for all staff and volunteer applicants may include the following elements (depending upon the position applied for):

- A completed employment application form
- Personal interviews
- Reference checks
- Background check
- Social media and internet check

Subject to the above information obtained, the staff applicant may be denied.

Applicants are informed during the initial conversation that Ramah Berkshires is vigilant in the protection of our children. During the interview, the applicant's beliefs and values in relation to the treatment of children and young people (including beliefs about discipline and reinforcement), their reasons for wanting to work with children and young people, and general awareness and understanding of child protection issues and this policy should be explored. Interviewers should ask applicants to respond to hypothetical scenarios of policy violations or suspicious behavior. New staff may not begin their engagement at Ramah Berkshires before the interview and screening process has been successfully completed.

Both new hires and returning staff must annually sign off that they have read, had the opportunity to discuss, and accepted the parameters of the policy.

Ramah Berkshires will not make any exceptions in the screening/hiring process for “people you know or have worked with in the past.”

References and Checks

Ramah Berkshires requires a current background check to be completed for all staff hires and volunteers who will be interacting with campers. Ramah Berkshires has the discretion to re-screen any individual and to terminate employment and/or engagement at any point for concerns regarding an individual’s ability/reliability to keep children safe. Ramah Berkshires will ask an applicant’s references direct questions about the applicant's ability to keep children safe, and will re-screen returning staff and year-round staff.

Policy Dissemination and Affirmation

This Policy shall be disseminated widely to the Ramah Berkshires community through publications, public discussion, educational opportunities, rabbinic/leadership teachings, training programs, and other means of communication intended to raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children. The policy will be available on the Ramah Berkshires website, in print in the Ramah Berkshires office, and will be communicated widely. Ramah Berkshires requires all staff and community members who have responsibilities with children, and all Board of Trustees members, to sign an affirmation indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the terms of this Policy.

Intermittent guests (often spouses of staff), volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors will likewise be required to sign an affirmation indicating that they have either read the entire policy or an abridged version of the policy and agree to abide by its terms, as a precondition of engagement with the Ramah Berkshires community or space.

Child Safety Committee (CSC)

From the Camp Ramah in the Berkshires bylaws:

The Child Safety Committee shall be a committee of the camp responsible for working with the Camp Director to establish and maintain policies and procedures to ensure the safety of campers of the camp. The Committee will be responsible for providing appropriate guidance and counsel to the Camp Director with regard to the implementation of such policies and procedures, and may be called on by the Camp Director in the event of a policy violation or educational need. The Committee will be composed of between three and seven members in consultation with the Camp Director, except that the Chair shall be a board officer. All members of the committee must participate in camp-administered training and screening related to Child Safety beginning before or soon after their appointment to the Committee and continuing for their entire tenure.

The CSC's role is to coordinate and oversee:

- Ongoing maintenance of and compliance with the policy.
- Advisement to the camp on questions of child protection.
- Educational forums and training.
- Timely and responsible handling of policy violations and other allegations of misconduct, abuse or concern.
- Facilitation of formal reporting of abuse allegations to the state registry when requested to do so.

The CSC shall not attempt to address issues related to the integration in the community of alleged child abusers or known registered sex offenders, or otherwise act outside their expertise, without consulting with external child protection professionals. The engagement of an independent child protection professional is required to pursue a formal investigation of cases involving Ramah Berkshires staff and other community members. (See below: Policy Compliance and Violations)

Child Safety Committee (CSC) Members

CSC members are individuals possessing maturity of judgment, deep integrity, compassion, sensitivity, respect of the camp community, and the ability to work well with others in sensitive situations.

Initially, each CSC member shall commit to a three-year term, the first year of which is a non-voting training period during which the new member may be invited to meetings at the discretion of the Chairperson. Additionally, at the discretion of the Chairperson, a member may remain on the committee for an additional consecutive term of two years, and may be reappointed to the committee after a one-year hiatus. These terms shall be staggered so that, when feasible, no more than one new CSC member is replaced in any twelve-month period.

Additionally, the President, the Camp Director, and the Director of Community Care & Inclusion shall be ex officio members of the CSC without voting privileges. They shall be invited to participate in all meetings, deliberations, and regular communications of the CSC.

CSC members shall keep all meetings and communications confidential, except as otherwise stated within this policy.

CSC members must agree to follow the protocols as outlined in this policy for preventing and responding to child abuse.

CSC members, including the CSC Chairperson, who fail to comply with the policies and protocols set within this policy shall be removed by vote of the other CSC members and the President (notwithstanding the President's ex officio status).

Meetings

The CSC shall meet at minimum four times each year to oversee maintenance of this Policy, including one meeting that will be dedicated to the annual policy review. Additional meetings will be held as necessary to address child protection concerns that arise. A majority of voting CSC members must be present to conduct a meeting. A majority vote is required for CSC decisions relating to policy compliance and violations. In the event that there is no majority vote, the President shall be granted a vote. CSC members shall recuse themselves from deliberations and actions relating to family members and other situations in which there is a conflict of interest. At the discretion of the Chairperson, the CSC may meet in closed session, from which ex officio members are excluded.

All preliminary discussions about policy violations or suspected abuse should be presented "blindly" (i.e., without mention by name of any party involved).

Screening and Training

All CSC members, including ex officio members, shall undergo thorough screenings. All CSC members, including ex officio members, are required to have additional Child Safety training beyond the highest standards noted for other members of the community, as set forth in the Training Chart (page 15) and are expected to enhance their knowledge and training annually.

Policy Review

The Ramah Berkshires Child Safety Committee will engage in an annual review of child safety at Ramah Berkshires, which will include:

- Feedback received from staff, guests, volunteers, and lay leaders
- Soliciting feedback from parents and children

- Soliciting feedback from youth, staff, guests, and volunteers
- Review of the general compliance of the community with this policy
- Review of Incident Reports and reports of Ramah Berkshires individuals known to have engaged in behavior concerning the safety of children
- Review of the language and details of this policy, and revisions as necessary, to ensure it meets the daily and programmatic realities of Ramah Berkshires

The CSC is empowered to make ongoing minor changes as needed to this statement, however any qualitative or substantive changes to the policy will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval. Revised versions of the policy will be presented for endorsement to the Board of Trustees annually at the May Board meeting, or sooner as dictated by the need for revisions. The CSC will ask experts to review this policy to ensure that it is up to date with current research and best practices.

Reporting

There are two types of reporting discussed in the section below:

1. Suspected Abuse Reporting
2. Policy Compliance and Violations Reporting

1 – Suspected Abuse Reporting Requirements:

State laws mandate that certain persons (*Summary Guide for Mandated Reporters NY State Mandated Reporters - see Resources - Appendix D*) report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to civil authorities. Extending the NYS statutes to our community, Ramah Berkshires policy requires all Ramah Berkshires staff, whether they are mandated reporters according to NYS law or not, to report **any reasonable suspicion that a youth is being abused or maltreated**. In addition, all members of the community are empowered and encouraged to report incidents of suspected child abuse and maltreatment whether independently or with assistance from any individual or committee or staff member.

Individuals may directly notify the Camp Director or the Child Safety Committee (childsafety@ramahberkshires.org) of any suspected incident of child abuse. The Committee will support this individual in reporting the incident to the SCR; or when necessary by law or to protect a child, report directly to the SCR.

Reports may be made directly by an individual to the Statewide Central Register (SCR) of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cps/>). Individuals are encouraged, but not obligated, to notify the Camp Director or Child Safety Committee (CSC) after making such a report. Individuals may also ask for assistance from any other authority who can help facilitate the reporting and support the individual.

To the extent that is possible, all reports facilitated by the CSC will be held in the strictest of confidence protecting the confidentiality of the information and the individuals involved.

Additionally, this policy encourages reporting to the SCR and other authorities on suspected historical events that are suspicious for child abuse or maltreatment.

There may be cases in which the SCR may not be the appropriate reporting body, in which case the appropriate governmental agency should be notified (e.g., District Attorney's office, Police Enforcement, Federal Hotline, etc.).

For any noted violation of this policy that does not meet any of the definitions of child abuse, and thus SCR notification is not indicated, a report should be made to the Camp Director and the CSC.

This policy protects all individuals, who in good faith report an episode of suspected abuse to the SCR or the CSC, from any form of retaliation.

2 – Policy Compliance and Violations Reporting:

All members of the community are responsible for the safety of our children. In the event that one observes any violation of this policy, they are expected to report such incidents to whatever authority they feel most comfortable including their Rosh Edah, Camp Director, Director of Community Care and Inclusion, Director of Operations, Associate Director, Yoetz, Marp staff, another counselor and/or the Child Safety Committee.

Information will be shared with the Child Safety Committee and if necessary, with appropriate New York State personnel.

Reports can be made verbally to a member of the Child Safety Committee, via email childsafety@ramahberkshires.org, or through a confidential web form. A written “Safety Policy Incident Report” shall be generated for all such events.

Any violation of this policy reported to the Child Safety Committee will initiate actions that may include but are not limited to the following:

- Notification of the child’s parents or guardians of the violations
- Immediate actions to protect the child
- Separation of the alleged violator from the child and other children at Ramah Berkshires
- Police notification of the occurrence
- Notification to the State Central Registry

Upon completion of a State Central Registry investigation, if determined necessary, an independent investigation may be conducted.

- If the incident involves a Ramah Berkshires staff member, an investigation will be conducted and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination.
- If the incident involves a Ramah Berkshires volunteer or guest, a warning limited access, and barring from Ramah Berkshires property and events may occur.
- Notification of other Camps and Jewish Organizations of the actions taken by Ramah Berkshires, under advisement from a legal team, may occur.
- In those instances where a report is made to the SCR and the authorities are unable or unwilling to move forward, Ramah Berkshires’ CSC will continue to execute due diligence in responding, which may include enlisting the assistance of an independent investigator.

If the violation is one of Ramah Berkshires' policies but does not rise to a required notification of the SCR, then the actions taken may include, but are not limited to the following:

- For a serious violation - A discussion regarding the violation between the violator and a minimum of two members of the committee, and the Camp Director.
- During that discussion the policy and the violation will be reviewed to ensure the violator understands the guidelines. There will be written documentation of the policy violation and subsequent discussion that will be added to the violator's file, and affirmation by the violator to abide by the policy going forward.
- Initial discussions by the CSC about a violator to be name/identity blind.
- A formal written warning may be delivered following an initial violation.
- For subsequent violations, further discussion and/or warnings, a limited access agreement may be initiated depending upon the circumstances and nature of the violation.
- Offer of referral of the child for a medical evaluation.
- Offer of referral of the child for a psychological evaluation and/or mental health services.
- Dismissal of the violator from the community.
- Consultation with an outside legal expert.
- Offer of referral of the violator for appropriate supportive and/or mental health assistance.
- Notification of other community institutions - under advisement from the legal team.

Alleged abuser suspension of contact with children

If an allegation is made, the alleged perpetrator will be immediately suspended from the parts of their role that provide direct contact with children.

If the alleged perpetrator of abuse or policy violator is a staff member or an individual that otherwise has regular interactions with children, upon notification of such allegations, the Camp Director or the CSC will immediately determine if there are grounds to report that claim to authorities and permanently limit the individual's access to campers at camp.

Exceptions

Every community member is required to adhere strictly to this policy. There may be exceptional situations where these guidelines do not apply, for example, in an emergent situation (such as a medical emergency or an active shooter) where compliance with these guidelines would place the child or another individual's safety in

danger. At such times, when security and safety are the primary concerns, the policy does not apply to the extent necessary depending on the circumstances.

In the event that the guidelines are deviated from, the Camp Director and the CSC should be notified as soon as possible after the incident and details of the event should be documented.

Similarly, deviations from the policy may be anticipated and, in such cases, exception requests may be made to the CSC in anticipation of a potential policy violation. Such requests should be made in writing and at least one week in advance of the need. The Committee will convene and determine if the exception is acceptable. All policy exceptions will be documented in writing by the CSC.

Supporting Victims and Survivors of Child Abuse

The purpose of this Policy is to prevent occurrences of child abuse. We understand that no matter how hard we try to protect children, there may be some individuals seeking to harm them. Should the CSC or Ramah Berkshires staff become aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been, abused, they will designate a support person to clearly communicate support for the child and the child's family.

Designation of a Support Person

The Ramah Berkshires Camp Director, Director of Community Care and Inclusion, Yoetz or other relevant professional or lay leader may be designated as "Support Person(s)" and will reach out to the child and the child's family after learning of the abuse to express the camp's unequivocal support.

Possible support includes:

- Showing up
- Listening
- Affirming
- Offering to help the family find a qualified mental health practitioner with expertise treating victims of abuse and their family members
- Asking the child and the child's family how else Ramah Berkshires can support them

Support Persons will understand the limitations of their role and will not offer therapeutic, legal or other expert advice, but will instead function as members of a multidisciplinary support team, working when possible to support and complement the efforts of involved professionals to support the child and family.

Creating a Culture of Ongoing Support for Victims of Childhood Abuse

Ramah Berkshires aims to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse – both those we know about and those we do not.

To this end, Ramah Berkshires will:

- Make every effort to protect the privacy of victims of child abuse.
- Create and distribute a referral list of local organizations and therapists who specialize in abuse prevention and treatment.
- Post signs throughout the main office and staff lounge about child abuse prevention and reporting.
- Speak about child safety guidelines publicly.
- Speak to the summer staff about child safety.
- Initiate communal dialogue.

- Post the contact information for CSC members who are available to answer questions about child safety.

Integration of Individuals Known or Suspected to Pose a Risk to Children

Ramah Berkshires is deeply committed to protecting our children from potential and known offenders of child abuse and maltreatment. The safety of our youth is paramount. This is a core value of our community and the unifying principle upon which this policy is based.

As in all communities, there may be individuals already within the Ramah Berkshires community, or who may wish to join, visit, or participate in our camp and activities, who pose a known or potential risk to children. These may include individuals who have been convicted of child abuse or neglect or otherwise have substantiated findings against them; have unresolved allegations of child abuse or neglect; have otherwise behaved in a manner that is potentially harmful to children; or who have violated this policy.

In considering whether and how to integrate such individuals into our community, Ramah Berkshires will prioritize the safety of our children. While inclusion is another core value of our community, any inclusion of an individual who presents a known or suspected risk to children is prohibited, as it violates the protective mission of this policy.

Prioritizing child protection while also upholding Ramah Berkshires' value of inclusion is a complex endeavor that requires nuance, sensitivity and expertise. While the CSC aims to manage all situations in this manner, it also recognizes the limits of its expertise and role in addressing the complicated issues of integrating those who may pose a potential risk to children. At the discretion and direction of the Camp Director and CSC, an expert consultant may be engaged prior to including or excluding these individuals. Based on the CSC's review of the consultant's recommendations, access will be denied, permitted, or permitted with clear limitations set forth in writing.

Third Party Use of this Policy

Any organization wishing to use all or part of this policy is asked to submit in writing such a request to the Ramah Berkshires Child Safety Committee (childsafety@ramahberkshires.org) or the Camp Office (info@ramahberkshires.org). If permission is so granted, they are then further requested to acknowledge Ramah Berkshires when using the document for their own purposes.

This policy is adopted by action of the Camp Ramah in the Berkshires Board of Trustees this 5/20/2024.

President Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Atara Jacobson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Atara Jacobson

Date: May 20, 2024

This policy was developed in consultation with Sacred Spaces. To adapt this policy for your institution, please contact: info@JewishSacredSpaces.org. Also, this policy was developed in part by important work done before by CSAIR and Schechter Manhattan. We thank them for their pioneerism.

Appendix

- A. [Social Media Policy](#)
- B. [Ramah Berkshires Building List](#)
- C. [Ramah Berkshires Code of Sexual Conduct](#)
- D. [Local and National Resources](#)

Appendix A

Ramah Berkshires Social Media Policy

Staff to Camper interactions at camp are not over once everyone goes home. Today's modern, electronic age allows for 24/7/365 opportunities for contact with the entire planet in seconds. This means that your obligations as a Camp Ramah in the Berkshires employee and ambassador must also demand that same 24/7/365 commitment. We also, as an organization, want all our constituents - campers, staff, volunteers, and parents - to keep Ramah Berkshires in their lives. The Ramah Berkshires community is active year-round with events, fundraisers, reunions etc., that require contacting people to help or participate - even our underage staff and campers. Camp administration utilizes social media for recruitment and dissemination of important information to staff and the wider camp community. It is strongly recommended that staff connect with Camp and administrators on social media. It may be necessary to contact campers through phone or electronic media to conduct Camp business throughout the year.

Please follow these guidelines for appropriate and safe communications with campers:

- Ideally, social media connections and interaction with campers should only be done with parental/guardian permission and the parents/guardians should be included in the communication.
- Just like at camp, it is ideal to have at least three people on electronic interactions, both at camp and off-site, and through any form of media. This is meant to protect all parties involved: the camper, the staff member, and Ramah Berkshires as an organization.
- The subject matter and topics of online interactions with campers shall be treated with the same care as in-person interactions. Avoid any sensitive topics and report anything to Ramah Berkshires that makes you think the camper may be in danger.
- Ideally, text messages and emails to campers must have someone copied - preferably a parent/guardian, but another staff member, camper, admin, etc. are also acceptable, even if the third person is not involved.
- We ask all staff members to change all privacy settings on your personal social media accounts to be only viewable by people you are friends with, and to make all your profiles, posts, and pictures private
- Cell phone usage in the presence of campers is permitted within reason and staff are only permitted to take photos of campers with their phones with permission of the Ramah administration. However, those photos are strictly forbidden from being posted to their personal and public social media accounts.
- Staff and volunteers who have a collection of photographs may give them to the Camp communications team to be used in photos Camp shares with parents.

Please follow these guidelines when using social media as a Ramah Berkshires staff:

- Ramah Berkshires reserves the right to use staff likenesses online and in other public electronic or print media formats.
- No staff may publicly post negative comments about Ramah Berkshires on social media.
- All public posts to personal social media accounts using the Ramah Berkshires name or referring to Ramah Berkshires must comply with the mission, vision, and values of Ramah Berkshires.
- ***How you conduct yourself on social media - posts, pictures, videos, links, comments, etc. - reflects upon you as a person, as well your consideration as a future candidate for employment at Ramah Berkshires. You are still a Ramah Berkshires staff member after you go home.***
- Staff members and volunteers at Ramah Berkshires are in the public eye of our campers, and parents, both during the summer at Camp, as well as back home in your communities. We ask that staff conduct and portray themselves online in the same manner they do at Camp, as well as in public, in school, at synagogue, with family, etc.

*Violation of any of the above policies could result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment or dismissal.

Appendix B

Ramah Berkshires Building Inventory

	New Name	Old Name
A-Side Bunks		
	A1	
	A2	
	A3	
	A4	
	A5	
	A6	
	A7	
	A8	
	A9	
	A10	
	A11	
	A12	
	A13	
	A14	
	A15	
	A16	

	A17	
	A18	
	A19	
	A20	
	A21	
	A22	
	New	Old
B-Side Bunks		
	B1	

B2		
	B3	
	B4	
	B5	
	B6	
	B7	
	B8	
	B9	
	B10	
	B11	

	B12	
	B13	
	B14	
	B15	
	B16	
	B17	
	B18	
	B19	
	B20	
	B21	
	B22	
	B23	B30
	B25	B23
	BOO	Old Omanut
	New	Old
A-Side Buildings		
	A-20 Courts	
	Bridge Pagoda	
	Farm	

	Mini Courts	
	Pergola	

Volleyball Court		
	Softball Field	
	Tennis Courts	
	Archery	
	Beit Am Aleph/ Activity Hall	
	Beit Am Chadash	
	Beit Breira	
	Gan	Nursery
	Paradise	
	Igul Aleph	
	Infirmary/Marp	
	Mitbachon Pagoda	
	Teva Shack	
	Treehouse	
	Basketball Court - Large	
	Basketball Court - Small	
	Laundry	

	New	Old
B-Side Buildings		
	Agam	
	Bet Am Bet/ Social Hall	
	Al Hagova	
	Chadar	
	Bamat/Torah Center	
	Sand Volleyball Court	
	Softball Field	
	Beit Bob	
	Beitan Shapiro	
	Kikar Darom Pagoda	
	Basketball Court	
	Volleyball Court	

	Gatehouse Pagoda	
	Art Center/Omanut	
	Hadar Ohel	
	High Ropes Course	

	Igul Bet	
	Jerry Pavilion	Roller Hockey
	Low Ropes Course	
	Gesher Lounge	
	Staff Lounge/ Canteen	
	Rockwall	
	Library/Sifriyah	
	Soccer Field	
	Stadium Courts	
	Sundeck	
	Ultimate Frisbee Field	
	Welcome Center	
	Tennis Courts	
	Storage	Laundry
	Gymnasium	
	Storage & Office Space	
	Garden	
	Legacy Garden	
	Laundry House	
	Amphitheatre	

	New	Old
A-Side Staff		
	SB1	
	SB2	
	SB3	
	SB4	
	SB5	

SB6		
	SB7	
	SB8	
	SB9	
	SB10	Glass House
	SB11	Beit Degel Alef
	SB12	HM / Honeymoon Cottage / House on the Lake
	New	Old
B-Side Staff		
	SB19	Flaghouse B/ Beit Degel Bet

	SB20	Old Infirmary
	SB21	LSA
	SB22	LSB
	SB23	LSC
	SB 24	LSD
	SB25 (now B30)	B25
	SB26	
	SB27	Arts & Crafts/ Penthouse
	SB 28	B24/ Aby/ John's House
	SB29	Beit Gesher
	SB30	New Staff Housing
	SB31	Gate House
	SB32	Caretaker's Trailer/ Tricia
	SB33	Asst. Caretaker Trailer/ Alan
	SB40	Director's House
	SB50	Admin House/ Business Manager's House
	SB60	Facility Manager/ Jason
	New	Old

Guest Cottages

	GC1	
	GC2	
	GC3	
	GC4	
	GC5	
	GC7	
	GC8	
	GC9	
	GC10	
	GC11	

Appendix C

Code of Sexual Conduct

Our Philosophy

Camper-Camper Relationships

At Camp Ramah in the Berkshires we believe that, for most young people, curiosity about sexuality and interest in sexual relationships is positive and age appropriate. However, the expectations for campers while they are at Ramah Berkshires are that campers are not engaged in sexual intercourse, regardless of what has happened in previous summers and/or the choices the campers make during the school year.

When we talk about sexuality, it is in the context of creating an emotionally and physically safe environment and building caring and nurturing relationships between campers of all genders and sexual identities.

Physical relationships for campers are based on a sense of mutual interest and consent. Consensual means that both parties affirmatively agree to the activity, free from coercion, and feel they can safely say "no" or stop the activity at any time.

Our goal in maintaining this code of conduct is for campers to get a break from any sexual pressure they may be exposed to outside of camp and for campers to feel safe and nurtured within Camp.

Staff-Camper Relationships

There are absolutely no romantic or sexual relationships permitted between staff and campers, even if they are close in age. This means that no romantic or sexual words, acts, or suggestions can occur between them. If a staff person were to cross this line, they would be dismissed immediately. If a camper were to make romantic or sexual advances or suggestions toward a staff person, they would be directed to stop, taught why the behavior is inappropriate, put on a behavior contract, and possibly sent home.

Appendix D

Local and National Resources

Sacred Spaces

<http://www.jewishsafespaces.org/>

New York State - Child Protective Services, main web page

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>

New Jersey - Department of Children and Families

<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/reporting/how/>

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth Serving Organizations Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingchildsexualabuse-a.pdf>

Summary Guide for Mandated Reporters New York State

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/publications/Pub1159/OCFS-Pub1159.pdf>

Safehorizon

<https://www.safehorizon.org/get-help/child-abuse/#our-impact/>

Creating Child Safe Institutions

Royal Commission (Australia)

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/final-report>

Preventing Abuse in Jewish Organizations that Serve Youth: Ten Policies to Create Safer Environments

<https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/preventing-abuse-in-jewish-organizations-that-serve-youth-ten-policies-to-create-safer-environments/>

Local Referrals for organizations and therapist who specialize in abuse prevention and treatment

- Weill Cornell Hospital Child Protection – provides evaluations of suspected cases of abuse/neglect (Upper East Side) 212-737- 7800
- Francis L. Loeb Child Protection and Development Center at Bellevue Hospital – evaluations, therapy, wraparound services 212-562-6073
- Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center – therapy/support groups/legal help 212-423-3000
- Emily L. Bowen Community Service Center (Upper Manhattan) Child & Adolescent Clinic – therapy 646-340-1416
- Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (Midtown) – therapy intake 212-582-9100
- Safe Horizon Counseling Center (various locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn) – therapy/support groups/practical assistance/shelter 347-328-8110