

CAMP AT THE J

Summer 2026
Family Handbook

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Welcome to Camp at the J!

Thank you for choosing Camp at the J for your child's summer experience! You have given your child the gift of camp; a place for campers to develop skills, make new friends, build self-confidence, and participate in activities that promote Jewish values.

We are committed to creating valuable experiences and a community that supports what your children are learning at home. Safety and supervision are essential components of our program. We carefully select our staff members from a vigorously screened group and train them extensively.

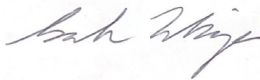
This handbook has been designed to answer your questions, to promote communication between our staff and your family, and to assist you in understanding our policies and procedures. By subscribing to the rules of Camp at the J and remaining familiar with this information, we can work together to help your child have the best camp experience possible. This handbook also contains important information regarding Camp at the J, an American Camp Association (ACA) accredited camp.

We hope to meet and exceed the expectations of you and your family. Camp at the J strives to provide a safe, fun and educational camp experience. Should you find yourself with further questions about camp, please contact us. We're here all year, and love to talk to people about Camp at the J!

Sincerely,



Jake Preston
Camp Director
513.722.7245
jpreston@mayersonjcc.org



Swess Wessinger
Assistant Camp Director
513.644.0703
swessinger@mayersonjcc.org



MAYERSON JCC
of Cincinnati

Contact Information

Camp Office:

513.722.7249

daycamp@mayersonjcc.org

Camp Director: Jake Preston

513.722.7245

jpreston@mayersonjcc.org

Assistant Camp Director: Swess Wessinger

513.644.0703

swessinger@mayersonjcc.org

Address:

Mayerson JCC: Attn. Camp at the J

8485 Ridge Road

Cincinnati, OH 45236

Camp Hours:

9am - 4pm

**Extended care options available for an additional cost*

Communication Policy

The majority of regular communication from camp will be via email. This includes reminders, updates, photos, and weekly newsletters with a recap of the week's activities, information about the upcoming week, and other community events.

Please save daycamp@mayersonjcc.org in your address book to ensure you receive our email.

Camp Units & Ages

PIONEERS GRADE K - 1

TRAILBLAZERS GRADES 2 - 3

QUEST GRADES 4 - 8

Camp Team

Our committed Camp Team meets year round to plan the best possible summer experience for our campers. Many of our staff members were campers too, and are truly passionate about camp. Each staff member was chosen for their leadership skills, safety consciousness, responsibility, and caring attitude toward children. All staff members are carefully background screened, receive specialized training, and key staff are CPR and First Aid certified. Additionally, staff are required to participate in a weeklong staff orientation and training where they acquire valuable knowledge and skills.



JAKE PRESTON
CAMP DIRECTOR

Jake grew up in the camp world and has been working in the industry for more than 20 years. He spent much of that time directing and overseeing youth programs, such as adventure travel, outdoor education, and, of course, summer camp. Jake moved back to his hometown of Cincinnati in 2024, and is excited for another great summer at Camp at the J. Camp changed Jake's life for the best, and he's eager to help create the same opportunities and atmosphere for our campers at Camp at the J.



SWESS WESSINGER
ASSISTANT CAMP DIRECTOR

Swess has worked for the JCC for over a decade, and they are excited to return for another amazing summer. They hope to build a positive, fun and safe environment for the campers, as well as unforgettable experiences!

Tipping Policy

In keeping with the policy of the Mayerson JCC, Camp at the J staff may not accept cash gratuities. If you want to say "thanks for a job well done," we encourage you to make a contribution to Camp. Contact Rick Lefton, Director of Development, at 513.722.7233 or rlefton@mayersonjcc.org for more information.

Inclusion Policy

Our camp-wide inclusion philosophy extends to all participants with the goal that campers of all abilities have the opportunity to participate, socialize, and grow. We work to ensure every camper can fully participate in programming by providing reasonable accommodations. Camp families requiring accommodations should reach out to camp leadership to ensure timely planning and accommodation coordination.

Questions and Concerns

While it is against Camp at the J policy to give out personal cell phone numbers or email addresses of our camp staff to guardians and campers, guardians are welcome to call or email the camp office any time at daycamp@mayersonjcc.org or 513.722.7249. Should you have questions or concerns, please leave a message for the Camp Director or your child's Unit Head with our Camp Office, and someone will get back with you as soon as possible. See page 4 for additional contact phone numbers.

American Camp Association (ACA)

Camp at the J is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA accreditation requires camp excellence in safety, programming, staff training and education. Camp at the J exceeds the 300+ standards and guidelines established in policies, procedures, and practices on an annual basis, and participates in the re-accreditation process every five years.



Camp at the J Mission Statement

Camp at the J offers a fun, active and safe summertime experience providing opportunities for children and young adults in the Jewish and broader communities to build friendships, learn valuable skills, participate in physical activity, and enhance their self-esteem. Our welcoming and inclusive environment values the dignity and worth of each individual, and we work to foster positive relationships and build greater understanding among campers.

CAMP AT THE J STRIVES TO:

- Offer constructive, meaningful, and fun developmental growth opportunities to campers and staff.
- Develop positive individual habits, attitudes, knowledge, and skills to enable the campers to function more effectively as individuals and as part of a community.
- Increase all campers’ awareness and appreciation of Jewish culture, traditions, and values.
- Create a mentally, physically, and emotionally safe environment for all participants.

Registration/Application

Registration closes after May 15, 2026, and spaces are limited. The JCC reserves the right to deny or limit service due to non-payment or prior outstanding financial obligations to the JCC. Once the capacity is reached, registrations will be denied unless space becomes available.

Financial Policies

All camp balances must be paid in full by May 15, 2026, unless other arrangements have been approved by the Camp Director in writing.

Credit cards, ACH payments and wire transfers are accepted for camp tuition payments. If you decide not to pay in full, you will be charged in up to three batch payments. The balance on your account will be billed in up to three equal payments on March 16, April 15, and May 15.

No refunds or adjustments will be made after May 15, 2026. All deposits made to camp are applied to the final tuition balance and are non-refundable. Camp at the J will issue you a full refund, minus your deposit, if you cancel your registration before April 16. You will be issued a 50% refund, minus your deposit, if you cancel between April 16 and May 15.

Camp at the J will assess a \$10 late fee per form, per day for all forms completed after May 15, 2026. Adjustments made to your registration (week changes and cancellations) after May 15 are subject to a \$25 fee. Please contact daycamp@mayersonjcc.org for billing information and questions.

Financial Assistance

Mayerson JCC offers financial aid funding, and we encourage families to apply as early as possible for consideration. We will begin accepting financial aid requests on December 15, 2025. Applications will close after April 15, 2026. Please contact Ariel Gamm at agamm@mayersonjcc.org for more information.

Membership Info: A child under the age of 13 is considered a member only when they are part of a family membership. Teens 13 and older are considered members when they have a student membership or are part of a family membership. For more membership information please contact our Director of Membership, Ariel Gamm at agamm@mayersonjcc.org.

Sample Daily Schedule

While each bunk has its own schedule, the following is an example of a typical day for a Trailblazer camper. A pre-Shabbat (Sabbath) celebration occurs every Friday afternoon starting at 2:30pm.

9am	Car Line
9:30am	Flagpole
9:45am	Value Time
10:15am	All-Camp Activity
11am.....	Activity 1
12:15pm.....	Lunch

1:15pm	Swimming
2:30pm	Activity 2
3:45pm	Camp Closing
4pm.....	Car Line

Arrival and Dismissal

Your child may leave only with those authorized on their enrollment form and no exceptions will be made. Upon registration, guardians will complete the authorized pickup form identifying any adults approved to pick up said guardian’s child. All adults will be required to present identification when attempting to pick up a camper, and only those on the authorization form will be permitted to do so.

The regular camp day is 9am - 4pm.
For the safety of all campers, Camp at the J has a strict drop-off and pick-up policy.

For campers who participate in Car Line and are dropped off at 9am and/or picked up at 4pm:

- Drop-off begins at 9:00am in the back parking lot. Please do not arrive before 8:50am. If your child will arrive after 9:15am, please call the Camp Office at 513.722.7249, and Camp Staff will come pick them up from your car.
- Pick-up begins at 4pm in the back parking lot. Cars can begin lining up at 3:50pm.
- Do not leave your vehicle. Camp staff will direct you where to go and assist your camper(s) in and out of your vehicle.
- Do not attempt to exit the Car Line out of turn.
- Please have your photo ID ready and present at pick-up.
- Afternoon carline is expected to last 15-20 minutes. We appreciate your patience as we carefully assist campers to their cars in a safe manner.

Late Arrivals and Early Pick-Ups

Please provide advance notice directly by phone call to the Camp office, written note, or email to: daycamp@mayersonjcc.org.

If your child will arrive after 9:15am or leave before 4pm, please call the Camp Office at 513.722.7249 before you arrive, and Camp Staff will come pick them up or drop them off to your car. You may be assessed a charge if your child is not enrolled in Before or After Crew but has been dropped off early or picked up late.

Late Pickup Policy

In the event a camper is not picked up during check out, they will be sent to after-crew care at 4:15pm and the family account will be charged a flat \$25 fee. The camp or after-crew team will phone the camper’s guardian to inform them that carline has ended, and that the camper has been taken to after-crew. After-crew policy requires that an individual authorized to pick up the camper park in the back parking lot, come to the camp office, and present their ID upon check-out. Any family whose camper stays after 6pm may be subject to an additional fee, as determined by the Camp Director.

Bunk Assignments

Campers are bunked with other campers their own age. We do everything we can to honor all bunkmate requests. Our goal is to keep campers and counselors in the same bunks throughout the summer. However, if it is determined that a camper(s) should move bunks (for example, to maintain ratios), one of our Camp Directors will call parents/guardians ahead of time to discuss.

What to Wear

For your child's safety, socks and sneakers (closed toe and closed heel) are required footwear. The majority of camp injuries occur due to inadequate footwear. In order to keep campers safe, guardians will be asked to drop off close-toed shoes if a camper arrives without them.

Sandals, Crocs, or flip flops may be packed for swimming or water activities only. Your child should come dressed each day in comfortable clothing that can get dirty. **Please label all clothing and personal belongings with your camper's first and last name.** The lost and found is in the Camp Office and available to look through during pick-up and drop-off.

What to Pack

Each day, your camper should bring the following items to camp in a backpack.

All items must be clearly labeled with camper's first and last name:

- Swimsuit and towel
- Lunch with utensils
- Refillable water bottle with a carabiner (campers are required to bring a refillable water bottle and will have frequent opportunities to refill)
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Shoes that can be worn to the pool (flip flops or crocs) are optional
- Plastic bag in which to put wet swimsuits or towels
- Snack

What Not to Pack

- Money (except for field trips)
- Animals/Pets
- Jewelry or other expensive items
- Cell phones, cameras, and all electronics
- Toys, trading items, and personal sports equipment
- Weapons
- Alcohol and drugs

Valuables and Personal Items

We discourage your camper from bringing any valuables or items outside of what was specifically listed above. Staff members are not responsible for the care of their camper's personal items. If campers bring inappropriate items, the item will be turned in to the Camp Director or Unit Head and the camper's guardian will be notified. The item will be returned to the guardian or authorized pick-up person of the camper at dismissal or in other cases turned over to local law enforcement authorities. Other than certified therapy pets approved by the Camp Director, pets are not allowed at Camp.

Water and Hydration Stations

Part of what makes summer camp so much fun is getting to spend lots of time outdoors! However, active campers plus high temperatures can equal dehydration, heat exhaustion, and other illnesses. That's why one of our top priorities at Camp at the J is to keep campers hydrated at all times. **All campers are required to bring a refillable water bottle with them each day. Please put your camper's name on their water bottle.** We have several Hydration Stations set up around camp that enable campers to refill their water bottles with fresh, cold water whenever necessary.

Lunch and Food at Camp

Packed Lunches

All campers must bring a lunch each day. Campers may eat ONLY what is in their own lunch. All lunches brought from home are stored in an air-conditioned area but are not refrigerated. Please send all required utensils and **do not send any food that must be heated or cooked.** We do not have access to a microwave. The camper's first and last name should be clearly marked on the outside of the lunchbox or bag. We encourage campers to use their personal water bottles as a drink. Packed lunches do not need to be kosher.

Note: Campers are not permitted to make purchases from the J Cafe or vending machines.

Snacks

Feel free to pack a snack every day, if you feel your child may need one.

Nut Policy

Camp at the J is a “nut aware” camp. We avoid items that contain nuts, or that may contain nut products. Campers with severe nut allergies will have a designated place to sit during lunch, the “nut-free zone.”

Special Events and Field Trips

Pioneer and Trailblazer campers get to enjoy several special events throughout the summer that may include programs like the popular Fire Truck Day, Maccabi (healthy sports and arts competition), Cool Critters, and more.

Quest campers will participate in some of the special event programs at Camp at the J and also go on field trips to places like water parks, Main Event, and the Cincinnati Zoo as indicated on the camp calendar. Guardians will be notified of the destinations in advance and are encouraged to chat with their child the week of to prepare them. Additionally, please note that Camp at the J allows campers to bring money on field trips. Camp staff are not responsible for any personal camper property, including money. Make sure they wear their Camp at the J t-shirt on all field trips!

Swimming

On their first Monday at camp, each camper is administered a swim assessment by our lifeguards. Lifeguards determine if the camper is a green band or a red band based on swimming ability. Campers may attempt a swim assessment on Mondays in an effort to graduate from red band to green band.

All red band campers will receive swim lessons Monday - Thursday at no additional cost to families. Following the day's lesson, red band campers will wear life jackets, remain in the shallow end, and join the rest of their bunk for free swim.

Campers swim most days in our Outdoor Pool, weather permitting.

Swimming Assessment Procedures

- The child is required to start in the shallow end of the indoor Lap pool, swim to within 5 ft. of the other end of the lane then stop, tread water for 20 seconds, and continue swimming to the end of the pool.
- The child may not stop and hold the pool wall at any time.
- They must show they have enough endurance to swim without difficulty.

Red Band

Skills sufficient for
leisure pool only

- May swim in the shallow end of pool
- Staff must be in the water within arm's reach at all times
- Life jacket must be Coast Guard approved

Green Band

Skills sufficient for
all areas of the pool,
can swim independently

- May swim the entire length of the pool
- Staff member must remain in water and have close supervision
- May swim without a staff member

Birthdays

Birthdays are special and we love to celebrate them at camp! If your child's birthday falls during camp, Camp at the J will provide popsicles for all the children in your camper's bunk at no charge, upon advance request. In addition, we have an annual Birthday Celebration to recognize everyone's birthdays throughout the year!

Camp Evaluation

Families will receive an electronic evaluation form at the conclusion of the summer. Your feedback enables us to modify and improve Camp at the J programs. Also, feel free to share your camper's summer experience, **both during and after the summer**, directly with the Camp Director.

Camp at the J Advocate Program

Camp at the J is proud to offer individual supports for campers with mild to moderate disabilities through the Advocate Program. This unique program is free of additional cost to families and provides support for campers in grades K-8 that need assistance to be successful at camp through the 1:1 or 1:2 support of an Advocate Counselor.

The Advocate Program may be a great fit for campers who have an IEP or 504 plan at school, however these are not requirements. Campers in the Advocate Program should be able to complete self-care tasks such as toileting and changing independently, communicate with staff via their preferred method (AAC, ASL, and other alternate communication methods are welcomed), and should be able to safely engage with their bunk programming.

Campers in the Advocate Program will participate in full camp programming as much as possible with the support of an Advocate Counselor. Advocate Counselors receive additional training to ensure they are equipped to provide individualized accommodations and support to campers to facilitate participation and peer connections. Additionally, families are expected to collaborate with Mayerson JCC Camp and Inclusion staff in the months ahead of camp to develop an Individual Recreation Plan (IRP) for each camper to ensure safety and success during the summer.

Families in the Advocate Program should expect to collaborate regularly with the Advocate Coordinator. The Advocate Coordinator is the seasonal staff member who leads the advocate program during the summer. Collaboration with the Advocate Coordinator may look like informal conversations during pick up or drop off, phone calls, emails, and a weekly goal sheet.

Families in the Advocate Program should expect more intentional and frequent communication leading up to and throughout the summer. After a family applies to the advocate program, they will be contacted by the JCC's full-time Inclusion Coordinator to schedule an intake call. This call ensures that Camp at the J is a good fit for your child and allows us to learn more about any accommodations we may need to develop or train staff on. Following an intake call, the Inclusion Coordinator will reach out again in the spring with a Teacher/Rec Leader input form. We ask that families have an education or recreational professional fill this out to give us a more complete picture of the camper's access needs. Finally, Advocate Families will have the opportunity to preview camp to meet the Advocate Counselor their child will be working with as well as the Advocate Coordinator, the seasonal employee who will manage the program and become the new point of contact for families throughout the summer.

Medication

Medication Policy

All medications are kept in a locked area under the supervision of the Camp Director and Supervisor Staff. This complies with American Camp Association standards and State Department of Health guidelines. **Please do not put any medications in your camper's lunch or backpack.**

Upon the written request of a camper's guardian and with written and signed orders from a physician, routine personal medications are administered only by a member of the supervisor team. Before the start of the summer, all guardians will be contacted directly by a member of the camp supervisor team to review and confirm the steps required for their child's medication administration.

Only a member of the supervisor team will administer medication with the written request of caregivers/guardians. All administration of medication is documented.

All medication must be in original prescription container or over-the-counter packaging with instructions written by caregiver/guardian. In cases where a question exists about medication(s), the Camp Office will contact the appropriate person (i.e., caregiver) by phone to clarify the issue. This conversation is documented.

Camp staff will not give medication that does not meet safety guidelines. Campers with prescribed inhalers and/or Epi-Pens will be allowed to carry their medication and, if administered, the camp staff will document the time and related details. When medication is refilled, a medication check-in form must be filled out and signed by parent/guardian and camp staff. **If your child takes medication during the camp day, the camp administration will reach out to your family in May to set up a time for training and drop-off.**

Medication Vacation

If your camper regularly takes a medication during the school year that they will not be taking over the summer, please alert us to this change ahead of camp. Changes in medication can lead to changes in behavior that may impact your child's camp experience. It is always helpful for us to have as much information as possible when addressing a child's needs at camp.

Health and Safety

Safety and Security

In the event of an emergency, the first priority of the staff is the safety and security of your children. We will be in touch with guardians as soon as possible through the Mayerson JCC's emergency text/voice message system. During an emergency situation, please do not attempt to contact camp staff and/or other families, and please refrain from posting on social media, as you may unwittingly disclose confidential information about our emergency procedures.

If a text message is sent from the Emergency Notification System, the number will appear as **76127**. This is a one-way communication only; replies to the text message will not be delivered.

If a recorded voice message is sent, it will come from: **1.866.419.5001**. If you miss a call from this number, you may call the number back to listen to the last recorded message.

Sun and Heat

Please put an initial application of sunscreen on your child before they come to camp. Hats are encouraged. Refillable water bottles are required. As with all personal items, clearly mark your child's first and last name on these items. Camp at the J staff will model sunscreen application but are not allowed to physically apply sunscreen to any child. Campers are reminded every 1-2 hours to re-apply sunscreen and are frequently reminded to drink water. We work closely with our Medical Consultant at the J to ensure campers are safe. In the event of extreme heat, we will move camp indoors.

Accident/Injury

In the event of accident or injury, first aid will be administered on site, and an accident/incident report will be completed. Should the accident or injury require more than basic first aid, 911 will be called and your camper will be treated by professional EMTs or be taken to the nearest hospital. If this occurs, the caregiver or guardian will be contacted immediately. In the event that the caregiver or guardian cannot be reached by phone, the emergency contact will be notified and a camp staff member will ride to the hospital with the injured camper. The Mayerson JCC's Aquatics Department serves as the first responders until EMS arrives.

Absences/Illness

The health and safety of your camper is the number one priority of our staff. For your child's safety and protection, please contact the camp at 513.722.7249 if they will be absent.

Please do not send your child to camp if they are not feeling well, or you suspect illness.

When children become ill at camp, a caregiver or emergency contact will be notified IMMEDIATELY to pick them up.

Returning to Camp after Illness/Lice

In order to return to Camp after any illness, your camper must be free of symptoms such as, but not limited to, cold symptoms, fever, diarrhea, or vomiting for at least 24 hours. Campers returning after an episode of head lice must be free of lice and nits and will be checked by the Camp Staff and/or Medical Consultant before returning to the bunk. Camp at the J has the right to not accept the camper if they still display any symptoms. If your camper is well enough to come to camp, they are expected to participate in all camp activities unless a signed note is provided by a caregiver or physician.

If your camper requires care for injury or illness that occurred at camp, the Camp Office will ask for a copy of the report.

What should you do if your child has head lice?

Please do not be alarmed, as this is a common occurrence among school-aged children, head lice are not a sign of unclean people or homes. If your child does have head lice, everyone in your family should be checked, and anyone with nits should be treated. We will not allow children to return to camp until zero signs of eggs or lice are present.

Please take these precautions:

1. Check your child's hair for eggs (also called nits).
2. If you suspect your child has head lice, ask your health care provider to diagnose the problem and recommend appropriate treatment.
3. Tell us if your child is diagnosed as having head lice.
4. If head lice is diagnosed, do not return your child to camp until they have been treated and all the nits have been removed.

Please remember to provide the JCC with up-to-date phone numbers for guardians, authorized persons, and emergency contacts so you or another contact can be reached in case of an emergency. Changes must be submitted in writing.

Camp at the J Behavior Policy

Our camper care philosophy is based on MESSH framework. "MESSH" stands for "mental, emotional, social, spiritual health." In partnership with Jewish Family Service, camp staff are trained to provide holistic support to each camper based on their individual needs. During the summer, we have a mental health professional on-site who is available to anyone in our camp community. Additionally, we hold regular staff workshops to continue practicing and growing our MESSH practices.

Establishing Expectations

All children and staff at Camp at the J are protected by and provided with a safe and secure environment. Age-appropriate rules and expectations are established for the Camp at the J campers and are based upon:

- Respect for the individual
- Respect for the environment
- Respect for others

It is important that children clearly understand behavioral boundaries. Rules are introduced at orientation and reinforced throughout the summer. We understand childhood is a process of learning to conform to rules and guidelines; we view our role as enabling children to gain these important social skills in a positive environment.

Redirection and Discipline

When a child is disruptive, staff members will immediately remind them of the rules and expectations. Redirection, explanation, and constructive solutions are the first line of techniques used by the camp staff when a child requires behavioral correction. Some examples of this include:

- Taking a break from the group activity (while still in sight of counselors)

- Working through a disagreement with discussion and words
- Finding a different activity to participate in
- Providing a job for the camper within the activity/group
- Coaching a camper by praising them and reinforcing the positive ways they've contributed

Persistent Behavioral Problems

Persistent disruptive behavior is rare at camp, but discipline may look like:

- The child is removed from the group for part of or all of the day
- The child's behavior will be recorded by all staff members involved
- A Camp Director and supervisor staff will meet with the camper to discuss the events, consequences, and expectations moving forward
- The Camp Director will phone the parents/guardians to discuss, or set up a time to discuss later in the day; there will be a written copy of the meeting
- In most cases, once the camper is ready and accepts the expectations, the camper will rejoin the bunk
- Generally, camp considers terminating care for a camper after three incidents; however, the JCC reserves the right to suspend or terminate care at any time depending on safety considerations and the severity of issue(s)

Staff are expected to be fair and consistent with discipline and should not use demeaning language or raised voices. In addition to the Camp at the J policies, all state laws regarding child care are adhered to.

Termination of Enrollment from Camp at the J

When the individual needs of the child cannot be served by the program or program policies are consistently being disregarded, Camp at the J may terminate a child's enrollment in the program. Such termination decisions will not be made without prior consultation with the child's caregivers/guardians and will be communicated to the caregivers/guardians. In most cases, the caregivers will be given a grace period of 3 days to make other care arrangements; however, Camp at the J reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any point in time if a situation is determined to be extremely detrimental to the child concerned or to the other children or staff in the program. Caregivers are financially responsible for tuition of expected time at Camp per the May 15, 2026 registration deadline.

Possible Reasons for Termination of Enrollment

Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- The possibility of danger to the child or others in the group.
- The impact of the problematic behavior on the rest of the participants.
- The frequency of the problematic behavior.
- Availability of resources to address the problematic behavior.
- The willingness of the family members to work with the staff and/or to get outside help.

Additional, non-behavioral causes for possible termination may include:

- Non-payment of tuition and fees.
- Non-compliance with Camp at the J policies and procedures.
- Habitual lateness in picking up the child.
- Failure to provide the required enrollment forms.

Physical Safety & Intervention Response Policy

At Camp at the J, our goal is to promote a culture of inclusivity where children of all abilities are welcomed to experience and enjoy camp activities without barriers. We strive to facilitate inclusion among staff, campers,

and families. We are committed to open and ongoing communication with caregivers to ensure the best camp experience for every child by involving them to help identify issues to make activities accessible.

Our Camp at the J Behavior Policy, pages 12 - 13 of family handbook, outlines our policies and procedures for commonly occurring behavior concerns and difficulties at camp. Please see the outline below for our policy and procedure for addressing more rare and emergent behavior concerns such as elopement, fighting, and other behaviors that put physical safety at immediate risk. We have consulted guidelines, procedures, and policies from the State of Ohio Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the US Department of Education, the Council for Exceptional Children, and other leaders within recreation inclusion spaces in developing this policy.

Definition of terms

Per the Council for Exceptional Children Physical Restraint: According to the OCR Form for the 2017-2018 Data Collection, the term “physical restraint” means “a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual’s arms, legs, torso, or head freely.” OCR distinguishes between this term and the term physical escort which means “the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location” (CRDC, 2017). Physical restraint is a means for controlling that person’s movement, reconstituting behavioral control, and establishing and maintaining safety for the out-of-control individual, other individuals, and school [or, in our context, camp] staff.

Seclusion: OCR defines seclusion as “the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving” (CRDC, 2017). Seclusion does not include a sensory room and does not include a timeout.

[*Council for Exceptional Children’s Policy on Physical Restraint and Seclusion Procedures in School Settings, 2017*]

The State of Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) also notes

Physical restraint does not include brief, physical contact for the following or similar purposes:

1. To break up a fight.
2. To knock a weapon away from a student’s possession.
3. To calm or comfort.
4. To assist a student in completing a task/response if the student does not resist the contact.
5. To prevent immediate risk of injury to the student or others.

[*State Board of Education of Ohio, Policy on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, and Restraint and Seclusion, 2013*]

At the Mayerson JCC, we do not utilize seclusion practices. Campers have access to sensory rooms and are given opportunities for breaks to regulate when campers or camp staff deem it to be necessary. At no time will we utilize seclusion practices that leave campers unsupervised in restrictive settings, as they go against the core principles of this program.

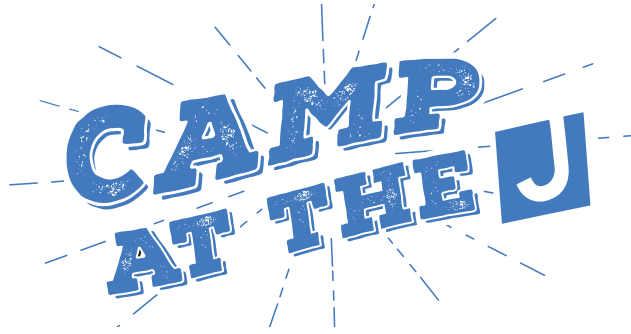
The Mayerson JCC believes that the use of restraints and physical escort as defined by the Office of Civil Rights are not effective behavior management strategies and should only be used in instances when camper or staff safety is at immediate risk. The Mayerson JCC Inclusion Team includes staff members that have received training from certified organizations in safe restraint and de-escalation practices. Staff will always make a good faith effort to ensure the most qualified staff member available serves as first responder to any emergent/escalating behavioral incident. However, in rare instances where safety is at immediate risk, the nearest and most senior staff will address the immediate safety risk. As noted by OAC, physical restraint does not include contact to prevent physical injury.

In the rare occurrence of an extreme behavior or safety incident, such as fighting or aggressive behavior, staff will de-escalate, prioritizing the safety of all parties. After safety risks have been addressed and the situation is stable, supervisory staff will document the incident and meet with relevant parties to review and create a plan to move forward safely. Caregivers will always be notified of extreme instances such as this as soon as is safely possible. Campers or staff who violate safety policy may face disciplinary action such as a warning, removal from programming for the day, or dismissal from camp. Campers or staff may be dismissed from camp if they

are found to be a safety risk to themselves or others, or require a level of care and supervision that camp staff is unable to safely accommodate. Additional details regarding termination can be found in the Camp at the J Behavior Policy, pages 12 - 13.

Camp at the J Babysitting Policy

In an effort to maintain the professional status of our staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, the care giving, instruction or engagement in any type of outside social or employment relationship between Camp at the J families and any Camp at the J employee is discouraged. However, should you hire or otherwise engage any Camp at the J employee for any reason or period of time, it must be outside the Mayerson JCC property and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services are solely between you and the Camp at the J staff member. These arrangements are not sanctioned by the Mayerson JCC and the Mayerson JCC is not liable or otherwise responsible in any way for the Camp at the J employee or any act, inaction, injury, damage, or result of such unsanctioned arrangement, engagement, activity, event, or service.



OUR SHARED VISION: ONE CAMP, ONE FAMILY

At Camp at the J, we believe a great summer is more than just fun — it's about belonging.

We welcome families from many backgrounds: Jewish, multi-faith, culturally connected, and those just starting to learn about Jewish life. Whether this is your first camp experience or your fifth, you and your child are now part of something bigger — a community built on connection, care, and shared joy.

This *Brit* (a Hebrew word meaning “covenant” or “sacred agreement”) reflects the values that guide our relationship. It's a promise we make to one another, as a family would: with trust, respect, kindness, and a whole lot of heart.

What Camp Commits To

SAFETY AND CARE

- Ensuring every camper feels physically, emotionally, and socially safe.
- Caring for each child with kindness, patience, and attention to their unique needs.
- Making camp a space where kids can be fully themselves and fully accepted.

MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

- Creating days filled with fun, discovery, and spirit (*ruach*).
- Introducing and living Jewish values and traditions in a warm, inclusive way.
- Helping campers grow as individuals and as part of something greater.

BELONGING AND TOGETHERNESS (KEHILLAH)

- Fostering a deep sense of *kehillah* — a loving, supportive community.
- Making sure no camper feels left out, overlooked, or alone.
- Creating traditions, rituals, and shared moments that help campers feel: *This is my place. These are my people.*

OPEN COMMUNICATION

- Keeping families informed and connected throughout the summer.
- Listening with openness and compassion to your thoughts and concerns.
- Working together as partners in your child's growth and happiness.

What Families Commit To

TRUST AND OPENNESS

- Entrusting us with the honor of caring for your child.
- Letting us know how we can best support your child's needs.
- Approaching the camp team with honesty, patience, and shared intention.

RESPECT FOR OUR COMMUNITY (KAVOD)

- Embracing the idea that camp is a shared space built on mutual care.
- Supporting our camp's culture, grounded in Jewish values, curiosity, and celebration.
- Helping your child understand they are part of a community where everyone belongs.

PARTNERSHIP

- Communicating clearly and constructively with our team.
- Working with us when questions, needs, or challenges arise.
- Participating as a member of our extended camp family — even from afar.

RESPONSIBILITY (ACHRAYUT)

- Completing forms, payments, and camper prep on time.
- Encouraging your child to try new things and care for others.
- Helping create a positive, caring, and inclusive environment from home.

Together, our Commitment is

To build a summer community that feels like family — where every camper is valued, every voice matters, and every day brings laughter, learning, and love.

We enter this *brit* — this sacred relationship — with gratitude and shared purpose.

Together, we are one camp, one family, shaping a summer full of connection, meaning, and belonging.

CAMP AT THE J FAQs

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THIS IS A “JEWISH” CAMP?

Our camp is rooted in Jewish culture, religious tradition, and values, but we welcome campers from all backgrounds. Kids will explore traditions like Shabbat, sing Hebrew songs, and talk about kindness and justice in ways that are inclusive, age-appropriate, and joyful. The camp also opens each day singing the Israeli national anthem, honoring the JCC’s connection to the modern-day state of Israel as a spiritual and cultural center of Jewish life.

WE’RE AN INTERFAITH OR NON-PRACTICING FAMILY. WILL OUR CHILD FEEL OUT OF PLACE?

Not at all. Many of our campers come from a variety of backgrounds including multi-faith, culturally Jewish homes, or are totally new to Jewish traditions. We meet kids (and families!) where they are and focus on creating a warm, welcoming space for everyone.

WILL MY CHILD BE EXPECTED TO PRAY OR FOLLOW RELIGIOUS RULES?

Camp includes blessings, songs, and stories, but we don’t expect belief or religious observance. We teach with curiosity and celebration — not obligation.

WHAT’S SHABBAT LIKE AT CAMP?

Shabbat is a highlight! It’s a time to slow down, dress up, sing, reflect, and come together as a community. It’s joyful, musical, and welcoming, especially for campers experiencing it for the first time.

WHAT’S A “BRIT”?

Brit (or *Berit*) is Hebrew for “covenant” — a mutual promise. In our case, it’s not legal — it’s about relationships: camp and family, working together for the good of each child.

WHAT IF I’M FEELING UNSURE OR HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Please reach out! We’re here for you. Whether it’s your child’s first time at camp or your first time encountering Jewish traditions, we’re happy to talk, explain, and support. This is a shared journey.