



Shalom Ramah New England Families,

This is our January COVID-19 update for both our overnight and day camps.

We are excited and confident that we will be back at our summer homes for *kayitz* (summer) 2021. We have been working hard with the National Ramah Medical Committee, American Camp Association (ACA), and the Foundation for Jewish Camp to prepare for a safe experience. We are sharing what we know with the understanding that many things will evolve and change. We appreciate your partnership in helping us reopen our camps safely while providing a wonderful Ramah experience.

This month we will have a short Camp Ramah New England (Palmer) overnight camp report and a longer Ramah Day Camp Greater DC (Germantown) report.

For Camp Ramah New England (Palmer):

- We are planning for camp to operate in a “bubble” and thus there will be no Visiting Day, no camper trips, and campers must arrive on time and stay throughout the session. We will make plans for full summer campers to connect virtually with their families on Visiting Day.
- We have already sent out flight information for campers coming from the DMV (DC, MD and VA).
- We are developing procedures for those driving their campers to camp. Families will drop off campers, but parents will not enter camp or leave their cars. Specific luggage truck and luggage delivery details will follow.
- We are hopeful that all staff will be vaccinated prior to the summer. We will require all staff to be tested prior to arrival and we will follow a course of testing throughout staff week.
- In our next update we expect to provide more details on the testing protocols for campers and staff during the camp season and an overview of our program, including how we will progress from small “pods” to larger cohort groups.
- More information can be found on our [COVID-19 web page](#).

For Ramah Day Camp Greater DC (Germantown):

We are planning for a meaningful and fun *kayitz* 2021 at Ramah Day Camp Greater DC. Our goal is to maintain our Ramah mission and *ruach* while providing the safest summer possible for our campers and staff. While Montgomery County has not yet published guidelines for day camps, we have been paying close attention to school and federal guidance as we plan for summer. Our Ramah New England Medical Committee has also dedicated time to day camp- specific

discussions, including taking a tour of our property. Below are some updates on what we anticipate summer could look like and our planning to prepare.

Bus Transportation – We currently plan to offer bus transportation in accordance with CDC and state guidance. The current guidelines state that there should only be one child per seat, unless children come from the same household. Everyone should also be masked and windows should be open. Seats will need to be assigned. Buses will be disinfected between trips. It is imperative this year, more than ever, that parents fill out their transportation form on time when it becomes available in the spring.

Camper Groups – We anticipate that we will need to form camper pods. Groups will stay consistent throughout the day and week. Group size will be determined according to the county guidance we receive in advance of summer. We will do our best to provide campers some programmatic choice during the day. Given our vast amount of outdoor space, we also believe we can safely include morning *rikud* (dance) and some *edah*-wide (unit-wide) activities, with appropriate distancing.

Masks – All campers and staff will be required to wear a mask the entire camp day except during meals, swim, and scheduled mask breaks. If your child is not currently used to wearing a mask, we highly recommend you start acclimating them to mask-wearing prior to camp. Parents will need to supply their own masks but we will also have extra disposable masks on hand as needed.

Outdoor programming and weather – We know that being outside is the safest option for our camp day. We are blessed with an abundance of outdoor space at our Wellspring site and intend to do much of our programming outside. We know that heat is also an issue and will provide extra tenting and ways to keep our campers cool. We are currently working on our inclement weather plans and will send details in a future email.

Swimming – We hope to provide as much swimming as possible for our campers this summer. We will update you with more specific plans in the next couple of months.

Family expectations – We will expect all families to adhere to any Maryland state travel advisories for summer. If you anticipate you may need to switch weeks because of travel plans, please contact Linor Shemesh at linor@campramahne.org and she will assist you.

NEW Forms – Our first new form is our COVID Health form, which will inform us of any social-emotional, mental and physical health changes your family has had this year. It will help us in planning for the summer, assessing individual camper needs, and working with you should you have a medical reason to withdraw from camp. This form will be out in the coming week and will be due by March 15. Second, in the spring, we will have a buddy request form for requesting one friend for your child's pod. This will be due May 3rd. Please help us by only submitting your buddy requests via this form.

This email will also be posted as a blog to [our website](#) and incorporated into our [COVID FAQ page](#) for future reference. For any additional day camp questions, please email Rabbi Jill Levy at rabbijill@campramahne.org.

Todah Rabbah,
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Ramah New England