

Camp George – Gender Inclusive Practices & Policies



We are guided by our mission which states that URJ Camp George is a Reform Jewish camp that nurtures Jewish identity, knowledge and values through a fun and immersive summer camp experience that transforms lives, building community within and beyond its borders. We strive always to maintain and grow Camp George as a safe space where we respect and celebrate everyone's ways of identifying themselves, as we are all made b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God We respect and celebrate everyone's ways of identifying themselves. We believe that every child has the right to have a Jewish camp experience. We work closely with the families of campers who require additional support to explore how Camp George can be the right fit as we want each child's experience to be a successful one. Each child who is part of our community is fully integrated into our programs and activities. Camp George welcomes all members of the community; we support gender-expansive and transgender campers and staff at Camp.

In support of our commitment to transparency and respect, we are affirming our practices and policies regarding gender inclusion. We recognize that gender identity and expression is expansive and may change at any point in an individual's life. To support our transgender and gender-expansive community, Camp George acknowledges that each participant's needs are unique and should be treated individually, in consultation with the participant.

We understand these policies may be new to some families, and we encourage everyone to have a conversation with their camper(s) prior to Camp. Included in this policy are resources available to use in support of family dialogue.

During the summer, our community care team will be available to answer questions campers or staff may have and will communicate with families when necessary. We are grateful for the partnership with our Camp George families in helping our Camp be a safe and inclusive place for our entire *kehillah*. We are committed to ensuring that Camp is a true reflection of today's families and individuals.

Registration & Intake

Due to technical limitations in the CampMinder registration system, gender options are limited. There will be an opportunity later in the application process to request a conversation with Camp regarding gender and any additional accommodations. Please select 'Specify' under the drop-down tab on the first page of registration. You will have to then manually enter the gender in which the camper most identifies with. We recognize the limitations of the current technology we are using in identifying gender identity and we are working on improving this. To best facilitate your camper's needs, we will contact you for an intake meeting for any participant that indicates that their gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth as noted in the forms filled out by parents and campers.

Housing

Our cabins are separated by gender and grade level. In focusing on supporting each participant's overall development and well-being, cabin assignments in certain cases may be made by gender identity instead of sex assigned at birth. For campers to request housing by gender identity, this request must be made by the camper and a parent or guardian before camp, at the beginning of May. Housing changes cannot be made once Camp is in session. We will support gender-expansive participants and their families before Camp to help them identify and agree to the appropriate housing assignment for their camper.

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Facilities

Each cabin has its own shower area and separate bathroom stalls where private changing can be accessed that campers can choose to use. Camp George's public bathroom spaces are all-gender bathrooms. All-gender bathrooms are available in the main Lodge, Mirpa'ah, Dorms, and The Azrieli Pavilion.

Confidentiality

Camp George prioritizes the confidential status of a camper, participant, or staff member's gender status in accordance with applicable provincial, municipal, and federal privacy laws.

All campers and staff have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information. The fact that a camper or staff chooses to use a different name, to transition at Camp, or to disclose their gender status to staff or other campers does not authorize Camp George to disclose this information with their parent or guardian. When contacting the parent or guardian of a camper, Camp George will use the camper's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the camper's sex assigned at birth unless the camper, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

Camp George will not disclose any information that may reveal a camper or staff member's gender status to others, including other campers, families, and staff, unless legally required to do so or the camper or staff has given permission. In any scenario where Camp George is legally required to disclose a camper or staff member's gender status, Camp George will provide the camper or staff an opportunity to make that disclosure themselves first.

Pronouns & Names

Every camper and staff member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. Regardless of whether a camper or staff member has legally changed their name or gender (or undergone any medical transition), Camp George will support such campers and staff members to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity. Camp George will ask in the camp forms how the camper prefers to be addressed, and Camp staff will ask campers privately how they would like to be addressed, and if they want to be addressed this way in group settings. Staff are asked for their pronouns and are provided an opportunity to include them on staff identification (name tags, etc.).

Some campers may feel most comfortable being addressed by gender-neutral pronouns such as "they" or just referred to by their name (without pronouns). We recognize that our returning campers may come to camp with a different name, pronouns, or gender than the summer prior. In that case, Camp will direct all staff to use the person's chosen name and pronouns. Camp George will act to the best of our ability to educate campers and staff members to avoid "dead naming" (call someone by their birth name when they have changed their name as part of their gender transition) - if aware of a change of name prior to summer let us know.

De-Gendering Places & Traditions

Our Camp George Camp Council members along with our professional staff, have created the You Belong Initiative – a committee that takes a deep look into how we can do even more to prioritize that everyone in our community feels welcome and safe. The You Belong Initiative prioritizes ensuring that Camp George is an inclusive and safe community for all LGBTQ+ individuals and families. In 2015 the URJ passed a resolution calling for the full inclusion of

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transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals in our communities. While campers are bunked by gender, participants are included in the bunk of the gender they identify with. We welcome the opportunity to work with families to make every effort that all personal needs are met for any camper. Leading up to the summer of 2022 we have been working with Keshet for LGBTQ+ equality in Jewish life. Keshet envisions a world in which all LGBTQ Jews and our families can live with full equality, justice, and dignity. By strengthening Jewish communities and equipping Jewish organizations with the skills and knowledge they need to make all LGBTQ Jews feel welcome, they work to ensure the full equality of all LGBTQ Jews and our families in Jewish life. They also create spaces in which all queer Jewish youth feel seen and valued and advance LGBTQ rights nationwide. With that lens, we have made programmatic revisions over the last few years to reflect our commitment to being an inclusive camp. Camp will continue to monitor and adjust programmatic areas to assure maximum inclusion – if you would like to participate in the You Belong initiative, please be in touch.

Staff Training

Camp George has been working with organizations that specialize in training camp communities about gender inclusion like [Keshet](#). Our full-time team is interviewing additional trainers and experts to work with our summer staff to train them on topics of how to create safe spaces for everyone.

Resources

[Union for Reform Judaism](#) * [Keshet Resources](#) * [Camp George You Belong](#)