

# Parent Handbook

## 2022

*Friends, please note that this handbook is subject to all requirements of our COVID Safety Plan ([campzeke.org/camp-covid](http://campzeke.org/camp-covid)). The Safety Plan is an evolving, live document; to the extent of a difference between the Safety Plan and this Handbook, the Safety Plan takes priority.*



[questions@campzeke.org](mailto:questions@campzeke.org) | [www.campzeke.org](http://www.campzeke.org)

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# Table of Contents

- I. Welcome!
- II. Key Forms, Dates & Deadlines
- III. Going Away from Home
- IV. Camp Policies
- V. Medical Information
- VI. Clothing & Packing
- VII. Camper Travel
- VIII. Communication with Campers
- IX. Camp Office Hours
- X. Visiting
- XI. Photos
- XII. Camper Contact Information
- XIII. Extending Sessions
- XIV. Counselor No-Tipping Policy
- XV. Counselor Off-Season Communication Policy

# I. Welcome!

Dear Parents:

It's hard to believe that summer is almost here! Your campers are about to embark on an incredible celebration of healthy, active living. They'll be cooking amazing dishes, joining action-packed activities, and spending their summer in a joyful Jewish environment. We hope they're getting excited.

We designed this handbook to help prepare you and your campers for the summer. It includes information on how to submit medical forms, policies and procedures, a packing list, pick-up and drop-off information, and other important details. Please review everything and submit all the required forms using our online system (described below) **by May 20th**.

If you have any questions, please call us at 212.913.9783 or send us a note at [questions@campzeke.org](mailto:questions@campzeke.org).

With great anticipation,  
The Camp Zeke Team

## II. Key Forms, Dates & Deadlines

Please access and submit all camper forms on our online portal, [CampInTouch](https://zeke.campintouch.com) (<https://zeke.campintouch.com>). Please note that some forms are digital and others are PDFs which you should download, complete, then upload to CampInTouch.

You can also view account balances, change credit card information, and see pictures and blog posts during the summer. To access the portal, use the same email address and password that you used for the camp application (or go to [CampInTouch](#) and click “retrieve/set password” if you can’t remember it).

**Please note that all forms must be completed by May 20th. For everyone’s safety, we cannot allow campers to enter camp grounds without completed forms.**

**Also, please note that various COVID-safety requirements are forthcoming, including a mandatory PCR test shortly before entering camp. We will send instructions by email as we get closer to summer.**

### III. Going Away from Home

**Camp is an amazing adventure!** Campers learn to live independently while forming life-long memories and the closest of bonds with new friends. Obviously, some kids have a little anxiety in the days leading up to camp. To help ease the transition and make for a truly remarkable and magical experience, we have a few pointers for parents:

- **Overall concerns:** If your camper exhibits concerns about going away, encourage the open expression of feelings. You might explain that these concerns are normal and natural, and most campers feel exactly the same way. Remind him or her that Camp Zeke’s warm and caring staff are there to help in any situation, and we’re going to check in with them all the time to make sure that they’re happy and everything is going well.
- **A set period of time away from home:** Your camper should understand that he or she is coming for a pre-determined length of time. A “let’s try it out” and “you can leave whenever you want” approach doesn’t work. Although it might provide temporary comfort to children who are anxious, it creates problems at camp by preventing kids from fully immersing themselves in camp life.
- **Consistency at home:** Reassure your camper that everything at home will be the same as when they left – pets will be cared for, possessions will be protected from siblings, and his or her room will stay the same. If for any reason this cannot be promised, let our office know about the circumstances. We can be more helpful when we are informed.
- **Mental wellness:** Please inform the camp directors if your child has been under any psychological/psychiatric care at any time prior to camp, or if something might occur at home during the summer. This includes illness or death in the family, poor school grades, divorce, moving to a new house or city, etc. Camp Zeke is more than adequately prepared to deal with most children and the common problems of growing up. Our knowledge of the facts will help lead your camper to success.
- **A cheerful goodbye:** When seeing your camper onto the bus or dropping them off at camp, make the parting brief, pleasant, and cheerful. Prolonged good-byes and abundant tears will be emotionally upsetting to your camper (and you!). This also applies to visiting day for six-week campers.

## IV. Camp Policies

**Our goal is to provide campers with unforgettable summers that are full of amazing memories and warm friendships.** We have a few key rules at camp, which all campers must know to have the best possible summer. Please review these with your camper(s).

- **Food:** Please do not bring or send candy, gum, or other foods to camp. Some members of our community have severe food allergies, so this rule is strictly enforced.
- **Calls Home:** Over the years, we have found that calls home often have the opposite of their intended effect. Hearing a parent's voice sometimes takes kids out of camp's happy, self-contained community and creates moments of sadness that wouldn't otherwise occur. For this reason, families now communicate in writing. Of course, parents can contact the camp office or their unit head **at any time** to check in on how their camper is doing. We will give you a full, detailed update.
- **Electronic devices:** Driving into camp, you will notice a sign that reflects our aspiration for campers: "At Camp Zeke, we unplug so we can really connect." **To this end, we are a screen free camp and devices with screens are strictly prohibited.** This includes phones, tablets, kindles, iPods, cameras, handheld game systems, and all other devices with screens.

Any camper using a cell phone (or a device to access the internet) will have the device confiscated and returned after camp. If there is a second violation, the camper will be suspended for a day. Parents will be required to pick up and return the camper at parents' expense.

- **Photography:** We have a photographer who takes countless pictures throughout the camp experience to capture all the memories. We post them all in our parent portal, which you will have access to throughout the summer. For privacy reasons and to avoid any photography in the bunks we do not allow campers to bring cameras to camp.
- **Bullying:** We strive to protect every member of the Camp Zeke community from bullying. In addition to creating a culture of kindness, Camp Zeke has a three-strike policy for bullying behavior. For the first incident, the offending camper will participate in a meeting with camp leadership staff. If there is a second incident, the camper's parents will be notified. If there is a third incident, the camper will be sent home.
- **Valuables:** Please do not let your child bring any valuables to camp. If you would be upset if a particular item is lost or broken, the item should stay at home.
- **Money in camp:** Campers do not need any money in camp. Please note that none of our field trips require money either – we always provide food/snacks and cover all admissions fees. Indeed, most of our trips won't involve opportunities to spend money. For example, we might go on a hiking adventure or take a hands-on tour of a local farm.
- **Supervision:** Each camper must be in range of sight or hearing of a staff member at all times. Our top priority is keeping campers safe and healthy, followed closely by ensuring they have a fun, friendship-filled, and memorable summer.

- **Dress code:** Our dress code helps maintain a safe and comfortable environment. We reserve the right to ask anyone to change if deemed necessary by the camp staff.
  - **Footwear:** During the day, campers are required to wear socks and closed-toed sneakers. This prevents injury and enables campers to move freely around camp. Campers may wear sandals at the pool and lake. They may also wear dressy sandals on Friday night for Shabbat and during certain other special evening activities. If your child chooses to wear heels, they may not exceed two inches.
  - **Tops and Bottoms:** Clothing should not contain inappropriate slogans or images. We do not permit revealing clothing for boys or girls, including visible bra-straps, see-through clothing, crop tops with tummies showing, Speedo-style bathing briefs for boys, etc.
  - **Sunblock:** Sunblock is part of our dress code – you aren't fully dressed without it!
  - **Bathing suits:** Two-piece swimsuits are permitted during general swim. One-piece swimsuits or tankinis should be worn during instructional swim to maximize mobility. For boys and girls, no overly revealing suits, please!
  - **Shabbat:** On Friday nights, we wear blue and white for our Shabbat celebration. You can get a bit dressy if you'd like!
- **Camp property:** Anyone who intentionally damages or defaces camp property is liable for such damage, and families will be charged accordingly. This includes writing names on cabins or beds.
- **Privacy:** To protect each camper's privacy, campers are only permitted in their own bunks. Under no circumstances may boys or girls enter the opposite gender's bunk. Campers may not bring cameras or take photographs in bunks, bathrooms, or other private areas.
- **Prohibited behaviors:** Campers are suspended from camp if they bring any of the following items: vape pens, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, firecrackers, weapons, or other dangerous instruments. Campers may also be sent home if they are out of their cabin at night, have preexisting behavioral or medical conditions that were not communicated to camp, or engage in criminal or sexual behavior. Inappropriate language is not tolerated. Within the camp's discretion, a camper who is suspended may be allowed back in a subsequent session.

## V. Medical Information

**As noted above, various COVID-safety requirements are forthcoming, including a mandatory PCR test shortly before entering camp. We will send instructions by email as we get closer to summer. For details of our safety planning, please visit: [campzeke.org/camp-covid](https://campzeke.org/camp-covid).**

Our medical staff carefully reviews each camper's medical history prior to the start of camp. The more we know about each camper's health history and habits, the better we can care for them. Please err on the side of giving us more information. It will make for a more successful summer.

As noted on page 4, **you will need to submit medical forms by May 20th**. All of these forms are available on [CampInTouch \(https://zeke.campintouch.com/\)](https://zeke.campintouch.com/).

## Medical Insurance

All health and accident expenses will be covered by each family's medical insurance. Parents are responsible for providing proof of medical insurance for their children. If a provider does not accept your family's insurance, it is your obligation to pay the costs of the medical service. Please provide insurance information on the **Parent Authorization Form** on [CampInTouch](#).

## Key Health and Safety Policies

- **Glasses:** Please send a second set of glasses with each camper. Also, please make sure to indicate that he or she wears glasses or contacts on the **Health History** form on [CampInTouch](#).
- **Special dietary needs:** We are nut-free, sesame free, and offer vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, egg-free and dairy-free options at every meal. If your child has any other special dietary needs, please let the camp office know now so we can work out a plan.
- **Contagious disease:** Please advise camp of any contact your child has had with any contagious disease after June 10<sup>th</sup>. If your child has a cough, cold, rash, fever, lice, conjunctivitis/pink eye, or any throat problem in the days before camp begins, please contact us so we can make a plan for when they can join us in good health! **COVID-specific instructions will be provided separately.**
- **Head lice:** When campers arrive at camp, our medical staff or a lice service checks them for lice and nits. If any are found, we hire a lice treatment service to come to camp and treat the camper and his or her belongings on site. We ask parents to reimburse us for the cost of this service (\$250).
- **Sick campers:** If your camper is feeling under the weather at camp, he or she will receive comforting and professional care. Our Health Center is staffed 24 hours a day by medical professionals. They are supported by a team of local doctors, if specialists are needed. Camp is a few minutes from a complete network of health care providers and roughly 50 minutes from a major hospital.
- **Health Center:** Camp Zeke's Health Center is a warm, welcoming environment that's centrally located. Our medical staff live in the Health Center and are right there when campers call.
- **When do we call home?** We err on the side of contacting parents. We will always call to inform parents if: a camper has been in the Health Center overnight; a camper has been placed on prescription medication; or a camper has been taken out of camp for medical care. Parents will not be notified if a child spends less than 24 hours in the Health Center or receives a routine diagnosis and treatment, which could include a cut, bug bite, sore throat, or headache.

## Medications

- **J Drugs:** To ensure that all medication is administered in the safest possible way, we require use of J Drugs for all prescriptions, daily over-the-counter medicines and vitamins.
  - J Drugs pre-packages medications and vitamins in individual doses, which is the distribution method recommended by the American Camp Association and considered the best practice among overnight camps.



- J Drugs is a **free service** to our families. The deadline for ordering medications is May 20th. Please note that J Drugs charges a \$25 expedited service fee for medications ordered after May 20th.
  - J Drugs will bill your insurance company directly. Please note that you will be charged directly by J Drugs for co-pays, deductibles, or the cost of non-covered medications, vitamins and over-the-counter medications. J Drugs charges the same rates as any normal pharmacy for medications and vitamins.
  - To obtain medications through J Drugs, please use the form on CampInTouch, and submit it directly to J Drugs.
  - Please obtain a prescription for any medication, vitamin or supplement you order.
  - J Drugs accepts all major insurance plans.
  - Please call J Drugs with any questions about filling medication and vitamin orders: 718-258-6686
- **Administration of pills:** All camper medications are kept in our Health Center under the nurses' supervision. Outside of special circumstances, the nurses will administer medications during meals (around 8:45 am, 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm). If this schedule is not possible, please let us know on the medical forms. **With the exception of emergency medications, campers may not keep or carry medications of any kind themselves.**
  - **Inhalers and EpiPens:** Certain emergency items, such as inhalers and EpiPens, should be kept by campers at all times. Campers who use inhalers, EpiPens, and similar emergency items must bring a spare to be kept at the Health Center. Please provide all emergency medicine information on the **Health History** form on [CampInTouch \(https://zeke.campintouch.com/\)](https://zeke.campintouch.com/).
  - **As-needed medications:** Camp Zeke stocks most over-the-counter drugs, which the nurses administer as needed. You do not need to use J Drugs for any of the following medications: Acetaminophen, Benadryl, Claritin, Ibuprofen, Lactaid, cough drops, decongestant (Sudafed PE), antacid and all first aid supplies. Note that vitamins and **any over-the-counter medications taken on a daily basis** must be ordered using J Drugs.

## VI. Clothing & Packing

Here is a list of everything you should bring to camp! If an item requires special laundering or you will be upset if it gets lost or dirty, please leave it at home. The weather can get a little chilly at night, so be sure to pack warm clothing. We have athletic equipment like yoga mats, tennis racquets, and baseball gloves, but you may also bring your own.

This list is intended as a guide, not a checklist. Not everything is relevant to every camper. We welcome you to use your judgment based on your knowledge of your child.

**Luggage:** On opening day, once emptied, all camper luggage is removed from the cabins and safely placed in storage. No suitcases, duffle bags, or plastic drawers (except those plastic drawers that fit under the bed) remain in the cabins as extra storage for campers. Please label each piece of luggage (including sleeping bags and hand luggage) with two sturdy name tags.

**Laundry:** We provide laundry services. Each camper has his or her personal clothing and linens washed weekly.

**Camp Zeke Store:** You can buy all sorts of Camp Zeke gear and other useful camp stuff and the [Camp Zeke Store](http://www.everythingsummerncamp.com/camp-zeke?camp_code=CAMP907ZK) ([http://www.everythingsummerncamp.com/camp-zeke?camp\\_code=CAMP907ZK](http://www.everythingsummerncamp.com/camp-zeke?camp_code=CAMP907ZK)), which is run by an independent retailer.

**Please label everything with your camper's name!** You can just use a regular permanent marker. If you want to get really advanced, you can find some [popular labeling options here](http://www.everythingsummerncamp.com/iron-on-labels) (<http://www.everythingsummerncamp.com/iron-on-labels>)

### Linens

- 3 bath towels (to use for showering)
- 3 beach towels (to bring to the pool and lake)
- 2 face towels (for hand and face washing)
- 2 wash cloths (to use in the shower)
- 2 fitted sheets (twin size)
- 2 flat sheets (can also be used as light blankets)
- 2 pillow cases (bring an extra if you want your bunkmates to sign it!)
- 1 pillow (or two if you prefer)
- 1 blanket (light to medium weight)
- 1 sleeping bag (optional)
- 2 laundry bags (so you have an extra when your clothes are being washed)
- 1 mattress pad or egg crate (optional for those who like to pad their mattress)

### Clothing

- 14 face masks (if cloth masks, they must be at least two-ply)
- 14 pairs of underwear (older girls include bras)
- 14 pairs of socks
- 12 t-shirts, tank tops, or short sleeve shirts

- Camp Zeke tee shirt (we'll give you one at camp too)
- 3 long sleeve shirts (for cool evenings)
- 2 sweatshirts (for very cool evenings)
- 1 light jacket (for even cooler evenings)
- 8 shorts (gym, cargo, Soffes, etc.)
- 3 pairs of long pants or jeans (for cool evenings, hiking)
- 1 raincoat/poncho (must have a hood)
- 3 pairs of pajamas (or sleeping shirts, etc.)
- 2 nice blue and white Shabbat outfits (skirts, nice shorts, collared shirts, or slacks)
- 4 bathing suits (for instructional swim, please have two suits you can very comfortably move in; girls, one piece suits and tankinis are recommended, and boys, leave the Speedos at home)
- 4 swim shirts (to protect against the sun – we spend a lot of time on the water!)
- swimming goggles (required for instructional swim)
- 1 sun hat (baseball hat, cowboy hat, etc.)
- 2 blue shirts and 2 yellow shirts for Olympics, so you're ready to join either team! Campers can also bring other blue and yellow items for added Olympic spirit (tutus, headbands, hats, etc.) The accessories are totally optional of course.
- 2 pairs of sneakers for everyday wear and sports (we especially like waterproof sneakers at camp, but any sneakers are fine)
- 1 pair of boots (for hiking and rainy days)
- 1 pair of water shoes (optional, if you want them for the lake)
- 1 pair of sandals/flip-flops (for walking to the pool or waterfront or the shower)
- 1 pair of Shabbat shoes for Friday nights (no heels over 2 inches!)

### Toiletries

- comb and brush
- clips, barrettes, hair bands
- toothbrush and toothpaste
- plastic drinking cup (optional, if you use one to rinse)
- soap and soap dish or body wash for shower
- shampoo
- conditioner, gel, etc.
- deodorant
- Q-tips
- razor and shaving cream (for shavers)
- nail clipper
- pads, tampons (for older girls)
- three bottles of sun block (these get used up fast)
- insect repellent
- tissues
- caddy to store toiletries

### Miscellaneous

- flashlight, extra batteries
- backpack or small duffel for trip day

- pens, pencils, stationery, envelopes, stamps
- family addresses, printed labels, pre-addressed and stamped envelopes
- 2-3 sturdy refillable water bottles (item most commonly lost at camp!)

### **Totally Optional**

- funny costumes (we have many themed activities at camp, you never know what will come in handy!)
- fan to clip on near bed (can be electric or battery operated for an added breeze)
- battery operated clock
- sports equipment (we have it all, but if you want your own baseball glove, yoga matt, tennis racket, Frisbee, Nerf ball, cleats, basketball, soft “safety” baseball to play catch around the cabins, etc.)
- athletic protector and mouth guard for campers who will take wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu
- dance shoes (for those who love to move)
- cleats (for soccer, baseball/softball, etc.)
- musical instrument (but please don’t bring anything too valuable!)
- lovies (teddy bears, stuffed Zeagles, blankies – everyone has them!)
- playing cards, baseball cards, magic cards, etc.
- summer reading books

### **Again, please label everything with your camper’s name!**

#### **WHAT NOT TO PACK**

- ⊗ any device with a screen including iPods, cell phones, laptops, tablets, portable DVD players, phones, cameras, and similar devices
- ⊗ disposable cameras
- ⊗ money
- ⊗ hard baseballs – campers should bring soft “safety” baseballs to play catch around the cabins (we only use hardballs with proper safety equipment on the baseball field)
- ⊗ tube tops, strapless dresses
- ⊗ inappropriate clothing (see page 7 for policy)
- ⊗ expensive clothing requiring special washing
- ⊗ shoes or sandals with heels higher than two inches
- ⊗ Heelys or any other shoe with a wheel
- ⊗ chewing gum, candy, food of any kind, bottled water (not to be confused with a water bottle!)
- ⊗ super soakers
- ⊗ valuable jewelry
- ⊗ hair straighteners and curlers
- ⊗ anything that would upset you or your camper if lost or broken

## VII. Camper Travel

Due to COVID, all campers will be driven to camp this summer. We will not be able to offer buses so that we can maintain each bunk as a distinct camp family and not mix together large groups of kids. For campers who fly to camp, please contact the office to discuss options. We will email more transportation details as we get closer to opening day.

## VIII. Communication with Campers

- **Letters:** Campers love getting letters! Please address envelopes to:

Camp Zeke  
Name of Camper  
PO Box 253  
Lakewood, PA 18439

- **Email/eLetters:** You will be able to send your camper emails using [CampInTouch](https://zeke.campintouch.com/) (<https://zeke.campintouch.com/>). We have purchased five emails (“CampStamps”) per week for each camper. If you would like to send more than five emails a week, please see the rates on CampInTouch.

Your camper can also send you eLetters. This is a letter written on a special page of eLetter stationery containing a unique, printed barcode. The camp office will scan and upload your camper’s eLetters onto CampInTouch. There are two ways to use this system:

1. Send an “eLetter stack” with your camper before they leave home. Using this option, you can print a stack of eLetter stationery (up to 20 individual pages at a time) within your CampInTouch account. There is no CampStamp cost to print eLetter stationery.
2. Attach an eLetter reply request to an individual camper email. This option is found below the email body and will request a single eLetter reply from your camper. Please note: CampStamps will not be deducted for the eLetter until a reply is received by the parent.

### eLetter Tips:

1. Campers should use blue or black ink pens to ensure the eLetter PDF is legible.
  2. Campers should make sure the barcode is not obscured in any way, or the system won't be able to read the barcode and put it in the proper parent's CampInTouch account.
  3. Parents will receive an email notification as each eLetter is returned. You will not be charged a CampStamp until you open the eLetter. Once viewed, an eLetter may be opened, saved, or forwarded by email an unlimited number of times at no additional cost.
- **A first letter or email to your camper:** It is essential that your camper receive a letter or e-mail within the first two days of arrival. If you send us an email, please do so the day before camp begins. If you send a letter, please note USPS mail takes three or four days to arrive, so plan accordingly.

- **Letters home:** If you are not using the eLetter system, please provide an adequate number of stamps and self-addressed envelopes for your camper to write home. You should expect at least one letter each week from your camper(s).
- **Packages from home:** We do not allow campers to receive gift packages at camp. The camp community is about friendships and bonding rather than gifts and physical possessions. When a camper receives a package of gifts, other campers can feel left out and it distracts from the cabin community. Of course, if your camper needs an essential item, our office will be glad to coordinate with you to receive the package.
- **Camper photos and camp blog:** On many evenings, we will post blog posts and photos of your camper to [CampInTouch](#). Stay on the lookout!
- **Calls Home:** Over the years, we have found that calls home often have the opposite of their intended effect. Hearing a parent’s voice sometimes takes kids out of camp’s happy, self-contained community and creates moments of sadness that wouldn’t otherwise occur. For this reason, we strongly prefer letters. Of course, parents can contact the camp office or their unit head **at any time** to check in on how their camper is doing. We will give you a full, detailed update.

## IX. Camp Office Hours + Phone

During the summer, you can reach the camp office by calling the same main number you call all year: **212-913-9783**. Our staff answer phones and respond to inquiries from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. When possible, please call between these hours. Outside of these hours, we check messages and elevate emergencies and special situations to senior staff members as necessary. Our office is open six days a week and closed on Saturday, which is a special day of rest and rejuvenation at camp.

## X. Visiting

Because we are establishing a bubble in the camp community this summer to maximize the likelihood of COVID staying out of camp, we will not have our usual visiting day between the two sessions.

## XI. Photos

Throughout the summer, we have a camp photographer who takes pictures of campers and loads them into [CampInTouch](https://zeke.campintouch.com/) (<https://zeke.campintouch.com/>) so you can see what your kids are up to! We will occasionally use these pictures on our website and materials. Likewise, we will be filming footage for our Camp Zeke movie this summer, starring your campers!

## **XII. Camper Contact Info**

At the end of each session, we are glad to provide emails and phone numbers of other campers so friends can keep in contact over the year. If you prefer that your family's information not be included in this list, please let us know. Unless you let us know, we release directory information including names, birthdays, and contact information.

## **XIII. Extending Sessions**

If campers are having too good a time to go home, they may request that we contact their parents to see if they can extend their stay to the following session.

## **XIV. Counselor No-Tipping policy**

Our counselors are instructed to neither solicit nor accept gratuities or tips. If you would like to recognize an outstanding counselor, we encourage you to make a donation to the camp scholarship fund in their honor or send an email or letter of praise to our office.

## **XV. Post-Camp Communication with Staff**

Campers and former staff should not communicate outside of camp. We hand-pick our staff and consider them outstanding, but we cannot guarantee their behavior when they are not under our supervision and program structure. Once camp ends, it is up to parents to monitor the phone, text, and online activity of their kids and be aware of any online interactions with camp staff, which should be prohibited. While we make our expectations clear during staff training, our summer staff are no longer our staff once camp ends.

# **We can't wait for our adventure to begin!**