



## **Habonim Dror Camp Miriam - Gender Inclusive Practices and Policies (2024)**

Camp Miriam is firmly committed to promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Our Jewish values of Kehillah (community), B'tselem Elohim (we are all created in God's image), Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), and Shiviyon Erech Ha'Adam (equality of human value) inspire us to act in support of our entire community - campers, families, alumni, and staff members - to ensure camp is always a safe place.

We are proud of the open, supportive, and inclusive environment we have built together. We are collectively committed to building a vibrant community rooted in Jewish values and bringing the transformative power of a youth-led Jewish summer camp to every person who wishes. Camp Miriam welcomes all members of the community; we support all campers and staff members, regardless of gender identity.

In support of our commitment to transparency and respect, we are affirming our practices and policies regarding gender inclusion. We recognize that gender exists along a spectrum and may change at any point in an individual's development. To support our transgender and gender expansive<sup>1</sup> community, Camp Miriam acknowledges that each person's needs are unique and should be treated individually, in consultation with that individual. We acknowledge that we are limited by our facilities, and we are in the process of re-evaluating how we can improve our facilities to better meet the needs of our community. We recognize that gender terminology is evolving and to the best of our knowledge we have used terminology that is most appropriate and inclusive throughout the policy. We will do our best to continue to update the policy as the terminology continues to evolve.

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, we will be available to answer questions campers or staff members may have and will communicate with families when needed. We are grateful for the partnership with our Camp Miriam families in helping our camp be a safe and inclusive place for our entire community. This is a policy that we plan to review annually and update as needed based on feedback and the experiences of our community.

### **Housing**

Our bunks are separated by gender and grade level. In focusing on supporting each camper and staff's overall development and well-being, bunk assignments are made by gender identity instead of sex assigned at birth. Those who are gender fluid/non-binary can decide which bunk works best for them.

If a camper decides that they would best be suited in a differently gendered bunk than where they were initially placed, they are able to switch (beds and space permitting). During this process, we will communicate with the parents/guardians of the camper who is switching. We

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<sup>1</sup> Someone whose gender identity and/or gender expression expands beyond, actively resists, and/or does not conform to the current cultural or social expectations of gender, particularly in relation to male or female.



take a camper-centered approach to these conversations, understanding that the needs for each camper may look different. We give as much agency as possible to the camper in shaping the process. As a community that values youth voices, we will uphold the housing decision of the camper. No information about the reason for switching bunks or any other information will be shared without the consent of the camper. As part of staff training before the summer, camp staff will be thoroughly briefed on the steps to follow (outlined in the Staff Policy Manual) if and when this situation arises.

### **Facilities**

All cabins and tents have a private changing area that all campers can choose to use.

Camp Miriam has gender neutral bathrooms in lower camp and upper camp. These bathrooms have single stalls and no showers. The bathrooms in lower camp and upper camp that have showers are gendered. There are 2 private single stall showers available, one in upper camp and one in lower camp. We respect campers' ability to choose which gendered bathroom works best for them.

Camp Miriam has scheduled shower times by bunk. All campers and staff members, no matter their gender identity, have the option of showering in a private single stall during their scheduled group shower. Trans/non-binary campers and staff members have the options of either showering with their bunk in a bathing suit or showering in the private single stall.

Camp Miriam is committed to the ongoing development and improvement of our gender neutral washroom facilities. Future structural upgrades to the camp will include the introduction of more private gender neutral shower facilities in order to meet the needs of all campers.

### **Confidentiality**

Camp Miriam will make every effort to ensure the confidentiality of a camper or staff member's gender status. All campers and staff members 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 member chooses to use a different name, to transition at camp, or to disclose their gender status to staff member or other campers does not authorize Camp Miriam to disclose this information to their parent or guardian. When contacting the parent or guardian of a camper, Camp Miriam will use the camper's name and the pronoun indicated on the camper application/forms unless the camper, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

### **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 surgical or hormonal transitions), Camp Miriam will allow such campers and staff members to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity. Camp Miriam will ask in the camp forms how the camper prefers to be addressed, and staff members will ask campers privately how they would like to be addressed. Staff members are asked for their pronouns and are provided an opportunity to



include them on staff member 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 members to use the person’s chosen name and appropriate pronouns. Camp Miriam will act to the best of our ability to educate campers and staff members to avoid calling someone by their birth name when they have changed their name as part of their gender identity.

### **De-Gendering Places & Traditions**

Leading up to the summer of 2023, Camp Miriam has been working on (and continues to work on) inclusion initiatives at camp. These discoveries included removing gendered language (since 2016, we have used gender-neutral Hebrew) from places in camp. We continue to explore the role of gender in camp programs and traditions and how we can prevent feelings of exclusion. With that lens, we have made programmatic revisions over the last few years to reflect our commitment to being an inclusive camp. Camp Miriam will continue to monitor and adjust programmatic areas to assure maximum inclusion.

### **Questions/Concerns**

We are available for any community members who want to talk more about these policies.

- If parents/guardians have any questions or concerns they can contact the Community Director at [registrar@campmiriam.org](mailto:registrar@campmiriam.org).
- If any campers have questions or concerns they can speak to their camp counselors.
- If any staff member has concerns they can contact the *Rosh Machaneh* (Camp Director).

### **Resources:**

- <https://www.jqtvancouver.ca/resources>
- <https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/topic/families-parenting/>