



**CAMP**  
**ASPARE**

**2022 PLAYBOOK**

**(CAMPER & PARENT HANDBOOK)**

Dear Camp Aspire Campers and Parents,

Welcome to Camp Aspire 2022! For the past two summers, Camp Aspire was a one-week immersive sports camp experience for the Yeshiva athlete. This year, we are so excited to be able to offer a full four weeks of Aspire! Not only will there be three more weeks of opportunities to grow the campers' sports acumen and techniques, but this added time will allow everyone in the group to be a cohesive unit. The bond they will achieve with our amazing staff of *Rebbeim* and counselors will be incomparable!

The Camp Aspire 2022 Playbook will give you all the information you should need for camp this summer. Parents, we thank you for entrusting us with your most treasured gems. Our goal is to return them to you as boys who have gained new athletic skills, but most importantly, as men who have learned how to be exemplary Torah role models. We look forward to a summer experience for the body, mind, and soul.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at [mbennett@campaspire.com](mailto:mbennett@campaspire.com).

Sincerely,

Rabbi Mordechai Bennett, Director

---

## **MISSION**

Camp ASPIRE is the premier summer destination for the Yeshiva athlete. Located in beautiful Erie, Pennsylvania a few minutes from Lake Erie, Camp Aspire gives you the tools to cultivate and develop your athletic skills at a picturesque 70+ acre campus with a world-class training staff, and at the same time foster positive growth in davening and learning. Daily activities will include drills, scrimmages, high-level training, competitive leagues, and various shiurim offered throughout the day in order to imbue proper middos on and off the court. When you combine all of this with premium accommodations, gourmet food, and our private campus, Camp Aspire is truly unlike any other Jewish sports camp experience in the world.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

First day of Camp Aspire: Monday, June 27, 2022

Last day of Camp Aspire: Monday, July 25, 2022

## **HOW TO CONTACT US**

Call/Text/Whatsapp: (814) 201-7121

Email: [office@campaspire.com](mailto:office@campaspire.com)

## **CAMP LOCATION**

Camp Aspire will be held on the grounds of Granite Ridge (the former Mercyhurst NE Campus) 16 W. Division Street, North East, Pennsylvania 16428.

## **FEES**

All camp tuition must be paid in full by **July 1, 2022** unless other prior arrangements have been made with the Administration. Outstanding payments may result in jeopardized enrollment. There are no refunds after June 1, 2022. If a camper leaves by his own will, tuition paid will not be refunded. Additionally, there will be no refunds for campers who are dismissed due to violating the Camp Aspire rules and regulations.

## **CAMP FORMS**

All forms must be filled out completely prior to the start of camp. Any incomplete form may impact a camper's enrollment. Mandatory forms include: Health History, Mental Health, Physician's Exam, Insurance, Bunk Request, and Travel Information. To access all your camper's forms, please log in to your CampInTouch account.

## **VISITING CAMP**

Due to the short program and remote location, there is no visiting day at Camp Aspire. You will see how excited campers will be to see their families once camp is over!

## **COMMUNICATING WITH CAMPERS**

To reduce potential homesickness, we discourage phone calls with campers. In case of an emergency, camp leadership will be in touch. Please reach out to camp via phone or email with any questions or concerns throughout the summer. We do encourage letter writing. Campers should bring everything they will need to correspond – paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps. Mail should be sent to Camp Aspire/ "Care of" campers name. Attn: Main Office 16 W. Division St. North East PA 16428

Camp care packages are strongly discouraged and may not be delivered in a timely fashion. We will provide everything that your camper needs and there is no need to send any food. If a camper forgot something important at home such as his tefillin, those type of packages will be accepted. We can supply other forgotten items like toothbrushes. Any major costs incurred will be billed to the parents.

## **PHOTOS**

Photos during the course of the summer will be posted to our Instagram page. Sign up for CampAspirePA to see the latest news and pics. <https://www.instagram.com/campaspirepa/>. Additionally, we will share pictures through our WhatsApp group. Please make sure you are signed up for both, so you won't miss any of the action!

## HEAD STAFF



**Rabbi  
Mordechai Bennett  
Director**



**Yitz Gecovitch  
Head of Operations**



**Rabbi Shmuel Silber  
Camp Rav**



**Rabbi Yitzy Weiss  
Division Head**



**Rabbi Matt Faigen  
Assistant Director**



**Mordy Rechtes  
Division Head**



**Zack Kessler  
Rosh Madrich**



**Ben Steele  
Head of Sports**



**Rabbi Aryeh Cohen  
Rebbe and  
Staff Mashpiah**



**Daniel Gelb  
Director of Food  
Services**



**Rabbi Yosef Platt  
Rebbe**

## STAFF

Counselors are hired not only for their skills and personalities but also for their ability to be positive Jewish role models. Camp Aspire's staff members are enthusiastic, loving, and camper-focused. We train staff in a code of conduct, including "no tolerance" for smoking, drinking, and drugs. The code also addresses appropriate relationships and behavior. Although the camp environment is generally informal, it is critical to establish limits and reporting processes for bullying, inappropriate remarks, or physical conduct. Our staff training focuses on positive relationship building, appropriate staff/camper interactions, how to support campers, basic first aid, and so much more. All staff are fingerprinted and have criminal background and child protective services background checks done on them prior to working at Camp Aspire.

## GRATUITIES

Though camp gratuities are not required, tips are a way to express *hakaros hatov*, gratitude. Financial recognition for a counselor is always appreciated. If you are not able to express your appreciation in this way, a letter of thanks is always encouraged. Checks can be mailed to the campus, please send out by the middle of the third week of camp to ensure receipt. If you would prefer, you can make a credit card payment and we can give the staff member cash. Please coordinate with the office to do so.

## CAMP ASPIRE SCHEDULE

The primary focus of Camp Aspire is to develop the whole athlete – body, mind, and soul. Our ultimate goal is to teach every camper how to be a *mentch* on and off the court. We will be focusing on basketball skills and player development, with time spent playing other sports, like football, baseball, soccer, and volleyball. Each day will consist of sport-specific training, strength and conditioning, drills, scrimmages, league games, and a night activity. Indoor swim will occur 3-4 times a week. We have partnered with Erie Sports Center who will provide specialty coaches and trainers throughout the summer.

We are fortunate to have access to an Olympic-caliber sports training facility, SPIRE, about an hour away. There will be two trips to SPIRE during camp to take advantage of their exceptional facilities and staff.

## TRIPS

The two trips this summer will be to Cedar Point Amusement Park and an Erie Seawolves baseball game. There will be other smaller offsite trips, taking advantage of the unique landscape and amenities of the scenic Lake Erie area.

## JEWISH LIFE

We are very fortunate to have Rabbi Shmuel Silber as our camp Rav. Along with Rabbi Silber's exceptional teaching ability, his gentle nature and love for *Chassidus* will set the tone for an unparalleled Jewish experience. Rabbi Silber leads our incredible group of Rebbeim. It is Aspire's goal for the learning to be engaging, meaningful, and practical. Each shiur will spend time on *Gemara*, *Mussar*, *Machshava*, and *Parsha*. The learning will be interactive, and the boys will be encouraged to contribute and participate. *Shiur* will also create an opportunity to forge a relationship with the Rebbe, which we hope will remain a meaningful relationship for the boys throughout the year.

Additionally, we strive to create a meaningful, inspiring, fun, and enjoyable Shabbos experience that will be an opportunity to bond with each other, but most importantly, Hashem. Beginning with an *Erev Shabbos Toameha*, *leibidig Kabbolas Shabbos*, delicious *seudos*, inspiring *Divrei Torah* and melodic *zemiros*, Shabbos will be nothing other than "Geshmak!"

## **CAMPUS LIFE**

Camp will be on the beautiful Granite Ridge campus. On-site is an indoor gym that has basketball courts and a weight room. Outdoor sports facilities include baseball and softball fields, an outdoor basketball court, and other fields for soccer and lacrosse. Within the main building are dining facilities and the camper lounge with ping pong, air hockey, and other recreational games. All davening and learning will occur in our *Beis Medrash*, a short indoor walk from the dorms.

## **ROOMING**

Each boy will have a bed, closet/wardrobe, dresser, and desk in their dormitory room. Rooms will have 2-6 beds and have their own window unit air conditioner.

Camp is a place to grow and make new friends. We also understand that it may make coming to camp a bit easier if your child comes with a friend. If that is the case, please let us know and we will take that into consideration when making room assignments. We cannot guarantee any request. We will divide campers by age and school. Please understand that we make room assignments well in advance, so let us know by June 1<sup>st</sup> if you have a specific request.

## **SECURITY**

The camp curfew will be at 11pm each night unless there is a special activity. The dorm building will be locked and inaccessible from outside from midnight-7:00 am daily. Local law enforcement is aware of Camp Aspire's presence on the grounds this summer and will be making sporadic visits. Additionally, an armed security guard will be onsite for specified hours.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

If your camper will be celebrating a birthday while at camp and you would like to purchase a cake for all the campers to enjoy, please contact the camp office by June 15<sup>th</sup> to make payment arrangements.

## **FOOD**

Proper nutrition and hydration are very important to a successful camp experience. Please stress to your camper the significance of eating when meals are served, and drinking water throughout the day. Please bring a refillable water bottle (labeled with camper's name) that will be used daily to ensure your camper remains hydrated.

All food will be made by our kitchen staff under the direction of Food Services Director, Daniel Gelb. Kosher supervision will be overseen by our Camp Rav, Rabbi Shmuel Silber. We aim to serve healthy plentiful choices at each meal.

Daily breakfasts will always include hard-boiled eggs, bread, cereal, yogurt, and cheese. Additional items that will be rotated include oatmeal, French toast, waffles, and pancakes.

Lunches will typically be dairy. A sampling of meals is pasta, baked potato bar, fish sticks, pizza, falafel, and grilled cheese.

Dinners will typically be meat. BBQs, tacos, meatballs, and chicken are some of the selections.

There will be daily afternoon snacks and campers will have access to drinks in the dorms. There is no canteen.



## ALLERGIES

We are extremely diligent and supportive when it comes to caring for campers with special dietary needs, particularly those with food allergies, sensitivities, and/or intolerances. We do allow peanuts and tree nuts on campus. It is imperative that you make us aware of all allergies and sensitivities on your camper's medical forms. If he has a severe allergy, please email us prior to camp so we can fully understand his needs and make appropriate substitutions.

If your camper has a prescription for an EpiPen, you must send it to camp. We assume that campers who are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above can and will self-administer. If this is not the case, please email us to let us know so we can make our staff aware.

## MEDICAL INFORMATION

We daven and hope that all of our campers and staff remain happy and healthy for the duration of the summer. Should a medical need arise, we have partnered with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) to provide all medical services. UPMC operates a primary care office across the street from our campus and will be available for all camp needs. Should your insurance not cover the cost, a substantially discounted rate will be charged. You must fill out all health forms and insurance forms through your CamplnTouch account. Additionally, we have multiple EMTs on staff who will provide immediate attention in case of any medical emergency.

Should your child require medication while at camp, all medication **must** be sent to camp in the original container(s) showing your child's full name and dosage information. Please write explicit dosage and dispensary instructions on the camper's Health History Form. Medication should be given to one of the head staff upon arrival. One of our EMTs will be responsible for dispensing all meds during mealtimes unless there is a different specific time noted on their paperwork. If your child has over-the-counter medication (daily vitamins, creams, or other herbal supplements) they must also be in the original containers with explicit instructions on the Health History Form. Please do not send Tylenol, Advil, etc. as we will provide these basic medications as long as you have signed off on this. If your child's medical status or medications changes prior to their arrival at camp, please send a written update along with their medication so we can best serve your child.

Your child's safety and well-being is our primary concern. Insect bites, minor sunburn, headaches, minor poison ivy, upset stomachs, cuts and scrapes, etc. are considered basic routine health care. It is our policy to notify parents only if a child experiences illness or injury that requires more than basic routine health care. Please be sure to provide accurate contact information and an additional emergency contact who will be available while your child is at camp, especially if you plan on being out of the country during this period.

Our staff will remind campers to wear and reapply sunscreen, however, we are not able to individually monitor each camper to ensure they are reapplying as needed. This is summer camp. Your child will be playing outside a lot of the day and will be exposed to the sun. Please discuss with your camper the importance of applying sunscreen often and dangers of sunburn, as well as the possibility of dehydration if they do not drink water often enough.

Anyone feeling ill or severely injured during camp will be taken to the UPMC office next door. We will follow guidance from their doctors regarding medication, rest, etc. We will follow the Pennsylvania Health Department's requirements regarding COVID protocols. Currently there are no specific requirements. If something changes, we will assess and proceed accordingly. Testing for COVID will occur if the UPMC doctor

deems it necessary. In the event of a symptomatic positive case, we will again, follow health department requirements.

## **CAMPER MENTAL HEALTH**

Some parents hesitate to provide camp with personal information about their child's behavior or past experiences. Some fear the information will be used inappropriately, while others are concerned about their child being labeled or treated differently. All parents want to see their child have a fresh start at camp. While we fully understand these concerns, we know how invaluable such information can be in assisting us to help make your child's adjustment to camp as smooth as possible – something we know all parents want. Knowing about a learning difficulty, ADHD, bedwetting problem, a recent loss or major change in the family or child's life, etc. makes a tremendous difference in helping us to be sensitive to your child's needs. This information will be handled confidentially and shared only on a "need to know" basis. We hope you will be open and honest with your child's struggles, so our staff can have the greatest impact this summer and will allow your child the best summer experience possible.

## **HOMESICKNESS**

Being away from home for an entire month can be scary, especially for our younger campers who are away at camp for the first time. Our staff will do their best to help campers deal with homesickness and be sensitive to their needs. Please help us address homesickness before your camper even arrives at camp. Have a chat with your child before their departure. Reassure them that feelings of homesickness are totally normal. Make sure your child knows how much fun they will be having while they are away. Make sure your child knows that he is unable to call home while at camp.

Please do not say things like "If you are homesick or want to come home, I will come and get you."

Encourage your child's growth and success by saying things like:

- "You're going to LOVE camp and make so many memories!"

- "I can't wait to hear about all of the fun, new things you're going to experience."

- "Focus on making new friends and learning new things!"

- "If you're feeling homesick, let your camp counselor know and they will help you"

Rest assured, homesickness is usually very short-lived and typically campers adjust to camp quickly and smoothly!

## **ABUSE and NEGLECT**

Camp Aspire follows all Pennsylvania State Laws and Regulations with regards to the reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Staff are trained on their duties as mandated reporters, signs and symptoms of abuse, and appropriate conduct/best practices for interactions with children.

## **CODE of CONDUCT**

A major factor in the success of a camp program is the behavior, interest, and aptitude of the campers. These ingredients set the mood for the entire summer. Courtesy and respect are always expected. The purpose of camp is to develop new friendships, knowledge and skills, and most importantly, to have fun! All standards of behavior at Camp Aspire are grounded in Torah values. We want campers to be part of a *chevra*, a group of friends, who live in a vibrant community. Campers who do not follow the established Code of Conduct rules may be sent home early from camp per discretion of the camp director. No refund shall be given if a camper is asked to leave camp early due to poor behavior.



## **EXPECTATIONS**

- Campers are expected to attend all parts of the planned program. If for some reason a camper is not feeling well, he will be sent for a medical examination.
- Campers are expected to clean up after themselves. Campers will be asked to put away supplies, throw away their trash, leave all activity areas and their dorm rooms clean.
- Campers must always be with their groups. Campers must never leave the campus grounds without staff supervision.
- Campers will respect all campus buildings and property. Parents will be billed for repairs if their child causes any damage.
- Vandalism, shoplifting, or theft from other campers, the campus, or while on field trips will not be tolerated.
- No video games, game systems, or cell phones will be allowed at camp. Cell phones will be handed in upon arrival and will be kept in a safe location until campers are on their way home.
- Bullying, fighting, and abuse will not be tolerated. Any harassment, hazing, or teasing with the intent to belittle, scare, offend, or harm is unacceptable.
- Language must be appropriate and respectful of others. Swearing, name-calling and insults of any type will not be tolerated.

## **SMOKING and DRUG POLICY**

Smoking, vaping, alcohol, and drug use is prohibited at Camp Aspire. We have a “no tolerance” substance policy. Anyone using drugs will be immediately removed from camp.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

When limits are broken, it is essential to provide some form of consequence and understanding to prevent future problems. Madrichim and Division Heads will address minor behavioral issues. Parents will be notified of any issue and actions taken by Camp Aspire senior staff. Discipline may range from a simple phone call with parents and the camper to expulsion. A behavior report will be filled out and placed in the camper’s permanent file. Major violations that result in the dismissal of the camper from camp will not receive a tuition refund. Parents will be responsible to make arrangements to pick up their camper and will be liable for any costs incurred. There is never any use of corporal punishment at camp.

## **LAUNDRY**

Weekly laundry service will be provided at no extra charge. Each camper receives their own personalized laundry bag, which is sent out once a week and returned in that same personal bag. Laundry will be done three times over the course of camp. Camp takes no responsibility for clothing that shrinks, discolors, or is lost in the process.

## **LABELING**

All clothing and personal items must be clearly marked with the camper’s full name. If using name tapes, sew/iron them securely where they may be seen. If stamping or marking with indelible laundry ink, make sure it's legible. Many campers bring similar items. Unmarked items that are lost are less likely to find their way back to their owner. Campers must assume responsibility for the proper care of personal belongings. Camp bears no responsibility for lost items. Though there will be a lost and found area, we expect campers to be responsible for their belongings. If we can identify the owner, we will make every effort to get the item back to you. Items that are not claimed by the end of camp, will be donated or disposed.

## DRESS CODE

Campers are expected to wear appropriate attire for each part of the day. Athletic wear is recommended during all sports and training activities, while pants and shirts with sleeves and collars are recommended for all davening and learning.

## WHAT TO BRING & WHAT NOT TO BRING

Camp is only four weeks long, and with the availability of weekly laundry, there is no need to overpack. See below for a suggested packing list. Please do not bring any valuable items or expensive clothing to camp.

### **CAMP ASPIRE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OR DAMAGE OF PERSONAL ITEMS.**

You should be able to fit this all in one large rolling duffel bag and a carryon bag. In order to save space, we suggest placing your comforter and pillow in a bag made to vacuum out the air.

## SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Siddur  
Tefillin (put in carryon bag)  
Personal Sforim  
Tzitzis  
2 Yarmulkes  
Clips/Bobby Pins

10 pairs of underwear  
10 undershirts  
10 pairs of athletic socks  
2 pairs of dress socks  
6 polo shirts  
4 pairs of casual pants  
10 t-shirts  
8 pairs of shorts  
2 bathing suits  
3 pairs of sweatpants  
2 pairs of pajamas  
2 Shabbos outfits (suit, button-down dress shirt/pants)  
1 pair of basketball shoes  
1 pair of dress shoes  
1 pair of sneakers  
1 pair flip flops  
2 baseball hats  
1 sweater or light jacket  
1 light raincoat  
1 Hooded Sweatshirt

1 blanket/comforter  
2 sets of linen (twin bed)  
Pillow  
2 bath towels/1 towel for swimming  
2 hand towels  
Soap and shampoo  
Deodorant  
Toothbrush, toothpaste  
Hairbrush or comb  
Extra pair of glasses or contact lenses  
Sunscreen  
Nail clipper

Hangers  
Mesh bag  
Swim goggles  
Travel alarm clock  
Watch  
Baseball glove  
Refillable water bottle  
Backpack  
Medication\*  
Paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps

\*If you take any prescriptions and/or over-the-counter medications, you must inform the Camp Aspire administration in writing on your health form prior to camp. The description must include dosage and when meds are taken.

**Please DO NOT bring to camp:**

- Technology of any kind. If it has a screen, don't bring it! This includes smart watches.
- Items of high value such as watches, jewelry, and expensive cameras.
- Clothing that is delicate, new, or valuable.
- Clothing with slogans or pictures that is not befitting of a ben Torah.
- Matches, lighters, fireworks of any kind.
- Guns, knives, and weapons of any kind.
- Tobacco products, vapes, alcoholic beverages, or controlled substances

There is no need to send food or spending money. If your camper does bring money to use on our big trips, Camp Aspire does not take any responsibility for cash that gets lost or misplaced. We advise campers to store any money in our office safe if they do bring cash.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Camp Aspire feels that it is important to "Disconnect to Reconnect!"

Camp allows them to spend more time enjoying the outdoors, as well as appreciating and improving their peer-to-peer relationships and social skills. As stated above, no devices are allowed at camp.

## **TRAVEL TO/FROM CAMP**

If you have not yet done so, please finalize your son's travel plans as soon as possible. Camp will open on Monday, June 27th at 4:00 pm for campers being driven to camp.

We recommend that campers flying in use one of the flights to Buffalo Niagara Airport listed below.

Transportation will be provided transportation to camp from the airport. Campers arriving at other times will need to be transported to/from camp at their family's expense.

To Camp, Monday, June 27th				From Camp, Monday, July 25th			
Airport	Airline	Flight #	Departure	Airport	Airline	Flight #	Departure
LGA	Delta	5052	1:48 pm	JFK	Delta	5274	7:00 pm
EWR	United	3537	2:29 pm	EWR	United	3438	7:37 pm
BAL	Southwest	3008	2:40 pm	BAL	Southwest	2730	7:25 pm
ORD	United	535	2:00 pm	ORD	American	1398	6:38 pm
PHL	American	5647	1:50 pm	PHL	United	3438	7:37 pm*
LAX	United	622	7:00 am	LAX	JetBlue	491	6:55 pm

\*Indicates a stopover