

ELECTRONICS AT CAMP...Greene Unplugged

Unplug from your electronics and the outside distractions to plug into yourself, your friendships, the outdoors and Jewish life at camp!

***Al tifrosh min hatzibur* - Do not separate yourself from the community!**

Our Electronics Policy is designed to:

- ✓ encourage your children to spend more time off their beds and outdoors
- ✓ promote socialization between campers
- ✓ remove the divide between “the haves, and the have-nots” in each cabin
- ✓ reduce the stress associated with the damage to and theft of electronics
- ✓ give your children a much needed break from the world of technology
- ✓ allow your children to fully embrace and “plug into” the connections they make with other campers as they “unplug” from their electronics
- ✓ ensure that your children are not exposed to age-inappropriate material
- ✓ ensure that your children cannot post their camp photos on the internet
- ✓ ensure that your children are not focusing on situations revolving around their friends at home
- ✓ prevent your children from hearing about situations and incidents concerning home and family before their parents have a chance to communicate with them



Why are we changing the policy this year?

The parts of the policy that are changing are the sections regarding video games and tablets/e-readers.

- Regarding video games, many, many parents have asked us to go completely “electronics-free” at camp. It was actually the source of most of the suggestions on our post-summer on-line parent evaluations and other parent emails. You can look at the list above to see how communications and gaming systems affect life at camp and in the bunk. Many of our counselors spend most of their in-bunk time trying to regulate their use.
- iPads, Kindles, and most other reading systems and tablets not only make books available through the internet, but make all content available while children are at camp. Again, the list above summarizes many of the reasons that these devices are a real problem here. Not only can tablets act as video games (see above), but they can be portals to the outside world, including much that parents send their children to camp to avoid.
- Rather than trying to keep internet-ready devices off of the internet (taking out SIM card, etc) we have decided to ask parents not to send the devices at all. This is best summed up as “nothing with a touch-screen”.

iPOD/MP3 Players - YES

If your child must have his/her music at camp, please send an inexpensive mp3 player or an older generation iPod that does not have a touch screen. **We will not allow any mp3 players/mobile devices with touch screens.** This way we will ensure that our campers cannot watch videos, TV shows, movies or access the internet. As such, we will not allow any Smart Phones, even if the SIM card has been removed.

DIGITAL CAMERAS - YES

We encourage you to bring an inexpensive digital camera or disposable cameras with you. (Make sure you pack enough memory cards and batteries.) Please discuss proper handling of the camera and how pictures should be taken of bunkmates only with their permission. No cameras will be allowed that access the internet. These allow instant uploads of pictures to Facebook, etc. You should ALWAYS review your children’s digital photos (not only camp photos) before allowing them to be posted on the internet.

GAMEBOYS, PSPs, NINTENDO DSs - NO

No electronic held-hand game devices will be allowed in camp. Each cabin has a box with board games and card games. These games, not hand-held electronic games, allow our campers to socialize, interact with one another, and build community within the cabin.

LAPTOPS, NETBOOKS, iPADS, KINDLES, NOOKS – NO

None of these, or similar electronic devices, will be allowed in camp. Please send books.

CELL PHONES - NO

It is our long-standing policy that campers are **NOT PERMITTED** to have a cell phone at camp.

We believe that being at camp is an opportunity for your child to experience a world beyond home and a chance for you and your child to practice "letting go." "Letting go" allows children to develop autonomy, independence, and a stronger sense of self. It allows them to make new friends, take responsibility for themselves and their bunkmates, problem solve, and mature a bit. These things cannot be achieved when parents are only a phone call away.

Although cell phones have been strictly prohibited at camp for many years, a number of families often choose to ignore this policy. The consequences of this are disastrous. Cell phones can:

- Lead to conflicts within the cabin
- Allow campers to focus on their friends at home rather than their friends at camp.
- Enable campers to call parents when they need advice instead of turning to their peers or counselors.
- Enable campers to call friends from home when they need advice. Parents are rarely called on campers' cell phones.
- Prevent campers from learning to problem solve.

We believe that calling home to parents or peers removes the opportunity for a camper to learn how to problem solve on their own, or to seek help within their peer and counselor community at Greene. We want your children to learn more about self-sufficiency while here, and having a line to the outside makes that very difficult for them. Calls from camp to peers at home rarely end well.

We feel cell phone use at camp runs counter to the values we teach and uphold at GFC and interferes with an important peer aspect of the overnight camp experience.

When you allow your child to break the rules and take a cell phone to camp, you're teaching your child that the rules do not apply to you and your family.

To send a very clear message about how strongly we feel about leaving cell phones at home, we have a *zero tolerance cell phone policy*. If we learn that any camper has a cell phone in camp, we will take it away and store it in our camp safe until closing day.

Please take the time to discuss this policy with your camper. In the past, campers have hidden their cell phones in their bags without their parents' knowledge. Parents will be held responsible if their camper does not comply with the cell phone policy regardless of how the cell phone arrived at camp.

ELECTRONICS AND OUR STAFF

Our camp staff is being briefed on the rules both prior to their arrival and during staff orientation at Camp. Our message to them is simple: do not use any electronics that you bring while in the presence of campers. Every bunk has a cubby that locks, and this is where staff can keep their electronic devices. They can use them in the staff lounge. They are never to be on their cell phones during working hours.

ONE LAST WORD ON ELECTRONICS...

We have spoken to many campers and parents about the policy, we have read our post-summer camp evaluations that mention it, and our Camp Committee has weighed in. We recommend that your child powers down, unplugs, and takes what we're certain is a well-needed break from the world of electronics. We recommend that if your child enjoys listening to music, that he/she brings CD's to camp with an inexpensive CD player or an inexpensive mp3 player without a touch screen and with headphones. We recommend disposable cameras or an inexpensive digital camera, a deck of cards, and a game of chess or scrabble. Please be respectful of the usage and content limitations we have in place. If you have any questions or want further clarification, please contact one of the Directors at gfc@urj.org or 254-859-5411.

Leave electronics at home!