



Parent Handbook
CAMP GINGHAM GIRAFFE

The Gingham Giraffe Preschool
234 Southern Boulevard, Chatham, NJ 07928
973.635.0033
www.ginghamgiraffe.com

The Gingham Giraffe Preschool, opened in 1990, offers educational programs for children aged 2-6 years and is Fully Licensed by NJ Dept of Children and Families. We are a **private, non-denominational, not-for-profit** preschool for *all* children, regardless of race, ability, sex or national/ethnic origin. **Gingham Giraffe strives to serve our community by providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all children who attend our play-based and academic programs.**

At summer camp, our goals are to explore new ways to play independently and together, create lasting memories and friendships, foster learning, and inspire creativity through arts & crafts. During camp, families will receive weekly email updates on themes and activities.

Our Camp Handbook is designed to provide helpful information for parents and guardians and is expansive but not all inclusive.

A Typical Day at Camp Gingham

- * 9:00 AM: Arrival/Free Play
- * 9:30 AM: Sports & Games
- * 10:00 AM: Snack & Story
- * 10:30 AM: Structured Activities
- * 11:30 AM: Lunch
- * 12:00 PM: Arts & Crafts
- * 12:30 PM: Playground/Dismissal

Outdoor play occurs daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Activities include teacher-led "structured play" and "free play." In the case of inclement weather or extreme heat, we will utilize our full-sized, air-conditioned gymnasium!

Play clothes and sneakers are the best choice for camp. Your child should be able to manage in the bathroom with minimal help. Avoid belts and suspenders and jewelry. Elastic waist pants are easiest and sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are best. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Avoid clothing that can catch on playground equipment (strings, loops). Weather permitting, we go outside every day; our playground is nice and shady - **Please label everything with your child's first and last name to minimize lost items.**

What to Bring

If your child already attends Gingham Giraffe for school, please continue to use their school bag. Children new to camp will be given a bag that will be used to transport items back and forth from home. **Please do not send children to school with bags other than the one provided. Additional/replacement bags can be purchased by contacting Directors.** Students will be spending time outdoors as much as possible.

If your child is prone to accidents and/or is being potty trained, parents should **send an extra set of clothes that will be kept at camp.** We will send home clothes/ask for replacements as needed!

Everything brought to camp will remain in your child's classroom and will be separated from others' belongings in a cubby or basket. **Everything should be labeled with your child's first and last name.**

Children should refrain from bringing any personal items (toys, lovies, comfort items) to camp.

When engaging in water play, children may use sprinklers, water tables, and play water games. While they will not be submerged in water, their clothing and shoes may get wet. **If you prefer, you may send in an extra set of clothes and water shoes/crocs to be kept at camp. Please bag and label these too!**

Snack, Lunch, Water

Each child will need to bring a labeled water bottle and a nut-free lunch every day. Simple and healthy is best! Snacks will be provided daily at camp. Our policy remains that there is no sharing of lunches or snacks due to allergies. Water bottles can be refilled by teachers if needed. Water bottles will come home daily for cleaning and refilling.

A nut-free snack will be provided daily. If your child has severe food allergies and/or if you would like to send a daily snack in with your child for any reason, please contact Directors.

We are a nut-free/peanut-free preschool. Please do not include peanut butter in your child's breakfast on the days they attend camp, as some children have reacted to "peanut breath". **Avoid eating in the car prior to arrival. Campers are not permitted to bring breakfast from the car into camp. If a child is suspected of eating something with nuts or nut butter in the car, Directors may ask the parent to accompany the child into school to wash their hands/brush their teeth.**

If your child has food allergies, additional paperwork is required. Please see the "Health and Safety" section in this handbook for more information. If your child has or develops food allergies, please notify us so that we can arrange a meeting with your child's teachers. An additional emergency form is also required.

Diapers & Potty Training

Many of our campers are still in diapers and/or are being potty-trained. Our faculty will diaper children when they are wet or soiled, and assist and encourage the use of the toilet if your child exhibits signs of readiness! If your child is in diapers or if he/she is potty training, please communicate with teachers directly so we can assist and support with positive encouragement and consistency. Diapers, pull ups and an extra set of clothing should be kept at camp (we also have extra diapers and loaner clothes!) Teachers will notify parents when supplies need to be replenished.

Regardless of the stage of training, all students are required to wear some type of protective layer under their clothing at all times (diaper, pull-up, underwear) to ensure cleanliness of each individual child and the shared space of the classroom.

Accidents happen! Young children have accidents for various reasons and because a child is trained at home does not necessarily mean they are trained for a busy classroom. Cleanliness is our priority: children will be cleaned and changed by a faculty member in the presence of another faculty member. If a more thorough cleaning is necessary, a parent will be notified to pick up the child. **If a child is in**

underwear and accidents occur frequently, parents will be notified and it may be required for the child to wear pull ups to camp until fully trained. Failure to comply with guidelines may result in a request for a schedule change to reduce accidents, or to withdraw from our program.

Faculty will always accompany children to the bathroom, however once using the toilet on a regular basis, independence and privacy are prioritized. Please teach and encourage wiping skills at home.

Birthdays

At Gingham Giraffe, we know that for children, birthdays are a big deal, and we are happy to celebrate your child's special day at camp! If desired, you may send in a special **nut-free treat (cookies, cupcakes, donuts, fruit, ice pops, etc..please, no candy)**... just let us know ahead of time!

Daily School Procedures

Arrival & Dismissal

Curb Service offers a safe way to enter and exit school and eliminates walking through a busy parking lot, while also helping to ease separation anxiety. Each family will be assigned a drop off location and time to drop off. **All camp dismissals will occur on the EXIT Drive - either by the playground (because it shaded!) or the cul-de-sac.**

Morning curb service begins promptly at 9 AM. Teachers will unbuckle your child from the car and walk them to the school entrance and/or their classroom if needed. **If you arrive at camp after 9:15 AM, you will need to walk your child to the Exit Drive door and call the office so that a faculty member can let you in.**

2 and 3 year olds will be dismissed from camp at 12:30 PM. 4, 5 and 6 year olds will be dismissed at 1 PM. If you have multiple children attending camp and they are in different age groups, they can be picked up together. Please discuss this with Directors, as some young campers may be required to be picked up at the earlier dismissal time until settled into a routine.

During dismissal, your child will be walked to your vehicle by a faculty member. The driver will need to secure the child in his/her car seat before departure. All drivers should be aware of this policy - babysitters, grandparents, etc!

Attendance

Whatever the reason, if your child will be absent from camp, please notify us via email or brightwheel.

Late Drop Off/Early Pick Up

Should you arrive late or need to pick up early, you must notify the office at 973-635-0033 so that a faculty member can let your child in, or escort your child to the curb for dismissal.

The Start of Camp: Phase-In Schedule & Separation Anxiety

We do not offer a phase-in schedule for camp due to its brevity. However, **if your child has not yet been in a school environment and you believe your camper may suffer from separation anxiety, they**

may benefit from a phase-in schedule. Please contact Directors to arrange this! If a camper is in distress due to separation, the Director will notify the parents and an earlier pick up may be required until the child is settled into a routine.

Letting children express how they feel the first few days and “seeing and hearing” their worries and fears will help them know that they are supported. However, families should keep in mind that too much emphasis and discussion about the first day of camp may cause a child to be apprehensive. **When parents are positive, excited, and confident, children sense this and feel the same way.** Accordingly, it is helpful to practice your child’s camp routine (bedtime, breakfast, etc.) days before camp starts.

Camp is a great time for children to make new friends and engage in peer play in new surroundings and with new materials. Awareness that separation is an important part of growing up and a lifelong process that must be handled with care and sensitivity will balance the challenge of this initial separation. Working as partners in guiding your child through this adventure is paramount to a successful transition from home to camp.

Tuition & Payment

Full payment is due at the time of registration. Requests for reimbursement will be granted up until March 15th. Refunds or credit will not be given for vacation, illness, or days of camp missed for any reason.

Communication, Technology, Photos and Social Media

Parents will receive a weekly recap from the Camp Director which will include photos, planned activities and other important information. Occasionally, social media (Facebook & Instagram) is used to share fun events that happen at camp. **If you do not wish to have your child’s photo shared on social media, please contact Directors.** During camp, parents can contact Directors through email, brightwheel or calling the office.

Methods of Parental Notification

If needed, Directors and Teachers will call, email, or send a brightwheel message to parents depending on the situation. Voicemail will be left in non-emergencies. **For emergencies, we will call the preferred phone number listed on your Enrollment Form,** followed by the second parent phone number. If parents cannot be reached, we will call the child’s Emergency Contacts.

If a method other than a phone call should be used to notify parents of an injury to a child’s head or face, a bite that breaks the skin, a fall from a height, or an injury requiring professional medical attention, **you must note this on your child’s Enrollment Form.**

brightwheel

Gingham Giraffe currently uses the app called brightwheel for simple and easy communication between parents and faculty, as well as billing. Instructions on how to access and set up brightwheel will be sent at enrollment time. **Note: Non-urgent matters only. Faculty are not required to respond**

to brightwheel messages while supervising/teaching children during camp hours. If an immediate response is required, please call the school office at 973-635-0033.

Email

Email is checked daily by the Directors. **Non-urgent school** matters regarding health, attendance, and camp policies should be sent via email. Parents can expect a response to emails within 24 hours when camp is in session. **If an immediate response is required, please call the school office at 973-635-0033.** Leave a message so that faculty can contact you directly by your preferred method if needed.

Health & Safety

Our goals are to nurture and educate your child in a safe and healthy environment. New Jersey Law requires that all children must have a complete health record on file and be adequately immunized. Children will not be left in our care without an up to date Health Record.

Excludable Communicable Diseases

We expect that all parents will exercise caution and good judgment by sending their child to camp only when physically well. If there is doubt in your mind because of symptoms, lack of rest or behavior, your child should be kept home. If your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend camp:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes/jaundice skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior change
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck
- Unmanageable runny nose

Once the child is symptom-free or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/others the child may return to camp.

A child who contracts **excludable communicable symptoms or disease may not return to school/camp without a note from a health care provider** stating he/she presents no risk to himself/others and/or until all open sores/rashes are healed. If a child is exposed to an excludable communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, Covid-19) while at camp, parents will be notified in writing.

Illness & Exclusion Due To Illness

If your child feels ill during camp, the child will be isolated from other students, and a parent or caregiver will be notified so pick up can be arranged. Please make sure someone is readily available should this be necessary. **Your emergency contact should be geographically close.**

Your child may return to camp after 24 hours that he/she is fever free without the aid of fever-reducing medication.

If prescribed antibiotics, your child must have them in his/her system for 24 hours before returning.

Children displaying symptoms of uncontrolled mucus, cough, sneeze or malaise may be discharged or asked to remain home at the discretion of the Directors.

Children with highly contagious illnesses (impetigo, lice, etc) must remain home from school until a doctor's note stating that they are no longer contagious is presented.

Parents are required to pick up ill children immediately. **If you are not able to pick up your child within 30 minutes, or we can't get in touch with you, we will call emergency contacts.** Please ensure that your emergency contacts are up-to-date and **geographically close** at all times!

Injuries

Small cuts and scrapes will be treated by a member of our first-aid trained faculty and noted in our injury log. If a child receives any injury - however minor - on the head or face, it will be reported to the Parent/Guardian immediately. If there should be a biting incident, which can happen with young children, both parents will be notified and a second incident will result in the "biter" leaving school early.

The faculty at any time will call 911 for emergency medical treatment if their judgment warrants it. Parents/Guardians would be contacted immediately thereafter. If necessary, faculty will accompany a child to the hospital until the child's Parent/guardian arrives.

Sun Screen

At camp, we spend much of our time outdoors! **Sunscreen should be applied daily at home before camp.** Teachers are not permitted to apply sunscreen to children. Baseball hats and sunglasses are also welcome!

Medication

Any emergency medications that should be kept at camp must be labeled and **in the original prescription box** (epi-pens, benadryl etc.) Please note the expiration dates. Medication will be administered by the Directors only in the case of an emergency, after calling 911. Serious medical conditions will require the completion of our Emergency Health Plan form to be completed and signed by a Physician and a conference with Teachers and the Director. **If a child is taking any medication on a regular basis, it must be administered by parents.**

Food Allergies/Emergency Plans

We are a nut-free school. (See “Lunch, Snack, Water” in this handbook) **If your child has serious food allergies, or develops one, please notify us immediately. You will need to provide medication and we will review our emergency plan with you.** We always err on the side of caution and take this very seriously! Teachers will make decisions with the Directors when classes are established to determine "safe" food practices for each class. The safety of all children will be taken into consideration. Emergency plans regarding medications etc. will be discussed with Parents, Team Teachers and the Director. An "Emergency Bag" will be compiled and will be kept with the child at all times.

Behavior Policy: Positive Discipline

Positive Discipline helps to develop confidence, healthy relationships and self-esteem. Behavior guidelines are given which are appropriate for the age of the child. In order for children to appreciate and respect each other and their environment, they need limits set gently but firmly. Young children need help in: establishing inner controls geared to their level of maturity. We hope to foster self-control and an understanding of themselves and others. All children are invited and encouraged to participate in all activities.

If a child becomes disruptive, we.....

Intervene * Reiterate Rules * Redirect

We hope to:

- Anticipate friction to effectively redirect/ clarify messages and brightwheel
- Offer encouragement and options and praise accomplishments
- Offer options/point out consequences
- Provide positive attention and affection

If a child behaves in a destructive manner, a few minutes of "quiet time" with a teacher may be warranted. "Time out" is encouraged as a positive tool to help regulate emotions and behaviors rather than as a punitive measure.

If a child is disruptive or aggressive, the child will be separated temporarily from other students in the classroom. If necessary, the child may be removed from the classroom by the Director or acting Director.

If a child is physical towards another child or faculty member (hitting, kicking, biting), on the first instance:

- The parent will be contacted

On the second instance:

- The parent will be contacted and the child must be picked up from camp immediately.

On the third instance:

- The child will not be permitted to return to camp.

At Gingham Giraffe, our goal is to provide a safe, positive, and welcoming environment where every child can learn, play, explore, and grow. We encourage kindness, respect, teamwork, and fun each day, and we appreciate the partnership of our families in helping us create a happy and successful camp experience for all campers. We look forward to a wonderful summer together!

