

# OVERNIGHT CAMP SUGGESTED CHECKLIST

US Sports Camps represent the top tier of youth enrichment and the value of safety first! Below are strategies from the Camp Directors of our top-reviewed camps. What tip might elevate your camp to meet or exceed “Best in Class.” standards?

## Best in Class Staffing

- ☐ Assign an on-site director or hire an administrative support position (especially for large camps) to follow up on-site to ensure policies and protocols work.
- ☐ On-duty staffing ratio 1:10 (may differ based on your sport, housing contract, or camper ages).
- ☐ An Overnight Dorm Supervisor (at least 25 years old) is always on-site.
- ☐ Staff work in pairs during bed checks and bathroom supervision (Rule of Three: never one-on-one with minors).
- ☐ Staff rooms are labeled and can be easily found by campers. Signs in the hallway should include staff contact mobile number(s) and room number(s).
- ☐ Staff rooms are placed near bathrooms, exits, and thresholds between wings/floors of genders or different youth groups to discourage misbehavior or sneaking.
- ☐ Hire staff that are adults with enthusiasm, experience working with youth, and are responsible.
- ☐ Create a staff group chat or text chain for quick communication and coordination before and during camp.
- ☐ Communicate staff assignments for hallways, common areas, etc.  
Set limitations to when staff are allowed on their cell phones, to ensure engagement with campers.

## Best in Class Experience

- ☐ Lead a Welcome Speech covering essential topics, rules, emergency procedures, schedule, and facility layout.
- ☐ Zero Tolerance for bullying, drugs/alcohol/vaping, sneaking out, bringing guests, or severe breach of rules.
- ☐ Encourage campers to contact staff if a problem occurs rather than calling home as first resort.
- ☐ Promote cohesion, engage campers in team building, and “get to know each other” activities.
- ☐ Staff should know all the participants by name ASAP.
- ☐ At meals, staff and participants sit together. Relocate isolated youth to another table to support cohesion.

## Best in Class Experience (Con't)

- ☐ Have a pre-planned after-dinner activity for each night (wiffle ball, movie night, corn hole tournament, capture the flag, spike ball tournament, ping pong tournament, talent show, bowling, etc.).
- ☐ During “downtime,” provide options for board games, activities, movies, and a social lobby for chatting. Staff should supervise and engage with campers during downtime to build a strong camp culture and ensure proper behavior. Staff downtime can be scheduled in shifts during camper downtime.
- ☐ Accommodate independence and maturity by establishing boundaries, time limits, and nearby supervision. Participants should always stay in a group and not leave the immediate premises. If you allow participants to order food: implement deadlines, have staff supervision of drop-offs, and check for allergy impacts on roommates.

## Best in Class Organization

- ☐ Create camper room assignments that honor their housing requests. Otherwise, group similar age range and gender campers.
- ☐ Provide each staff member with a camper roster and assign small groups for easier roll calls.
- ☐ Hallway bathroom doors are labeled with your program name, especially when showering or getting ready.
- ☐ Different genders and age groups are kept apart by floor or wing, supervised by staff members of the same gender.
- ☐ Be vigilant about strangers or other guests of the facility. Other camps’ youth can be problematic. Also, individuals with ill intent often target youth camps.
- ☐ Limit visitation in each other’s rooms and restrict room visitors to those of the same gender.
- ☐ Assign staff to shift schedules to monitor common areas and dorm rooms during all downtime. Campers should be asked to leave dorm room doors open during the day, if possible.
- ☐ Enforce times for “Ready for Bed” and “Lights Out” that ensure appropriate rest for the age of campers.
- ☐ Bed check between the “Ready for bed” and “Lights out” phases to ensure all participants are accounted for in appropriate rooms.
- ☐ Escort preteens to and from activities, housing, and meals.
- ☐ If teens are trusted to get from place to place without staff, ensure they travel in groups and have a method of communication.
- ☐ Do “face-checks” (identifying camper by face rather than roll call) before leaving the residence, dining, or facilities.
- ☐ Carry a backpack (lockable) with health forms, medication, and a first aid kit.
- ☐ On the last night, all campers pack up except for their morning outfit. Most facilities require you to move out in the morning, leaving the luggage in a storage room or bringing it to the fields/gyms.