CANCELING FIRST SESSIONS AND CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS SUGGESTIONS

As you navigate the continually evolving COVID-19 situation and prepare for a safe and meaningful summer, clear communications to all constituents is critical, particularly if there is a delayed camp opening or if camp remains closed for the full summer. We recognize that one camp's decision is not a determination of what the summer season will look like for other Jewish camps across the US and Canada. Each individual camp will need to consider their state/province restrictions and the guidelines put into place by the CDC/public health Canada in addition to a variety of practical, medical, or financial considerations of their own.

FJC has drafted communication templates to use as a guide as you share your plans with families in the coming weeks. We encourage you to make them your own, and take the following into consideration prior to sending them:

*We recommend that you focus on cancelling the first session and not make a blanket statement for the entire summer.*

* Your camp’s communications should be vetted by your legal team and insurance companies.
* Be sure to highlight your partners in making this decision to build trust and bolster a sense of authority in this area with your constituents (ACA, local and state officials, CCA, movement partnerships, FJC and health officials).
* Reference your previous emails, reminding parents and staff of your ongoing communication and transparency throughout this pandemic.
* Be transparent in all of your communications. Highlight CDC guidelines are expected to be issued by the end of April, and may continue to evolve beyond that time, potentially impacting camp programs and other social activities.
* Summer staff will need a separate set of communications and should include opportunities to get involved with virtual programming (if applicable).
* Have a plan in place to share the news with funders.
* Be ready to amend arrangements or cancellations with vendors and local partners.

Your community members will undoubtedly have a number of questions for you after receiving these notifications. To efficiently address their concerns, we encourage you to host town hall meetings for the following groups (depending on camp size, may break it up into smaller cohorts):

* For parents
* For campers
* For staff

[Here are some pointers on how to host a virtual town hall meeting.](http://jewishcamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/HOW-TO-HOST-AN-ENGAGING-AND-EFFECTIVE-VIRTUAL-TOWN-HALL.pdf)

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR CANCELLING FIRST SESSION AND UNCLEAR ABOUT SECOND SESSION

Back in March, as the reality of COVID-19 began to hit us, we never thought we’d be in a place where the 2020 camp season would be in jeopardy. As you are aware, over the last number of weeks, camp leadership has been working hard in partnership with [choose all that apply: ACA, CCA, Foundation for Jewish Camp, health authorities, local officials, etc.] to make determinations on how to proceed with summer 2020.

With the health and safety of our camp community in mind, <CAMP NAME> has made the difficult decision to cancel our first session scheduled to begin on <INSERT DATE>. We are not yet sure about the remainder of the summer and will be circling back by <INSERT DATE> with an update on the second session.

If we are safely able to open camp for the second portion of the summer, we will do so and offer shorter sessions with the goal of offering the camp experience to the most number of campers as possible. <Insert details about the basis for this decision and an expected notification date.>

We so appreciate that this decision will have an impact on each of your homes! I’m sure you have questions, and we want to do our best to be transparent and address your concerns. At the end of this email, we have listed some FAQs to provide additional details about our decision. We also encourage your family to join one of our town hall meetings.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS:

 <insert details>

We will be providing virtual opportunities to connect the community during the earlier summer weeks. As we continue to develop our virtual offerings, we would love your feedback. Please fill out this survey, which we encourage you to complete with your child(ren).

We are a resilient community. We will get through this, together! At camp, we often talk about the need for a rainy day plan—the flexibility it takes to make a shift at a moment’s notice and our staff’s ability to make it all seem seamless. At this moment, perhaps the most important part of a rainy day plan is to make the best of it, while remembering that rain clouds are temporary and we have many more sunny days ahead.

FAQ:

* What is the refund policy? (Here is suggested language)

There are a number of strategies camps may pursue regarding refunds in the event that camps are forced to close for summer 2020. We encourage camps to revisit the terms and conditions found in their registration contracts before determining which are appropriate to use in their communications with families.

Here are some potential strategies for camps to explore:

a) Encouraging families to donate some or all of their 2020 tuition as a charitable donation to ensure that camp can continue to operate in summer 2021.

b) Encourage families to roll over some or all payments towards enrollment for summer 2021. This supports camps during a stressful time in securing essential cash flow.

* “Families that roll over a minimum amount of (choose amount) will be able to lock in the current tuition rate for summer 2021 (will not face an increase).”
* “If you roll over and find yourself in financial hardship, you can reach out for a refund.”

c) Request a refund for your 2020 tuition. “We understand that some of our families need an immediate refund and we will honor that request. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we navigate the refund process.”

OTHER SCENARIOS TO PLAN FOR

* + Refund requests from high-risk campers (or campers with high-risk family members) should camp continue as planned.
  + Refund requests for limited camp seasons with camp dates or logistics altered.
  + Refund requests for virtual camp offerings.
* What about the rest of the summer?
* Where does this leave <insert camps name> financial stability?
* Will your virtual programming feel different than the virtual school experience my child just had?
* If camp opens, what precautions will be taken to ensure the health and safety of the campers and staff?