

CAMP USA, COUNSELOR AGREEMENT

1. Commitment to Campers

The main reason for the huge success of USA Summer Camp has always been the close relationship between counselors and campers. Our counselors are not "teachers" whose day is done when the lessons are over. They are "friends" who enjoy meals, recreation, and free time with their campers and even sleep in the same rooms. While this is the major reason our counselors forge such rewarding and loving bonds with their campers, it can also be quite exhausting. Some students may find this type of commitment difficult for them to accept and enjoy.

Counselor Commitment Number 1: I know that by making such a strong commitment to my campers, being a good counselor is going to require great patience and dedication. However, I also agree that this is very important to make this a rewarding experience for me and my campers. I confidently accept the challenge and pledge to be a caring and devoted counselor.

2. Camp Food and Adjusting to the Japanese Diet

Every year we have several vegetarians on our program. We have also had our share of "picky eaters," and camp food at most of the facilities we use is not going to win any "gourmet" contests. We do our best to make sure that vegetarians can receive enough food at each camp facility to maintain their vegetarian diet, but we certainly have had some who have complained and felt frustrated with their food choices. We do what we can to help, but we do not control the menus at the facilities and do rely on our counselors to adapt and keep this from causing them to become depressed and frustrated with their role as a counselor.

Counselor Commitment Number 2: I will do my best to adjust to camp and Japanese food and feel very confident that this will not affect my ability to fully enjoy camp and my life in Japan.

3. Physical Health

USA Summer Camp is primarily an English and Friendship program, so we do not expect you to be able to pass a military-type physical exam, but the aforementioned long hours, stress, and humid summer of Japan do require you to be in good physical health to enjoy this experience. If you have any concerns about your physical health for this program it is important that you consult your doctor to be sure you are up for the challenges of being a camp counselor in Japan.

Counselor Commitment Number 3: I understand the physical challenges of being a camp counselor and am confident that my physical health will not cause me difficulty in carrying out my responsibilities or enjoying this experience.

4. Mental Health

Depression and other mental health problems are very common and often misunderstood. Mood swings will be common for all of us at camp, but anybody who has reason for mental health concerns needs to make sure with a doctor that the stress of working long hours with children in a foreign country will not pose any health risk or hamper his or her ability to enjoy the challenges of this program. Two counselors felt a need to return home in 2003 because they were no longer taking medication for depression.

Counselor Commitment Number 4: I understand the mental challenges and emotional stress of being a camp counselor and am confident that my mental health will not cause me difficulty in carrying out my responsibilities or enjoying this experience.

5. Physical Appearance

Our fashion code at camp is super casual, but we have had some problems and concerns due to the comparatively conservative nature of Japan and its school system. Any revealing or provocative clothing will create embarrassment and concern for both the campers and counselors. Keep it reasonably conservative, but do dress for the humidity: shorts, t-shirts and conservative tank tops are fine. While facial piercing has become very common and popular among America's youth, it is not allowed in most Japanese schools. Counselors with nose, eye, lip or tongue piercing have been stunned and embarrassed to find their young campers afraid of them or to find Japanese teachers complaining about them. As much as we respect your right to individual fashion expression, we are convinced from past experience that the strong cultural differences between Japan and America would cause you and your campers to feel uncomfortable if you cannot agree to a "no facial and minimal ear piercing and jewelry" policy. Counselor Commitment Number 5: I understand and support this policy and do not have any difficulty in reporting to camp without facial piercing.

6. Camp Schedules

The reason for the rapid and drastic increase in the size of our program is our contract with Japan Travel Bureau (JTB), the largest travel agency in Japan. While Guy Healy, Japan continues to plan and run the camp programs, JTB does the marketing and camper recruitment for the camps. Our contract calls for each team to conduct NINE 3 day/2 night camp sessions. The most common pattern is to have two sessions back-to-back, resulting in 6 days/5 nights at camp with the third night being a rest night at camp. Our initial plan was to ask JTB to schedule 4 nights off (3 full off days) between each 6 day/5 night session, to be sure our counselors were well rested between each camp session. However, realities of school schedules and facility availability made sticking to this pattern very difficult and impossible in many cases. Some of the schedules that were proposed to us were not acceptable, so we insisted on changes. We also know that if we cannot be flexible and work with JTB, this program will not be able to continue. This does result in some long stretches at camp.

To also be fair to our counselors and to make sure we do not suffer from emotional and physical burnout, we have agreed to the following schedule conditions:

1. Each counselor will be assigned a maximum of 27 CAMP DAY sessions. This is primarily NINE 3 day/2 night sessions, but there may be some changes to this pattern.
2. The term CAMP DAY will include any day we have campers at camp. Note: At a 3-Day Camp the campers usually arrive about 11:30am on the first day and leave about 2:00pm on the third day.
3. CAMP DAY does not include ORIENTATION or PREP DAYS.
4. Each team will have a 5 day ORIENTATION at the camp facility after arriving in Japan. There may be some PREP DAYS where the counselors arrive at the camp facility one day before the campers to prepare.
5. After a stretch of six consecutive CAMP DAYS, counselors need to have at least two consecutive OFF DAYS.
6. The term OFF DAY includes only full days of no camp. It does not include the travel days and off nights after a camp.
7. If counselors are asked to work camp sessions that DO NOT fit these rest day criteria (and some will be so asked), JTB will be required to provide suitable "Rest & Recreation" to reward counselors in the form of organized day trips to sightseeing places of interest in Japan.

The expansion of USA Summer Camp has posed many challenges for us. We are honored by the sponsorship of JTB and want to cooperate with them to make this a profitable venture for their company. We also must make sure this program remains attractive and fair to our counselors. To serve JTB we must agree to some tough scheduling when changes prove impossible. We ask that our counselors support this with energy and a good attitude and trust us to do our best to make sure they

are fairly rewarded for their sacrifices. We also ask our counselor to understand that the nature of this program and its marketing causes JTB to make many changes to the schedules.

Counselor Commitment Number 6: I understand that camp schedules may vary and are subject to changes. I am very flexible and understand and support the conditions noted above.

7. Non-Camp Days and Host Family Stays

Our program was founded on the concept of counselors staying with volunteer Japanese host families during all non-camp days. This is a great chance for the students from America to learn about life in Japan and to form lifelong friendships. Most have found the experience enjoyable, but surely some have had problems adjusting to Japanese life and the expectations of their new family. While this is still the basic foundation of our program, the expansion of our program to locations all over Japan has made the host family organization very complex.

While the goal and the norm remains having counselors stay with host families during all non-camp days, there is also the possibility of the following:

1. Multiple host families. We prefer to get families to host for the entire summer, but as the families are volunteers we must match up to their desires and availability. We have had several cases of counselors being assigned a different host family for each session.
2. Some hostel or hotel stays during non-camp sessions. While every counselor can be assured of having a host family during some sessions, it is possible that some counselors may be placed in youth hostels or hotels during some non-camp session. This did occur during some stays last year for counselors on the Tokyo and Osaka teams. If this happens, the lodging, transportation and meal expenses are covered by the program sponsors. Frankly, it is a lot of fun, but your parents need to understand this if you are a minor.
3. It is important to understand that the host families are volunteers who wish to share their family life with you. While it is understandable that at times you will want to make plans to meet other counselors, you also need to show a mature sense of respect and responsibility towards the family schedules, rules, and expectations.

Counselor Commitment Number 7: I will do my best to adjust to my life in Japan and show enthusiasm and respect during my host family stays. I understand and respect the fact that I may have multiple host families. I am fine with staying at a hostel or hotel during some of my non-camp days.?

8. Illegal Drugs and Alcohol

While this has never been an issue during our camp, counselors do have a variety of opportunities when they are free and unsupervised between camp sessions. The legal drinking age in Japan is twenty years old. We expect our counselors to strictly obey this law during their stay in Japan. We also expect our of-age counselors to drink alcohol only in moderation and behave themselves in public at all times. Alcohol is absolutely prohibited at our camp facilities by our counselors and campers!

Consumption of illegal drugs in Japan is much less common than the United States and a much more serious crime. Any involvement in such illegal activities by a counselor of our program would cause us great shame and be a very serious threat to the continued existence of our program. It is impossible to keep a secret in our program and any suspected violations will be taken very seriously. Any counselor strongly suspected of violating drug laws will be sent home immediately and required to reimburse JTB for the expenses of bringing them to Japan on this program. Of course, criminal prosecution in Japan is also a strong possibility.

Counselor Commitment Number 8: I very sincerely commit to obeying all Alcohol and Drug laws of Japan. I also understand that if I were to be sent home for violation of these laws I would be responsible for reimbursing JTB for the expenses of my trip to Japan.

9. Camp Facilities

Our typical camp facilities are government lodges. While these lodges are not fancy hotels, they are usually quite comfortable for a camp experience. Typically there are about 8 bunk-style beds per room, a cafeteria, and indoor bathing and rest room facilities. However, with our JTB expansion, we now can expect some variations on the type of facilities in which groups will stay. A few camps last summer provided large tent sleeping arrangements and others were held in hotels. We do ask JTB to limit the number of tent stays, but it is possible that some teams may have some sessions in tents again this summer. We also ask counselors to not be "jealous" of the counselors that end up in hotel camp stays. We cannot control how JTB books the facilities and do not have the wish to complain when the conditions are "too nice" for some of our counselors.

Counselor Commitment Number 9: I am okay to sleep in tents on some camp sessions if my team is asked to do so. I also understand and respect that the quality of facility arrangements for all teams is not necessarily equal and have no problem with that.

10. Nihongo (Japanese Language)

The ability to speak Japanese is not a requirement for students to become counselors on this program, but many of our counselors have studied Japanese and can speak the language to varying degrees. While we greatly respect the hard work and dedication they have devoted to their language acquisition, we do not want our counselors speaking Japanese to their campers. We have learned over the years that this causes problems with keeping campers motivated to use English with their counselors and even some campers have mentioned that they felt their English did not improve at camp because "my counselor could speak Japanese." Counselors will have many chances to use their Japanese during off hours with our Japanese staff and on non-camp days with their host families and friends. We ask that they cooperate with our entire staff to use only English with their campers. In cases, where it is helpful to use interpretation with the activities, Japanese Counselors will be available.

Counselor Commitment Number 10: I understand and respect the policy of not using Japanese with my campers and commit to encouraging their English by not using Japanese with them.

11. Personal Responsibility and Parental Permission for Minors

The majority of our counselors are legal adults, 18 years old and over. We also have several counselors who are under 18. It is important that your parents understand this and give their support for your involvement in this program. If you are under 18, we need to have them verify that support to us. While we feel our program is very safe, there are many times when counselors will have personal freedom and need to be responsible for their own behavior. In the past, our program was much smaller and we were able to provide more direct supervision during off days, but we now feel we need all of our counselors to take personal responsibility for their actions. If you are a minor or parental support is a factor in accepting this position, please be sure you review each of the commitments in this agreement with your parents. In particular, be sure that they understand that you will be staying in hotels and going out with adult-age counselors on various occasions. Besides the possibility of that happening during off days, all counselors will stay in a hotel the first and last day in Japan.

Counselor Commitment Number 11: I understand and accept the personal responsibility of being a counselor, and I have the support of my parents in accepting this position. (Counselors under 18 years old must have a parent or guardian sign and mail in the Parental Consent Form.)

12. Varying Conditions

Our counselors are assigned to various teams. Each team has separate directors, schedules, number of campers, camp facilities, camp food, etcetera. While we value all of our counselors equally, we cannot control the variety of these conditions for each team. It is easy for counselors to suffer from a "greener

grass" mentality and compare their conditions unfavorably with other counselors or other teams. Counselors cannot expect that the conditions for their team be the same as others.

Counselor Commitment Number 12: I understand that the conditions for my team may be different from those of other teams. I only expect the conditions of this program to be fair to me based on this agreement, not based on any difference in conditions for other counselors or teams.

13. Patience and Flexibility

For eleven years we ran our camp program in Nagasaki Prefecture with 10-20 counselors. In 2003 we formed a contract with JTB to take the program all over Japan and we will have about 180 American and Japanese counselors this year. We are thrilled that our program has become so popular and that we can invite so many talented and dedicated students from America to Japan, but the challenges of working with a huge agency and the rapid growth have made this program a big challenge. When problems or unexpected changes arise, constructive criticism can be very useful, but we also need our counselors to be very patient and flexible.

Counselor Commitment Number 13: I understand that to be a happy and successful counselor on this program I need to be very patient and flexible. I am a team player!