



Housing FAQ

Circus Smirkus offers multiple housing options for campers and troupers, including gender-segregated and all-gender housing options. We want to provide you with as much information as possible about housing options for your child or loved one.

In your participant's CampDoc profile, you will be able to select between the following options:

- all-gender
- female-identifying
- male-identifying
- no preference

What is all-gender housing?

All-gender housing means housing that is open to youth of all genders—male, female, and every gender between & beyond. All-gender housing provides safe & spacious options for youth who prefer to bunk with children of other genders, for children who identify as transgender or nonbinary, or for participants who feel this is the best fit for any reason. Transgender & nonbinary troupers are welcome in all rooms that reflect their authentic gender, including both gender-segregated & all-gender housing.

Why offer all-gender housing?

Smirkus offers all-gender housing in alignment with our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are aware that the accommodations we offer our troupers and campers meaningfully affect their sense of comfort, safety, belonging, and ability to learn and have fun. To this end, we offer all-gender housing to participants to accommodate the needs of our participants, such as rooming with siblings, friends or those of a similar cultural background, as well as transgender, nonbinary, and/or neurodiverse youth who may benefit from this option.

[Many overnight camps](#) & similar organizations provide all-gender housing options for minors. Research shows that offering gender-inclusive spaces, like all-gender housing, restrooms, & activities at camp, benefit all youth—by [encouraging friendship across gender](#), and by [providing safer spaces for youth who may be questioning their identities](#).

What does transgender mean? Nonbinary?

Someone who is [transgender](#) doesn't identify with their sex assigned at birth, sometimes called "biological sex." A person may have been assigned female at birth—everyone thought this child was a girl—but identifies as a boy (a trans boy.) Or a person may have been assigned male at birth—everyone thought this child was a boy—but identifies as a girl (a trans girl.) Or a person may identify with another gender that is not boy or girl. Transgender is an umbrella term that includes many different identities.

Someone who is [nonbinary](#) doesn't identify with the language of male/female, boy/girl, or masculine/feminine. Perhaps they feel like they move fluidly between these categories, that they are sometimes a boy and sometimes a girl. [Some nonbinary people](#) feel like they are beyond gender, or have a gender that can't be described within the male/masculine-female/feminine spectrum.

Every major medical & mental health association recognizes the validity of these identities, and the [need to provide](#) inclusive spaces for trans & nonbinary youth to support their overall health & well-being.

How do you handle couples?

Couples of any gender will not be housed in the same room. We will house couples in different trailers, and the counselors will do a nightly check of all housing to ensure campers or troupers are in their appropriate bunk spaces. Behavior of a sexual nature results in immediate dismissal.

Will my child be supported?

All Smirkus staff receive training on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; as well as LGBTQ+ Harm Reduction and Intervention. Our training partners this summer are The Full Story School and Kelsey Pacha Consulting. Our partners will also provide support throughout the summer to ensure the continual safety of our campers and troupers.

What if my child wants to change housing?

Your camper or trouper should bring up their concerns to a counselor, who will help them work through any issues with their bunk-mates. If it is determined that the best solution is to switch bunks, the counselors will work with the Camp Director or Tour General Manager to find a solution that is comfortable for your child..