

“How to be NYSC Staph With the Right Stuph” 101

Before You Arrive

Plan your teaching – During camp you will want to share a lot of your interests and expertise with the delegates. You might want to teach one or a number of seminars. There will be little time to plan them during camp. Make sure you have put some time into organizing and planning the material that you want to teach before you arrive – it will make your life easier and more fun at camp. Pick fun and interesting topics, both academic and recreational.

1. Contact your colleagues – Get in touch with people that will be working with you and bounce around ideas with each other before you come to camp. You’ll have an easier time getting started in your job if you know your partner-in-crime, and chances are that you will come up with a few cool ideas as a result of these discussions. E-mail is your friend, and phones work, too.
2. Plan the fun “stuph” – Bring all the weird and clever games and ideas that you possess. You will be surprised how many people will jump at the opportunity to be entertained during an overnighiter or while waiting in line to use the Phone / Internet.
3. Ponder your experiences – If you have been a delegate before, think about experiences that were most meaningful to you and the things you wished you had gotten out of camp. Think of what activities you have enjoyed at college. This might help you come up with something that hasn’t been done before, but would mean a lot to you and the delegates. Ask friends or family for suggestions as well.

Staph Week

Five-or-so days is not a long time to build the foundation upon which all of camp will rest. Have fun, but take staph week seriously. The solidarity and communication skills developed during this time can make or break a camp. Staph week is the time to learn the camp philosophy and the many different responsibilities that you will have as a part of staph.

1. Play With Others — especially those you don’t know well from previous years. Certainly take time to catch up with old friends, but make a real effort to get to know people well who are new to you. Do this on your own— don’t wait until the director pairs you up with a stranger for a role-playing game. Quick, clear communication among staph is the key

to a smooth camp, so it is most important at this time to build relationships with people you don’t know well. Learn the communication styles of others. If you don’t seem to be on the same wavelength with another person, work especially hard during these days to find a common frequency; it may save you from having a serious misunderstanding later on when you’re responsible for a herd of delegates, or pulling off a big event.

2. Ask Questions — this is just as important for experienced staph as it is for new staph. If anything seems unclear or not particularly efficient, or you just don’t get why we “always do it that way” then open your mouth respectfully and make someone justify it. If there’s a good reason, then you need to know it, and if the reason is that nobody has thought of a better way, your suggestion may be just the one we’ve been waiting for.
3. Share past experience — especially if you are veteran staph. Remember that what is obvious to you is not necessarily obvious to newer staph. Don’t forget to speak up and share with them what you know. If you are last year’s delegate, share the impressions that you had from the camp the year before, especially if they include situations that could have been handled better.
4. New staph, pay attention to the senior staph. Watching and talking with them is one of the best ways to learn how to act and what to do. Do not take for granted their knowledge of how camp is run. They may know the answer to some problem you have.
5. Learn as much as you can about the special abilities and interests of the other staph. This helps you to appreciate others more and hold them in higher esteem, so the first time they do something you disagree with, you are less tempted to write them off.
6. Get the most out of staph meetings – For new staph, this is a great chance to learn some really important things about being a staph member before you’re “thrown into the fire.” For experienced staph, meetings serve as a nice refresher and a chance to pass on your knowledge and experience to others. These can be tedious at times (if so, get creative to make them more interesting!), but they’re one of the best ways to keep the staph infection alive!

During Camp

When the delegates arrive, it's time to turn almost all of your attention to them. You may be surprised to find that occasionally you don't even get a chance to talk to some of the other staph for days at a time. At this point you start to appreciate the time you had with them during staph week.

1. Treat the camp as both a job and a personal growth opportunity. You are here to give 100+ people a time of their life, but you will find that if you put your heart into it, you too will take away from camp new experiences, new friendships, and new insights.
2. Respect general camp guidelines such as bedtimes, dress codes, and behavioral expectations. This also means don't complain about any of them in front of the delegates. The best way to help the delegates learn the rules is to be an example yourself. If you aren't acting like you should, how can you expect them to? Individuality is welcomed, but anarchy has no place at science camp. Work with your director and the other staph instead of against them. If you feel that this cramps your style, get some perspective — it's only five and a half weeks, and it is your JOB.
3. Spend time with the delegates – as much as possible. Be curious about their lives, their ideas, and their interests. Encourage them to try new things. If you are hanging outside the dining hall waiting for dinner, choose to have a leisurely chat with a delegate rather than a staph member. Don't clump with the other staph members and AVOID STAPH CLIQUES! You have less time with the delegates here than with the staph. You will discover on the last day at the airport how much those small conversations with you actually meant to them.
4. Don't argue in front of delegates, especially over something you want them to do. It's a surefire way to lose your credibility. If you disagree with your fellow staph member, or don't understand what you should be doing, the two of you should step out of delegate earshot and conference for a few minutes. Pay attention to senior staph members – they have been in this business longer and most likely have a better sense of how things should work out.
5. Don't gossip – don't discuss staph interpersonal relationships with delegates. Avoid criticizing staph in front of or while in conversation with delegates. Let them form their own opinions. Ideally the vices and shortcomings of staph (and we all have them) should never become apparent to the delegates. No matter what you think of the staph member, or how deluded you think the delegate may be, remember that it is not an accident that delegates think that staph are awesome, wonderful people, and that this is part of the magic of science camp for them. Be mature and objective enough not to spoil that.
6. Be a supportive and nurturing role model for delegates. Treat everyone the best you know how, and if you find that you don't know how, then make a serious effort to learn. There will be some delegates with obvious weaknesses, but our goal is to bring out their strengths. You will find this a challenging job sometimes, but it will improve your own interpersonal skills and make you appreciate the small details about people.
7. Avoid saying anything that would make a delegate think that you don't enjoy being with them, unless you have a specific complaint about their attitude or behavior. In that case it is sometimes appropriate to voice the complaint, but you should always take it up with the offending delegate(s), and not talk about it in front of or with other delegates. If the issue is not serious enough to be overly moralizing, handle it with a dose of humor.
8. Keep the surprises surprising – Be careful what you tell delegates, especially about the inner workings and personal dynamics of the camp. They don't need to know how much work we put into the special event or that everything doesn't work perfectly every time. They wouldn't know unless you mention it. If you need to vent, do it privately to your teddy bear out of earshot. Within reason, avoid discussing “Last Year” or “in 20__” with delegates. Until the banquet at the end, this is the only year camp had any importance as far as they're concerned. It's all part of the magic.
9. Be sensitive to other staph – don't pick on your fellow staphers, help them out in their tasks when you can spare some time, compliment them for a job well done, hug them or make them laugh if they feel stressed or hurt. If you feel overwhelmed, make sure to ask for help or take a break. Camp should be a fun and warm experience for everyone.
10. What time is it? What day is it? – Be where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there. This includes program areas, cabin meetings, lectures, meals, morning assembly, and campfires. Check the back of the office wall frequently for announcements, assignments, and staph meeting times. Don't sacrifice your duties as a staph member

to hang out with the delegates, especially later in camp when you become good friends with them.

Special Situations

Staph-Staph relationships — These are not “against the rules” per say, but unless you’re married, keep a very low profile during camp. We request that the delegates not have emotionally or physically intimate relationships at camp in order to help them get the most out of the experience, and to keep us out of potential serious and difficult situations. It is easier to enforce that if the staph seems to follow the rules, too. If the delegates don’t ever know you’re dating, that’s perfect. As a rule, delegates are very, very interested in staph love lives, and their eyes and ears are significantly sharper when this topic comes up than they are during the lectures. So save it for post-camp staph week. It’ll be here before you know it.

Staph-Delegate Relationships — Don’t do it during camp... period! If you really think that one of the delegates is the one for you, it is not an option at Science Camp. Be fair to the delegate. The very fact that you are staph denies him or her a fair judgement of you as a person. Remember that to delegates, staph are almost magic, and your position carries with it a fair amount of prestige in the eyes of most. If the coupling of two delegates causes others to stay away, the coupling of a staph and a delegate isolates the delegate even more. It is selfish to hyper-focus on one delegate during camp. There is a line there, and sometimes it is challenging, especially for first-year staph, but it is your responsibility and job to hold the line.

Lectures

Go to every lecture you possibly can! Presenters volunteer their time and expertise and many also cover their own cost to travel to Science Camp. They do not get speaker fees, but are at Science Camp because they want to share the amazing things they have done and accomplished with the delegates and staph. You’ll learn a lot and will be able to talk about them with the presenters, guests and the delegates. The delegates will appreciate you sharing the experiences with them. However, your role in lecture is different from a delegate. It is your responsibility to make sure that the delegates are paying attention instead of chatting or writing letters. *It is much easier to do if you sit among the delegates instead of at the back of the room.*

If you are not going to lecture, get out of the delegates’ sight as quickly as possible. Hide!! Don’t make it obvious to them that you are missing lecture. This also means don’t walk out of the shower when they are going

to lecture, and don’t walk behind the lecture hall – they’ll see your head bobbing.

Cabin Meetings

As cabin staph, it is your responsibility to help the flow of cabin meetings. When there is a lull in the discussion or a straying away from the topic, sometimes all it takes is for one of the cabin staph to say something that redirects the conversation.

Make sure you “sweep” the cabins and bathrooms when it is time for meals, lectures, directed studies, or special events. Start enforcing promptness at the beginning of camp to avoid problems later. Most important, be a good example yourself!

Overnighters

Don’t complain about the assignments that you get. There is always a reason for you to be where you are in the grand scheme of things.

The no arguing rule is very important on the overnighters. If there is a disagreement between you and another staph member on the trip, talk about it away from the delegates. The final say is always the trip leader’s responsibility. It is a good idea to meet together with the other staph on your trip beforehand to discuss the responsibilities and decide logistics.

If you are on the hiking trip, don’t spend your time telling people where to go. Let them figure out the trail for themselves – it will be a welcome challenge for them and the trip will be much more fun.

Pre-D.C and Pre-Fly-Out

At this time a lot of extra paperwork is filling every horizontal surface of the office, and the office staph may be working overtime. Be especially kind to them, i.e. offer backrubs and hot tea when you get a spare moment, and if you come in with a silly request like, “Can I borrow all your staplers and hard-drives for a physics experiment this afternoon?” and come out worrying that even your own mother may never recognize you again, well...you asked for it. Stay out of the office except when you really have a good reason to be in there, like helping them collate.

On the flip side, if you are not office staph, make sure that your primary responsibilities are covered first. Don’t leave your program area understaffed in order to stuff envelopes. Remember delegate projects also need to be more or less wrapped up before we leave for D.C.

While in D.C.

D.C. trip is a scheduling nightmare and logistical video game. When it works well, nobody gets lost, damaged, or snapped at more than twice. Keep your sense of humor, but be conscious of the need for a slight increase in safety precaution and responsibility. You don't have to keep anything that is happening in D.C. a secret when you are there.

1. Curfews – In D.C. they are just as rigid as they are at camp. You must work with each other to enforce them. Be kind to the staph on curfew duty and respect the fact that they have a job to do; it is hard enough to get the delegates to sleep without worrying about delinquent staph running around the halls and making a lot of noise. Be quiet and GET SLEEP – never again will you find a job that pays you to get a good night's sleep.
2. Study your maps – Know where the dorms are, where your destination is, and how to get there. Whenever possible, don't just blindly follow the group ahead of you. On the other hand, don't worry too much if you don't know exactly where the museum you want to go to is. Look at the map together with the delegates; you can figure out your way together, and it's fun for you and the delegates. Listen to their suggestions for food places if they have any. But be watchful when crossing roads – we have been in the middle of the woods for too long, and the delegates might feel a bit too safe on the city streets.
3. If necessary, remind the delegates to be polite. Remember that we go back to many of the same places in D.C. year after year, and the behavior of this year's delegates (and staph) may affect how, or whether, we are received the following year. It is not out of line to remind delegates that we rely on them to uphold our reputation as an organization.

Things to Keep in Mind

- ◆ Treat the delegates as friends and peers, but at the same time, watch out for them and regulate when necessary. Don't force your opinions on them, but let them make their own decisions (without running wild).
 - ◆ Make them think.
 - ◆ Encourage them to branch out and try new things. Help shy delegates to open up and become more confident.
 - ◆ Make everyone feel accepted, no matter what their background or personality.
 - ◆ Show them that they can do what they thought was impossible before.
 - ◆ Introduce them to new options in their pursuits. Create an open and trusting atmosphere, and throw in a little bit of kindness and caring. Make them feel at home.
 - ◆ Work as a team and be funny.
 - ◆ HAVE FUN!!!
- Compiled by Inna Kozinsky and Pam Muir, started by Beth Kinne and Allison Greenberg in 1998. Updated by John Giroir in 2015 and 2018. Previous staph reports and comments were also consulted in creating this booklet.*
- ◆ We are there for the campers. They come first and foremost with everything that we do. This is worth repeating: We are there for the campers. They come first and foremost with everything that we do.
 - ◆ We are also there for the presenters, they volunteer their time and expertise and many also cover their own cost to travel to Science Camp. They do not get speaker fees, but are at Science Camp because of the amazing things they have done and accomplished.
 - ◆ Not sure if a Presenter is "Doctor" or "Mister" or "Miss", err on the side of calling them "Doctor", most of them are and they deserve your respect.