



How to Host a *Virginia* RULES Camp

Teens Learn & Live the Law



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

www.virginiarules.org

Table of Contents

Camp Overview..... 2
Camp Curriculum..... 3
Camp Staff..... 4
Campers 5
Daily Schedule 6
Preparation Check List 7
Sample Forms 8
 Host contract 8
 Camper registration form 9
 Volunteer application..... 10
 Camper liability release..... 11
Resources 12





Camp Overview

Virginia Rules Camp is a law-themed summer experience first initiated by the Virginia Attorney General’s Office in 2004. In addition to offering Richmond young people a healthy way to spend a week in the summer, the day camp provides interactive instruction on Virginia’s laws.

In the past, this camp has been hosted by the Attorney General’s Office, in partnership with the Richmond Police Department and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond. However, law enforcement agencies and interested civic organizations throughout the state are encouraged to replicate the camp in their own jurisdictions.

The camp curriculum is based on Virginia Rules, the state-specific education program which places particular emphasis on how laws apply to middle and high school students in their everyday lives. Instructors can choose from over 20 lessons provided on the Virginia Rules website, all of which come complete with worksheets, handouts, and supplemental materials.

Through the years, Virginia Rules Camp has proved successful in educating young people about Virginia’s laws, helping them develop the necessary skills to make sound decisions, and teaching them to recognize the consequences of their actions.

“Even those youth who were skeptical about the experience find themselves engaged in camp activities. By the end of the week, they are bonding with their teammates and counselors. This is a tremendous opportunity to watch even the shyest kids come out of their shells, find their voices, and make new friends from other parts of the city – all while enjoying the great outdoors. Virginia Rules Camp provides a unique environment for young people to learn how to make good decisions for their future.”

Camp Director

RICHMOND GANG REDUCTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM



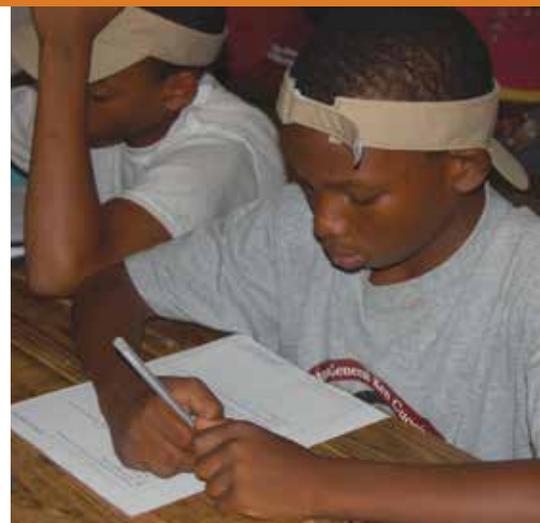
Camp Curriculum

Virginia Rules Camp is built around old-fashioned, outdoor summer fun, so kids enjoy activities such as swimming, fishing, canoeing, hiking, and archery. Every day, a lesson is taken from the Virginia Rules curriculum, which is unique in that students not only learn about laws, but also learn how to apply these laws in their own lives.

Virginia Rules evolved from the success of Virginia's Class Action Program, initiated in 1996. Now that the Class Action program has become the Virginia Rules program – complete with its own how-to website – the law enforcement curriculum is easy to reproduce in schools and summer camps throughout the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Rules curriculum includes instruction on the following topics:

- Drugs
- Gangs
- Bullying
- Keeping a driver's license
- Teens and violence
- Dating violence
- Alcohol and tobacco
- Technology
- Property crimes
- Crimes against people
- Laws
- Judicial system
- Juvenile justice system
- Courtrooms
- Victims' rights
- Criminal law basics
- Civil law basics
- Student responsibilities
- Family relationships and the law
- Teens and crime prevention
- Child labor laws



“The curriculum is very appropriate. It’s all those things kids could be introduced to at this age, and we have open conversations. We wear plain clothes, so they don’t even think of us as police officers. Every year we divide them into teams and they pick a topic for a skit. They work on it all week and then present the skit at the end of the week. I think what they learn in those skits sticks with them more than anything.”

Sarah Powell, Detective

CITY OF RICHMOND POLICE
DEPARTMENT





Camp Staff

Virginia Rules Camp staff is made up of volunteers. Over the years, instructors have included community police officers, seasoned homicide detectives, school resource officers, truancy officers, and patrol officers. The vast majority return to teach camp year after year, though there are always new faces.

The instructors say they love working at this camp. In so many cases, the only interaction police officers have with young people is when a problem arises and they must respond to the call. Therefore, this positive, pro-active experience provides a different perspective to both the officers and the kids. Staff members say they like the feeling of giving back to their community and forming positive relationships.

“I have been volunteering at this camp for years, and it is one of the highlights of my summer – so much so that I plan my own vacation around it. I still love seeing how some of these kids bloom after their first day. I love watching children go home with a smile, after I’ve been working with them all day; it makes my time at camp worthwhile. Personally, I have met great friends and co-counselors at camp and have remained friends with many of these folks for years.”

Esther Anderson

VOLUNTEER STAFF MEMBER



“We have a great time working with the youth attending camp. They say it is the best week of their lives. They have had fun working up an appetite – and they’ve done all this while learning great life lessons and building bonds with members of the Richmond Police Department.”

John Buturla, Deputy Chief

CITY OF RICHMOND
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Campers

Rising sixth through ninth graders are at the ideal age to benefit from Virginia Rules Camp. While most young people are out of school for the summer, many have little to keep them busy. At no cost to the parents, Virginia Rules Camp offers these kids positive outdoor experiences, companionship, and an early opportunity to make healthy choices in their lives. Some 80-140 campers attend every year.

According to the staff, two types of kids arrive on the first day of camp. One group is slightly reserved and anxious. These young people may be attending solo, or they may have come with a friend or sibling. The second group is energetic, smiling, and happy to greet previous counselors and friends. These are the repeat campers, delighted to return for another year.

Both groups have much in common. They have caring adults who have agreed to send them to camp. Here they meet people who live outside their neighborhoods. They get to know police officers, counselors, and a variety of volunteers ready to provide them with a meaningful experience. And at the end of the week, they return home having enjoyed an old-fashioned summer camp, supervised by caring adults and positive role models.

“I was glad to be around a lot of old friends from where I used to live. I was very excited to do some of the things I normally would not get to do in the city. I especially liked talking with the K-9 and horse officers.”

Darrell Anderson



“This was my first year at summer camp. I enjoyed it because I met a lot of new people. They kept me occupied with fun and challenging activities. It was also a great learning experience.”

Ma'khie Wicker



“It was a rewarding experience – very exciting and a lot to do. I’m looking forward to being a counselor this year.”

Darius Anderson

Daily Schedule

This sample is an illustration of one team’s activities during a one-week day camp.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 8:30	Camp arrival	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30 – 9:00	Breakfast	*Fishing	*Canoeing	*Hiking	Olympics and skits setup
9:00 – 9:30	Staff welcome	*Canoeing	*Survival station	*Fishing	Team time
9:30 – 10:30	VA Rules pre-test	VA Rules class pre- and post-test	VA Rules class pre- and post-test	VA Rules class pre- and post-test	Presentations and skits
10:30 – 11:30	Anti-gang video post-test	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch	Guest speaker	Mounted Police presentation	Guest speaker	Team Olympic competition
12:30 – 1:30	Station orientation	*Swimming	*Hiking	*Archery	Team Olympic competition
1:30 – 2:30	*Archery	*Survival station	*Swimming	*Swimming	Police canine presentation
2:30 – 2:45	Snacks	Snacks	Snacks	Snacks	Snacks
2:45 – 4:00	Team time	Team time	Team time	Team time	Swimming – all
4:00	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure
4:30	Counselors debrief and prepare	Counselors debrief and prepare	Counselors debrief and prepare	Counselors debrief and prepare	Counselors close out camp

**For managing large groups of campers, plan for teams to have multiple activities on the same day. For example: on Tuesday, at 9:30, team one goes fishing, team two goes canoeing and team three goes hiking. The next day, each team switches to a different activity.*



Preparation Check-List

This sample is intended for a one-week day camp held in August.

Pre-Camp Activities

APRIL

- Determine lead sponsoring agency
- Determine sponsoring partners
Example: Boys and Girls Clubs, police department. It is helpful if this agency can cover campers under its liability insurance policy.
- Determine location
Try to use an existing camp facility already set up for multiple activities.
- Determine dates
- Determine budget

MAY

- Determine camper selection criteria
- Determine number of campers
- Determine hours of camp
- Refine budget
- Prepare an alternate plan in case of inclement weather

JUNE

- Prepare camper registration forms
Attach any necessary waivers.
- Determine deadline for registration form to be returned to lead agency
- Determine camp staff members from lead and partner agencies
- Solicit volunteer staff members
- Determine portions of the Virginia Rules curriculum to be used
Three to five lessons are ideal for a five-day camp.
- Solicit donations from local organizations
Gift cards are a frequent donation. Use them to purchase food, water, ice, and supplies.
- Determine give-aways for outstanding campers
Place a logo, name, and/or date of Camp on give-aways. This not only helps advertise the camp, but also allows returning campers to demonstrate their veteran status.
- Design and order camp T-shirts
Use a logo, name, and/or date of Camp. Choose a bright color such as yellow, orange, or green. Estimate sizes needed for both campers and counselors. Order sizes as noted on camper and volunteer registration forms.
- Book transportation for campers to and from camp
- If facility has a pool, secure a lifeguard
- Research and obtain any necessary permits

JULY

- Conduct criminal background checks on all staff members and volunteers
- Set daily camp schedule
- Choose team leaders and assistant leaders
- Divide campers into groups, assigning an adult team leader to each group
- Determine teacher and location for daily Virginia Rules lesson
- Print Virginia Rules lesson plans, hand-outs, and tests
- Determine and purchase supplies
- Determine and purchase food and beverages
Daily breakfast, lunch, and snack are recommended. Have water and Gatorade on hand. Overestimate water consumption. Ask for provisions from the local food bank and cooking assistance from local organizations.
- Visit the camp site in person
- Invite guest speakers
One per day is recommended. Good choices are the local sheriff, chief of police, Commonwealth's Attorney, youth leaders, or others who can talk about choices they've made which have helped them succeed.
- Plan a daily agenda of camp activities, broken down by teams
- Advise the local Emergency Medical Services agency of the dates and times of the camp
- Develop format for the final skit, which will highlight lessons learned about Virginia Rules
- Secure emergency contact numbers for each camper
This information should also include any medical conditions or allergies
- Consider providing campers with backpacks on the last day of camp
These can be filled with school supplies.

AUGUST

- Visit the camp site to make sure everything is ready
- Distribute a binder to each counselor and assistant counselor
This should contain a list of campers' names, camp schedule, and cell phone numbers of staff and other counselors
- Provide a first aid kit (including bee sting treatment) to each team leader
This should be carried at all times.
- Provide two-way radios to counselors, if possible
- Set up signs where each team will sit

Camp Week Activities

FIRST DAY

- Sign in campers, give them their team numbers, and direct them to where their team is sitting
- Have counselors introduce themselves to their assigned campers
- Have camp leader welcome campers and discuss camp rules and expectations
- Administer Virginia Rules pre-test for "The Big Lie," show the video, and then give the post-test

EVERY DAY

- Campers are greeted and sign in
- Volunteers serve breakfast while camp leaders conduct a morning meeting for everyone in attendance
- Campers break out in to teams for activities
- Counselors offer campers sunscreen and bug spray
- Volunteers serve lunch on schedule
- Campers participate in all activities, including after-meal clean-up
- Staff members make sure campers stay properly hydrated
- Counselors lead campers through their daily activities, making adjustments if some activity runs overtime
- Team leaders administer a pre-test before and a post-test after the Virginia Rules topic instruction for the day
Packets for each team leader should include sharpened pencils. Designate location where packets should be returned at the end of each lesson.
- Staff members provide mid-afternoon snacks and drinks
- Staff members sign out all campers individually and make sure they board their assigned buses
- Require the bus drivers to take roll as well

LAST DAY

- Provide each camper with a certificate of completion
- Give each volunteer a recognition certificate
- Assign someone to compile a list of all sponsors, donors, and volunteers

UPON COMPLETION

- Compare Virginia Rules pre- and post-tests to gauge effectiveness of training
Report results at www.virginiarules.org
- Gather up all leftover materials and salvage as many supplies as possible
- Check site and buildings for any damage
- Provide evaluation forms to all counselors
- Meet to discuss accomplishments, problems, and plans for next year
All agencies and participants should be present.
- Send thank-you letters to all volunteers, counselors, and participating agencies

Sample Forms

The following are sample documents only. Consult your agency's attorney for proper language.

Sample Memorandum of Understanding Virginia Rules Camp

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ("MOU") is made this ____ day of _____, 20____, by and between _____ and _____.

WHEREAS, Virginia Rules Camp has been developed to provide healthy interaction between community role models, including police personnel and youth, and to provide a safe camp setting for children to enjoy during the summer break; NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1. The OAG will provide its curriculum to _____ for use at Virginia Rules Camp to be held _____.

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

_____ will sponsor, organize, and present Virginia Rules Camp during _____, 20____ at _____. Virginia Rules Camp will feature decision-making, gang and violence prevention, and leadership skills for selected students. Camp hours will be _____ a.m. through _____ p.m. Activities should include swimming, boating, hiking, archery, and fishing.

3. _____ will be responsible for the following:

- Securing camp location
- Contacting presenters and soliciting volunteers
- Providing at least four (4) trained school resource officers to provide Virginia Rules curriculum instruction
- Securing liability insurance for all camp staff and volunteers
- Ensuring that student campers are covered under liability insurance, whether through the City or a third party
- Complying with state and local regulations, including any permits
- Having an emergency plan in place in case of inclement weather or other emergencies, including medical emergencies
- Ensuring that all campers have completed an application, as well as permission slips for use of their photographs and any quotes and to view the anti-gang video "The Big Lie," prior to attending Virginia Rules Camp
- Transporting campers to and from the camp
- Administering a pre- and post-test for the Virginia Rules curriculum

4. _____ will request that _____ provide _____ with donations of breakfast items for each camper, volunteer, and counselor for each day of the camp.

5. _____ will provide lunches to _____ to be distributed to each camper, volunteer, and counselor for each day of the camp.

6. _____ will provide _____ with a Virginia Rules Camp-themed T-shirt for each camper, volunteer, and counselor attending the camp.

7. _____ will make available its _____, who will assist _____ with the planning of Virginia Rules Camp.

8. REPORTING

_____ shall provide the OAG with a final report stating the number of youth attending each day, the number of volunteers, pre- and post-test results, and a copy of the schedule for each day at camp.

9. BACKGROUND CHECKS

_____ reserves the right to require that any personnel undergo a criminal background check and to require _____ to conduct background checks on any subcontractor personnel.

10. CONTACTS

The address for the primary contacts for each of the parties is as follows:

For _____: For _____:

_____ will designate a daily contact person to coordinate the efforts of the program.

_____ will provide this information to _____.

Witness the following signatures:

**Sample
Registration Form
Virginia Rules Camp**

Use a separate form for each participant. All portions of this form must be completed. Be sure the camper meets qualifications for the program you choose. Please print, and remember to sign where indicated.

Return to: _____

Camper's name _____ Birth date (month/year) _____

Age/Grade in fall _____

Parent/Guardian's name _____

Day phone () _____ Evening phone () _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parent's e-mail _____

Camper's T-shirt size (check box) Youth S M L Adult S M L XL XXL

Emergency contact information: _____

Person to notify if parents cannot be reached: _____

Relationship to camper: _____

Day phone () _____ Evening phone () _____

Allergies _____

Dietary restrictions _____

Consent of Parent or Guardian

As parent/guardian having legal custody of the camper named, who is voluntarily enrolled as a participant in the Virginia Rules Camp program, I agree to instruct my child to observe rules and regulations governing the activities. I understand that camping programs involve inherent risk and possible injury because of the nature of the activity, even when conducted in a safe manner. I give permission for my child to attend camp and participate in all phases of the program, including off-site activities and related transportation.

I understand that a statement of his/her good health is required before he/she may attend camp. As the parent or legal guardian of the above child, I give permission for the above child to be photographed and/or audio/video taped during this event. I also give permission for the images and/or recordings to be published, reproduced, or distributed by _____ and its affiliates in all outlets, including, but not limited to, television, newspapers, internet, council publications, recruitment materials, and ads, without liability or limitation or claims on my part or that of my child. I have read the above statements. I understand the information and agree to allow my son/daughter/ward to participate in camp.

**Sample
Volunteer Announcement and Application
Virginia Rules Camp**

Announcement

When: _____

Where: _____

Do you like working with children and being a good role model? Do you enjoy canoeing, fishing, archery, and hiking? Do you like working with engaging people from the _____ Police Department or Sheriff's Department? Do you want to volunteer your time, or do you have some community or annual leave time you want to use up?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you are invited to apply to become a Virginia Rules Camp volunteer. You can plan to volunteer for a few hours, a day, or the entire week. Please understand that if you volunteer, the children and other counselors will be depending on you to attend and participate.

Application

Full name _____

Date(s) available _____ Hour(s) available _____

Note that because you will be working directly with youth, a criminal background check is required. All results are confidential, and information will be destroyed upon completion of camp.

Information for background check

Known alias _____

Date of birth _____ Social security number _____

Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

**Sample
Waiver and Release of Liability
and Assumption of Risk Acknowledgement
during Virginia Rules Camp**

Definitions

Indemnitees: The _____, its employees and agents.

Indemnitor: The individual signing below, and his/her heirs, administrators, executors and assigns.

I (“indemnitor”), the undersigned, desire to participate in the following physical activities during Virginia Rules Camp at _____ (the “Facilities”) in _____, Virginia:

- Hiking
- Archery
- Swimming
- Boating
- Fishing

I hereby release the indemnitees from any liability for damages from illness, injury, and/or death that arises out of, or is connected with, or in any matter relates to, my use of the Facilities and services provided at the Facilities in the course of normal activities, as indicated in the attached sample Virginia Rules Camp itinerary.

I, Indemnitor, represent that:

1. I am 18 years of age or older.
2. I am submitting this release, waiver of liability, and assumption of risk declaration voluntarily and of my own free will.
3. I have no physical or emotional problems, nor any history thereof, which may impair my ability to utilize the Facilities and its services in a safe manner.
4. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to assess the hazards presented by my use of the Facilities and services of the Facilities, and further agree that I am the ultimate judge as to whether I can use the Facilities and services without risk of harm to myself.
5. I understand and EXPRESSLY ASSUME all of the dangers incident to using the Facilities and their services, and hereby RELEASE ALL CLAIMS, including but not limited to personal injury, property damage or destruction, and death, whether caused by NEGLIGENCE, breach of contract or otherwise, and whether for bodily injury, property damage or loss otherwise, which I may ever have against the Indemnitors.
6. My use of the Facilities is entirely optional and my own free choice.

Signature of volunteer _____

Print name _____

Date _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ Cell phone _____

In case of emergency, contact _____ Phone _____

Resources

For more information on
Virginia Rules Camps contact:

Office of the Attorney General
202 N 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-2071

Virginia Attorney General
www.ag.virginia.gov

Virginia Rules website
www.virginiarules.org

Best Practices for Planning and Implementing
the Comprehensive Gang Model
www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/222799.pdf

Community Youth Gang Problem Assessment Guide
<https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/publications/4htm>

Implementation Planning
<https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh331/files/media/document/implementation-manual.pdf>

Strategic Planning
<https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/spt>

“The Big Lie: Unmasking the Truth Behind Gangs” video
Free copy through form found on “Hot Topics/Gang
Prevention/The Big Lie” at www.oag.state.va.us

“GRIP: a Model Program for Real Life” Program Guide
Free copy by contacting 804/786-2071 or
richmondgangreduction@oag.state.va.us



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

www.ag.virginia.gov | www.virginiarules.org

For more information on
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