



**YMCA OF THE NORTH SHORE
SUMMER CAMPS**

2024 PARENT HANDBOOK

WWW.NORTHSHOREYMCA.ORG

WELCOME

We are so glad that your camper will be joining us this summer! This handbook is to provide you with everything you need to know about YMCA of the North Shore camps to ensure that you and your child are ready for your first day of camp. If, after reading this handbook, you have questions, please call your local YMCA where our friendly staff will be happy assist you.

YMCA OF THE NORTH SHORE SUMMER CAMP PHILOSOPHY

Goals

The goal of the YMCA of the North Shore Summer Camps is to help mold young people into tomorrow's leaders. Our camps provide children with a positive, safe, fun, and creative summer experience incorporating the YMCA of the USA character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. While having fun at camp, your child will have opportunities to practice these values so they can include them in their everyday lives. Through innovative activities delivered by qualified staff and counselors, your child can grow to their full potential.

Licensing

Safety is our highest priority. YMCA Summer Camps located in MA must comply with regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and be licensed by the local Board of Health. YMCA Summer Camps located in NH must comply with the Youth Recreation Camp regulations and be licensed by the NH Department of Health and Human Services. Our YMCA Camps are directed by full time, year round recreational professionals with years of camping experience. All are trained in site specific Emergency Action Plans and are certified in First Aid and CPR. Your child's safety is our top priority!

Communication

Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with camp via email to Camp Directors, calling the Camp Office, or calling the YMCA directly. Camp will communicate with parents via email and phone calls using the information on file in ePACT. Please plan to be responsive to those communications.

Our camps also use the communication application Bunk1. Bunk1 is an easy way for you to see photos of what your child is having fun doing each and every day, the friends they are making, read camp announcements and share your child's experience through your own social media.

REGISTRATION, PAYMENTS & PAPERWORK

Registration

We strive to make registration simple. Register online at www.northshoreymca.org or register in person at the YMCA. Once registered, you will be sent a link to complete the on-line enrollment packet located on the ePACT website. Registration closes every Thursday for camps at Greater Beverly and Lynch/van Otterloo Y's and Friday at noon for Cape Ann, Salem, Ipswich, Haverhill and Plaistow Y's. for the following week's session at which time all required information must be completed and received. All ePACT registration forms, proof of physical and immunizations must be completed and in your electronic file before the first day of camp. Any child with incomplete registration files will not be admitted to camp.

Payment

To reserve your space at camp, payment is required. Pay in full at time of registration or pay a \$10 per week non-refundable deposit at time of registration and use our convenient E-pay system. E-pay will automatically draft a credit card 8 days prior to the start of your camp session. Any child/family that has an outstanding balance with the YMCA's summer camp, child care, or other programs, will not be allowed to enroll in our summer camp until the prior balance is paid in full. Any payment received will go toward outstanding balances.

Flexible Pricing

The YMCA is committed to ensuring that our programs and services are affordable for our

community. Flexible prices are available based on income, income verification required for flexible childcare and camp rates. Visit www.northshoreymca.org/flexible-pricing to apply.

Registration Changes and Refunds

\$10 deposits are non-refundable. Change requests must be made by Thursday for camps at Greater Beverly and Lynch/van Otterloo Y's and Friday at noon for Cape Ann, Salem, Ipswich, Haverhill, and Plaistow Y's. Friday at noon for the following week's session and fees may apply. **New in 2024; there will be no refunds after June 22. This includes your deposit and associated registration fee for the camp week(s) you selected. Charges will happen 8 days before the start of the camp session you registered for. In some situations, we may be able to issue a refund if you are unable to attend a program because of a serious illness or injury if written medical verification from your child's physician.** Please remember that your registration fee pays for direct operating costs such as staff, materials, and supplies. All of these must be available for your child. When you enroll, you are reserving the time, space, staffing, and provisions for your camper whether or not they attend.

WHAT TO BRING

Pack for the weather! Most Y camps are hosted outdoors, even on rainy days, unless it becomes unsafe for the campers. Camper belongings are stored separately and may not be shared, find a list below of what you'll need to make the most of every day. Campers frequently carry their backpacks between activities, so a light, sturdy backpack with weather appropriate attire and plenty to eat/drink make for a fun day at camp! Please be sure all belongings are clearly labeled.

Attire

Comfortable activewear and sneakers (close toed shoes are required) work great for all the fun planned. Please pack an extra t-shirt and pair of shorts just in case. On inclement weather days, add a sweatshirt, long pants, raincoat and/or boots to stay comfortable and dry.

Bathing Attire

Acceptable swim attire includes a one piece bathing suit, tankini, board shorts or swim shorts with a swim shirt. Thongs, bikinis and male competitive swim briefs are not permitted. Flip flops or water shoes are recommended during swim blocks, and of course a towel for drying off.

Sun Safety

Sunscreen of 25+ SPF, Bug Spray, wide brimmed hat and lip balm keep campers comfortable outdoors. Camp staff are not authorized to apply bug spray or sunscreen without written parental consent on file, so please practice applying at home.

It is strongly recommended for bug spray and sunscreen to be applied to your child prior to coming to camp so they are ready for the day!

Lunch/Snacks

Campers should pack a hearty lunch and two snacks. When making food choices, please remember all YMCA Summer Camps are nut sensitive, please help us keep all campers in our care safe. Healthy food choices are encouraged and proper methods for storing meals from home should be followed including cold packs in lunches. Board of Nutrition meals are provided at some sites in prepackaged individual servings, see your Camp Director for more information. In the event of a lost or missing meal, the parent/guardian is contacted and asked to provide one. If unable to provide in a timely fashion, the Camp Director will provide a nutritious meal.

Refillable water bottles (no glass, please) are a must! All campers and staff have adequate and centralized drinking water available. Multiple times throughout the day, campers are encouraged to refill and refresh.

Medication

A Medication Consent Form is completed prior to any medications being dispensed, this form is found in

your ePact enrollment file. Medication must be in the original container with the prescription label attached, please pre-cut any pills if needed. A physician's note should accompany any non-prescription medication to be administered. Medications are given immediately to the Camp Director or Health Care Supervisor to be stored in a secured cabinet or, if necessary, in the refrigerator at a temperature of 38 to 42 degrees F.

Medications not given to the Camp Director or in accordance with the above regulations will not be distributed and the child will not be allowed to attend camp. Medications are dispensed by authorized YMCA personnel, the only exceptions are for campers with written permission to self-administer insulin, epi-pens and/or asthma inhalers.

Items to Leave at Home

Sandals, slides, Pokemon and/or similar trading cards Technology - iPods, video games, etc. Action Figures and toys, Stuffed animals/love blankets, Glass food and/or drink containers, Radios or Music Speakers, Cosmetics, personal sports equipment, Cell Phones, Money or other valuables.

Camp is a social environment where campers are encouraged to interact. For cyber safety, phones and cameras, as well as the taking of photos, are prohibited. Please do not ask Camp Staff to be responsible for these items, we request they are left at home. The YMCA is not responsible for any missing items.

CAMP ACTIVITIES

Group Sizes

Camp is a wonderful opportunity for children to meet new people and to safely step outside their comfort zone. Generally speaking, campers are placed in groups by age. Group size, typically 10-20 campers, follows Board of Health guidelines. Campers are assigned to a group with designated counselors and changes to the group are as limited as possible. Groups follow a predetermined schedule that avoids interaction with other groups.

Activity Schedules

Schedules include a wide variety of activities and are available to parents/guardians upon request. Daily schedules include physical activities, art, music, STEM and other activities built around each weekly theme. Weekly special events and choice block opportunities keep campers engaged all summer. Feel free to ask camp staff specific questions in regards to your child's schedule.

Swimming and Swim Testing

Certified lifeguards are on duty at all times that swimming takes place. Campers are swim tested upon their first time entering the water and designated as "Swimmers" or "Non-Swimmers". The swim test consists of jumping into water over your head, treading water for 30 seconds, swimming 25 yards and climbing out unassisted. Campers who choose not to swim test are considered "Non-Swimmers". All "Non-Swimmers" are given a properly fitted USCG approved PFD to wear. Parents may provide a PFD from home. All such PFDs must be Type I,II or III (this does not include Puddle Jumpers) and be clearly marked with the camper's name. Bring a swimsuit and towel every day to make the most of the water fun!

Field Trips

YMCA camps will provide parents/guardians with a written itinerary for any field trip prior to departure that includes sources of emergency medical care. Staff will bring health records, medications and first aid supplies with them in case emergency care is needed. For camps traveling to waterfronts, YMCA lifeguard(s) travel with the camp. Campers participating in watercraft activities are equipped with, fitted and required to wear USCG approved PFDs.

Challenge Course Elements

Qualified, experienced staff lead Archery and High Ropes activities during camper Adventure time. Participation is encouraged with varying levels of difficulty, but not required. No personal bows, weapons or rifles are allowed on Y property.

CAMPER SCHEDULES

Camp Schedule Options

YMCA day camps operate from 9am to 4pm on weekdays. Drop off runs from 8:45am-9am and pick up is at 4pm. For your convenience, many of our camps offer extended care. Register in advance for Before Care and/or After Care to extend your day. **Please review your local Y extended day times as they vary from camp to camp.**

Drop Off Procedures

Each camper must be signed in and out by an authorized adult. It is requested that the same parent or guardian drop off and pick up every day. Once signed into camp, YMCA staff will then escort the camper to the camp space. Belongings are stored separately and may not be shared.

Non essential visitors including parents, volunteers and others who have no essential reason to be on camp property are limited to the maximum extent possible. Essential visitors such as parents picking up, instructors and vendors when permitted by local Board of Health regulation are escorted by YMCA Camp Staff whenever on camp property and are never left alone with campers.

Late Drop Off

Campers are highly encouraged to arrive before 9 am so they can join in on all of the activities planned for the day. Should a camper need to arrive late, please make arrangements in advance with the Camp Director. This will limit the waiting time prior to placement in your camp group. For field trip days, parents may need to travel to the field trip site for late drop off.

Pick Up Procedures

It is requested that the same camper parent or guardian drop off and pick up every day. Staff will need to verify and record the identity of the person picking up, so please have your personal ID ready.

To ensure your camper's safety, we require written notification if anyone other than a person on your authorized pick up list in ePact is coming to get your child from camp. Such persons must present a valid picture ID at pick-up. Written notification is also required if there is a change as to how your child will leave the camp property. If you desire to have your child walk home from camp, written permission is required giving your camper the ability to sign themselves out at the end of the camp day and indicate the specific date and time your child is allowed to leave the property.

Early Pick-Up

Campers are highly encouraged to stay until 4 pm so they can join in on all of the activities planned for the day. Should a camper need to leave early, please provide a written note at drop-off stating what time you plan to get your camper. Camp staff will make sure that your child is waiting for you. For field trip days, parents may need to travel to the field trip site for early pick-up.

Late Pick Up

Parents and/or authorized persons must call the Camp Office if they will not be able to arrive before the official pick up time for their camper. Each day a camper is picked up late, a fee is assessed. It is not the YMCA's intention to make money from these fees, but to defray the costs incurred. Within the first 10 minutes after your camper's scheduled pick up time, a \$15 fee is assessed. An additional fee of \$2 per minute is assessed after the first 10 minutes.

Camp staff will begin to contact parent/authorized emergency contacts 5 minutes after the closing of the program. If staff cannot contact any individual on the authorized release list and the parent has not contacted the program to notify of their tardiness within one hour of the closing of the program, the YMCA will inform local authorities of the situation.

Absences

Please call the Camp Office prior to the start of camp to let your Camp Director know if your child will be absent from camp. If the Camp Director is not alerted, a phone call is made to inquire on your camper's absence. Refunds and credits are not issued for absences.

STAYING HEALTHY AT CAMP

Healthy Hygiene

Camp follows CDC and State Guidelines for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting procedures. Personal protective equipment, hand washing and sanitizing supplies are readily available.

- Staff remind and encourage campers to follow good hygiene practices throughout the day including:
 - Wash or sanitize hands frequently, especially before and after activities
 - Cover their mouth with their elbow to cough or sneeze.
 - Refrain from touching their face.
 - Keep personal belongings in designated area and away from others, sharing is prohibited. Avoid close contact with others.
 - Report feeling unwell to Camp Counselor or Camp Director.
 - Adequate supplies are provided to minimize sharing of high touch materials, equipment

Illness

If your child is feeling ill the morning of camp or has a temperature over 100 degrees, they must be kept home until the symptoms clear for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. If your child is ill and unable to attend camp, please notify the camp office no later than 9 am. If your child is unable to attend camp, refunds are granted only when a signed physician's note is provided.

Responding to Infection and Illness

Caregivers are expected to be prepared to pick up a camper within 60 minutes of notification should a camper begin to not feel well or be deemed ill by the Camp Director and/or Health Supervisor. Please ensure emergency contact lists in ePACT are current.

Any person showing signs of illness at camp will be immediately isolated and sent home to talk to their medical care provider. Anyone who is positive or symptomatic for infectious disease may not return to camp until they have met the criteria for discontinuing home isolation and have consulted with a health care provider.

In the event that our camp program experiences an exposure to an infectious disease, employees and families will be notified of the exposure while maintaining confidentiality. The YMCA is dedicated to working with and following the guidance of the local Board of Health to maintain the safest camp possible.

First Aid

YMCA camps work with a Medical Doctor as a Health Care Consultant. In addition to the physician on call, key staff are trained in emergency care and first aid to handle minor injuries or illnesses. In the event of a minor accident, injury, or illness (i.e. bloody nose, cut, or scrapes), camp staff will contact the caregiver or the emergency contact person by phone or via a report at pick-up. In the case of serious illness or accident, YMCA camp staff will utilize appropriate police, fire department or ambulance transportation to the nearest hospital. Caregivers will be notified immediately. Our Health Care Policy has been agreed upon by our Health Care Consultant and is available in full upon request.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

All YMCA camp staff and bus drivers are trained in procedures to prevent, recognize and handle emergencies. The staff on duty will not release your child to unauthorized people. Staff are trained to do frequent head counts, name to face roll calls, buddy checks, and monitor attendance to ensure each camper is safe.

Camp leaders have telephones readily available and a two way radio communication system. In emergency situations, the Camp Director will notify authorities and rescue personnel as needed. Caregivers will be called to inform them of the situation if it pertains to their camper.

Fire / Evacuation Drills

Fire/evacuation drills signaled by 1 long air horn blast are held to ensure all YMCA staff and children are knowledgeable of the fire/evacuation plan. Drills are held within the first 24 hours of the start of the camp session and every month thereafter. Camp specific plans are available upon request and maps are posted within the YMCA.

Lost Camper/Swimmer

In the event it is determined that a camper is missing, all available staff work together to locate the child. Upon indication of a missing camper, camp staff notify the Camp Director. An air horn sounds for two long blasts, indicating that a camper is missing. All groups then meet at their designated location and attendance is taken. Staff are assigned to report to egresses to ensure that the missing person does not leave the YMCA facility while additional YMCA staff search the facility. Staff report to their assigned locations and search until the camper is found. Should it be determined that a camper is missing at an off-site location, one YMCA staff will remain with the entire group, while the second YMCA staff searches the area. The first YMCA staff will contact the Camp Director via cell phone to inform them of the situation and exact location of the group.

Unrecognized Person

Should there be an unrecognized person on camp property, staff are trained to move campers away from the person, assess the situation and respond appropriately. The Camp Director takes charge of directing the person off the camp property and calls 911 if the situation does not appear safe.

Off-Site Transportation

In the event it is determined that campers must relocate to an offsite location, YMCA staff will escort campers to YMCA of the North Shore vehicles, sitting two campers per seat, three if needed. A head count will be performed by the lead staff of that vehicle, as well as a name to face roll call to ensure all campers are present. Only appropriately licensed staff are allowed to operate vehicles used. When transported to the emergency location, another head count and name to face roll call will be made.

Traffic Control

Every YMCA camp has designated traffic flow patterns. Vehicles proceed with caution when on camp property following posted signage as well as any camp staff directions. Please park in an orderly fashion and use identified crosswalks, sidewalks and lanes to stay away from other moving vehicles. In the event it is determined that emergency pick up is needed, caregivers will be notified through email and/or phone. Pick up locations will remain the same unless otherwise notified.

Inclement Weather

Most YMCA Day Camps are held outside and on rainy days the children may get wet. Activities will be conducted outdoors as scheduled unless dangerous inclement weather arrives (ie: hard rain, rain for an extended amount of time, thunder and/or lightning). At that time, campers will be moved inside and will not return outside until the dangerous inclement weather has cleared the area according to the local radar.

Heat

Depending on the temperature outside, our camps may add extra swim time or water activities to their schedules. On the occasion that the temperature is extremely hot or lingers for an extended number of days, camp activities may be scheduled indoors and/or at alternate locations so as to provide relief.

CAMP CHILD GUIDANCE PLAN

The YMCA Summer Camp Child Guidance Plan is based upon safety and respect for others and ourselves, both personal and property. Positive reinforcement and guidance will be consistent and based on the understanding of the individual needs and development of the camper. Rules are constantly explained and reviewed with the campers. Campers are encouraged to work out minor disputes by themselves, according to their abilities. YMCA staff will intervene as quickly as possible when there is potential for major disruptions. Diversion techniques are used as well as mediation between all parties concerned. Our YMCA will focus on positive discipline, using group incentives based on the YMCA's four core Character Development values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Repeated infringement of the rules or disruptions of the group by a camper may result in a short break. This will be followed by a talk with the camp counselor about better ways to handle difficult situations. If the child is uncontrollable and creates a problem for the safety of other campers, themselves, or disruption of the activity for others, the camper will be escorted to the Camp Director or other designated YMCA staff.

Based on their age and development, campers are responsible for keeping track and taking care of all their personal belongings. In addition to being able to independently manage a large group size and navigate their day, children are expected to be able to:

- Follow verbal directions
- Follow the schedule
- Transition between activities
- Make choices at lunch & snack
- Change in/out of swimsuit or clothes
- Handle disappointment in competitive games
- Participate/tolerate in non-preferred activities
- Tolerate a variety of sensory input or loud noise

If the behavior threatens or causes injury to the camper, another camper and/or staff person, parent/guardian and program staff must discuss whether this is an appropriate placement for the camper. Some indicators that continued attendance in the program may be ill advised are:

- The camper's behavior is so intense that it is likely the camper will be isolated and ostracized by other children if it continues.
- The camper's behavior is causing stress and impacting their mental health.
- There is a serious possibility of harm to the camper, other campers, or staff and it has become extremely difficult for this camper and or other campers to learn and grow in the program.
- The camper's behavior consumes much of the staffs' time and energy.

Strategies to be implemented by YMCA staff (depending on situation):

- Talk through the problem with the camper. Redirection is encouraged to suggest alternative solutions and assist in implementing. A warning may be given to the camper as well as a list of consequences for continuance of their behavior.
- A break or removal from activity. Staff will safely remove camper from the activity. The YMCA staff will ask the camper to sit down and then help the camper regain control of themselves. After a time-out (one minute per year of age) or when the camper is calm, staff will ask why they were removed from the group. Campers will be provided an opportunity to resolve the situation by talking with staff and peers. After conversation, the child will be returned to the activity.

- The camper will be brought to Assistant Camp Director/Camp Director and a caregiver will be contacted to discuss the camper's situation. Upon pick up, the camp staff and caregiver will meet to discuss the problem and staff will provide the parent a written report, detailing the situation and efforts made by staff to resolve the situation. The camper may receive suspension from the YMCA for up to a week, depending on circumstances. In certain situations / circumstances YMCA Inclusion Specialists and / or Behavior Technicians **may** participate in meetings.
- Camp Directors immediately contact caregivers when these situations arise:
 - Physical fighting with another camper
 - Habitual use of swearing/foul language
 - Hitting and/or kicking a staff member/another camper/visitor
 - Inappropriate physical touching of staff member/another camper/visitor
 - Leaving the camp ground/area
 - Repeated infringements of camp policies
- If behavior continues, a meeting will be held between camper, caregiver, Inclusion specialist and Camp Director. All documented prior incidents will be discussed, and the camper will be placed on a detailed behavior plan according to the camper's developmental needs and level of support.
- Should future incidents occur, the YMCA Camp Director/other designated YMCA staff may recommend that the camper not return to camp. If the camper's behavior is severe and endangers the safety of the camper, other campers, and YMCA camp staff, the YMCA reserves the right to terminate services immediately. Any fees paid in advance will be returned on a pro-rated basis. Please feel free to consult the Camp Director regarding any concerns with your child's adjustment to our camp program.

Prohibitions to Guidance Plan

- Corporal punishment, including spanking is prohibited
- No camper shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse
- No camper shall be denied food, water or shelter as a form of punishment
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet

EXPERIENCED CAMP STAFF

Hiring and Training Camp Staff

All YMCA of the North Shore Employees and Volunteers (Camp and Non-Camp) are required to complete a background check including a CORI, SORI, prior work history and positive references. Each staff person and volunteer shall have a background free of conduct that bears adversely upon his or her ability to provide for the safety and well-being of campers.

Camp staff complete a rigorous training program covering the camp organization, policies and procedures. The program includes specific training for specialty activities and training to meet campers unique needs of support. In addition, Camp staff complete First Aid, CPR, Head's Up concussion safety, Emergency Action Plan and Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Training. All employees of the YMCA of the North Shore are mandated reporters and obligated to let their director/supervisor know of any signs of abuse and/or neglect. The director/supervisor is then obligated to inform the Executive Director of their YMCA branch of the case, who then informs the Executive Director of Education, who will work with appropriate staff to investigate the concerns and determine if a report needs to be made to the Department of Children and Families.

Caregivers have the right to request copies of procedures for background checks, health care, discipline and grievance.

Camper/Counselor Ratios

YMCA of the North Shore puts the safety of your camper first. Our camps maintain the ratios listed below.

- Day Camps

- 1 counselor for every 5 campers under the age of 7 1 counselor for every 10 campers age 7 and older
- Travel Camps
 - 1 counselor for every 5 campers under the age of 7 1 counselor for every 10 campers, minimum of 2 counselors
- STAR Camps
 - 1 counselor for every 2 to 4 campers depending on age

A FUN SUMMER AHEAD

YMCA Summer Camps are designed to help mold young people into the future leaders of our local community. Given opportunities to challenge themselves in new ways, make new friends and learn new skills while enjoying the great outdoors, it is our privilege to partner with you in helping your child grow to their greatest potential. See you at Camp!