



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

WHITLEY COUNTY FAMILY YMCA SUMMER DAY CAMP HANDBOOK 2026



Whitley County Family YMCA
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Website: www.fwymca.org

Dear Parents/Guardians,

There's something about summer camp memories that stick with us forever. The friendships we make, the skills we learn, and the confidence we build last long after the summer ends. The Child Care Services Branch has provided hundreds of children in our community with a camp experience they will never forget. Our camps offer a variety of experiences for children of all ages and abilities, with each camp offering safe and supervised fun provided by a caring, responsible staff. Each child gains something different at camp: making new friends, learning how to swim, self-confidence, independence, and leadership—skills that last far beyond camp. Whether it's your child's first camp experience or they are returning, each of our camps provide an environment where campers are encouraged to grow, have fun, and make those memories that will last a lifetime.

This handbook has been designed to answer your questions, promote communication between our staff and your family, and to assist you in understanding our policies and procedures. The policies outlined in this booklet are intended to protect your child(ren) and to ensure that his/her experience at the program is positive and rewarding.

Please read the handbook carefully with your child(ren) and refer to it as needed. We look forward to a tremendous summer!

Sincerely,

Lori Smith
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ABOUT THE Y

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening the foundation of communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

Our Cause

Strengthening the foundations of community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

How We Do It

We are the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Through our three areas of focus, the Y nurtures the potential of every child and teen, improves the nation's health and well-being, and provides opportunities to give back and support our neighbors.

Our Impact

The Y is, and always will be, dedicated to building healthy, confident, connected, and secure children, adults, families, and communities. Every day our impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, when a mentor inspires a child, and when a community comes together for the common good.

Our Promise

The YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne has made a promise to our community to turn no one away due to the inability to pay.

American Camp Association

Our Day Camp programs have obtained accreditation by the American Camp Association. Developed exclusively for camp programs, this nationally recognized accreditation process focuses on quality, health and safety issues and requires us to review every facet of our operation. Our camps have voluntarily submitted to this independent appraisal by camping experts through the American Camp Association.

The YMCA Mission Statement:

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

Character Development

Ys throughout the USA strive to implement our character development program exemplifying our core values of: CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, and FAITH.

These core values provide a foundation that guides all Y programs, staff trainings, and operations. It is our job to give youth and adults experiences that help them develop a set of positive values, morals, and ethics to live by. Y Staff strive to provide an environment focused on these Y core values. Campers will be taught these core values on a consistent basis. Each child will be taught expectations of conduct while at camp. Teaching the core values will allow campers in our care to form a foundation that will provide a stable, secure base on which to build their lives.

Staff Qualifications

The quality and effectiveness of Y services for children are directly related to the skills and personal characteristics of the staff. Recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the staff are essential, interrelated processes in ensuring the success and integrity of children's programs. The leaders are required to have experience in working with children, knowledge of recreational activities, and must model the Y's core values.

All Y staff are first aid and CPR certified. Background checks are conducted on all staff members. This includes a criminal background check, national sex offender public registry check, drug screen, and reference checks. We take pride in our staff training, which includes emergency procedures, program planning, child abuse awareness, and other areas pertaining to child development.

Admissions Criteria

Campers must be entering kindergarten through eighth grade. Parents must register online or in house. Parents must complete in its entirety, The YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne Whitley County Summer Day Camp On-Line Registration before your child is officially enrolled.

It is also our policy that every child be fully toilet trained and capable of using the facilities without assistance. We understand that accidents can occur, in which case, we would require that parents pick up their children immediately or provide clean attire. Due to staffing policies and training, if accidents begin to occur on a regular basis, the child will not be able to attend our program.

Equal Access

The YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne, in keeping with its mission to help all people realize their fullest potential, encourages and supports the participation of all children in Y Child Care Programs. We serve all children regardless of gender, race, color, nationality, religion, ethnicity, or disability. Consideration is given to the individual needs of every child and the ability of the program to meet those needs.

Diverse Abilities (Adaptive Services)

At the Y we aim to promote an inclusive environment where all children, whatever their needs, can learn and develop in a happy, caring, and educational environment. If your child has special needs (including disabilities, medicinal requirements, behavioral conditions, or child custody concerns, etc.), please indicate these on the health form and notify the staff.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for children who have special needs, provided a written request is made at least two weeks before the child's attendance. One-on-one aides are not provided by the Y, but will be accommodated if the family provides them, and they meet our hiring and volunteer criteria. Unless a family-provided personal aide accompanies them, children must possess the ability to self-monitor, be independently mobile, and the ability to reasonably foresee the consequences of their actions.

No child will be denied acceptance unless his or her presence would pose a significant risk to himself or herself, or to the general population, as determined by the staff. However, if the Y cannot meet the child's need through reasonable accommodations, the placement cannot be accepted. Decisions are made on a per case basis.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Goals

- Create a community by building relationships among campers and staff.
- Create a safe, nurturing, welcoming environment where campers will quickly realize camp is a place where they belong and can be themselves.
- Provide positive role models that will support and guide campers through curriculum that will allow them to discover and learn new skills, talents, and interests.
- Show campers that they can accomplish anything when they believe in themselves.
- Immerse campers in an atmosphere that inspires them to live healthy, help others, work together, and make strong friendships that will last a lifetime.
- The Y is here to help campers flourish socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Rooted in the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Session Times

All camp sessions are one week in length, Monday through Friday. Camp opens at 6:30am and closes at 6pm.

Dates available.

June 1nd-August 7th (Closed Saturdays & Sundays)

Daily Needs: Please mark all items clearly with camper's full name.

- Sunscreen (Spray kind preferred)
- Bug Spray
- Water Bottle
- Lunch, 2 snacks and drink
- Gym Shoes (Flip flops and sandals are not conducive to active play and walking)
- Swimsuit & Towel
- Backpack or Durable Bag for belongings
- Plastic Bag for wet suits and towels
- Comfortable Play Clothing (Dress for weather and messy activities)

What NOT to Bring:

We do not allow campers to bring personal items from home (including electronic devices, cell phones, sharp objects, weapons, firearms, explosives, alcohol, and drugs etc.). We are not responsible for any of these items should a camper make the poor choice to bring them. Due to the nature of our program, damages and theft of personal items is possible. If participants are caught with any of the above items, the staff reserves the right to confiscate them. In the case of weapons, firearms, explosives, alcohol, or drugs, expulsion from the program will result and the appropriate authorities will be contacted.

Test. Mark. Protect (Swim Testing)

All campers intending to swim at the deep end of the pool (past the buoy rope) will be required to complete a swim test. If passed they will be considered "Green Band Approved" which will allow them to swim in the deep end of any of the YMCAs of Greater Fort Wayne. If the camper does not pass or does not wish to take the swim test, they must stay in the shallow end of the pool. Life jackets are available upon request, but life jackets are not equivalent to passing a swim test and campers wearing life jackets must stay in the shallow end of the pool.

Testing age starts at 6 years old. Any child 7 years and younger that cannot pass the swim test will be required to wear a life jacket. Children between the ages of 6 and 7 that pass the swim test will be allowed to swim in the shallow area, not passing the buoy rope, without a life jacket.

All previous camp participants will be required to pass the swim test at the beginning of every summer as required by our insurance company and for your child's safety.

Bus Safety Rules

Please go over the following rules with your child so they will know what is expected of them on the bus.

- Passengers should always remain seated with all body parts inside the vehicle.
- Passengers should wear seat belts when applicable.
- Noise level should be such as not to distract the driver.
- No throwing objects inside or outside of the vehicle

- Passengers should enter and leave the vehicle under the direction of a staff member and/or driver. If the vehicle makes an emergency stop, passengers should follow directions of the staff and use the buddy system if leaving the vehicle.
- No disruptive or rude behavior
- Clean up after yourselves!!! If you bring something onto the bus, make sure you take it back with you.
- Know where the emergency exits are and how to use them.

Marketing

On occasion, the Y takes recordings of our programs. This media may include your child's image or voice and is used only for purposes of promoting or interpreting Y programs. On the registration form you will be asked for permission to include your child in these promotional materials.

Staff Relationships Outside of Y Program

For the safety and protection of your child and our staff, Y employees are not allowed to babysit for program participants, spend time outside of program with our families, transport children in their private vehicles, or contact families by personal phone, email, or internet. Please do NOT put our staff at risk of losing their position with us by asking them to do so.

Inclement Weather

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily camp schedule. Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for the weather conditions. A light sweater or jacket may be needed in the mornings. Air quality will also be monitored and appropriate precautions will be taken.

Heat/O-zone Advisories

At the Y we are committed to the safety of all children. All precautions will be taken to prevent heat-related injuries. Staff are trained to do the following for your camper:

- Make sure there are frequent water breaks
- Lower physical activities
- Act as role models, applying sunscreen & wearing hats outside
- Make sure campers are in the shade or indoors whenever possible
- Make sure there are opportunities for children to reapply sunscreen
- Watch for the signs of heat exhaustion

Rain/Thunderstorms

If it rains, camp will continue as normal. If it thunderstorms we will seek shelter immediately and stay there until it subsides. Should there be a tornado warning, all children and staff will go to the predetermined safe room. They will sit on the floor against the wall until the threat passes. Monthly drills are done for safety purposes.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Program Fees

Payment is due in full by the Thursday of the week prior to your child attending camp. If payment is not made on Monday morning at time of drop off your child will not be allowed to stay at camp that day, and will not be allowed to attend camp until balance is paid in full.

You are responsible for payment on all weeks that your child is registered. If a cancellation needs to be made, the Program Director needs to be notified prior to the first day of camp season in order to not get charged for the weeks not attending.

DEPOSITS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE. THEY ARE HOLDING YOUR CHILD(REN)'S SPOT AT CAMP.

Updating Your Payment Method on File

You may add a credit card or bank account online; however, it does NOT update your scheduled payments. You will need to notify the Financial Coordinator to make those changes so late fees do NOT occur.

Delinquent Accounts

When payment on an account falls two days behind, the parent/guardian will be notified that their child cannot return to the program. Your child may return when the account is brought current or payment arrangements are made. If parent/guardian has been notified of delinquent account and sends their child to the program anyway, staff will call to have the child immediately picked up.

Insufficient Funds

If payment to the childcare program is returned due to insufficient funds, a returned payment fee will be added based on the amount of the payment. The Y will attempt to collect the original amount plus the returned fee up to three times in the next ten business days.

Financial Assistance

We believe that no one should be turned away due to inability to pay. The YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne is a non-profit organization committed to strengthening the foundations of our community, one child at a time. Our Annual Campaign is a Y initiative that provides scholarships for programs and memberships to children and families in need. Those families unable to pay the full cost of participation are encouraged to apply, you are welcome to pick up an application at our membership

desk or download an application from the website, www.fwymca.org. Please let the Camp Director know if you are currently receiving or in the process of applying for financial assistance.

Personal Information

The Y participates in local, federal, and state grants. Some of these grants require family information such as: income, ethnicity, diverse abilities, housing info etc. You may be asked to complete additional information to remain enrolled in our program.

Tax Information

A tax statement including all expenses for the previous year can be found on your YMCA Daxko account. **Our tax ID number is: 35-0886850.**

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedures

The safety of every child is a priority of the Y. Following Sign-In and Sign-Out procedures helps ensure the safety of your child and allows staff to determine which children are present at any given time.

Sign-In

For your child's safety, please go through carline for morning drop-off. Please stay in your car to make the flow of things go smoothly. Roll down your window and staff will assist with getting child(ren) out of vehicle. This is similar to car drop off at school.

Under no circumstances may a child be dropped off without being signed into the program by an adult. If this occurs, the parent/guardian will be called and required to come to the site to sign their child into the program.

Sign-Out

All children must be signed out of the program by a parent/guardian or an authorized adult. When a child is picked up from the program the parent/guardian or authorized adult must come to the designated area. All adults picking up children must be prepared to show I.D. so staff can verify their identity. For your child's protection, anyone without proper I.D. will be stopped from taking a child from the program and the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.

Parents must keep staff notified and their account updated with phone number changes, authorized pick-ups, and emergency contacts. Any restricted individual must have the appropriate paperwork (restraining

order, court documents, etc.) on file with the director.

If staff are uncomfortable releasing a child to you or to an authorized pick-up person who appears to be incapacitated due to drug or alcohol use, they will call a different person on the authorized pick-up list. If you decline this and leave the child, we will call the police immediately.

Late Pick-Up

Camp ends at 6:00 p.m. and our staff is scheduled to leave. If you are running late, please notify your Camp Director. A late pick-up fee will be assessed after the program closes. There will be an additional charge of \$1.00 per child, per minute starting at 6:05p.m. payable to the YMCA. You will receive a receipt for your payment. Parents who have not notified the Camp Director they will be late can expect the following sequence of events to occur. These steps are necessary to ensure the safety of the child as well as Y staff members.

- 6:00 p.m. Program closes. Staff member in charge begins calling parent work number to check for problems or miscommunications. If contact is not made, alternative contacts listed on the registration form will be called.
- 6:30 p.m. Staff member in charge contacts Site Director, Program Director, and local authorities to apprise them of the situation.
- 6:45 p.m. If there is no contact from the parent and no other safe option, the child will be turned over to the city or county police department.

You risk dismissal from the program if:

- You fail to pay the late fee.
- You are late picking up your child three times within a 30-day period.

Parents must keep the Y office and camp staff notified of phone number changes for work, home, and emergency contacts always. You can update these in your account (under edit profile) at any time.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Medication During Program

Any medication that needs to be administered during program hours must:

- Be accompanied by "Permission to Medicate" form. (Available at each site)
- Be brought directly to the camp director in its original container with the child's name, physician's name, and drug name on the container.
- Have specific doctor instruction for dosage, times, etc. The Y can only administer medication according to original instructions on label. If direction from parent is different, the parent must provide a physician's written change.
- No over-the-counter medication, including aspirin, cough medicine etc. will be given without a doctor's written consent.
- Staff cannot administer amounts other than specified on bottle or split pills.
- Medication will not be administered past expiration date.

Child Illness

For the sake of your child and others, if a child has a temperature of over 100 degrees, is vomiting, or shows other signs of illness, parents are asked to keep the participant at home. Parents must notify their Y Site of the absence and the nature of the illness. If this happens during program hours we will call you and ask that you pick your child up within one hour.

Illness/Injury Occurring During Program Hours

The Y does not aim to exclude children from the program unnecessarily. The Y's illness/injury policies are based on the following criteria:

- Preventable public health practices
- The comfort and safety of the sick child
- The staff's ability to accommodate or care for a sick child
- The protection of the other students, staff and parents from communicable disease conditions

If your child becomes ill and/or injured, they will be isolated from the other children and you will be contacted to pick him or her up within one hour of notification (depending on the severity of the injury or illness). The YMCA is not equipped to handle ill/injured children beyond securing their immediate comfort.

If you cannot be reached, we will

contact someone you've authorized from your emergency contact on the Health and Registration form for immediate pick up. Please be sure to keep the YMCA and your Site Director informed of any changes in your work or emergency phone numbers. In an emergency, medical aid will be sought immediately.

Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases are diseases that are transmitted from one individual to another and easily spread among children. Common communicable diseases among children are head lice, pink eye, ringworm and chickenpox. The following policies have been created to reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

Head Lice

The Y reserves the right to inspect your child's head in the event lice is suspected in order to protect all of the other students, staff, and parents

- In the event nits/head lice are found among your child, a parent/guardian must pick up the child within one hour of the notification.
- The Y will notify all parents of all head lice/nits cases when found or reported.
- If nits/head lice are found outside of the Y care, parents/guardians must contact the Director immediately so proper notification can be made to the other parents.
- Students with nits/head lice must not return to Y care until 24 hours after first treatment is complete.

Same policies apply to all other communicable diseases.

Confidentiality

Student's records are kept within groups, as staff needs to access them regularly. Any information in a child's record that is sensitive will be kept in a secure place.

Behavior Management Procedures

Philosophy

The Y strives to maintain a positive approach to always managing children's behavior. "Discipline" is the process of teaching self-control and the ability to live within limitations and agreed upon guidelines. The staff and children at each site establish expected behavior guidelines. Positive behavior is self-rewarding and allows for program activities to occur. When children choose to behave outside the guidelines, some consequence is required to avoid future problems. The overall safety of all children in the program is our highest priority.

Children's Rules

It is our intent that each child enjoys the planned activities by understanding that they are responsible for their actions. With prior knowledge of our basic rules of safety and good conduct, each child is made aware of how to exercise self-discipline and to understand that we are here to assist her or him and that we expect them to succeed. Rules for behavior are posted at every Y Camp. Character Development is an important part of our program.

Process

When positive behavior is displayed, the consequence is participation and enjoyment of planned activities. In cases of negative or inappropriate behavior, the following process will be employed.

- **Redirection:** Every effort will be made to help the child understand the inappropriateness of his or her actions and agree to an alternate form of behavior. When the conflict is child-to-child, every effort will be made to have them reason together face-to-face with staff facilitating.
- **Removal from the Specific Activity:** When redirection has been pursued and behavior has not changed, removing the child from the activity involved for an appropriate amount of time is necessary. The removal time will be age appropriate. Other duty-oriented consequences suitable to the inappropriate behavior may also be utilized at this stage.
- **Behavior Communication:** When the child is not successful in correcting the behavior, or the behavior is of a serious nature, a behavior write-up will occur. This write-up will be discussed with the child and parent and requires a parent signature. Depending on the severity, a Parent Conference may be required.
- **Removal from the Program:** If the above process has not resulted in corrected behavior, the child may be removed from the program. If your

child is removed from one of the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne locations, they cannot enroll in another program during the same session (school year, summer etc.). To return during the next session, a parent conference will be required, and re-enrollment will be on a trial basis.

Serious Behavior Issues

When a child has a serious discipline problem, on any one occasion, the parent may be called by staff and asked to pick up the child within one hour of the call. Should it be decided by Y staff that a child poses a serious problem, the child may be suspended from the program for a period of one to five days or may be re-moved from the program entirely. No child will be allowed to continue in the program who becomes a safety hazard to themself or others. In addition to behavior management procedures outlined above, parents must be aware that a child may be released from the program, without refund, for the following misconduct (but not limited to):

- Leaving Y Camp premises without permission, or going into unauthorized areas
- Using foul language, being rude or discourteous to staff and other children
- Defacing property
- Physical Violence (fighting, biting, putting hands on another child, threatening)
- Bringing or using any illegal substances and weapons
- Any demonstration of sexual contact/words
- Any behavior that jeopardizes the safety of staff or participants
- Stealing
- Bullying

Other Behavior Related Issues

No staff member will ever strike, swear at, abuse, or threaten with physical intimidation either a child or a parent. Staff will only physically assist your child if they are in imminent danger. No staff member will allow a child to be struck, sworn at, abused, or physically intimidated by anyone else in the program. No staff member will ever solicit or accept gratuities in consideration for any treatment of a child.

Parent Conferences

Informal or formal conferences may be requested by staff or parents regarding their child's behavior. Typically, conferences are requested after multiple behavior reports or extreme changes in a child's demeanor. We cannot emphasize enough how important it is that you share changes occurring at home. Staff can better provide for a child's needs when we are aware of changes. The Y partners with local agencies to provide you with resources (skills coaches, counselors etc.). You will be provided with these resources at the time of the conference if needed.

Parent Code of Conduct

Some of the most important principles upon which the YMCA is founded, the basis for how our programs operate and that children are expected to follow, are our four core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. To create an optimal environment for each child it is essential that all parents and visitors be aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the expected code of conduct set forth below by the YMCA Child Care Services Branch.

Parents are expected to:

- Recognize that the success of children is a joint responsibility of the parents and YMCA Child Care staff.
- Inform YMCA staff of changes in their home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
- Observe all rules set forth by the YMCA when visiting or volunteering at one of the YMCA Child Care sites.
- Treat all Y staff, parents, and children with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behavior.
- Inform Y staff of ways they can help to resolve any issues of concern.
- Be respectful in all communication and ensure issues are resolved through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved while respecting the dignity of others.

Conduct Prohibited:

- Disruptive behavior which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of any childcare programs.
- Using loud, offensive, or profane language or displaying a temper including:
 - Abusive or threatening emails, texts, voicemails, phone messages, social media posts or other written communication.
 - Yelling, taunting, threatening or derogatory remarks.
- Approaching another child, parent, or guardian while in the program to discuss issues or chastise them. Parents may approach Y staff and privately discuss a situation to seek a peaceful resolution.
- Intentionally damage or destroy school property, YMCA property or any other person lawfully on school property or YMCA property.
- Refuse to comply with any reasonable request made by Y staff.

Parent Conflict Resolution

As our parent community, you deserve the best and most responsive communication we can provide. We want to actively address any concerns and ensure that all concerns are dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all. We believe:

- Your child(ren) and a positive environment are the focus of our work, and communication that concerns your child's well-being and progress is a priority.
- Parent communication regarding your child(ren) should first and foremost occur with the Y staff that works directly with the child.

The parent should arrange a meeting with Y staff to discuss any concerns and attempt to come to a mutually agreed upon solution. The Program Director assigned to the designated program should be included in these communications.

If a mutually agreed on solution is not reached, the parent may arrange a meeting with the Executive Director. The Executive Director, at their discretion, may invite the staff member(s) to be present.

People in violation of the Code of Conduct

Should a parent/guardian or visitor fail to heed the Code of Conduct set forth by the YMCA Child Care Services Branch, we reserve the right to enact the following:

- Issue a verbal warning with actions that are in direct violation of our Code of Conduct.
- Depending upon the severity of the incident:
 - Prohibit from school or YMCA grounds and participation in any childcare programs.
 - Pursue legal action against any person violating the code.

HEPA (Healthy Eating & Physical Activity) Standards

The YMCA Child Care Services Branch implements a series of healthy eating and physical activity standards in our programs as part of the Y's national commitment to combat childhood obesity and ensure that all those who participate in Y programs live healthier, balanced lives.

Specific ways we implement these standards:

- Parent Education- programs and information for parents about physical activity and nutrition as it relates to the health of their children.
- Physical Activity- minimum 30min. of physical activity each day, including a mix of moderate and vigorous activities. The entire group will be outdoors whenever possible.
- Screen Time- no access to television or movies. Limit digital device time to less than one hour per day. Digital device use is limited to homework or programs that actively engage children in activity.
- Food- we will commit to serving fruits, vegetables, or 100% juice for each snack with water being the primary beverage.

The standards are based in part on years of research supported by collaborations with the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), University of Massachusetts at Boston, the Healthy out of School Time Coalition (HOST) and the National Institute for Out of School Time (NIOST).

Lunch Guidelines

Nutrition is a very important aspect of each camp day. If your child does not like the lunch provided or can't have it due to dietary restrictions or allergies, please send a healthy lunch with them. **If your child has an allergy, please be sure to inform the staff of the specific details including the severity.** Y care is a candy, junk food, and soda pop free zone. Campers are not permitted to share food or candy with others!

Please keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Pack extra drinks and a refillable water bottle
- Send foods that are easy to eat and don't require cooking or refrigeration.
- Strive for a litter-less lunch (reusable containers)
- Label your child's lunch with first and last name.