



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE SUMMER OF THEIR LIFE



## A parent handbook for overnight camp at YMCA CAMP WILLSON

**YMCA Camp Willson**  
2732 County Road 11  
Bellefontaine, OH 43311  
1-800-423-0427

## 2024 SESSION DATES

### Magical Moments

**Week 1 June 9-14**

**Week 2 June 16-21**

**Week 3 June 23-38**

**Week 4(mini!)June 30-July 3**

**Week 5 July 7-12**

**Week 6 July 14-19**

**Week 7 July 21-26**

**Week 8 July 28-Aug 2**

Willson Cup

**Week 9 Aug 4-9**

**Drop off 3:00pm- 4:30pm on sundays- Pick up 3:30-5pm of Fridays (early pick up available), Pickup up on Wednsdays of mini weeks**

<b><u>Camps</u></b>	<b><u>Ages</u></b>	<b><u>Weeks</u></b>	<b><u>Cost</u></b>
Rangers	6-8	ALL	\$650
Pathfinders	9-11	ALL	\$650
Trailblazers	12-14	ALL	\$650
TEENnation	14-16	ALL	\$650
Fishing Camp	12-16	1,2,3	\$650
Ranch Camp	12-16	6,7,8	\$750
Junior Ranch Camp	9-11	1,2,3	\$750
Jr Ranch Camp Mini	6-8	5,9	\$400
Counselor in training	16-17	2,3	\$650

**\*mini week \$400**

## Welcome to YMCA Camp Willson!

For the past 105 years, YMCA Camp Willson has given children the experience of a lifetime. Here at the Y, we pride ourselves on providing programs that are high quality and fit your child's needs and interests. We look forward to having your child at camp where they will gain new skills, develop friendships, and leave memories to last a lifetime.

Please read through this information carefully as it will help answer many of your general camp questions. As you review the handbook, please remember that while we did our best to include as much information as possible, you may still have questions– that's okay! Please do not hesitate to ask any questions; we are happy to help you feel confident in your decision to send your child to camp this summer. We hope this information will help you prepare for your time with YMCA Camp Willson.

One policy we would like to highlight is our cell phone free policy. To provide your child with the best experience, it is important that you support Camp Willson's cell phone free environment. There is extensive research on why this makes for a safer and more trusting environment and we would be happy to walk you through this decision. Thank you in advance for being our partner in giving our campers a screen-free summer.

While your child is at camp, the possibilities are limitless. We hope your camper will try new things, get out of their comfort zone, find good role models, and connect with their peers. We are confident your child is going to have the best summer at YMCA Camp Willson.

On behalf of the camp staff, we are excited for summer and we can't wait to see you at camp!

Heather Graham  
Executive Director  
Email: [heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org](mailto:heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org)

Melk Kowalkowski  
Summer Camp Director  
Email: [Melk.kowalkowski@ymcacolumbus.org](mailto:Melk.kowalkowski@ymcacolumbus.org)

Wendy Kidwell  
Food Services Manager  
Email: [wendy.kidwell@ymcacolumbus.org](mailto:wendy.kidwell@ymcacolumbus.org)



# Before Camp Begins

Dear Parents and Guests,

Bedbugs are a nuisance, and we work very hard to provide the best programming and camping facilities in the area. We do not want bedbugs to detract from an otherwise wonderful experience. From our discussions with licensed professionals and others who deal with bedbugs, we believe heat is the best way to ensure bedbug elimination.

## **WE DO THE FOLLOWING TO ENSURE A CLEAN FACILITY**

- Prior to your arrival, the cabins are cleaned and inspected.
- Upon arrival at camp, luggage is heated and delivered to your cabins.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

- Please pack clothes, towels, sleeping bags, and linens into **a separate, heat-able, bag** as these items will be run through our heaters.
- Personal items such as toiletries, makeup & shoes should be packed separately. A tote or tub may be used to store clothing after your clothing and bedding have been heated.
- Our general rule-of-thumb: if it can go in your household dryer, it can be put through our heaters.

We know these are not cure-all steps, but we want to be as proactive as possible when dealing with this.

If you have any questions, please contact Email our staff  
heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org.



# THE CAMP WILLSON EXPERIENCE

## Life Skills and Values

At the core of our program is the cabin community and the lessons that come from living with and sharing a space with others. Through this experience, campers learn skills and values that will serve them throughout their life. Our commitment to the YMCA's Core Values of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility sets us apart from other summer experiences. Our counselors and campers work together to uphold these values through words and actions.

## Benefits of Coming to Camp

During your camper's adventure at Camp Willson, they will get to experience many new activities thanks to our beautiful natural setting and outstanding facilities. During the week, campers will have the chance to explore our beautiful 500 acres of hiking trails and enjoy activities in and around Lake Mac-O-Chee. During the week, campers get to participate in activities such as archery, riflery, climbing, fire building, weird science, and many more. As campers learn these new skills, they also strengthen their self confidence, form friendships, and reconnect with the outdoors.

## Camper Ages and Programs

While we believe it is important for older and younger children to learn together, our camps are divided into programs that help ensure your child's experience is age appropriate. During most evenings, campers participate in large group games for the chance to interact with the camp community as a whole. Our campers range in age from 6-17.

## Affordability for All

We feel strongly that Camp should remain affordable for everyone, and to that end, YMCA Camp Willson has created a Camp for All Fund. Through donations to Camp for All and our annual campaign, you can help Camp Willson fulfill our campership goals and stay strong for the next 100 years of Camp Willson kids.

To donate, please email [heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org](mailto:heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org)

## Our Staff

Our well-trained and diverse YMCA camp staff is dedicated to providing your child with an exceptional camp experience. Summer camp staff are carefully chosen for their enthusiasm, talent, and dedication– many of our counselors are former Camp Willson campers as well! All staff participate in pre-season training to further develop their skills to create an environment where our campers feel cared for, accepted, and encouraged. Training is approximately 40 hours and includes child protection, safety procedures, and best practices– as well as extensive training on how to be a great camp counselor. Additional training is provided for program areas such as horseback riding, waterfront, and high adventure elements.

Our lifeguards receive additional advanced training through the Red Cross to provide primary supervision during all waterfront activities.

All staff are subject to reference and background checks. Staff members receive first aid and CPR training, as well as instruction on policies and procedures specific to camp programs prior to the start of camp. Our well-trained and dedicated staff return year after year to help campers develop activity based skills while providing a fun environment for making friendships and memories to last a lifetime.

### **Please note:**

- Staff are prohibited from babysitting, nannying, or having contact with campers outside of camp without a prior relationship being established. If you know a staff member from home, please contact our office so we may document this relationship.
- Staff are prohibited from sharing social media or contact information with campers. If your child would like to contact a staff member, please have them write to the person and address the letter to camp along with the staff person's name.

## REGISTRATION & FEES

Registering is easy! Simply register online and pay a \$100 non-refundable deposit to each session you reserve. You can email [heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org](mailto:heather.graham@ymcacolumbus.org) or log on to our Parent Dashboard for assistance.

You can access our Parent Dashboard through our website or at [ymcacampwillson.campmanagement.com](http://ymcacampwillson.campmanagement.com).

Fees for each program are listed on the second page of this information packet or available online at [ymcacampwillson.org](http://ymcacampwillson.org).

### Ways to Pay Your Remaining Camp Balance

- Authorize us to automatically charge your credit card monthly to spread the cost of camp over several months. (This can also be set-up online through the Parent Dashboard).
- If you register for camp online through our Parent Dashboard, you can make additional payments online as often as you would like.
- Send physical checks (payable to YMCA Camp Willson).

**Mail to:**

YMCA Camp Willson  
2732 County Road 11  
Bellefontaine, OH 43311

- Call in to our office at 937-593-9001

Mark your calendar and ensure your final payment is made at least three weeks prior to your camper's session.

# ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

## **Important:**

To ensure a smooth Check-In process, make sure you have completed the following form online:

- Health History Form
- Parent/Camper Confidential form
- Payment in full

Returning campers: please update your medical forms. All forms must be resubmitted.

**NO PETS!** While we love your furry friends, please leave them home when dropping off/picking up your camper.

## **CHECK-IN: Sunday 3:00– 4:30 PM**

1. **Check in begins at 3:00 pm.** Please DO NOT arrive early. Our staff will not be ready for you and you will be asked to wait.
2. **Check in-**You will then be directed by personnel and signage to the Airnasium. Once you reach the Airnasium, you are permitted to exit the car to help your camper bring their luggage to the carts for heat treatment. Please ensure that your camper's swimsuit is readily accessible and with your camper, as they will take their swim assessment on Sunday afternoon. After you and your camper visit each check in station, you will say your goodbyes, your camper will join their cabinmates, and you will return to your vehicle and exit camp.
3. **Anyone with missing forms or balance due,** you will need to fill out paper forms and/or make a payment before you can move on to the next stations. **RETURNING CAMPERS:** Please update any Medical Forms and all yearly forms must be resubmitted (Authorization to Release Child, Parent/Camper Confidential, etc).
4. **At each check-in station,** you will be greeted by a staff member that will help you through the process. Check-in stations include initial check-in, camp nurse/medication drop off, camp store/ mail, lice check, and luggage.
5. **If you have any medications (prescription and over-the counter),** you will stop at the nurse's station to verify dosage and time of administration. All medications must be in their original containers (including inhalers), with instructions printed on the bottle.



## CHECK-OUT:

**Ranch:** Pickup/ Parent Show 9:15 am, gate opens at 9am

### **Traditional Camp (Fish, CIT, Ranger, Pathfinder, Trailblazer, Teen)**

- You can choose between a 10am pick up or a 3pm pick up at check in.
- Please wait at the barricade until a YMCA Camp Willson Staff member arrives to check ID's. **All campers are to be signed out by parents/guardians or authorized adults with a photo ID.**
- You will be directed where to drive your car and park
- Make sure to check the lost and found table before you head out.

## TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE FOR MAIN CAMP

7:30 AM	Cabin wake up
8:10	Flag raising
8:15	Breakfast
9:00	Cabin clean up
9:40	Morning activities begin
11:35	Lunch
12:30 PM	Siesta
2:00	Afternoon activities begin
4:40	Twilight (Unit Activities) and snack
5:50	Flag lowering
6:00	Dinner
6:20	Cabin time
7:00	Evening program
9:00	Cabin chat, showers, nighttime routines
10:00	Lights out

Campers will have the opportunity to pick their own age appropriate activities on Sunday night. Every camper will spend time at the waterfront each day.

## **YMCA CAMP WILLSON ACTIVITIES**

### **ACTIVITY OFFERINGS MAY CHANGE DAILY**

- Soccer
- Flag football
- Street hockey
- Pickleball
- Volleyball
- Gaga
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Archery
- BBs
- Kickball
- Nine square
- Carpetball
- Goofy golf
- Softball
- Climbing wall
- Hiking
- Outdoor cooking
- Fort building
- Farm camp, gardening and animals
- Nature art
- Arts and crafts
- Orienteering/GeoCaching
- Low Ropes/Team-building
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- SUP (Stand up paddle board)
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Capture the flag
- Aquatic studies
- High ropes course

## **WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP**

Please pack all clothes in a drawstring bag, duffel bag, or laundry bag. **Toiletries, swimsuits, towels, and shoes should be packed in a small backpack or day bag.** This ensures your camper will be able to complete their swim assessment on Sunday afternoon.

The following are items we suggest. It is not necessary to have a complete change of clothes for every day. Older play clothes and clothes campers enjoy wearing are recommended.

Packing tip: **Please put your camper's name on ALL items sent to camp!**

### **Packing List** (based on a one-week stay)

- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Twin sheet for bed (fitted or flat is fine)
- Pillow
- Jacket/sweater
- Long sleeve shirt for evenings
- Shower shoes
- Shoes (broken in!)
- Sandals with heel strap (please avoid open backed shoes – no flip flops or slides)
- Boots with heel (for horseback riding/Ranch Camp)
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Jeans or pants
- Socks and underwear
- Rain jacket or poncho
- Swimsuit/swim trunks
- Bag for carrying items (drawstring/bookbag)
- Pajamas
- Toiletries (toothbrush, paste, travel size shampoo, soap, washcloth, etc in a carrier)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Deodorant
- Shower towel and beach towel
- Water bottle
- Stationary, pens, stamps (can also be bought in camp store)
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Books and activities for siesta such as playing cards or games
- Insect repellent (30-70% Deet recommended)
- Sunscreen lotion (SPF 15 or Higher, spray bottle preferred)
- Laundry bag or bag for dirty clothes

### **Equipment for Specialty Camps**

**Fishing Camp:** (available at Wal-Mart or local store)

- Rod & Reel, 6-8# line or less
- Tackle box
- 1 pack Jig heads 1/32 oz. (lead ball and hook)
- 1 pack 2" plastic white twisters
- 6" black plastic worms (10)
- 2 bobbers – stick type
- Hat
- Old sneakers/sport sandals/water shoes
- Sunscreen/sunglasses
- Elastic eyeglass band (optional)
- **PLEASE DO NOT BRING KNIVES!** – Fisherman Dan or your counselor will be able to assist you for any cutting needs

**Ranch Camp:**

- Boot with heel
- Long pants
- Personal Riding Equipment (helmet/chaps if you own them)
- Sunscreen
- Head Bug Net (found at Walmart- looks funny but VERY HELPFUL)

**Clothing Policies**

These policies have been established for safety purposes and to make all campers and staff more comfortable at Camp Willson.

1. **Tops:** All attire should be casual or athletic. Tops must fully cover midriff.
2. **Swimwear:** One-piece, tankini bathing suit, or board shorts are preferred. Bathing suits should be suitable for active aquatic activity to ensure comfort, freedom of movement, and safety while participating in water activities and sports.
3. **Jewelry:** Camp is not responsible for lost items. Please refrain from bringing jewelry to camp. Earrings should be straight studs as dangling jewelry can be dangerous.
4. **Footwear:** In order to prevent injuries, all staff and campers are required to wear shoes with heel straps at all times. Open-toed shoes are permitted; however, flip flops may only be worn inside the cabins and for showering or carried to a swimming activity.

Above all, encourage your camper to bring and wear practical, comfortable clothing.

**What NOT to bring to Camp**

Campers should not bring expensive items to camp that could be lost, misplaced, or stolen. Camp Willson is not responsible for damage, theft, or loss of personal items. If you have a question about whether your child can or cannot bring an item to camp, please contact us prior to arrival.

- Cash or debit/credit cards
- Personal sporting equipment
- Weapons (including pocket knives)
- Drugs, tobacco, alcohol, e-cigarettes, and vapes
- Explicit items

**FORBIDDEN ITEMS:**

- o Any Form of Electronic (Cell phones, iPads, tablets, E-Readers, watches that connect to cellular service/devices etc)
- o Food or candy (due to possible allergies within the cabin as well as cabin pests)

## Electronics

We strongly urge you to leave iPods, cameras, cell phones, tablets, etc. at home. The physical camp environment is not kind to such items and Camp Willson is not responsible for anything that may happen to those items.

## Cell phones

Cell phones are not allowed and will be confiscated and held in the Main Office until departure.

When a child comes to camp there is a transfer of primary care from you (the primary caregiver) to Camp Willson personnel. As children learn to trust other caring adults, they learn little by little to solve some of their own challenges. We believe this emerging independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp, and it teaches resiliency.

If your child has a phone and can contact you, it prevents this transformative opportunity from happening. Using cell phones at camp can take away from the valuable learning experience of being away from home.

We respect and appreciate the relationship you have with your campers. We agree to tell you if your child is experiencing a challenge with their adjustment to camp. Prior to your child attending camp, you can help with this adjustment by talking with your child to let them know there is always an adult they can reach out to, whether it be their counselor, an activity leader, unit leader, camp director, or nurse.

In the next section of this handbook, we address how you are able to communicate with your camper during their time at camp.

## VISITORS & COMMUNICATION

We ask that parents and/or friends do not visit or call campers during the camping session as campers are busy playing, developing independence and being kids. Unplug for the week! Campers are not permitted to have cell phones at camp. This policy helps reduce homesickness and results in an improved program. Please feel free to call the camp office and speak with a Director for any extenuating or family situations.

We post camper photos on our Smug Mug page throughout the week, giving parents the opportunity to see our wide variety of camp activities. You might see your child in one of the pictures!

## Send Your Camper Snail Mail

Everyone loves to receive mail! Please send your camper several cheerful letters. You can even write out a whole week of letters or make care packages and drop them off at the camp store station during check in!

### **How do I write a good letter from home?** ([Via summercamphandbook.com](http://summercamphandbook.com))

A good letter from home is informative, upbeat, and encouraging. Your goal is to say a cheerful hello and give a positive report about what has been going on. You want to instill confidence and support your child's growing independence. Avoid mentioning sad things that your child cannot do anything about. Save mild bad news until you can talk to your child face to face. (Obviously, if there is a major piece of bad news to report, and you need to tell your son or daughter immediately, you would not put that in a letter either. Instead, you would call camp and talk to the director first.)

In a quality letter, it's fine to say that you miss your child, but don't say that you're miserable. Hearing bad news you can't do anything about, makes kids feel helpless. Helplessness leads to homesickness, depression, and anxiety.

Here is an example of an informative, upbeat, and encouraging letter from home:

*Dear Chris,*

*How is camp going? Did you get a chance to do archery yet? I know you were pretty excited about that when we dropped you off. I'm sure you're getting to try lots of fun new activities.*

*What's your cabin leader like? He sure seemed nice when I talked with him. I think that's pretty neat that he's going to the same college as Aunt Kathy went to. What a coincidence!*

*Yesterday, I worked until about 4:30pm and then came home to weed the garden. I was surprised to find four big tomatoes that were already ripe! I picked them and brought them inside for dad to make spaghetti sauce later this week.*

*Spot is doing great. Dad and I take turns walking him. Yesterday, he found a tennis ball under the Borozan's hedges and he was running around trying to get me to play catch. I did for a while, but then the ball got really slimy. Yuck!*

*Dad has been working hard, and looking forward to this weekend. On Sunday, he'll probably watch the game and then we're cooking dinner for the Rutars. Do you remember Mr. and Mrs. Rutar? Mrs. Rutar was Danilo's math teacher in fourth grade. I haven't seen her since April.*

*I'm so happy that you had the chance to go to camp this summer, Chris. What a wonderful experience! I just loved camp when I was your age. My favorite part was singing songs. Have you learned any camp songs? What about camp cheers?*

*Dad and I miss you and we love you a lot. We'll be there to pick you up on Saturday the 16th. Until then, have a great time. I'll write more soon.*

*Love, Mom*

*P.S. I cut out the last three Thunder Cat cartoons from the paper and enclosed them. I'll send the Sunday cartoons on Monday. Enjoy!*

This letter sounds a little contrived because it is. You can surely write something more personal and sincere. The strength of this sample is that it contains the key elements of a good letter from home: **It's informative, upbeat, and encouraging.** Plus, it mentions when the parent will write again, and it contains a lot of questions. This invites the child to write back (you can at least hope, right?). Finally, the letter includes some newspaper comics. Interesting, age-appropriate newspaper or magazine clippings add interest to your letters. You can also insert photographs or drawings or whatever you dream up that fits in an envelope.

## **Our Mailing Address:**

Camper Name; Cabin name or number  
 YMCA Camp Willson  
 2732 County Road 11  
 Bellefontaine, OH 43311-9382

## **Send Your Camper a Package**

Packages can be fun for campers to receive at camp. When sending packages, please be mindful of limited space in the cabin, and that your camper cohabitates with other children. Suggested items to send are books, magazines, stationary, markers, decks of cards, and things to share with their new friends.

## **Send Your Camper an Email**

Sending an email to your camper while they are at camp just got a whole lot easier; and it is free! You can contact your camper daily through an email on our website located in the **Parent Dashboard**.

When you send your email, please put your camper's name and cabin name in the subject line of the email. All emails received before 11:00 am will be given to the camper that day, usually during or after lunch.

## See Photos of Your Camper Making Memories

**Smug Mug:** This website allows you to view photos of the camp excitement as well and create keepsakes on mugs, shirts, puzzles etc. Please check out these wonderful photos and items at: [ymcacampwillson.smugmug.com](http://ymcacampwillson.smugmug.com)

## HEALTH SERVICES

The health hut is centrally located in the main area of camp and is equipped with first aid supplies and emergency medical equipment. A staff person with advanced medical training (RN, EMT, LPN) is on duty 24 hours a day.

Time at camp is short, so our camp leaders need as much assistance as possible from parents/guardians in order to get to know our campers. Whatever your child's needs are, we ask that you partner with us to ensure your child has the best camp experience possible. Our ability to accommodate and meet the needs of your child is directly related to the information provided to us prior to camp arrival.

### Required Health Information

All campers must have current health and medical information to attend camp. If your child takes ANY medication or supplement, prescription or over the counter, it must be turned in to the nurse upon check-in, in the ORIGINAL bottle, along with the Camper Medication Form, signed by a doctor. Individual camper health records are kept confidential; information is only shared on a "need to know" basis.

### Medication

Along with turning in medication to the camp nurse with appropriate forms, ALL MEDICATIONS must be in the original containers and taken under the supervision of the camp nurse. Medication WILL NOT be accepted or distributed if it is not in the original container with dosage directions.

### Immunizations

Each camper must have all immunizations as required by law and/or deemed necessary by your family doctor. Every child must be within the protection period of an up-to-date tetanus booster at the time they attend camp.

### Mental Health



The mental health of our campers and staff is just as important to us as their physical health. It is paramount that parents/guardians disclose mental health difficulties and management plans with the health care team at camp. Our camp directors and staff are trained in best practices to work with campers experiencing anxiety and other mental health challenges.

## Illnesses or Emergencies

Camp personnel will contact you or other designated emergency contact if your child requires the services of a physician. If a camper requires hospital emergency room treatment, camp personnel will contact you. Mary Rutan hospital is just ten minutes away. If you cannot be reached, Camp Willson will contact your child's designated emergency contact.

## Medical Bills

All medical bills are the responsibility of the camper's parent/guardian. Camp does not carry medical/accident insurance for individual campers.

# HOMESICKNESS

Often, children do feel homesick. This is natural and a normal part of camp experience. We have trained staff to help your child through their homesickness. Before your child comes to camp, it is important for you to recognize the potential for homesickness and create a plan with your child.

- Talk openly about missing home- Prepare your child for the possibility of missing home by talking openly about it. Explain that missing home is a normal feeling, especially when being away for the first time. Reassure your child that many campers feel this way at first, but that it usually goes away after a few days. Talk about camp with enthusiasm.
- Pack familiar items- Encourage your child to pack familiar items from home, such as a favorite stuffed animal or blanket, to help them feel more comfortable in their new surroundings.
- Stay connected- Help your child stay connected with family and friends while at camp by encouraging them to write letters.
- Encourage participation- Remind your child to stay active and participate in camp activities. This will help them make new friends and feel more comfortable in their new surroundings.
- Make use of support resources- Let your child know that they can talk to their counselors or other camp staff if they are missing home. Many camps, including Camp Willson, have practices in place to help children cope with these feelings, so encourage your child to take advantage of these resources.
- Be supportive- It is important to remind your child that missing home is normal and it will pass. Let them know that you'll be thinking of

them and that you're looking forward to hearing about all the fun they had at camp when they return home.

- Practice being away from home by having sleepovers at a peer's or relative's house.
- Give your camper's counselors tips and tools to help communicate with your child when they are not feeling 100% via your Camper Confidential form.

**Please do not promise to come and get your child if they experience homesickness.**

Children who are experiencing life-changing events, such as divorce, death in the family, and moving, may feel homesickness more acutely. Please communicate any life-events with us so we can be better prepared to assist your camper.

If your camper is struggling at camp, we will call you to discuss what we are seeing and what we are doing to help your child through it. In most cases, we can resolve the problem and your child comes home LOVING camp. Please trust our judgment on this matter.

## BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE AT CAMP

It is the vision of YMCA Camp Willson to provide a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of home for all our campers. Please review the following guidelines with your child so we can work together to keep camp safe for all participants.

As a close-knit community, Camp Willson expects each camper to respect themselves and everyone at Camp Willson as well as the facilities and surroundings. All members of the Camp Willson community are expected to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times.

### Behavior Standards

Campers and staff are expected to understand and follow general behavior guidelines while at camp. When your child is at camp, specific rules for safety will be explained to them. Additionally, campers will make a community commitment with their cabinmates on the first evening of camp to set the standard for behavior in their own cabin.

### General Rules and Standards

- Campers and staff must respect themselves, other people's bodies and other people's belongings.
- Campers and staff must follow all rules and guidelines in every area of camp.
- Campers and staff must not intrude on others' enjoyment of camp.
- Campers and staff must maintain their personal hygiene.
- Campers and staff must represent themselves and camp in a positive manner.

## Hate Speech Policy

YMCA Camp Willson denounces the use of words or images to harass individuals or groups based on gender, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity. "Hate speech" of this nature is contrary to our YMCA's Mission Statement, Diversity Statement, and Core Values. Individuals participating in such harassment may be subject to consequences, including suspension and expulsion.

## Discipline at Camp

At camp, we stress the need for each child to take personal responsibility for her or his own actions. In addition, we believe that parent/guardian cooperation is vital to the successful implementation of our discipline policy.

In the event a child is having trouble following the rules of the program, one of the Unit Leaders will work with the counselor to make every reasonable effort to modify inappropriate behavior. When campers repeatedly ignore camp rules and policies, a parent/guardian will be called to discuss how to best resolve the situation. It is at the discretion of the Summer Camp Director to determine disciplinary action, including expulsion from the program.

## Examples of unacceptable behavior:

- Being rude or disrespectful to staff and/or other children, including the use of offensive language or gestures
- Bullying
- Refusing to follow basic safety rules, including sneaking out of cabins at night
- Stealing from other campers, staff, or camp property
- Defacing or intentionally breaking camp property
- Physically harming, or threatening to harm, another camper or staff member
- Possession and/or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol

Depending on severity and frequency of behavioral issues, one or more of the following actions will be taken :

1. Verbal warning from staff
2. Temporary removal from activity with corrective action plan created between Unit Leader and camper.
3. Phone conference with parent/guardian to discuss plan to move forward in a positive manner.
4. Dismissal from Camp program for remainder of the summer without refund. Campers who are removed from the summer program may be asked not to return in the future.

## Bullying

To ensure that everyone has a positive experience and that the physical and emotional safety of each camper and staff member is our utmost priority, we embrace restorative practices at YMCA Camp Willson. Bullying, in any form, is viewed as an opportunity for growth and learning rather than an immediate dismissal from camp.

Bullying can manifest in various ways, but throughout the summer, we actively engage our staff in recognizing and addressing any incidents that may arise. We collaborate with cabin groups to establish expectations for how campers treat one another and create an environment where unity and understanding are fostered. Our schedule is thoughtfully designed to offer numerous opportunities for campers to connect and appreciate their shared experiences. Our primary focus is on helping campers discover the common ground they all share, as we believe that cultivating a positive atmosphere from the outset is the most effective way to reduce bullying.

We strongly encourage you to share any concerns you may have regarding bullying, both at camp and in other settings. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us support your child and address any past bullying incidents they may have been involved in. While all campers start with a clean slate when they arrive at camp, knowing about previous incidents enables us to identify potential issues early on. With continuous staff training, consistent follow-through, open communication with campers, and a strong partnership with parents, we are confident that we can effectively manage and address bullying, fostering growth, empathy, and positive change in our camp community.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Stay Over Weekends**

Stay Over Weekends at YMCA Camp Willson offer campers a unique opportunity to extend their camp experience beyond the traditional week-long sessions. These weekends provide a chance for campers to relax, recharge, and fully immerse themselves in the enriching camp environment.

Stay Over Weekends are scheduled between specific camp weeks: Week 2 and 3, Week 3 and 4, Week 6 and 7, and Week 7 and 8. This strategic timing allows campers to transition smoothly between sessions and offers flexibility in their camp duration.

During the Stay Over Weekends, campers have the chance to bond with fellow campers in a smaller group setting during Stay Over Weekends. This provides a valuable social experience and strengthens the sense of community at YMCA Camp Willson. One of the unique features of Stay Over Weekends is the opportunity for campers to get their laundry done. This service ensures that campers have clean clothes for the remainder of their stay, promoting comfort and hygiene.

For just \$150 per camper per weekend, this option is not only convenient but also cost-effective for families looking to maximize their camp experience.

## Lost and Found

We understand that sometimes campers misplace their belongings while having the time of their lives. That's why we have a dedicated Lost and Found system in place to help reunite campers with their cherished items.

Here's how it works:

- Daily Collection: Our staff collect all lost and found items daily and bring them to the dining hall, ensuring that nothing goes unnoticed.
- Lost and Found "Fashion Shows": We encourage campers who notice they misplaced a belonging to check the lost and found first. Additionally, we host "Fashion Shows" in the middle and at the end of each week where lost and found items are displayed in hopes that they found their owner. Campers can claim their items during these events. If you label your campers belongings, this makes returning their belongings a quicker process.
- Check Out Display: For added convenience, lost and found items not claimed during the week will be displayed at the check-out area on departure day.
- Smugmug Postings: Once all campers have been picked up, we post photos of any left over lost and found items on our lost and found Smugmug album. If you recognize an item as your child's, you can choose to have it sent home or pick it up at camp.
- Shipping Option: If you choose to have your left over items sent to you, they will be sent via USPS and will incur a \$15 charge to cover postage expenses.
- Donations to Local Organizations: Any unclaimed lost and found items remaining after two weeks will be washed and donated to local Bellefontaine organizations that support those in need. This way, even lost items find new purpose in helping our community.

## Camp Store

Campers are encouraged to deposit money into their Camp Store account, which may be used to purchase items from the Camp Store only. Items sold in the store are Camp Willson memorabilia and items they may use at camp like stamps, flashlights, water bottles, etc. Please note:

- Prices of items range from \$10-\$35
- Campers visit the store once per session. The camp store will be open during check out.
- Campers are unable to withdraw money.
- **Any money remaining at the end of camp will be donated to YMCA Camp Willson Fund that enables children to attend camp.**

## Cabin & Cabin Assignments

Main camp cabins have electricity, ceiling fans, air conditioning, and bunk beds. Campers should bring a sleeping bag or sheet, blanket, pillow and pillow case.

Campers stay in age-appropriate cabins under the supervision of our adult counselors with a ratio of 1 counselor to 6 campers. Bathroom and showers are located conveniently near cabins.

Placement with a cabin group depends on camp and age. While we attempt to honor bunk requests, please understand you may only request one child, and that request must be mutual. Placing too many friends in the same cabin disrupts social interaction of the group. Cabin assignments will be given upon your child's arrival.

## **Food**

Camp serves 3 well-balanced meals with an afternoon snack each day. We offer healthy choices including a salad bar and can accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions.

## **Tipping**

The policy of the American Camp Association, the YMCA and YMCA Camp Willson, does not allow tipping of an employee. If you wish to express your appreciation in a material way, we invite you to join our Annual Campaign by contributing to our camp fund and help us send more kids to camp! You can make the donation in the name of the camp counselor.

## **Pets**

Campers are not allowed to bring animals, of any kind, to camp. During camp arrival or departure, Pets are not allowed at camp.

## **Safety and Health**

YMCA Camp Willson is licensed through Logan City Health Department, is Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA), and accredited through American Camp Association (ACA). To be accredited by ACA involves meeting over 300 standards of health, safety, and program excellence.

# **Contacts Information**

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