



PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE SUMMER OF THEIR LIFE

**Parent Handbook for Summer Overnight Camp
YMCA CAMP WILLSON**

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

2025 Session Dates.....	3
Before Camp Begins.....	5
The Camp Willson Experience.....	6
Life Skills and Values.....	6
Benefits of Coming to Camp.....	6
Camper Ages and Programs.....	6
Affordability for All.....	6
Our Staff.....	7
Registration & Fees.....	8
Ways to Pay Your Remaining Camp Balance.....	8
Arrival & Departure.....	9
Check-In.....	9
Check-Out.....	9
Typical Daily Schedule.....	10
For Main Camp.....	10
YMCA Camp Willson Activities.....	11
Activity Offerings May Change Daily.....	11
What To Bring To Camp.....	12
Equipment for Specialty Camps.....	13
Clothing Policies.....	13
What NOT to Bring to Camp.....	14
Electronics.....	14
Cell Phones.....	14
Visitors & Communication.....	15
Send Your Camper Snail Mail.....	15
Send Your Camper a Package.....	17
Send Your Camper an Email.....	17
See Photos of Your Camper Making Memories.....	17
Health Services.....	18
Required Health Information.....	18
Medication.....	18
Immunizations.....	18
Mental Health.....	18
Illnesses or Emergencies.....	18
Medical Bills.....	18
Homesickness.....	19
Behavior & Discipline At Camp.....	20
Behavior Standards.....	20
General Rules and Standards.....	20
Hate Speech Policy.....	20
Discipline at Camp.....	20
Examples of Unacceptable Behavior.....	21
Bullying.....	21
Additional Information.....	22
Lost and Found.....	22
Camp Store.....	22
Food.....	22
Pets.....	22
Cabins.....	23
Cabin Assignments.....	23
Assignment of Counselors to Cabins.....	23
Modesty Policy.....	23
Tipping.....	23
Safety and Health.....	23
Contact Information.....	24
Links and Resources.....	25
Child Protection Resources.....	25

2025 Session Dates

Week 1: June 8-13

Week 2: June 15-20

Week 3: June 22-27

Week 4: June 29-July 2 (Mini Week)

Week 5: July 6-11 (Ranch Mini Week is July 6-9)

Week 6: July 13-18

Week 7: July 20-25

Week 8: July 27-August 1

Week 9: August 3-8

Drop off: 3:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m. on Sundays

Pick up: 3:30-5:00 p.m. on Fridays (Wednesdays on mini weeks); early pick up is available.

Camps	Ages	Weeks	Cost
Rangers	6-8	ALL	\$700*
Pathfinders	9-11	ALL	\$700*
Trailblazers	12-14	ALL	\$700*
TEENation	14-16	ALL	\$700*
Fishing Camp	12-16	1, 2, 3	\$700
Junior Mini Ranch Camp	6-8	9	\$450
Junior Ranch Camp	9-11	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8	\$800^
Senior Ranch Camp	12-16	5, 6, 7, 8	\$800^
Leaders-In-Training	16+	2	\$700
Counselors-In-Training	17+	3	\$700
Wranglers-In-Training	17+	3	\$700

***Mini Week 4 (Rangers, Pathfinders, Trailblazers, TEENation):** \$400

^Mini Week 5 (Junior & Senior Ranch): \$450



Welcome to YMCA Camp Willson!

For more than 100 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 create memories to last a lifetime.

Please read 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 about sending your child to camp this summer. We hope this information will help you prepare for your time with YMCA Camp Willson.

We would like to highlight our cell phone-free policy. To provide your child with the best experience, you must support Camp Willson's cell phone-free environment. Extensive research shows that 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, leave their comfort zone, find good role models, and connect with their peers. We are confident your child will have the best summer at YMCA Camp Willson.

On behalf of the camp staff, we want to express our excitement about summer and look forward to seeing you at camp!

Roger Hanafin, Associate Vice President of Operations
Email: ghanafin@ymcacolumbus.org

Devin Barry, Associate Executive Director
Email: devin.barry@ymcacolumbus.org

Melk Ekberg, Summer Camp Director
Email: melk.ekberg@ymcacolumbus.org

Wendy Kidwell, Food Services Manager
Email: wendy.kidwell@ymcacolumbus.org

Before Camp Begins

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

WE DO THE FOLLOWING TO ENSURE A CLEAN FACILITY

- Before 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. We will run these items through our heaters.
- Pack your personal items separately, such as toiletries, makeup & shoes. After we heat your clothing and bedding, you may use a tote or tub to store clothing.
- Our general rule is that if it can go in your household dryer, you can put it through our heaters.
- We know these are not cure-all steps, but we want to be proactive.

If you have any questions, please email ghanafin@ymcacolumbus.org.

The Camp Willson Experience

Life Skills and Values

At the core of our program is the cabin community and the lessons 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

Thanks to our beautiful natural setting and outstanding facilities, your campers will have the chance to experience many new activities during their adventure at Camp Willson.

During the week, campers can explore our beautiful 500 acres of hiking trails and enjoy activities in and around Lake Mac-O-Chee. They may choose to participate in archery, riflery, climbing, fire building, weird science and many more activities. 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, we divide our camps into programs that help ensure your child's experience is age-appropriate. Most evenings, campers participate in large group games to interact with the camp community. Our campers range in age from 6 to 17.

Affordability for All

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 visit our website at ymcacampwillson.org/support

Our Staff

Our well-trained, diverse YMCA camp staff dedicates their summer to providing your child with an exceptional camp experience. We carefully choose our summer camp staff for their enthusiasm, talent, and dedication– many of our counselors are former Camp Willson campers! All staff participate in pre-season training to further develop their skills and 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, and extensive training on how to be a great camp counselor. We provide additional training 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. Before the start of camp, staff members receive first aid and CPR training and instruction on policies and procedures specific to camp programs. Our staff returns each year to help campers develop activity-based skills in a fun environment where they make friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.

Please note:

- We prohibit staff from babysitting, nannying or having contact with campers outside of camp without a prior established relationship. If you know a staff member from home, please contact our office so we may document this relationship.
- We prohibit staff 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! Register online and pay a \$100 non-refundable deposit for each session you reserve. You can also call us at 937-593-9001 or log on to our Parent Dashboard.

You can access our Parent Dashboard through our website or at ymcacampwillson.campmanagement.com.

Fees for each program are listed on the second page of this information packet or available online at ymcacampwillson.org/programs/summer-overnight-camps.

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 may also be set up online through the Parent Dashboard). Monthly payments will be taken out on the 1st of the month starting in March of each year.
- 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 our office at 937-593-9001.

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

Arrival & Departure

Important: To ensure a smooth check-in, 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. You must resubmit all forms.

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

Check-In

Sunday 1:00PM– 3:00PM

1. **Check-in begins at 1:00 pm.** Please DO NOT arrive early. Our staff will not be ready for you, and we will ask you to wait.
2. **Check-in:** Staff and signs will direct you to check in. Please ensure your camper's swimsuit is readily accessible and with them, as they will take their swim quest on Sunday afternoon. After you and your camper visit each check-in station, you will say goodbyes, your camper will join their cabinmates, and you will return to your vehicle to exit camp.
3. **Anyone with missing forms or a balance due** must fill out paper forms and make a payment before moving on to the following stations.
RETURNING CAMPERS: Please update any medical forms. You must resubmit all yearly forms (Authorization to Release Child, Parent/Camper Confidential, etc.).
4. **A staff member will greet you at each check-in station** to 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 administration time. All medications must be in original containers (including inhalers), with instructions printed on the bottle.

Check-Out

Ranch: Friday 9:15 AM

Pickup and our Parent Show starts at 9:15 am; the gate opens at 9:00 am

Traditional Camp: Friday 10:00 AM or 3:00 PM

(Fishing, Ranger, Pathfinder, Trailblazer, TEENATION, LIT & CIT check-out is at 3:00 p.m.)

- You may choose between a 10:00 am pick-up or a 3:00 pm pick-up at check-in.
- Please wait at the barricade until a YMCA Camp Willson Staff member arrives to check ID's. **Parents/guardians or authorized adults must sign out all campers with a photo ID.**
- Staff will direct you 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

(check our website for other camps' schedules)

7:30 a.m.	Cabin wake up
8:10	Flag raising
8:15	Breakfast
9:00	Cabin clean-up
9:40	Morning activities begin
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:45	Siesta
2:00	Afternoon activities begin
4:10	Twilight (Unit Activities) and snack
5:50	Flag lowering
6:00	Dinner
7:20	Cabin time
7:30	Evening program
9:00	Cabin chat, showers, nighttime routines
10:00	Lights out

YMCA Camp Willson Activities

On Sunday night, campers will have the opportunity to pick their age-appropriate activities. Each day, every camper will spend time at the waterfront.

Activity Offerings May Change Daily

- Soccer
- Flag football
- Street hockey
- Pickleball
- Volleyball
- Gaga
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Archery
- BBs
- Kickball
- Nine square
- Carpet ball
- Goofy Golf
- Softball
- Climbing wall
- Bouldering
- Hiking
- Outdoor cooking
- Fort building
- Farm camp, gardening and animals
- Nature art
- Arts and crafts
- Orienteering/GeoCaching
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- SUP (Stand up paddle board)
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Capture the flag
- Aquatic studies
- High ropes course
- Giant Swing
- Leap of Faith
- Weird Science

What To Bring To Camp

Please pack all clothes in a drawstring, duffel or laundry bag. Pack **toiletries, swimsuits, towels, and shoes in a small backpack or day bag** to ensure your camper can complete their swim assessment on Sunday afternoon.

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

It is unnecessary to have a complete change of clothes every day. We recommend older play clothes and clothes campers enjoy wearing. We suggest the following items:

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

- o Sleeping bag or blanket
- o Twin sheet for bed (fitted or flat is fine)
- o Pillow
- o Jacket/sweater
- o Long sleeve shirt for evenings
- o Shower shoes
- o Closed-toe shoes (broken in!)
- o Sandals with a heel strap (please avoid open-backed shoes, flip-flops or slides)
- o Boots with heels (for horseback riding/Ranch Camp)
- o Shorts
- o T-shirts
- o Jeans or pants
- o Socks and underwear
- o Rain jacket or poncho
- o Swimsuit/swim trunks
- o Bag for carrying items (drawstring/bookbag)
- o Pajamas
- o Toiletries (toothbrush, paste, travel size shampoo, soap, washcloth, etc in a carrier)
- o Feminine hygiene products
- o Deodorant
- o Shower towel and beach towel
- o Water bottle
- o Stationary, pens, and pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes
- o Flashlight and spare batteries
- o Books and activities for siesta, such as playing cards or games
- o Insect repellant (30-70% Deet recommended)
- o Sunscreen lotion (SPF 15 or Higher, spray bottle preferred)
- o 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
- Tacklebox
- One pack of jig heads 1/32 oz. (lead ball and hook)
- One pack of 2" plastic white twisters
- 6" black plastic worms (10)
- Two bobbers – stick type
- Hat
- Old sneakers/sports 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 with 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

We've established these policies for safety 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 the midriff.
2. **Swimwear:** One-piece, tankini bathing suit, or board shorts are preferred but not required. 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:** All staff and campers must always wear shoes with heel straps to prevent injuries. Open-toed shoes are permitted; however, campers may only wear flip-flops inside the cabins, during a shower and on their way 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 before arrival.

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

Forbidden Items

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

Electronics

We forbid the following items at camp and kindly ask that you leave home cameras, cell phones, tablets, smart watches, air tags and similar electronic devices. The camp environment can be tough on these items, and YMCA Camp Willson cannot take responsibility for any loss or damage.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are prohibited and will be confiscated and held in the Main Office until departure.

When a child comes to camp, you (the primary caregiver) transfer primary care to Camp Willson personnel. As children learn to trust other caring adults, they know little by little to solve some of their challenges. This emerging independence is one of the most significant benefits of camp and 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 diminish the valuable learning experience of being away from home.

We respect and appreciate your relationship with your campers. We agree to tell you if your child is experiencing a challenge with their adjustment to camp. Before your child attends 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 to communicate with your camper during their camp.

Visitors & Communication

We ask that parents and friends 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 call the camp office and speak with a Director about extenuating or family situations.

We post camper photos on our Smug Mug page throughout the week, allowing parents 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 write a week of letters or make and drop off care packages at the camp store station during check-in!

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

A good letter from home is informative, upbeat, and encouraging. Your goal is to say a cheerful hello and positively report what has happened. 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 lousy news until you can talk to your child face to face. (Obviously, if there is significant bad news to report, and you need to tell your child immediately, you would not put that in a letter either. Instead, you would call camp and first talk to the director.)

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

Example

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

Dear Chris,

How is camp going? Have you had a chance to do archery yet? 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 it's pretty neat that he's going to the same college as Aunt Kathy went to. What a coincidence!

I worked until about 4:30 pm yesterday 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 Borozan's hedges and ran around to get me to play catch. I did for a while, but then the ball got slimy. Yuck!

Dad has been working hard and looking forward to this weekend. He'll probably watch the game on Sunday, and then we'll cook 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 contrived because it is. You can indeed write something more personal and sincere. The strength of this sample is that it contains the key elements of a good letter from home: **Informative, upbeat, and encouraging**. Plus, it mentions when the parent will write again and contains many questions. This letter 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, 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 cabin space and that your camper cohabitates with other children. Suggested items to send are books, magazines, stationery, 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 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 include your camper's and cabin names in the subject line. All emails received before 11:00 a.m. 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 and create keepsakes on mugs, shirts, puzzles etc. Please check out these beautiful photos and items at camp-willson.smugmug.com. (you will receive the password at check-in)

Health Services

Our health hut, The Bungalow, is located in the camp's central area and is equipped with first aid supplies and emergency medical equipment. A staff member with advanced medical training (RN, EMT, LPN) is on duty 24 hours daily.

Time at camp is short, so our camp leaders need as much assistance as possible from parents/guardians 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 your child's needs directly relates to the information you provide before 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, you must turn it into the nurse at check-in. Please use the **original** bottle and fill out the Camper Medication Form with a signature from your doctor. Individual camper health records are kept confidential; we only share information 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 only be accepted or distributed if it is 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 when they attend camp.

Mental Health

Our campers' and staff's mental health is as important to us as their physical health. It is paramount that parents/guardians disclose mental health difficulties and management plans with the camp's health care team. We train our camp directors and staff in best practices for working 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. Camp personnel will contact you if a camper requires hospital emergency room treatment. Mary Rutan Hospital is just ten minutes away. Camp Willson will contact your child's designated emergency contact if we cannot reach you.

Medical Bills

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

Homesickness

Children sometimes feel homesick, and it's a natural and normal part of the camp experience. We have trained staff to help your child through homesickness. Before your child comes to camp, you need 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 typical, 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:** Encourage your child to write letters to family and friends while at camp to help them stay connected.
- **Encourage participation:** Remind your child to stay active and participate in camp activities. Activities will help them make new friends and feel more comfortable in their surroundings.
- **Use support resources:** Let your child know they can talk to their counselors or other camp staff if they are missing home. Many camps, including Camp Willson, have practices to help children cope with these feelings, so encourage your child to take advantage of these resources.
- **Be supportive:** It is essential 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 their fun at camp when they return home.
- **Do a practice run:** Practice being away from home by having sleepovers at a peer's or relative's house.
- **Give your camper's counselors tips and tools:** Use your Camper Confidential form to help them communicate with your child when they are not feeling 100%.

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. We can resolve the problem in most cases, and your child will come home **loving** camp.

Please trust our judgment on this matter.

Behavior & Discipline At Camp

YMCA Camp Willson's vision is to provide all campers with a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of home. 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, everyone at Camp Willson and the facilities and surroundings. We expect all members of the Camp Willson community to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times.

Behavior Standards

We expect campers and staff to understand and follow general behavior guidelines while at camp. When your child is at camp, we will explain specific safety rules. Additionally, on the first evening of camp, campers will make a community commitment with their cabinmates to set the standard for behavior in their cabin.

General Rules and Standards

- Campers and staff must respect themselves and other people's bodies and belongings.
- Campers and staff must follow all rules and guidelines in every camp area.
- 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 the camp positively.

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" contradicts 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 their actions. In addition, parent/guardian cooperation is vital to the successful implementation of our discipline policy.

If a child has trouble following the program's rules, 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, we will call a parent or guardian to discuss how to resolve the situation best. 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 the severity and frequency of behavioral issues, we will take one or more of the following actions:

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 a plan to move forward positively.
4. Dismissal from the Camp program for the remainder of the summer without refund. Campers removed from the summer program may be asked not to return.

Bullying

To ensure a positive experience and the physical and emotional safety of each camper and staff member, 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 everyone fosters unity and understanding. Our schedule is designed to offer numerous opportunities for campers to connect and appreciate their shared experiences. Our primary focus is 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 encourage you to share any concerns 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. While all campers start with a clean slate when they arrive, 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

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 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 nothing goes unnoticed.
- **Lost and Found "Fashion Shows":** We encourage campers who notice they misplaced a belonging to check the lost and found. Additionally, we host "Fashion Shows" in the middle and end of each week, displaying lost and found items to help find their owner. Campers can claim their items during these events. Label your camper's belongings to help us return them.
- **Check-Out Display:** On departure day, we display lost and found items not claimed during the week at the check-out area for added convenience.
- **Smugmug Postings:** Once parents/guardians pick up all campers, we post photos of any leftover lost and found items on our lost and found Smugmug album. If you recognize an item as your child's, you can have it sent home or pick it up at camp.
- **Shipping Option:** If you choose to have your leftover items sent to you, we send them via USPS and charge a \$15 fee 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 campers may use only to purchase items from the Camp Store. 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. It will be also open during checkout.
- Campers are unable to withdraw money.
- **We donate any money remaining at the end of camp to our YMCA Camp Willson Fund, which enables children to attend camp.**

Food

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

Pets

Campers are not allowed to bring any animals to camp. Pets are not permitted during arrival or departure.

Cabins

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

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

Cabin Assignments

Camper cabin assignments are made based on the age and gender identity selected by parents or guardians during the registration process. This approach helps us create a supportive, respectful and comfortable living environment for every camper.

Every camper has their own bunk and designated space for their personal items. All campers have access to a private changing space in the cabin and bathrooms. While we attempt to honor bunk requests, please note that you may only request three friends, and their request must be mutual. Placing too many friends in the same cabin disrupts the group's social interaction. We will give out cabin assignments upon your child's arrival.

Our goal is to honor family input while ensuring each child is placed in a cabin where they can feel safe, included, and at ease. Families are encouraged to reach out with any questions or special considerations during the registration process.

Assignment of Counselors to Cabins

At our overnight camp, the safety and well-being of every camper is our top priority. That's why we take great care in selecting and preparing our camp counselors through a rigorous hiring and training process. We strive to ensure two camp counselors are assigned to each cabin to ensure consistent, full-time supervision and support. Counselors assigned to stay overnight in cabins will have a gender identity that aligns with the gender of the campers in that cabin.

Modesty Policy

To respect everyone's privacy and comfort, all campers and staff are expected to change clothes in private areas, such as restrooms, individual stalls, or designated changing spaces. Changing in shared sleeping areas or in front of others is not permitted.

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 materially, we invite you to join our Annual Campaign by contributing to our camp fund and helping us send more kids to camp! You can donate in the name of the camp counselor.

Safety and Health

YMCA Camp Willson has a Logan City Health Department license and accreditations from the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) and the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA Accreditation involves meeting over 300 health, safety, and program excellence standards.

Contact Information

Roger Hanafin

Associate Vice President of Operations

Email: ghanafin@ymcacolumbus.org

Devin Barry

Associate Executive Director

Email: devin.barry@ymcacolumbus.org

Melk Ekberg

Summer Camp Director

Email: melk.ekberg@ymcacolumbus.org

Wendy Kidwell

Food Services Manager

Email: wendy.kidwell@ymcacolumbus.org

Phone: 800-423-0427

Fax: 614-382-8974

Website: ymcacampwillson.org

Links and Resources

- [Camp Willson Parent Resource Website](#)
- [Incident Reporting](#)

American Camp Association

- [Expert Advice](#)

Child Protection Resources

Praesidium Accreditation

- praesidiumaccreditation.com
- [Know, See, Respond](#): This video resource introduces you to Know, See, Respond principles.
- [Five Days Of Action](#): This page has parental resources about online safety and talking with your children about staying safe.

Phone Numbers

- For reporting suspected child abuse or neglect in Ohio: (855) 642-4453
- Child Help's Nation Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453)
- 24-Hour Stress Hotline: 1-855-427-2736
- The Children's Advocacy Center: 1-800-932-0313