



175<sup>YEAR</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

# THE Find Your *Best Friend* PLACE

No Place Like *This Place*™



2026 SUMMER DAY CAMP  
2025  
PARENT MANUAL



## WELCOME TO YMCA SUMMER DAY CAMP!

The summer of 2026 will allow campers to choose their adventure in ways never before seen at the Birmingham YMCA Day Camps! Campers will experience daily opportunities to select which games, crafts, or activities they participate in. Not only will they get to follow their interests, but they'll make their path throughout the summer.

Being part of our summer day camp program goes beyond silly songs and games. Camp is about learning who you are, becoming what you want to be, developing new skills and healthy habits, reaching goals, and building relationships. Our summer day camp helps kids gain self-confidence, build character, and focus on the whole child in spirit, mind, and body. At Y Summer Day Camp, we are here to make your kids feel welcome and to help them quickly realize this is a place where they belong and can be themselves – try new things, learn new skills, make new friends, and be a part of something great!

This Parent Manual provides information to help you and your child have a successful experience. Please read everything carefully and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

We're looking forward to the best summer ever. We take pride in our programs. If your experience could be more positive, please contact your Summer Day Camp On-Site Director.

For billing and account information, please email [childcare@ymcabham.org](mailto:childcare@ymcabham.org).

## Our Commitment to Safety- Child Abuse Prevention

At the YMCA of Greater Birmingham, we are committed to protecting children physically and emotionally. We create spaces where children feel safe and supported, where they can learn, play, make friends, discover who they are, and find a place where they belong. This means we all play a role in educating ourselves and our community about child abuse prevention. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about policies, how to make a report, and for resources for your family.



Praesidium Accreditation @publicly demonstrates to consumers that the YMCA of Greater Birmingham has achieved the highest industry standards in abuse prevention.

## CARING STAFF

The YMCA prides itself on hiring quality staff that embodies our mission and is passionate about being a positive role model for children. Many of our counselors are college students. Staff members are selected through a comprehensive application and interview process and often have previous experience in other YMCA programs.

We place a serious emphasis on safety standards by offering a remarkable counselor-to-camper ratio and requiring our counselors to complete pre-camp training, including CPR, First Aid, AED, and Child Abuse Prevention, along with specific training in the areas of working with children, discipline, group dynamics, safety, and programming. All YMCA staff go through background checks before hiring. We take pride in the high expectations we set for our summer camp staff each year and evaluate them regularly.



## BULLYING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Through the interactions between students in our program, we can help develop conflict resolution skills within our students to help them in their future endeavors. We are seeing a rise in the use of the term bullying, and we wanted to address this with all of our families so that you can know where we stand on this issue.

**BULLYING** is any **unwanted** behavior that involves a **power imbalance** and occurs **multiple times**. Here at the Y, our goal is to stop bullying, and we encourage our participants, parents, and staff to be Upstanders. An Upstander recognizes when something is wrong and acts to make it right. If there is disclosure, discovery, or suspicion of bullying, we will handle each case on a case-by-case basis and with care. At the Y, we are building a caring, respectful, honest, and responsible community for all; the safety of our program participants is our main concern.

**CONFLICT** is a disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views and have an equal power balance. Conflict with resolution is a natural and essential part of Youth Development. Conflict can be constructive if managed in the right way. We will identify and resolve conflicts healthily and proactively. The conflict resolution skills we learn and practice will positively impact our Y programs and every child's future.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Our priority is to ensure parents are informed of what is happening in our programs. The Y will communicate with you about activities, special events, and, especially, your child! We communicate via newsletters, social media, signs posted at pickup and drop-off times, phone calls, in-person meetings, and email. Email updates will be sent out to the primary email address provided. If you would like to learn more, please contact your Y and speak with the program director or a member of our leadership team.

- Parents must follow all established policies and procedures outlined in the YMCA Day Camp Handbook, including the pickup, payment, late pickup, and cancellation policies.
- Parents are responsible for reading all emails, newsletters, flyers, and similar communications sent home regarding the Day Camp program, and for regularly reviewing the Y website, Facebook page, and materials available at their child's Day Camp location to stay well-informed about the program.
- Parents should read and review the Camper Code of Conduct with their children.

## **COMMUNICATION**

YMCA staff will provide periodic updates about your child's participation at the Y. We strive to communicate effectively about our programs through newsletters, emails, and staff communication during drop-off and pick-up. We encourage all families to sign up for Remind. Parents will receive an email invitation to join, and a code will be provided in camp communications. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact your Summer Day Camp On-Site Director.

## **EMAIL ADDRESS ON FILE**

Be sure to update your online account with an accurate email address. Each Friday before your child's first day, you will receive an email with important information for the week. The email will let you know what is planned each week, including dress-up days or special activities.

## **CUSTODY**

Please alert the YMCA of child custody arrangements. Official, current court documents must be maintained in your child's file if custody or visitation is a concern. Without court orders, we cannot withhold a child from their parent. Based on the information you share with your director, they will let you know if they need additional documentation. The parent(s) registering the child for the summer day camp is responsible for payments. We cannot subdivide fees.

## DEPOSITS AND WEEKLY FEES

Deposits will be required at the time of registration for each week. This deposit will hold your child's spot for that particular week. Deposits are non-refundable and cannot be transferred to another week.

All fees must be automatically paid from your checking account or debit/credit card. Fees will be scheduled for payment on the Wednesday prior to the week of care. You will be charged for each week you reserve, regardless of attendance, unless you cancel under our cancellation policy.

## LATE REGISTRATION

Registration is open online through the Thursday prior to the week of care. Campers registered on Thursday or later for the upcoming week and/or registered after the start of the current week will be charged a \$10 late registration fee, and payment will be processed with the weekly fees.

## REFUND/CANCELLATION POLICY

If the YMCA cancels a week, a full refund will be issued for fees paid. If a parent wishes to cancel a week, 2 weeks' advance written notice is required, using the appropriate cancellation form. Registration Fees and Weekly Deposits are non-refundable and cannot be transferred to another week. No refunds or credits for weekly fees will be issued for requests that do not meet the 2-week notice, and the weekly balance will be considered due. Please click [HERE](#) to submit a cancellation request.

Week of Camp	Cancellation Deadline	Week of Camp	Cancellation Deadline
June 1-5	May 18	July 6-10	June 22
June 8-12	May 25	July 13-17	June 29
June 15-18	June 1	July 20-23	July 6
June 22-26	June 8	July 27-31	July 13
June 29-July 2	June 15	August 3-7	July 20

\*There will be no camp on June 19 or July 3.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The YMCA believes in serving the needs of everyone in our community, regardless of their ability to pay full fees. Financial assistance, based on need, is available for Summer Day Camp. Awards are given on a first come basis. For more information, click [HERE](#).

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM CAMP

Going to summer camp is a very exciting experience for campers and parents. It's very natural for everyone to be anxious about the first day of camp and meeting new friends. Hopefully, the following information will familiarize everyone with camp procedures and minimize "first-day" anxiety. The YMCA Day Camp has well-trained staff focused on meeting individual campers' needs and is committed to serving as excellent role models.

- Dress for the weather. The camp day will continue rain or shine.
- Campers are very active during camp. Therefore, have your camper wear "play clothes" that can become dirty.
- Your camper will probably come home tired and need additional rest after a day of high-energy activities.
- Label all items with the camper's name, including swimsuits, towels, water bottles, and backpacks.
- Please don't send valuable clothing or items to camp, including jewelry and electronics.
- Make sure all your forms and payments are completed. This will save time at check-in.

## CAMP HOURS

7:00 am–9:00 am Morning Extended Care

9:00 am–4:00 pm Program Time (varies by location)

4:00 pm–6:00 pm Afternoon Extended Care

\*Morning and afternoon extended care is included in the weekly fee.

## WHAT TO WEAR

- Dress appropriately for outdoor play and the weather.
- All shoes must be closed-toe and closed-heeled. Sneakers are recommended. Crocs and slides are not permitted.
- A cap or hat for sun protection is advisable.
- All belongings should be marked with the child's first and last name.

## WHAT TO BRING

Campers should bring the following daily in a backpack. Please label everything.

- Lunch and two snacks daily (more detailed information below)
- Refillable water bottle
- Sunscreen (children must be able to self-apply sunscreen)
- Swimsuit and towel

Toys, personal listening devices, portable game devices, cell phones, Pokémon or trading cards, stuffed animals, pets, and money should stay home. The YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items.

## LUNCHES AND SNACKS

- Participants should bring a nutritious lunch, beverages/water bottle, and two snacks.
- We recommend small, cooler-type lunch boxes marked with the child's name.
- Non-perishable items are recommended, as refrigeration is unavailable.
- Children do not have access to a microwave.
- Healthy snack options include fresh fruit, raisins, pretzels, small granola bars, and 100-calorie packs.
- Healthy options include water, sugar-free beverages, and 6-ounce servings of 100% fruit juice.
- Participants are not allowed to purchase items from the vending machines.
- We accommodate children with food allergies.

## SWIMMING PROCEDURES

Campers must take a swim test on their first swim day of the summer.

Swimmers EARN a GREEN BAND when they can:

- Jump into the water over their head and resurface.
- Tread water for 30 seconds consistently without touching the side of the pool.
- Swim 25 yards non-stop.

Those who do not pass the swim test will be issued a red wristband, considered a non-swimmer, and will be expected to:

- Wear a U.S Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device, either provided by the parent or the YMCA
- Wear a red band while swimming
- Those who decline to take the test will be considered non-swimmers.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### MEDICINE PROCEDURES

Please do not pack medication with your child's belongings. Parents (not the child) must leave necessary medicines with a staff member during drop-off. Medication must be in its original container with written instructions for dispensing. A Medication Form must be provided to staff for dispensing all medications, including over-the-counter medicines such as topical ointments. Forms will be available via email and on the website closer to the start of summer.

Generally, children are prohibited from carrying medication unless it is dispensed on their person (e.g., an insulin pump), or a doctor has specifically indicated in writing that the child may self-administer and that safety precautions are met for the safe handling of the medication. If a doctor has given this written permission, a copy must be provided to the YMCA. A parent or guardian must deliver the medication to the program staff. All medicines are stored and locked in the program office for safety reasons.

Notice: For those children who may require injections, medications that require insertion into a body cavity, and/or have other special medical needs, the YMCA will consider all requests for reasonable accommodations to its program, including meeting with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of such children to discuss such accommodations, and strive to develop a mutually acceptable plan designed to address the medical circumstances of each child, provided that the requested accommodation does not amount to a fundamental alteration to its program.

## WHAT'S GOING ON AT HOME

Children's behavior in camp often reflects situations they experience at home (e.g., pet loss, divorce, sibling conflict). Please inform the director or counselor if any disruptive or traumatic experience should occur. For the protection of participants and staff, we follow the policies below:

- YMCA Staff and volunteers are not authorized to transport children outside YMCA programs.
- Parents may leave children at the YMCA or program site only when supervised.
- The YMCA is a federally mandated reporter of any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- YMCA staff are not permitted to babysit campers participating in YMCA programming.
- Any traumatic experience at home that may affect the camper's behavior should be reported to the Camp Director.

## SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen may be brought to the program by the child. Children must be able to apply sunscreen independently. Our staff is not permitted to apply sunscreen to the children. Please apply sunscreen at home before coming to the Y.

## WHEN TO STAY HOME

Please do not send your child to YMCA programs with any of the following symptoms:

- Sore throat
- Excessive coughing
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever
- Head lice
- Undiagnosed rash, sore, or other skin condition
- Any other contagious disease or symptom

A child must be diarrhea, vomiting, and fever-free for a full 24 hours before returning to the program. A physician's note may be required before re-admitting a child to the program.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of severe rain, lightning, or other unsafe conditions, activities will be modified as necessary to ensure the safety of all participants.

On CODE ORANGE days, outdoor activities are modified to include frequent water breaks and play in shaded areas. On CODE RED days, activities are modified with virtual field trips or indoor play, depending on the program site.

Severe weather may affect the pick-up process. Staff will keep children sheltered in driving rain and/or lightning until conditions improve. This may slow down the pick-up process, requiring drivers to wait. The safety of YMCA children and staff is our top priority.

## **DROP OFF & PICK-UP**

Specific drop-off and pick-up procedures will vary from location and will be communicated in our weekly newsletters. Please check with your Summer Day Camp On-Site Director for details. Parents will receive the detailed information before summer. Anyone picking up will be asked to present a photo ID at the time of pickup.

## **PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

At pickup time, children will be released only to parents, legal guardians, and those designated as authorized pick-ups on your child's account. If you need to add/edit authorized pick-ups on file, click [HERE](#) to access your online account. Once you are viewing the account, click the "Add Authorized Pickup" button. If you need to add a temporary authorized pickup, please email the program director with the person's full name as it appears on their ID and the dates they are authorized to pick up. For the safety of the children in YMCA programs, any person not on the authorized pick-up list will not be allowed to pick up your child.

Severe weather may affect the pick-up process. Staff will keep children sheltered in driving rain and/or lightning until conditions improve. This may slow down the pick-up process, requiring drivers to wait. The safety of YMCA children and staff is our top priority.

The YMCA/our staff or volunteers do not buckle children of any age into car seats or fasten seatbelts, even when parents request it. We make every effort to be efficient in the pick-up line. We provide parking spaces or spaces for a parent to pull up to secure their child.

## **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

Children not picked up by the program's close will be supervised by YMCA staff. The Y will assess a fee of \$1 per minute after the program officially ends, and the parent's account will be drafted on the next business day. Every attempt will be made to contact the parent. If the parent or guardian has yet to arrive thirty minutes after the program's end time, and parents or authorized pick-ups are not reachable, our staff will contact DHR and local authorities.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

At the YMCA of Greater Birmingham, our behavior expectations and discipline procedures are based on our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We believe in creating a safe, secure, and fun environment where all youth can learn the importance of demonstrating good character. To do this, all youth must know and understand the rules and expectations for appropriate behavior. When youth do not follow the rules or demonstrate inappropriate behavior, we can help them learn from their mistakes.

The YMCA promotes behavior guidance and discipline by creating a positive environment, developing structure and clear limits, promoting social and emotional learning, reinforcing our core values, and addressing challenging behaviors.

The YMCA of Greater Birmingham youth programs use six simple rules to communicate behavior expectations to the youth in our care. The purpose of these rules is to ensure the safety of our campers and staff and to create a positive environment for all.

**Camper Code of Conduct:**

- Listen and follow directions.
- Do what's right.
- Keep your belongings, hands, and feet to yourself.
- Try everything and do your best.
- Be an Upstander. If you see something, say something.
- Be safe and have fun!

All youth are expected to follow the YMCA Camper Code of Conduct to ensure the safety of all program participants. Your cooperation and support ensure that all youth have a safe and fun experience.

The YMCA reserves the right to warn, suspend, dismiss, or remove any program participant or member from our programs, program locations, and facilities upon the following conditions:

- Unruly behavior within the group that disrupts the daily operations of the program
- Use of phones or other technology inappropriately
- Communicating with staff through social media and gaming platforms
- Vandalism, stealing, threats against others, or destruction of YMCA property or schools.
- Hitting, biting, or fighting
- Abuse or profane language, gestures, or physical actions towards staff and campers.
- Harassment, intimidation, bullying
- Inappropriate verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate racial comments towards other students or staff
- Possession of a weapon of any kind
- Possession of or use of alcohol or controlled substances unless under the prescription of a doctor
- Running away

The YMCA uses positive discipline, meaning staff promote desired behaviors through teaching and reinforcement. Staff will redirect or problem-solve with youth when they are not displaying desired behaviors, rather than restricting behaviors by taking away opportunities or controlling youth with fear of punishment. This approach focuses on the needs of youth and contributes to their overall development.

Staff shall use positive discipline, which shall include the following:

- Communicate with youth using positive statements
- Encourage youth, with adult support, to use their own words and solutions to resolve interpersonal conflicts.
- Communicate with youth by meeting them at their level and speaking calmly and quietly about expected behavior.

## YMCA DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

If a youth cannot meet established behavior expectations, YMCA staff will follow the disciplinary procedures below. The YMCA staff desire to partner with the families of the youth in our care. If you have concerns about your child's behavior or success in our program, please contact your Youth Director to schedule a conference.

1. Conversation between staff and youth to discuss behavior and reset expectations.
2. Staff will first use positive reinforcement and redirection to redirect a youth's behavior. If this is ineffective, staff may use a timeout to allow the youth to take a break from the behavior before rejoining the group.
3. Staff will communicate with parents/guardians if/when the youth is not following established YMCA rules. This communication may occur at checkout, over the phone, or during a parent conference.
4. If positive discipline and redirection are ineffective in changing the youth's behavior, the Youth Director may suspend the youth. The length of suspension will be determined by the situation. Factors such as the type/severity of the behavior, behavioral history, and the youth's age will be considered when determining the length of the suspension.
5. Suppose the youth continues to have challenges after a suspension. In that case, the Youth Director may set up a conference with the parent/guardian to develop a behavior plan for the youth.
6. If neither suspensions nor a behavior plan effectively changes the child's behavior, the child may be dismissed from the program. Dismissal from the program for disciplinary reasons could result in permanent removal from all YMCA programs.

\* Please note: **these steps are guidelines, and Y program directors have the right to adjust consequences individually as situations arise, which may include suspension or removal from the program for a first offence.** We want all of our children to enjoy their experiences at the Y. We also want your children to be physically, emotionally, and mentally safe in our programs. Children who interfere with the mental, emotional, and physical safety of others might not find this program a good fit and may be asked to leave. A refund will not be issued if your child is removed from the program for behavioral reasons.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The goal of the YMCA of Greater Birmingham is to meaningfully include all youth and provide accommodations in our programs when needed. To help us achieve this goal, we respectfully ask parents or guardians to inform the YMCA of any special circumstances that may affect your child's ability to participate before the program begins. By providing information about your child's strengths and needs, the staff can prepare appropriate accommodations that better serve all children in our programs.

When we are informed of these circumstances, the Summer Day Camp On-Site Director or another staff member may request a meeting to gather more information and discuss accommodations that can be implemented to ensure your child's successful inclusion.

