



YMCA Camp Christmas Tree

2024 Family Handbook

About YMCA Day Camps

YMCA Day Camps are wonderful places for your child to experience fun, outdoor adventures in the summer! New and returning campers thrive during a week packed full of exciting, structured traditional and specialty activities. Campers participate in small, age-appropriate groups where they build self-esteem and learn new skills. Our experiences are built on the Y's Core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and equity.

Our goal is to give all kids the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. Day Camp is an enrichment program and the next step in youth development. Day Camp gives traditional camp experiences during the day. Each child will benefit from this connection with nature.

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Contact Information

YMCA Customer Service Center. 612-230-9622 or visit online at [www.ymcanorth.org/contact us](http://www.ymcanorth.org/contact-us). Contact them about registration, payments, financial assistance etc. Changes and/or cancellations must be completed in writing using the link above.

Camp Christmas Tree

Phone: 952-472-1018 (Summer Only)

Email: camp.christmastree@ymcamn.org

Website: <https://www.ymcanorth.org/adventure/locations/day-camp-christmas-tree>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/campchristmastree/>

Address: 6365 Game Farm Rd E, Mound MN

Summer Office Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm

Max Ostenso, Camp Program Director.
763-230-6365

Email: maxwell.ostenso@ymcamn.org

Camp Open House & Family Nights

Pre-Camp Open House: Thursday, June 6th

Camp will be holding an Open House before summer begins for families coming to camp for the first time. Please check our facebook page for additional details in the spring.

We also host a family night each Thursday during the summer where families will have the opportunity to explore camp with their camper. You can grab a hot dog or brat meal at our Weiner Wagon, try

your hand at archery, canoe on our lake, and enjoy an all camp show! All family members and families are welcome. If you were unable to come to the Open House this is a great chance for your family to see camp before you send your campers! Additional info regarding parking, transportation and times will be posted each week on our Facebook page.

Communication

While your camper is at camp, all communication should be directed to the Camp office at 952-472-1018. We encourage campers to learn independence while at camp. Speaking with your child during camp hours is not encouraged. If you have an emergency please call 952-472-1018 or 763-230-6549 or email Max Ostenso at Maxwell.Ostenso@ymcamn.org. Most of our weekly communication is done through counselor notes, that will be sent home in your camper's backpack.

Letter from the Camp Director

WELCOME!

YMCA Camp Christmas Tree is excited to present an outstanding program based in tradition and new experiences this summer. We strive to help your camper meet new friends, discover the benefits of being in nature, and learn new skills that all adds up to wonderful, lasting camp memories. Our staff is caring, nurturing and well trained to provide a safe and fun environment for our campers. Most of them (including myself) were campers at Christmas Tree and are passionate about providing the same positive camp experience at Christmas Tree they had when they were campers. Please call us with any questions or concerns you may have. We are looking forward to another wonderful summer!

Oooooo Tree!

- Max Ostenso, Director



Registration and Forms

Registration

Registration can be completed online at Connect With YMCA of the North (ymcanorth.org)

or by downloading a registration form from <https://www.ymcanorth.org/adventure/paperwork>

You will receive confirmation by email immediately if you register online or within 24 hours of your paper registration being processed.

The balance for your session is due one week prior to your child attending camp, unless you have a pre-approved payment plan established with the Customer Service Center.

Changes and Cancellations

Change Requests

Changes must be received in writing no later than Monday, two full weeks before the start of the session. A \$10 Change fee is assessed for all changes made to the original registration, including transportation.

Cancellations

Cancellations must be made by Monday, two full weeks before the start of the session. A \$50 deposit per session paid at registration is non-refundable; the remaining session fees will be refunded.

Session fees for cancellations received after the deadline are non-refundable.

Diversity & Inclusion

It is the YMCA of the North's vision to serve our community relentlessly, until all can thrive in each stage of life. At camp, we gladly welcome campers regardless of race, ability, creed, national origin and gender.

Please contact us directly if you have perspective on you camper that may help us to better support your camper while they are at camp or complete our **Individual Camper Care Plan**, found on our website.

Forms

All forms are available at <https://www.ymcanorth.org/adventure/paperwork> under the Day Camp section.

The **Medication Form** must be submitted if you are sending medications, *prescription or non-prescription*, with your camper to camp.

The **Camp Store Form** may be turned in if you would like your camper to be able to purchase items from the camp store.

The **Teen Release Waiver** is for campers (12+) in our teen programs, that when filled out and submitted allows teens to check themselves out from the bus.

The **Individual Camper Care Plan** is if you think there is anything important or specific the counselor should know about working with your child. This includes, detailed allergy information, camper's fears/reservations, behavior concerns and tips etc.

Scholarships

The YMCA offers need-based financial assistance to help people access the programs that are important to them. To apply please go to <https://www.ymcanorth.org/scholarships>.



About Camp Christmas Tree

Transportation

We will be providing transportation to and from camp. You will be responsible for signing your child in and out of the bus each day, with the bus captain.

If you live near by you may also elect to drop your child off at camp between 8:45-9:00am daily. Pick up is from 3:30-4:00pm by choosing the No Care/ No Bus option during registration.

If your transportation plans change due to sports, appointments, going out of town etc. please let us know by calling our office at 952-472-1018.

Pro Tip

Bus schedules are subject to change weekly, due to enrollment. Usually time differs by only 5-10 minutes.

Please be sure to check the website one week prior to know exact bus times.

Pick-up

Safety of your child is our number one priority.

Whoever is picking up the participant must have a photo ID and be listed on the Authorized Pick-Up section of the registration form. We will only release children to individuals listed as authorized to pick up.

If you need to add an authorized pick up or change a pick up location, camp needs that in writing. Please email ymcacct@gmail.com to make any changes or additions.

Campers in our Teen Programs are allowed to walk home from a bus stop, with your permission. You must fill out, sign and return the [Teen Release Waiver](#), found on our website.

In order to stay on schedule, busses cannot wait pass their scheduled time. If you are late for pick up please call camp. If we do not hear from you, we will attempt to reach you by phone. If you are not reached, we will call persons listed as emergency contacts. Your camper will be transported to the closest Before/After care site. After 1 hour, the authorities will be called to ensure the safety of your child.

Pro Tip

Many bus stops are at public locations. Allow yourself a few extra minutes to locate the pick up location on Monday Mornings.



Camp Christmas Tree Bus Stops 2024

NOTE: Due to highly fluctuating registration numbers at each stop week to week; Drop off/Pick up times are subject to change. Times will not change more than 10 minutes if possible. Bus stop times will be posted on our website by Thursday the week before.

Hopkins High School

2400 Lindbergh Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55305

Northern Tool & Equipment

17505 Hwy 7, Minnetonka

Wayzata Community Church

125 Wayzata Blvd, Wayzata

Lakewinds Food Co-op

17501 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

St. Bonifacius School

8801 Wildwood Avenue, Street Bonifacius

Chanhassen Rec Center

2310 Coulter Blvd, Chanhassen, MN 55317

Chaska Community Park

1151 Hundertmark Rd, Chaska, MN 55318

Orono Middle School

800 Old Crystal Bay Rd N, Long Lake, MN 55356

Interfaith Outreach

1605 County Rd 101 N, Plymouth, MN 55447

Ridgedale YMCA

12301 Ridgedale Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55305

Excelsior Elementary

440 Oak St, Excelsior, MN 55331

Eisenhower Elementary

1001 MN-7, Hopkins, MN 55305

Glen Lake Elementary

4801 Woodridge Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

Ridgedale Mall SE Lot

12431 Wayzata Blvd, Minnetonka

Families who are dropping their camper off directly at camp and are not choosing a bus: **Be prepared to show your photo ID!**

- **Camp Christmas Tree Address: 6365 Game Farm Rd E, Mound, MN**
- **Drop off: 8:45-9:00am / Pick up: 3:30-4:00pm**

Note: If you are registered for a bus but need to drop off late or pick up early please let us know by calling our office at 952-471-1018.

YMCA CAMP CHRISTMAS TREE BEFORE & AFTER CARE SITES

The schedule for pick up/drop off locations & times below are subject to change. Check website one week prior to session for exact bus pick up/drop off times.

Ridgedale YMCA: 12301 Ridgedale Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55305

Drop off: 7:00 – 8:00 a.m.

Pick up: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

* Late fees will be assessed after 6:00 p.m.

POLICY: Any violation of our posted hours of operation will result in a late pick-up charge of \$1.00 per minute per child for children in our care before or after program hours. Parents/guardians are held accountable for these additional fees. Late fees will be assessed on with the next tuition payment. Habitual lateness or abuse of this policy could result in expulsion from the program.



Life at Camp

Our Camp Community

YMCA Programs are about learning skills, developing character and making friends. But few environments are as special as camp, where kids become a community as they learn both how to be more independent and how to contribute to a group as they engage in camp activities.

Camp Groups. Campers are assigned to camp groups based on age and program choice (i.e. Specialty/ Traditional Camp). Counselors will lead the camp group through a rotation of scheduled camp activities.

In addition to the group rotations, camp often gives campers the opportunity to interact with some of the other groups through large group, all camp, or camper’s choice activities.

Large group interaction will be subject to current COVID protocols as established through the YMCA per the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC.

Pro Tip

Check your camper’s backpack for information handouts and schedules on Monday on what your camper’s week will look like.

Camp Staff. Each staff member goes through an extensive hiring process including criminal history background & national sex offender check, reference checks, and interview.

They receive training in camp program areas, relating to children, health and safety skills, and are First Aid and CPR certified. Camp staff members are committed to being positive role models for campers.

Camp Store

Store order forms may be filled out and turned in with payment to your camper’s counselor. Make any checks payable to: **YMCA**

*Items will also be available during Open Houses and Family Nights.

Lost & Found Policy

To support lost items being returned to campers, we highly encourage that campers be sent to camp with their personal belongings labeled. Camp will keep to these items for no longer than two weeks from the end of the session. After this time, these items will be donated or thrown away. Please note that all items will be held at the discretion of camp staff. Items that are soiled, damaged, or otherwise deemed not able to be safely stored will be disposed of. The list of items camp will not hold on to includes but is not limited to: socks and underwear, all toiletries and toiletry bags, all swim gear, hats, t-shirts, pants, shorts, towels, water shoes, water bottles, sunglasses, toys, cameras, arts and crafts projects including tie dye. We highly encourage parents to label all items with their camper’s name to help our staff identify items during the camp session. Many items look similar and it can be confusing for both staff and campers. As a reminder, please do not send your camper with anything that is irreplaceable. Things like jewelry or favorite stuffed animals can be easily lost or damaged. Electronics, including phones, are not permitted at camp. Phones may not be used at camp and will be confiscated and returned to families at the end of the day. Camp is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items—including confiscated phones.

Life at Camp

Camp Activities

Campers will experience a variety of activities during their camp experience. Our camp staff aim to encourage campers' creativity, skill development, and understanding of the world around them. Often times, during these creative learning experiences in a camp setting, campers are exposed to the natural elements of camp. They will experience dirt, mud, bugs, plants, and various types of weather—but camp will go on. Our staff are trained to recognize and avoid unsafe situations. However, if your child has a specific reaction (*allergies, fears, etc*) to any camp elements; be sure to indicate this in their health information. Also if necessary, to help us work with your camper, please fill out the Camper **Individual Care Plan**, found on our website.

Campers registered for Specialty Camps will spend a portion of each day in their specialty area—weather permitting. If weather makes it unsafe to run a specialty activity, camp staff will lead alternative programming. In addition, they will do their best to make up activity time lost later in the week **if the schedule allows**.

Pro Tip

If your child is especially prone to mosquito bites, be sure to send long layers (long sleeve shirts/pants) to help prevent future discomfort.

Water Activities

All swimming and watercraft activities are supervised by Certified Lifeguards.

Personal Flotation Devices are worn by campers and staff at all times during boating/watercraft activities, and are provided by camp.

Each camper's swim ability will be tested on their first day of swimming.

Weebackpackers (Kindergarten) always wear PFD's during swim time and stay in the shallow end.

Camper Behavior

At the Y we believe that every family and child should have access to camp. We aspire to create a camp community that is safe, inclusive, welcoming, and exemplifies the Y's core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Equity. We recognize that campers come to us with a range of backgrounds, experiences, and history, and that this may be reflected in their mental or behavioral health while at camp. While working with children at camp our goal is to collaborate with families. To help in this effort, we utilize an **Individual Camper Care Plan** to help us inform and prepare our staff. We ask for families to fill out this form only if there are special concerns or situations that you feel we need to know. The more detailed information and helpful "tips" you can give, the better prepared we are to work with your child. The individual Camper Care Plan can be found here:

<https://www.ymcanorth.org/sites/default/files/day-camp-individual-care-plan.pdf?openyts=1648491066079>

It is our goal that Day Camp staff make every effort to ensure all campers have a safe and positive camp experience. We believe our success at camp stems from a safety-first mentality. Day Camp is designed to be a fun and amazing outdoor experience for kids, but we recognize that the small and large group activities may not always be the best fit for all campers.

In order to best support the safety and enjoyment of camp, we approach Social Emotional Learning as strategy for systemic improvement for all as it supports adults to strengthen practices that promote equity. Social Emotional Learning is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. We believe that our campers have the opportunity for growth and support within the five pillars of Social Emotional Learning and development- self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness.



Life at Camp

Camper Behavior cont.

While working toward our goals of providing a safe and positive camp experience we may implement Action Plans. Action Plans are tailored to children and their specific needs. We work in partnership with campers, families, and camp staff to determine appropriate action plans for a camper. When determining action plans we strive to partner with families and meet campers where they are at in their development, all while keeping safety at the forefront.

We train and empower our camp counselors to support campers' individual needs with the implementation of action plans. These action plans are designed to work with campers on a personal basis to reach success while ensuring we are meeting each camper where they are at.

When a situation becomes harmful to an individual, the group, or when it cannot be resolved, then we will bring in additional support from the Camp Leadership team. Examples of this could be a camper running away from their group or not staying within sight and hearing range of their staff members, bullying toward another camper or staff. Our Day Camp Leadership teams include a small team of Blue Card® holders trained in CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®. This team is trained in crisis intervention, de-escalation, non-restrictive and restrictive intervention.

If camper behavior escalates to physical violence, endangering the health and safety of themselves, other children, or staff, purposefully hurting themselves, another child or staff, restrictive intervention will only be deployed as a last possible resort due to extreme danger or intent to harm. Our Y Camping teams hold a range of compassion and expertise, but we are not mental health professionals, social workers, or 1:1 camper to staff support.

We will support your child the best we can to make camp as successful as possible. If change has not been made after a thorough action plan, should a camper need support that goes beyond what we can safely provide, or, should a situation escalate to a level where we can no longer safely find a resolution for the camper an action plan may determine the need for a child to be removed from a program for any amount of time, including the remainder of the summer season.

The above serves as an overview of how our camps help to ensure the success and safety of all our campers. If you have questions regarding further details of our procedures, or if you have concerns regarding your camper's needs, please contact the Camp Director.

What To Bring

Dress your child for a day of outdoor fun. Please do not send your child's best clothing/shoes, as camp activities are outside and rugged. **All items should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name.** This will assist us with claiming lost and found. Camp Heritage is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items. Valuables and meaningful items should be left at home.

Daily Packing List

- Healthy lunch and snack
- Clothing appropriate for the days weather. (Check the daily forecast!)
- Swimsuit & towel
- Re-fillable water bottle
- Insect repellent and sunscreen (spray kind preferred)
- Backpack/Bag (labeled)—to tote all items

Pro Tip

If time allows it, please apply sunscreen and bug spray before your child comes to camp.

Do Not Bring

- Electronic Equipment, cell phones, iPods/mp3 players, and smartwatches. Personal sports equipment should remain at home, *except when requested for specialty camps.*
- Firearms, pocket knives or weapons
- Alcohol or drugs
- Unregistered friends/family
- Pets/animals



What to Bring cont.

Specialty Camps

Please bring the items on the Daily Packing List. The following are additional items specific to the specialty programs:

Water Sports Camps (Canoe Camps & Water Adventure Camps)

- Swimsuit and towel each day
- Footwear that can get wet

Fishing Camps

- Poles, bait and life jackets provided by camp
- Campers may bring a personal fishing pole and tackle box to be left at camp until Friday. **Please remove all hooks for bus ride and label all personal equipment.**
- Bait is provided by camp
- Footwear that can get wet

Archery Camps

- Bows & arrows provided by camp. Personal bows and arrows are prohibited.

Climbing Camps

- Closed toed shoes **required**

Pro Tip

Being outside daily, things will get dirty and/or lost. Don't feel the need to go buy lots of new things if you already have gear that will do. With very few exceptions, high-end gear doesn't improve your camp experience.

Health & Safety

Inclement Weather.

Camp is held rain or shine. Please make sure your camper dresses for the weather, with appropriate rain gear. On rainy days, Your child may return home wet and muddy! Many times, fun filled activities are held in our rain shelters at camp.

In the case of severe weather, campers will take shelter in buildings on site until it is safe to resume outdoor programming. The Camp Director will notify the YMCA as soon as possible about camper safety and any bussing delays. Updates will also be posted on our Facebook page, or sent via email and pre-recorded call.

Severe Heat

To keep participants safe during extremely hot days, we will occasionally cancel certain activities.

We always encourage participants to drink lots of water, play more water games, and stay in the shade.

As always, you know your camper best. If you believe your camper will not thrive on a day with severe heat and would prefer to keep your camper home, please just notify your camp. Refunds will not be offered due to air quality. You can also refer to your camp's early pickup information if you determine an early pickup would be appropriate, as air quality often increases throughout the day.

Air Quality

In times of Air Quality Alerts, we carefully follow the guidance from the Minnesota/Wisconsin Pollution Control Agency, National Weather Service, CDC, and Minnesota/Wisconsin Department of Health.

We monitor and adjust programming to ensure children can safely participate in our outdoor programs.

Adjustments include slowing down physical activity, emphasizing hydration, and spending more time in our indoor spaces (when available – not all Day Camp locations have indoor space).

For campers with specific health concerns, sensitivity to air quality, or other concerns, we encourage guardians to send an N95 mask and speak with a camp leader for accommodations.

Your child's safety and welfare are our top priorities.

As always, you know your camper best. If you believe your camper would not thrive on a day with lower air quality and would prefer to keep your camper home, please just notify your camp. Refunds will not be offered due to air quality. You can



Health & Safety cont.

As always, you know your camper best. If you believe your camper would not thrive on a day with lower air quality and would prefer to keep your camper home, please just notify your camp. Refunds will not be offered due to air quality. You can also refer to your camp's early pickup information if you determine an early pickup would be appropriate, as air quality often increases throughout the day.

Illness Procedures & Guidelines. For the health & safety of all campers, please do not send your child to camp if they are ill. If your child is ill and must miss camp, please notify camp by phone or email. Sick day refund requests can only be approved with a doctor's note.

If your camper contracts a communicable disease, parents/guardians must notify the Camp Director as soon as possible. The camp director will inform other participants in writing about the communicable disease. Please follow the below guidelines before sending your camper back to camp:

- Fever over 100F: please keep your camper home until they are fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours.
- Influenza like illness: Keep your camper home until fever free for 24 hours, without medication.
- Vomiting or Diarrhea: please keep camper home until 24 hours after last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
- Bacterial Pink-Eye/Conjunctivitis: please keep camper home until they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours, or until doctor has determined they are no longer contagious. This includes no more mattering or drainage from the eyes.
- Strep Throat: please keep camper home until they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours and are feeling well.
- Possible Impetigo/Other Rash: keep camper home until doctor determines whether or not rash is contagious. If treatment is started, camper should be on medication 24 hours before returning.
- Head Lice: Keep camper home until first completed treatment and no lice and/or nits are visible.

Injury & Illness at Camp. Campers are well looked after. All camp staff are First Aid & CPR certified.

We will treat bumps, bruises, and scrapes. For an injury that requires more attention than our staff are trained to do, Y Staff will:

- Call 911, perform immediate first aid and contact you or emergency contacts, if you cannot be reached.
- If emergency transport is required, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain until the parent/guardian arrives.

In the case of illness, parents or emergency contacts are called to make arrangements for treatment or pick-up. If your child is ill and must miss camp, please notify camp by phone or email.

Medications. Medication will be turned into the director upon arrival. Medication must be in the original container and marked clearly with dosage, frequency and camper's name. This includes over-the-counter drugs. Please only send medication that will be needed for your child's week at camp. Additionally, a **Medication Release Form** will need to be completed upon arrival and turned in with medications. The form can be found on our website.

Child Protection Policy. Your child's safety is our top priority. If you witness or feel that your child is in danger of any type of verbal, physical, sexual or emotional abuse, please report it to our Human Resource Department at 612-465-0551. Parents/guardians may observe the program at any time.

Risks at Camp. YMCA Day Camps are members of the American Camp Association, meaning we are rigorously held accountable on over 300 standards regarding health & wellness, transportation safety, aquatic and program safety and more. These standards guide us to use the best practices regarding camper safety & behavior, staff training and much more.

Nonetheless, like all other experiences, camp is not risk-free. Please refer to our waiver on our website if you would like to review our indemnification policies.

Pro Tip

Don't be alarmed if you get a call from camp. We like to get input even on minor health, homesickness, and behavioral issues.