



**FIND YOUR FUN.
FIND YOUR Y.**

For a better us.®

SUMMER CAMP 2024
**PARENT
HANDBOOK**
YMCA OF COLUMBIA

GET READY FOR FUN

FRIENDSHIP, ACHIEVEMENT AND BELONGING

WELCOME PARENTS AND CAMPERS

Dear Summer Camp Family,

Get ready for another unforgettable summer with the YMCA of Columbia! For 170 years, YMCAs nationwide have proudly hosted summer camps, and we're thrilled to welcome you into this tradition.

Our dedicated Youth Development Quality Team has crafted exciting and enriching programs designed to nurture the whole child. Whether it's achieving personal goals, building lifelong friendships, or discovering newfound passions, your child will thrive in our safe and supportive environment.

Here's what makes our camp special:

- **Multiple locations:** Choose from convenient locations across the Midlands area.
- **Variety of programs:** Explore new interests with classic options and exciting new additions.
- **Holistic development:** We focus on achievement, relationships, and belonging, fostering well-rounded individuals.
- **Expert staff:** Rigorously selected and trained counselors ensure the highest quality care and guidance.

More than just fun: Camp is an invaluable experience that goes beyond summertime games and exploration. It's a place where your child can:

- **Conquer challenges:** Achieve goals and build confidence through engaging activities.
- **Connect with others:** Create lasting friendships and learn teamwork skills.
- **Discover new passions:** Explore activities and spark interests they may never have known existed.
- **Become their best selves:** Grow in a supportive environment that fosters self-expression and belonging.

Get ready for summer magic! Join us for a summer of growth, discovery, and unforgettable memories!

Happy Camping,
Youth Development Quality Team

LOCATIONS

**DOWNTOWN YMCA
IN RICHLAND ONE***
1447 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803.799.9187

*Camp provided at
select Rich1 Schools.

**JEEP ROGERS
FAMILY YMCA**
900 Lake Carolina Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29229
803.451.8439

**NORTHWEST
FAMILY YMCA**
1501 Kennerly Road
Irmo, SC 29063
803.407.8007

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ABOUT YMCA CAMPS

Mission and Goals

CAMP MISSION

To have fun learning essential life skills that build positive relationships, a feeling of belonging and a sense of achievement in a safe, supportive environment.

ABOUT YMCA CAMPS

The YMCA is giving kids their Best Summer Ever! The YMCA of Columbia's camps offer a mix of fun and educational activities aimed at improving kids' well being. Our programs center on three areas proven to impact kids' development: friendship, achievement, and belonging.

ALL CAMPS FOCUS ON THE Y'S CORE VALUES

- » Caring
- » Honesty
- » Respect
- » Responsibility
- » Faith

The Y has been a leading provider of summer camp for 170 years and continues to provide youth with an enriching experience. We ensure that campers are in a safe environment with caring YMCA staff that instill positive values that help build character. When at camp, kids are given new responsibilities and learn independence. As a result, they become more confident, open to trying new things and grow as individuals and as part of a group. Camping at the Y is a fun and unique experience that gives youth the opportunity to discover their full potential, meet new friends, play and create memories that last a lifetime.

YMCA Day Camp provides a safe and affordable opportunity for youth to participate in weekly-themed activities in which campers will create arts and crafts, explore science and technology, swim, participate in field trips, appreciate nature, and better understand our many cultures. Campers will build self-confidence, practice/develop teamwork and sportsmanship while gaining independence as they nurture their spirits, challenge their mind and strengthen their bodies.

The Y works to help youth discover their full potential by providing opportunities to learn, grow and thrive amidst caring, supportive counselors. These experiences are grounded in a set of objectives that characterize all of the YMCA of Columbia camping programs. Through the Y's day camp program, kids participate in fun and educational activities that help them with:

- » **ACHIEVEMENT** - Learn and master skills that help them realize their passions, talents and potential.
- » **RELATIONSHIP** - Build friendships with new friends and staff role models adding to their well-being.
- » **BELONGING** - Help them feel like they belong so they feel safe, welcome and free to express their individuality.



PAYMENTS

Collections, Enrollment, Registration and Assistance

PAYMENT & COLLECTIONS SCHEDULE

WEEK OF CAMP		DRAFT DATE	CANCELLATION FORM DUE BY (For refund minus \$10)
1	June 3-7	May 28	May 19
2	June 10-14	June 4	May 26
3	June 17-21	June 11	June 2
4	June 24-28	June 18	June 9
5	July 1-3, 5	June 25	June 16
6	July 8-12	July 2	June 23
7	July 15-19	July 9	June 30
8	July 22-26	July 16	July 7
9	July 29-August 2	July 23	July 14

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Registration for all sessions opens March 1, 2024. You may register your camper online at columbiaymca.org, or in person at any of our local YMCA branches.

Enrollment must be completed for each child participating 3 days prior to the start of the camp in which you wish to enroll. This includes registration, Health History, Payment, and Waiver sections. There is a \$10 non-refundable deposit at the time of registration per week, per camper.

Weekly deposit fees are non-refundable. Payment of tuition is due in full at time of registration or the setup of weekly draft payments **must** occur for registration to be processed and accepted. **All tuition must be paid prior to camper's attendance.** Weekly drafts are processed the Tuesday before the week of attendance. Weekly tuition is not prorated for any reason.

Cancelation for any reason requires a written notice given to the program Director via email two weeks prior to that registered week.

A \$30 return or late fee will be accessed to any returns or payments made after the due date.

We reserve the right to discontinue service if an account becomes 5 days delinquent. We understand that occasional financial situations arise; please keep the YMCA Program Director informed as to your family's situation in advance of delinquency so we can work with you. Upon registering for the YMCA Summer Camp Program, you are responsible for payment of all program dues associated to your child's enrollment in the program.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Y is committed to providing quality programs to all children and families regardless of their financial circumstances. The YMCA strives not to turn anyone away due to an inability to pay and offers financial assistance through our Annual Campaign scholarship program. Applications are available at any YMCA front desk. Scholarships are only available to families who hold a current membership with our Y and must be completed at each site attended. **All scholarship forms are due by May 24.**

SAFETY FIRST

Counselors, ratios, heat, transportation, trip & swim safety, healthy environments and medication

OUR COUNSELORS

Our counselors receive extensive hours of professional development training that meets state licensing requirements. All counselors are CPR and First Aid certified. We meet or exceed state staff-to-child ratios. We perform background checks on all YMCA counselors.

Your camp director is your primary contact for information about our programs or any questions you have. We strongly encourage and invite parental participation and communication. All programs have an open door policy and we hope you take an active role in your child's day.

RATIO AND SAFETY

All of our camps provide a lower staff-to-child ratio that exceeds the minimal ratios and supervision requirements, as defined by Section 114.504 of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) Regulations for Private and Public Child Care Centers.

We always check restrooms before a child goes into a restroom in a public place. We want to know who is in the restroom before the children go in. We monitor who goes in and out of the restroom while our campers are in there.

Note: Camp counselors do not go into restrooms with kids. Kids must be fully potty trained and able to use the bathroom independently. They must also be able to change into and out of their swim suits on their own.

HEAT

During extreme heat and heat advisory days, we will adjust our schedule when possible. The safety and comfort of our campers is always our top priority and we want you to be aware of the changes we will make to our camp schedule.

- » We will limit the time we spend in direct sun.
- » We will spend more of the outside time in shady places.
- » We will take more breaks than usual to "chill out."
- » We'll play games that keep kids hydrated and cool (like water fun).
- » We will move activities inside when possible.
- » We will take extra water breaks and make sure water is always available.

Here are some tips to help your kids stay cool during summer fun:

- » Pack a frozen water bottle.
- » Dress campers in lightweight and light colored clothing.
- » Store lunch in an insulated, chilled lunch box.
- » Send your child with a hat.
- » Apply sunscreen before camp.
- » Tell your camp staff if your child has a health condition that makes them more sensitive to the heat.

TRANSPORTATION

Drivers of all YMCA vehicles are thoroughly screened and authorized by the YMCA based on experience and good driving records. Each bus driver has a current CDL license and participates in YMCA driver training. The YMCA ensures all our vehicles are regularly maintained and drivers conduct daily inspections before being driven. Upon registration, you have given the YMCA permission to transport your child to the appropriate YMCA or on fieldtrips.



FIELD TRIP SAFETY

When we are on field trips, we take health information and necessary medication with us. We frequently take attendance and use a method called “name-to-face checks” – that means when we take attendance, we aren’t just calling names and listening for the child to say, “Here.” We want to see who is saying it. We do this every time we take attendance, and as the children get on the bus.

SWIM SAFETY

When we go swimming, our staff is required to be in the water and interacting with the kids – but not all at once. Some staff will be in the water, while others will be equally spaced around the side of the pool monitoring the children. You will not see our staff lounging or sunbathing at the pool. We require a swim test of all of our campers to ensure we know their swim ability.

Campers must be able to change independently. We recommend practicing putting on swimsuit with little ones prior to camp.

KEEPING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

If a child cannot participate in the program due to illness, the child must be kept at home. Children who are ill may not return until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. They must also be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers.

If your child becomes ill during program hours, you will be notified and requested to pick up your child immediately.

Our associates will administer first aid for minor injuries. You will be notified if your child needs prompt medical care.

Children with lice must use a doctor-approved treatment and be free of nits (un-hatched eggs) before returning to the program.

Physical Activity - We ensure that children engage in at least 30-60 minutes of physical activity per day, including a mix of moderate and vigorous physical activities that promote bone and muscle strengthening. Play will take place outdoors whenever possible.

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 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.

MEDICATION

Prescription medications must be in their original labeled with the child’s or youth’s first and last name, the date the prescription was filled, the name of the licensed physician or licensed nurse practitioner who wrote the prescription, the expiration date of the medication, and specific and legible instructions for administration and storage of the medication. YMCA staff will administer the medication according to the instructions.

Non-prescription medications can be given by permission and directions from child’s physician. YMCA staff will administer non-prescription medication from the original container labeled with the first and last name of the child or youth and according to the instructions on the label.

All medicine must have a medication authorization form completed. *Medications will be held in a locked box, supervised by Senior Staff only.*

ATTENDANCE

Policy, Procedures, Visitation, Custody Issues, Transitions, Withdrawals, and When to Stay Home

POLICY

When you enroll your child in day camp you are reserving your place in the day camp from 7:00am – 6:00pm for the entire week. We are unable to refund or prorate fees based on individual attendance, inclement weather, or in the case that a child is removed from the program by a parent or by the YMCA's Administration. We do not refund or prorate fees for cancellations/ changes in activities and trips.

PROCEDURES

Your child must be signed into and out of the program. Only people you authorize on your YMCA account may pick up your child from the program. If your child is going to be absent, please notify your camp director.

DROP OFF - For the safety of staff and campers, campers may not be dropped off at Camp earlier than 7:00am*. At that point, a YMCA staffer will be waiting at the car ride line to help your camper exit the vehicle and get their day started.

*Drop-off is 8:00-9:00am for Adventure Camp.

EARLY PICK UP - We understand that there will be times when you need to pick up your child early. When this occurs, it is extremely important that you call or email the camp director with the details of the early pick up. Please understand that we use many areas of our facility and children may be participating in an activity away from the building. We have a handheld radio system that allows us to communicate effectively. It may take a few minutes to retrieve the child from the program area. Your patience is appreciated. Please sign your child out at the MEMBER SERVICE DESK in the lobby of our YMCA if picking up before 4:00pm or at the main programming space with the site supervisor. For the convenience of others and the safety of the children, all early pick-ups need to park in the parking lot and not in the lane in front of the building.

PICK UP - Regular pick up is from 4:00-6:00pm at the Rides Out Line.* A staff person will be waiting to

greet you, ask for your phone number, and have you sign before they radio for your camper to be sent to the car line. You do not need to park; a staff person will help your camper get into your vehicle to allow for speed and ease. Please remain patient while we retrieve your camper from their huddle, we use the entire facility for programming and it may take a few minutes.

*Pick-up is 4:00-5:00pm for Adventure Camp

SIGN OUT PROCEDURES – The YMCA of Columbia utilizes an Electronic Attendance Tracker for Sign In and Sign Out purposes. **Only persons listed as an authorized person on your account will be able to pick up your camper.** Anyone wishing to sign out a child from program will be required to enter their unique phone number and be prepared to show a Photo ID. Campers will not be released to anyone not on the Authorized Pick Up list. Authorized pick-ups can be edited by the Primary Account holder by accessing your online account. If you need assistance adding or removing Authorized Pick Ups, please contact your camp Director.

LATE PICK UP - In fairness to our staff and because of subsequent program demands, it is very important that your child be picked up on time.

- A late fee will be charged for each child not picked up by 6:00 pm. The fee will be assessed at a rate of \$1 per minute, per child starting at 6:00 pm.
- If a child is not picked up at dismissal time. We will begin calling parents and/or emergency contacts.
- If the child is not picked up by 7:00 pm, local authorities will be called.
- If a Y staff member believes that a parent is intoxicated when they arrive to pick up their child, we will detain the child until an alternate plan can be arranged for the transportation of the child and his/her parent. We will first try to contact another family member or spouse.

If one cannot be reached, then one of the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form will be contacted. If those means are unsuccessful, a cab will be called at the parents' expense.

- If the parent is suspected of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, and is unruly, uncooperative, or out of control physically, for the safety of the child and staff person, the staff may have no choice but to contact the police.

CUSTODY ISSUES

The Primary Parent listed on the Camp Enrollment form is the **ONLY** authorized party to make any account or enrollment changes. Any change in family status which impacts authorized parties for pick-up will require official documentation from the proper authority. In cases of separation or divorced parents where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the child to such parent unless a court decree or separation documents are in our file expressly forbidding such parent to pick the child up from our program, or from pick up at times not allowed by the court decree. The court decree must also be specific to the rights of visitation on the YMCA property during program hours.

Please call the director if you have specific custody issues that we need to be aware of. YMCA staff will not testify in court in regard to child custody

proceedings. Neither our programs, nor staff will endorse any person(s) for the purpose of custody disputes. The YMCA reserves the right to discontinue care if custody issues disrupt the program or become an issue for program staff, office staff, the child, or other children in the program.

FAMILY TRANSITIONS

Children's actions in our program often reflect problems they are experiencing at home (i.e. pet's death, parent divorcing, fight with sibling, etc.) If any such disruptive or traumatic experience should occur, please inform your Director. This will enable us to better meet the needs of your child.

WITHDRAWAL AT THE YMCA'S REQUEST

The YMCA has the legal option to withdraw a child for any of the following reasons:

- A) Non-payment of fees
- B) Failure of parents to pick up child on time
- C) Failure to provide the YMCA with current emergency/medical information
- D) Unresolved disciplinary issues
- E) Inappropriate conduct of parent or guardian.



BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS & DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our discipline policy is youth-centered and designed to achieve a positive outcome to misbehaviors and conflicts. We acknowledge good behaviors.

We respond to misbehaviors and conflicts in an appropriate manner. We have zero tolerance for violence and bullying (see 'Is It Bullying' on page 9)*. We follow the school/district policy in which the program is held. We have the right to suspend or expel children from our programs if they or their family threatens safety or interferes with the sustainability of a quality program.

The YMCA makes every effort to help parents and children understand clear definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

The YMCA does not condone and will not permit:

1. Corporal punishment
2. Ridiculing, threatening, using an inappropriate loud voice
3. Leaving children unsupervised
4. Use of profanity

A child's behavior is expected to be consistent with the following:

1. Use appropriate language at all times
2. Cooperate with staff and follow directions
3. Respect other children and staff, equipment and facilities, and yourself
4. Stay in the program areas - running away is not acceptable

Discipline Policy

1. If a child is unable to comply with behavior expectations, child will be redirected and expectations will be reviewed by a counselor. Depending on severity, child will be given a consequence.

2. If child continues to be unable to comply with the behavior expectations, or redirection takes longer than 5-10 minutes, behavior will be documented and the parent(s)/guardian will be notified in writing.
3. If the child is still unable to comply with the behavior expectations after several redirection attempts and/or documented incidents, the Director will set up a conference with the parent(s)/guardian, Site Supervisor and child. An individual behavior intervention and/or behavior contract will be established and signed by the child (if appropriate), parent(s)/guardian, Site Supervisor and Director.

If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive and/or unsafe, the child will be subject to suspension or dismissal. **Failure of the parent(s)/guardian to attend conference(s) and cooperate will subject the child to suspension or dismissal.**

Behaviors that may result in immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:

1. Any action that could threaten or pose a direct threat to the physical/emotional safety of the child, other children or staff
2. Fighting (includes shoving, pushing and/or any intimidating act towards a counselor or program participant)
3. Possession of a weapon of any kind
4. Vandalism or destruction of Y property or property of others
5. Inappropriate conduct
6. Swearing or Cursing
7. Possession of or use of alcohol or controlled substances unless under the prescription of a doctor
8. Running away
9. Biting

IS IT BULLYING?

When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once, that's...**RUDE.**

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once, that's...**MEAN.**

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it - even when you tell them to stop or show them you're upset, that's...**BULLYING.**

MORE IMPORTANT INFO

Babysitting, Cell Phones, Group Assignments, Parent Communication, Special Needs and Volunteers

BABYSITTING/ FRATERNIZATION

YMCA staff are not allowed to fraternize with, babysit or transport your child outside the YMCA program. We request that you not ask any YMCA associate to care for your child outside of the program. If a relationship exists outside the YMCA which predates the staff employment with the YMCA, staff must notify their supervisor.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Campers will not be allowed to use their cell phones during camp. If a camper is found with their cell phone, we will confiscate it. We will only return the cell phone to the parent/guardian. If you need to contact your child during the camp day, please feel free to contact the camp.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Group assignments are made based on the ages of the campers and camp enrollment. We make every effort to keep campers in the same group from session to session but this is not guaranteed. It may be necessary to make adjustments due to ratios and registration. We cannot accommodate requests for specific groups or counselors.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We are committed to giving you all the information you need to be prepared and have an awesome camp experience! You'll receive a camp email with detailed camp information the Friday before your child's camp begins. Please read through it thoroughly. If you do not receive an email the Friday prior to camp starting, please email your camp director.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Y Camp is open to all children, and the YMCA aims to work with children of all abilities. Parents have a duty to disclose significant medical, physical, or behavioral needs at the time of enrollment. Due to the large-group format of our summer programs, the

Y is unable to provide one-on-one. Children must be able to participate with the ratios noted on page 6 of the Handbook, as well as regularly scheduled activities that may include loud activities and/or assemblies. This includes independently being able to use the bathrooms and change clothes, as well as staying in program space.

VOLUNTEERS ENCOURAGED

Parents support their child's camp through special talents or hobbies, helping on field trips, and fundraising. Please let the Camp Director know in advance of your interest in volunteering. All volunteers will need to be screened through our volunteer background process. In addition to asking for certain behaviors from our youth participants, the Y requires that each parent conduct themselves appropriately at all times. This includes communications and interactions with Y program and office staff. Inappropriate language, conduct, or action toward any participant, Y staff, child, or other parent will NOT be tolerated. Failure to abide by this policy will result in termination of services without refund of previously paid services.

EATING HEALTHY, LIVING HEALTHY!

Food and Nutrition - Healthy foods help ensure children receive the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow. All of our camps provide a healthy USDA-sponsored CACFP. In addition to fruits and vegetables, only whole grains will be served. If students bring their own food for snacks during camp, the food must meet our recommended nutritional standards.





OUR MISSION

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

columbiaymca.org

**2024 SUMMER CAMP
PARENT HANDBOOK**