



YMCA OF COLUMBIA

# SUMMER CAMP

## 2026 PARENT HANDBOOK

No Place Like *This Place*™

# SUMMER CAMP 2026

## PARENT HANDBOOK

### WELCOME PARENTS AND CAMPER

### 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

Our camps offer fun and enriching activities that foster friendship, achievement, and belonging. For 170 years, the Y has provided safe and enriching summer camps. Campers build character, learn independence, and gain confidence while making friends and creating lasting memories.

### CAMPS CORE VALUES

- ▶ Caring
- ▶ Responsibility
- ▶ Honesty
- ▶ Faith
- ▶ Respect



### LOCATIONS

#### DOWNTOWN YMCA\*

1447 Hampton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
803.799.9187

\*Camp provided at off site locations including Richland One Schools (South Kilbourne and Mill Creek Elementary), Washington Street UMC, Church of the Apostles, and Sports & Skate Station USA.

#### Contact:

Youth Director Catie Young,  
[catieyoung@columbiaymca.org](mailto:catieyoung@columbiaymca.org)

#### JEEP ROGERS FAMILY YMCA

900 Lake Carolina Blvd.  
Columbia, SC 29229  
803.451.8439

#### Contact:

Interim Director  
La'Toya Browne,  
[latoyabrowne@columbiaymca.org](mailto:latoyabrowne@columbiaymca.org)

#### NORTHWEST FAMILY YMCA

1501 Kennerly Road  
Irmo, SC 29063  
803.407.8007

#### Contact:

Youth Director  
Abbie Trayers,  
[abbietrayers@columbiaymca.org](mailto:abbietrayers@columbiaymca.org)

## PAYMENT, DRAFTS, & CANCELLATIONS SCHEDULE

WEEK	DRAFT DATE	CANCELLATION FORM DUE BY (For refund minus \$25)
May 26-29	May 19	May 10
June 1-5	May 26	May 17
June 8-12	June 2	May 24
June 15-19	June 9	May 31
June 22-26	June 16	June 7
June 29-July 3	June 23	June 14
July 6-10	June 30	June 21
July 13-17	July 7	June 28
July 20-24	July 14	July 5
July 27-31	July 21	July 12
August 3-7	July 28	July 19

## ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Registration for all sessions opens March 1, 2026 (and February 15, 2026 for Afterschool Families). You may register online or in person.

Enrollment must be completed 3 days prior to camp start. This includes registration, health history, payment, and waiver sections. A \$25 non-refundable deposit per week, per camper is required at registration.

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

Accounts 5 days past due may be subject to service discontinuation. To avoid this, please inform the Program Director of any potential financial difficulties in advance. You are responsible for all program dues associated with your child's enrollment.

## CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations for an reason requires an email to the director of that location. Cancellations for any reason must be sent two weeks in advance and will forfeit the \$25.00 deposit.

Cancellations requests via phone are not accepted.

## 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 online. Scholarships must be completed for each YMCA branch attended.

Accepting applications starting February 1st. Registration fills up fast, funds are limited and awarded on a first come basis. Get your application in early.

# SAFETY

## Our Counselors

- Highly trained and qualified counselors with CPR/First Aid certifications .
- State and federal background checks conducted on all staff.

## Ratio and Safety

- Camper to counselor ratios average of 1 to 12.
- Stringent safety protocols in place, including restroom checks and supervision.
- Campers must be fully potty-trained and able to independently use the restroom and change for swimming.
- Open-door policy for parents—your involvement is encouraged, with children participating under the supervision and guidance of YMCA staff.

## Child Abuse

Our staff is legally required to report any instance of observed or suspected child abuse/neglect to the appropriate authorities. This includes anyone attempting to pick up a child while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## Heat

- **Safety First:** During extreme heat, we prioritize camper comfort and adjust our schedule accordingly.
- **Schedule Adjustments:** Expect added heat-safety precautions, including more shade breaks, frequent water breaks, and indoor activities when possible. We'll also incorporate fun water games to help campers stay cool.

## • Keeping Kids Cool:

- » Pack frozen water bottles.
- » Dress in light-colored, breathable clothing.
- » Use an insulated lunchbox.
- » Send with a hat.
- » Apply sunscreen before camp.
- » Inform staff about any heat-related health concerns.

## Transportation

- **Qualified Drivers:** All drivers are screened, possess valid certifications.
- **Vehicle Safety:** Vehicles are regularly maintained and undergo daily safety inspections.
- **Transportation Consent:** By registering, you authorize the YMCA to transport your child to/from camp and on field trips.

## Field Trip Safety

- We bring necessary medications and health information on all field trips.
- Frequent attendance checks are conducted.
- We reserve the right to exclude campers from field trips if we believe it's unsafe for them to participate.

## Swim Safety

- **Active Supervision:** Lifeguards and counselors actively supervise in and around the water.
- **Swim Test:** Children must pass a swim test to be able to go into the deep end.
- Campers must be able to change independently. We recommend practicing with the younger campers.

## Healthy Environment

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, including fever-free without medications, diarrhea, and vomiting. A physician's note may be required before re-admitting a child into the program.

Stay home if your camper has 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 symptoms

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

Our team 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.

# ATTENDANCE

## Medication

- **Prescription Medications:**
  - » Must be in original, labeled containers with child's name, prescription details, and clear instructions.
  - » Administered by staff according to instructions.
- **Non-Prescription Medications:**
  - » Require physician's permission and original, labeled container with child's name.
  - » Administered according to label instructions.
- **General Requirements:**
  - » All medications require a completed authorization form.
  - » Medications are given to Director, Site Supervisor, or Coordinator and stored in a locked box.
  - » Supervised by Senior Staff only.

## Policy

When you enroll your child in day camp you are reserving your place in the day camp during operating hours for the entire week. We are unable to refund or prorate fees for individual attendance, inclement weather, child removal from the program by parent or YMCA staff, cancellations, or 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.

## Pick Up:

If a camper is not picked up by the end of camp, a late fee will apply: \$10 for the first 1–10 minutes late, plus \$1 for each additional minute after that.

## Authorized Pick Ups:

- The YMCA of Columbia uses an electronic attendance tracker for sign in and out purposes. This requires a unique phone number per person for drop off and pick up purposes.
- Only adults listed as an authorized person on your account will be able to pick up your camper.
- Be prepared to show a photo ID.
- Authorized pickups can ONLY be edited by the primary account holder, online or with a director.

## Custody Issues

- **Family Status Changes:** Changes impacting authorized pick-ups require official documentation.

- **Custody Disputes:**
  - » We follow court orders regarding custody and visitation rights.
  - » Provide the YMCA with a copy of the court decree.
- **YMCA Role:**
  - » We do not intervene in custody disputes.
  - » We do not provide testimony in court.
  - » We reserve the right to discontinue care if custody issues disrupt the program.
- **Please email the director/coordinator if you have specific custody issues that we need to be made aware of.**

## 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: YMCA Request

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

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

# BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND 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. 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 director's discretion. 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:

- Corporal punishment
- Ridiculing, threatening, using an inappropriate loud voice
- Leaving children unsupervised
- Use of profanity

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

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

## Discipline Policy

- 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.
- 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.
- If a child consistently struggles to meet behavioral expectations despite multiple redirection attempts and documented incidents, the Director will schedule a meeting with the parents/guardians, Site Supervisor, and the child (if appropriate). This meeting will focus on developing an individualized behavior plan. This plan, if agreed upon, will be signed by all parties involved.
- 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:
  - » Any action that could threaten or pose a direct threat to the physical/emotional safety of the child, other children or staff
  - » Fighting (includes shoving, pushing and/or any intimidating act towards a counselor or program participant)
  - » Possession of a weapon of any kind
  - » Vandalism or destruction of Y property or property of others
  - » Inappropriate conduct
  - » Swearing or Cursing
  - » Possession of or use of alcohol or controlled substances unless under the prescription of a doctor
  - » Running away
  - » 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.**

# OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## Babysitting/Fraternization

YMCA staff cannot fraternize with, babysit, or transport your child outside the program. Please do not ask staff to care for your child outside of YMCA hours. Staff must notify their supervisor of any pre-existing relationships with program participants.

## Technology Usage

Cell phones/ipods/tablets are not permitted at camp and must be kept stored away. If a device becomes a problem, it will be confiscated and returned only to a parent/guardian. To contact your child, please contact the camp directly.

## Group Assignments

Group assignments are based on age and enrollment. We strive to keep campers in the same group, but adjustments may be necessary. We cannot accommodate requests for specific groups or counselors.

## Parent Communication

To ensure a fantastic camp experience, you'll receive a detailed camp email the Friday before your child's camp begins. Please read it carefully. If you don't receive the email, contact your camp director.

## Additional Needs

YMCA Camp welcomes all children. Parents must disclose any significant medical, physical, or behavioral needs at enrollment. Due to our group format, we cannot provide one-on-one support. Children must be able to participate in group activities, including loud events and assemblies, and be independent with bathroom use and clothing changes.

## Volunteers Encouraged

Parents can support camp through sharing talents, assisting on field trips, and fundraising. Please inform the Camp Director of your interest in volunteering; all volunteers undergo background checks. All parents are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times, including in communication with Y staff. Inappropriate behavior towards any participant, staff, or other parent will not be tolerated. Failure to comply will result in termination of services without a refund.



# OUR MISSION

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

**[columbiaymca.org](http://columbiaymca.org)**