



# **Resident Camp Family Handbook**

Summer 2024

**Lansing YMCA Mystic Lake Camp**  
9505 Ludington Dr.  
Lake, MI 48632  
Phone: (517) 827-9650

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## **USDA Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email:

[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Dear Families:

Thank you for choosing Mystic Lake YMCA Camp for your child’s summer camp experience. We have been hard at work planning to make this summer a safe and enjoyable experience.

## Overview

### *Core Values and Mission*

Our mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Through our focus of ...

- Youth Development – Nurturing the potential of youth and teens
- Healthy Living – Improving the health and well-being for our communities
- Social Responsibility – Giving back and providing support to our neighbors

... each camp program is reflective of the values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility. We also try our best to help campers grow physically, mentally, and spiritually all within a fun camp environment. Nurturing the potential in every child is of the utmost importance, and we take on that challenge with an open mind.

### *Goals and Expectations*

- To provide a safe, inviting, and inclusive camp community for all our participants
- To ensure trained and qualified staff dedicated to being professional role models work with your child
- To help foster friendships between your child and other campers
- To allow campers to learn and have fun in our exciting activities and traditional camping programs
- To provide children the opportunity to unplug from technology and experience time away in a safe and natural environment

Please use this information as a tool to help better prepare your family for your child’s upcoming camp experience. We look forward to partnering with you in helping to bring your child up strong in spirit, mind, and body!

### *A Typical Day at Camp*

7:30 a.m.	Wake up
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Morning Activities
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Rest Hour
2:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Afternoon Activities/Open Swim
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Evening Activities
8:30-10:00 p.m.	Lights Out by Village/Age

### *Preparing Your Child for Camp*

Going to camp can be a challenging experience for a child of any age. Short-term separation from parents and learning independence are important parts of growing up. Talking with your camper prior to

camp lets them know you have confidence in their ability to cope with the new camp lifestyle. Focus on the positive aspects of camp: making new friends, exciting activities, and how proud you will be when they succeed. We keep campers so busy and having so much fun with their new friends that they have little time to miss home!

Missing home usually manifests as sadness, crying, and mild anxiety about being away from home. This is managed by our trained staff as they know the signs and have many strategies for alleviating these negative feelings, ranging from “get to know you” games, one-on-one conversations, writing letters home, as well as creating an exciting and energetic schedule of activities. You may receive a letter early in the session from your camper relaying strong feelings of missing home during this transitional period, this is normal.

Do not promise your child you will come get them if they don’t like camp. This is a phrase we often see campers struggle through. Talk with your child about “when,” not IF. Let them know they may miss home and that they will be okay! Remind them all their counselors are away from home too. Help them remember they are brave and capable of practicing their independence while they are at camp. Talk with them about all the new learning they are going to do at camp as well! There will be camp activities they will do for the first time, and it is great to try new things! The bed will be different than at home, the food will be a little different, and remind them how much fun they will have!

Camp is a very physically and emotionally busy week. Campers will meet new people and spend their entire days with others, they will walk (a lot) and be learning new things. Please prepare your child with the items they need to be physically prepared for camp as well as their curiosity to learn new things and learn about new people. Some of the Mystic Lake staff are international counselors, so your child may have an additional opportunity to learn about a new culture.

### ***Preparing Parents for Camp***

You will miss your child as much as they will miss you! It’s vital for families to be aware of their own emotions and avoid transferring them to their child. For example, instead of saying, “I’m really going to miss you,” say, “I’m looking forward to hearing all about the fun you’ve had when you get home.”

If you have any concerns, your first point of contact should be the camp director. Missing home only becomes a problem when the negative feelings become so strong that making friends, having fun, sleeping, eating, or participating in activities is difficult for the child. In this extreme and rare case, the camp director will contact you to work together to decide the course of action. No proration or refunds will be given due to departing camp for missing home.

## **Registration**

### ***How to Register***

- Via the website at [www.mysticlakecamp.org](http://www.mysticlakecamp.org)
- Via phone at (517) 827-9650

### ***Required Forms***

All forms may be completed in your YMCA account:

- Health Form (includes Participant Waiver with parent signature)
- Camper Release Form
- USDA Summer Food Program Family Information Form

All campers MUST have a completed health form with parent/guardian signature on file. This is required by the State of Michigan and the American Camp Association. Children will not be allowed to be dropped off without this completed form. For accurate health information, all campers need to have their form updated or completed each year.

### ***Registration Fee***

A nonrefundable registration fee of \$100 is required per session per child and must accompany your camper registration. The registration fee is applied to the total balance.

### ***Final Balance***

Your camper's final balance must be paid at least 15 days prior to the start of their camp session. For your convenience, our registration software will automatically withdraw this final balance at the time, if it has not been paid.

### ***Refund Policy***

- Registration fee is nonrefundable.
- In case of dismissal due to poor behavior or voluntary withdrawal, there is no refund of fees.
- A medical excuse must include a physician's authorized signature to be considered for a refund less the registration fee.

### ***Financial Assistance***

Through the hard work of volunteers and generous donors, financial assistance is available for those who demonstrate need. All information is kept confidential, and assistance is awarded on a first come, first served basis. The application can be found on our website.

## **Arrivals and Departures**

### ***Check In***

**Check In at Camp** will be staggered by last name to help control the number of people on camp. Family may accompany the camper to the cabin and remain outside while the camper settles in. A temperature check and health screening will be completed.

- Last names A-M will be from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- Last names N-Z will be from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Check In at Bus** (pre-registration required, \$30 each way) begins at 11:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required. The bus will leave the Parkwood YMCA at approximately 12:00 p.m. The bus location is the Parkwood YMCA 2306 Haslett Road East Lansing, MI 48823.

### ***Check Out***

Adults picking up camper must be listed on their camper release form and have a photo ID.

**Check Out at Camp** will take place on Friday 6:00 - 6:30 p.m.

**Check Out at Bus** will take place Friday at approximately 7:45 p.m.

## **Packing List**

Label everything! Add additional items for a two week stay accordingly. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items. Please leave valuables and very important items at home.

### ***Clothing***

- 4 pairs shorts
- 2 pairs blue jeans &/or pants
- Heavy sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket
- Pajamas
- 6 shirts (1-2 long sleeved)
- Swim suit
- Rain gear
- Flip-flops or sandals
- Underwear and socks
- Closed-toe shoes

### ***Equipment***

- Bag for dirty laundry
- Bin, tote, or trunk to keep your child's belongings organized
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Hat
- Daypack or small backpack
- Water bottle

### ***Bedding and Toiletries***

- Sleeping bag or comforter
- Twin sheet to cover mattress
- Pillow and cover
- Washcloth & bath towel
- Beach towel
- Shower cady, or container to hold toiletries for one week
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Comb/brush
- Shampoo, conditioner, and soap
- Deodorant

### ***Optional Items***

- Camera
- Fishing pole & tackle (we have equipment at camp)
- Writing & reading material
- Stamps & envelopes (pre-addressed is best!)
- White T-shirt for tie dye
- Small fan
- Swim goggles

### ***Prohibited Items***

**The following are not permitted:** cell phones, personal music devices, smart watches, Fitbits, laser pointers, video games, electronics, tablets, food with peanuts or tree nuts, or fireworks. These items will be held in the camp office.

### **Nutrition & Food Service Policies**

Our kitchen staff plan and prepare well-balanced meals for campers in conjunction with the Summer Food Service Program.

- All meals are sufficient in quantity and meet or exceed current nutritional guidelines as set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Department of Education.
- Menus will be available to pick up at the designated check-in/out area.
- Reasonable accommodation can be made for campers with dietary restrictions or food allergies; please note these on the registration form at the time of registration. You may also call camp to discuss any dietary restrictions.

Campers sit and eat with cabin groups for all meals and snacks.

### **Health and Safety**

All campers must have a completed Health Form with parent/guardian signature on file each year. This is required by the State of Michigan and the American Camp Association. In the case that your child needs to be picked up from camp for health or safety reasons it is the parent's responsibility to have a transportation plan in place for your camper to be picked up.

### ***Insurance***

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp does not provide health insurance for campers. Please list your insurance carrier, insurance number and primary physician on the Health Form. Parents are responsible for all necessary health care expenses while your child is at camp.

### ***Medications***

All medications, including inhalers and epi pens, must be sent in their original container with label. The child's name, physician name and the directions including dosage and frequency must be clearly printed on the label. Send only the supply needed for your camper's stay. All medications and vitamins are to be given to the Health Officer at check-in. Medications are not permitted in cabins. Emergency medications will be held in a central location and brought with children when they leave the main camp area.

### ***Health Care***

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp has a well-equipped Health Center with around-the-clock care from a certified Health Officer. All staff are trained in first aid and CPR. We have a strong relationship with our local fire and rescue departments. Mystic Lake YMCA Camp has hosted training events with our local department to enhance their ability to respond to incidents at camp.

In case of illness, campers will be temporarily housed in the health center. If necessary, you will be contacted to pick up your camper. In case of sudden illness or injury, your camper may be transported by camp vehicle to Mid-Michigan Urgent Care or the Emergency Room in Clare. We will contact you or the emergency contact you have listed right away. If necessary, for the well-being of your camper, Mystic Lake YMCA Camp will transport your child via local ambulance.



Complete the Health Form emergency contact information thoroughly. If you are traveling, include the itinerary and phone numbers where you can be reached. In case of any injury or illness that requires medical attention, we will make every effort to contact you prior to treatment. In the event you cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts.

### ***Communicable Disease***

Monitor your child's wellness prior to their arrival at camp. If your child shows any symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue or generally not feeling well, please call camp to reschedule your child's week. Likewise, if your child has been in close contact with anyone who has had COVID-19, flu, cold, or any other illnesses, please call camp to reschedule your child's week. We want to keep our camp community healthy.

Please prepare your child for camp so they know to wash hands before and after eating, and not to share personal items such as hairbrushes or anything that goes near eyes and mouth, including water bottles.

### ***Management of Communicable Disease***

If an individual has any of the following signs and/or symptoms of illness they will be immediately isolated and may need to be picked up from camp:

- Diarrhea
- Severe cough
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Temperature of 100.4 Fahrenheit or higher
- Untreated infected skin patches
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Vomiting
- Evidence of head lice, scabies, ringworm, or other parasitic or fungal infection
- Severe stomach or head pain

If any of these symptoms are present prior to the start of camp, please do not proceed to camp to ensure the well-being of others. If an individual has a communicable disease, a return note from a physician is required for program participation.

If necessary, based on the guidance of the local health department, we will determine whether to close individual cabins or our camp, the duration of the closure, and other needed next steps. When communicating with families and staff about any communicable disease, we will respect the privacy of individuals and not share health information of a specific person.

**DISCLAIMER:** An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that can lead to severe illness and death, and by attending camp, participants voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

### ***Communicable Disease Response Plan***

If an individual at camp is suspected of having any communicable disease, the following will occur:

- The individual will be asked to put on a face mask and will be isolated from others. Currently our Health Center, Spikehorn Lodge, has a designated area for isolation.

- The Health Officer attending to the individual will wear a mask and disposable gloves when in close contact.
- Camp management, group leaders, and parent/guardian will be notified.
- If an individual is suspected of having COVID-19, a Rapid Test and/or a PCR test will be administered. We may also randomly test other campers in the same cabin.
- Further assessment or guidance will be sought from an appropriate healthcare provider.
- A plan will be made for the individual with suspected communicable disease to be removed from camp by their parent/guardian/designated adult as soon as possible. They will be isolated from others until they are picked up.
- Camp staff/group leaders will gather the participants belongings and then disinfect the individual's cabin, sleeping area and other areas they may have visited. PPE use will be required during this process.
- Basic contact tracing will be done on camp with the assistance of staff and group leaders for those that may have been in close contact with the individual (*within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes in the past 24 hours cumulatively*) and will be observed for symptoms.
- If a positive COVID-19 test is returned, the campers and staff in the positive individual's cabin, if not fully vaccinated, may no longer be able to stay at camp. Fully vaccinated campers and staff experiencing no symptoms of COVID-19 will be able to remain at camp.

### ***Campers with Accommodations***

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp strives to offer a positive experience for children of all abilities whenever their needs can be met. We request that you call the camp to review your child's needs and level of staff involvement. We will work with you to determine if Mystic Lake YMCA Camp is the right choice for your child.

### ***Camper Behavior Expectations***

The goal of our camp program is to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to a variety of satisfying skills and relationships while allowing children to enjoy healthy activities. Throughout the summer we will instill our character development mission of honesty, caring, respect, responsibility, and safety among our campers. It is our intention to provide positive, realistic expectations and guidelines for each camper to ensure their success at camp. We ask that all campers make a commitment to following the camp's expectations.

The following behaviors are not allowed. Campers could be sent home for the following:

- Leaving the group/camp
- Possession of tobacco, vapes, drugs, or alcohol
- Excessive, deliberate use of profane language
- Physical or emotional abuse of another camper or staff
- Being at or in the lake when not part of a scheduled activity
- Fighting or provoking fights
- Forcing others to do something they don't want to do
- Stealing
- Lying to camp staff about matters that may jeopardize campers' rights and welfare
- Deliberately damaging property
- Disrespecting camp rules and staff

**What Will Happen If This Policy Is Violated?** If an incident occurs where a camper conducts him/herself in a manner that jeopardizes their safety, the safety of others, or is not in accordance with the mission of the Y and camp, the counselors will use the following techniques:

- Guide children by setting clear, consistent, fair expectations for behavior.
- Value mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Redirect children to more acceptable behavior and activities.
- Make eye-to-eye contact and listen when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
- Guide children to resolve their own conflicts and model skills that help them to solve problems.
- Patiently remind children of rules and their rationale as needed.
- Use effective praise that is immediate, sincere, and specific.
- Convey instruction and direction in a positive fashion.

When behavior intensifies, the following steps will be taken:

- **First Violation:** Staffers address the behavior with the camper, helping the camper to understand the rules and take responsibility for changing the behavior.
- **Second Violation:** The camper will meet with the camp director. Parental contact and clear objectives will be established.
- **Third Violation:** The camper will be removed from camp for the day, the next day, or the week, depending on the severity of the behavior, without a refund. A parent or guardian will be asked to pick the camper up as soon as possible.
- **Fourth Violation:** The camper will be immediately removed from camp for the remainder of the summer season. All terminations will be handled in conjunction with the camp director. No refunds will be provided.

Depending on the severity of the incident, a child may be suspended or terminated from camp on the first violation at the camp director's discretion. In any situation, campers will not be deprived of food or sleep; shall not be alone without staff supervision, observation, and interaction; and shall not be subjected to hazing, ridicule, threat, corporal punishment, excessive physical exercise, or excessive restraint.

### ***Bullying***

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp takes bullying very seriously. Our staff works diligently to prevent campers from physically, mentally, or emotionally abusing other campers. All behavioral incidents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. In most situations, should a second incident occur after the initial warning, parents will be required to pick up their child.

### **Communication**

Supportive letters let your camper hear from you in a constructive way. We suggest you send a letter prior to your child's session or bring to check in and hand to staff to ensure it is received while your camper is here.

Focus letters on all the fun your child is having at camp and all the new friends they are making. Letters that include how much the family dog misses them can trigger missing home- keep the content positive!

Campers are encouraged to reply by writing letters as they are generally not allowed to use the phone or computers. Please send your child pre-addressed envelopes.

### ***Care Packages***

Although all campers enjoy receiving these packages from home, we discourage packages containing food items. They can expose fellow campers to allergies or other dietary restrictions. Please keep snacks at home, our kitchen will provide snacks to campers in the afternoon and at bedtime.

### ***Letters***

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp  
Camper Name, Cabin Name  
Dates Attending  
PO Box 100  
Lake, MI 48632

### ***E-mail***

Parents may email their camper at [mysticcampers@lansingymca.org](mailto:mysticcampers@lansingymca.org). Please list camper name and cabin in subject line. Note that campers will not be able to reply via email. Emails received after 12:00 p.m. may not be delivered until the next day.

Emails will be delivered Monday - Friday. Finals emails will be delivered Friday at 12:00 p.m. No emails will be delivered Sunday.

### ***Scheduled Contact from Camp***

Camp will send an email update on Monday and Thursday. Pictures of camp activities will be posted by 8:00 p.m. daily beginning on Monday, you will use the same link all week. Each email will include the link to view our photo gallery and a link to send your child or our staff an email.

### ***Missing Home***

Going to camp can be a challenging experience for a child of any age. Short term separation from parents and learning independence are important parts of growing up. Talking with your camper prior to camp lets them know you have confidence in their ability to cope with the new camp lifestyle. Focus on the positive aspects of camp: making new friends, exciting activities and how proud you will be when they succeed. We keep campers so busy and having so much fun with their new friends, they have little time to miss home, though it tends to come up at bedtime.

When setting up your child for success, explain Sunday – Friday is the timespan of camp. They will have a great time at camp, but they may have tough moments; explain to them they are able to make it through the week!

## **Miscellaneous**

### ***Contact with Staff Outside of Camp***

For the safety of the children in our programs and the YMCA staff, the YMCA of Lansing has a policy prohibiting contact between staff and children outside the YMCA, including babysitting and social networks. Monitor your children's internet use. If you notice that your child has been contacted by YMCA staff outside the YMCA, including social networks, please contact us.

### ***Camp Store***

From water bottles and t-shirts to sweatshirts and bandanas, camp offers a wide range of souvenirs and snacks for your child to purchase. The average store account is typically \$50 for one week of camp.

Camp store accounts can be set up during the registration process, so your child has an account waiting for them when they arrive at camp. All store accounts must be set up with a credit/debit card.

***Laundry***

Please pack enough items for the length of your camper's stay. Laundry facilities are generally not available to campers.

***Lost and Found***

Label everything. The camp experience is an opportunity for a camper to learn responsibility for their personal articles. Please discuss with your camper the importance of keeping track of their gear. Any unclaimed items will be held for two weeks and then donated.