



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YMCA Camp Shepard 2020 Family Handbook



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# Program Overview

## YMCA of Greater Westfield Mission Statement

To provide the community with quality programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

## Program Philosophy

The purpose of YMCA Youth programs is to meet the development needs of children, provide recreational opportunities, and provide families with quality care. Our programs focus on facilitating the child's natural sense of curiosity, promoting a sense of self efficacy, creating an environment conducive to positive peer interaction, which encourages initiative and support the growth of each child as an individual, all under the guidance and care of a nurturing staff community. We strive to provide a setting built with acceptance, respect, and encouragement. We believe in building positive self-esteem and strong character development in children by focusing on our values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

## Camper Development

YMCA Camp Shepard focuses on camper progression, individual growth, team building, and leadership growth within our programming efforts. Each experience at camp is designed with intentionality to assist each camper with reaching short, medium, and long term goals. Within our camper and group based activities, campers are given a sense of belonging, achievement, all while making new friends and everlasting memories.

## Staff

Our staff team is our greatest resource and the most important ingredient in the success of our program. Our staff consists of public educators, youth coaches, student-athletes, high school juniors and seniors, and college students. Prior to hiring, each staff member completes a personal interview, CORI/SORI checks, and reference checks. Our staff ratio minimums are 1:5 for ages 6 and under and 1:10 for 7 and up (this does not include Volunteers or CIT's). The staff as a whole completes a five day staff training. Every staff member holds certifications in CPR/AED and First Aid. Our Archery, High Ropes, and Lifeguards, also hold certifications for their specific skill area.

## **Babysitting Policy**

The YMCA of Greater Westfield's Code of Conduct prohibits staff members from outside contact with children met through any YMCA programs.

## **Family Night and Overnights**

Family night and overnights are the second Wednesday of each two week session. Permission slips for these events are sent home on the Monday prior to the overnight. If your camper is absent on Monday or their permission slip is lost feel free to contact the camp office and we will send one home. These forms must be returned by Monday so we can staff, purchase supplies/food, and plan overnights accurately. Campers under age 6 may participate in dinner and the Family Nights but not the overnight. There are three levels of involvement outlined below:

1. Campers follow normal end of day transportation plans and return to camp with their family for the Family Night and return home after. Cost: \$0
2. Campers stay at camp for dinner, attend Family Night, and then return home with their Family. Cost: \$10
3. Campers ages 6+ stay for dinner, attend Family Night, participate in the overnight camp out, and receive breakfast/lunch the following day. Cost: \$25.

## **Swimming**

Campers will be given the opportunity to swim twice a day (weather dependent): swim lesson in the morning and recreational swim in the afternoon. If campers are present but do not participate in swim lessons they are not allowed to participate in recreational swim. We have an in-ground pool which is staffed with 3 lifeguards and other staff members are assigned strategic positions to ensure camper safety. At no point will the lifeguard to swimmer ratio be more than 1:20. YMCA Camp Shepard ensures the safety of each individual child by following a test, mark, protect procedure. All campers are given a swim test by a Certified Lifeguard on their first day and are allowed to retest as many times as they like as they progress due to swimming instruction. Each swimmer is marked to easily identify their level and placed with necessary restrictions including: area of the pool and life jackets. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your campers' safety please do not hesitate to contact the Camp Director or CEO.

## **Scheduling/Camp Events**

Your camper will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities while at camp. A typical day includes six 45 minute periods (3 before lunch and 3 after lunch). We aim to provide a well-rounded experience and ensuring each group with equal time in each

“skill area”. Skill areas include but are not limited to: Archery, Creative Arts, Canoeing/Kayaking, High/Low Ropes Challenge and Rock Climbing, Mountain Biking (10+), Nature Classes, and Sports. Each group is intentionally scheduled free periods where they may use this time to prepare their camp sites, go on hikes, challenge other groups to friendly competitions, and practice skits/songs. Every Friday the entire camp community enjoys a workshop (week one) and then an all camp event (week 2). Campers will also enjoy participating in theme days scheduled in the middle of the week. Schedules outlining their activities and these special events/days will be provided on the first day of each session.

### **What to bring:**

- Backpack
- Lunch
- Swimsuit
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Sun Screen
- Bug Spray
- Rain Coat
- Close Toed Shoes

\*be prepared to get dirty

### **What to leave at home:**

- Toys
- Games
- Cell Phones
- Any electronics
- Money/Valuable items

\*Campers will only need items on the “what to bring” list.

If you have any questions/concerns please contact the Camp Director.

# Transportation

## Bussing

A local bus company is contracted to transport campers to and from camp with the same standards required by the Board of Education. The YMCA provides a bus monitor who is responsible for the personal safety, attendance, and behavior management of the campers. Bus routes are designed to accommodate the maximum number of campers while trying to limit the length of time a child spends on the bus. Bus transportation is not available for those attending extended AM/PM hours. If an authorized adult is not present by the end of the bus route they will be transported to the YMCA for further supervision. See camp brochure for detailed bus schedule.

## Extended AM/PM Care

In order to better accommodate families with schedules that span past the general session camp hours (9 AM – 4 PM) we provide extended care at no additional cost. Camper Registration Forms need to indicate participation in extended day if they plan to attend these hours. Morning hours run from 7-9 AM and afternoon hours run from 4-6 PM. Games, songs, and crafts will be provided during this time. Families will be responsible for paying a \$1/minute late fee after 6 PM unless it is an emergency situation communicated to and approved by the Camp Director.

## Pick Up/Drop off Procedures

The YMCA of Greater Westfield will only release campers to adults listed on the registration under "Authorized Pick Up" unless the Parent/Guardian has specified that their camper has permission to walk home alone. Additions to a campers authorized pick up list can only be made in person, by a Parent/Guardian, with a valid state photo identification. All authorized adults must present valid photo state identification or they will not be allowed to pick up a camper. If there is a restraining order regarding your child, please provide us with a copy. If you are dropping your camper off or plan to pick them up between 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM you must do so at YMCA Camp Shepard's Administrative Office (Brown House) located at 360 Northwest Road which is located approximately 30 yards uphill from the main gate.

\*If there are any potential concerns regarding the security of your camper please contact the Camp Director at least one week prior to your campers first day.

# Enrollment

## Registration

In order to register a child for YMCA Camp Shepard a Parent/Guardian must fully complete the front and back of the registration form and provide the health form with an immunization record completed within the last 2 years from your campers last day within our program. Registrations need to be processed at the YMCA of Greater Westfield on 67 Court Street in Westfield, MA. After a registration is processed, payments may be made over the phone. Without health form/immunization record your camper can not be present in our program per the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## Payment

A \$50 non-refundable deposit must be paid on EACH session that a camper is registered for. This deposit will hold the camper's place and will be applied to the full camp tuition. Remaining balances must be paid by the Thursday prior to the beginning of the registered session. Fees will not be refunded for absences.

## Attendance

If your child is absent for a day during the week or session they are registered for, please call the camp office prior to the day starting to confirm absence for the day. If your child is registered for a week/session and will not be attending, please call the camp office prior to the week starting.

## Financial Aid

The YMCA of Greater Westfield believes that no child should be excluded from a program because they are unable to afford the fees. Financial assistance is available for those who qualify within our income-family size scale. Financial aid applications can be found at the YMCA's reception desk. To apply complete the application and provide this year's income tax, three pay stubs, or letter outlining government provided benefits. Please allow up to 10 business days for processing. Other organizations such as the New England Farm Workers provide subsidies and vouchers for youth to attend YMCA Camp Shepard.

# Health/Emergency Policies

## Medications

In order for any camper to receive ANY type of medication while at camp the parent must complete the "Authorization to Administer Medication" form which is available at the reception desk of the YMCA, YMCA of Greater Westfield Website, and YMCA Camp Shepard offices. The medication must remain in its original packaging. The Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director, and Office Manager are the only staff permitted to administer medication.

## Inhalers, Epi-Pens, Insulin and Other Emergency Medications

Pertinent information regarding any special medical considerations and allergies must be clearly noted on the Health Form. All inhalers and other emergency medications will be readily available to program staff members who work directly with the camper. These medications must also be accompanied with a completed "Authorization to Administer Medication" form and a copy must be present in the camp office as well.

## Ill Campers

In consideration of the health and well-being of all program participants and staff members YMCA programs cannot allow ill children to attend. An ill child is defined as someone who is experiencing symptoms ranging from minor cold to communicable disease. If a child cannot participate in the regularly scheduled programs, he/she should remain at home. Note that our employees will also abide by the same policies as the campers. A camper who becomes ill during the day will be cared for in the camp office until an authorized adult is able to pick them up as promptly as possible. They will be isolated at the YMCA Camp Shepard office in the meantime. In the event of exposure to communicable disease, families will be notified via phone, email, or note home.

## Soiled Clothing

It is a requirement of enrollment that campers be toilet trained but sometimes in the height of excitement bathroom accidents do occur. In the event that your camper experiences an accident while at camp we will contact the Parent/Guardian, double bag their soiled clothing, attach the time/date of the accident to the bag, and send the clothing home with them at the end of the day. We exercise regular bathroom/water breaks in-between activities and no child will ever be denied/delayed access to bathroom facilities or water.



## **Minor Injuries**

Minor accidents such as cuts, bruises, etc. will be treated by a certified staff member per the health care written orders of our camp physician. If warranted, the Parent/Guardian will be contacted. Parents will always be contacted for injuries involving the head, stings, or bleeding.

## **Serious Injury**

In the event of a serious injury/illness at camp, 911 will be called and then the campers Parent/Guardian will be contacted. If the situation requires transportation to the hospital, one staff member will accompany the camper with their medical information.

## **Evacuation**

In the event of serious weather, natural disaster, or fire YMCA Camp Shepard will be evacuated by bus to the YMCA of Greater Westfield.

## **Sunscreen and Insect Repellent Policy**

It is the parent/guardians' responsibility to apply sunscreen and insect repellent to their child before releasing their child to the care of Camp Shepard. Please send in sunscreen and insect repellent (labeled with your child's name) in your camper's bag each day. If your child has sensitivity/allergies to certain sunscreens or insect repellents, please be sure to note this on the health and wellness form. When necessary, a counselor will assist each child that may be unable to personally apply his/her own sunscreen and insect repellent. When a child needs such assistance, the counselor will apply only on the exposed parts of the child's skin. Children will be requested to apply along their suit lines. Also, the counselor will only apply sunscreen and insect repellent while another counselor is present.

## **Ticks**

Campers should do a DAILY tick check in a well-lit location. Locker Rooms are a good place to do a visual check of your body. Counselors and other staff are available to assist campers with checking for ticks upon their request. If campers should locate a tick on their body, they should not remove it themselves but instead ask for help from their counselor, healthcare supervisor, Assistant Director or Camp Director. If a tick is found and has to be removed, there will be a call home to notify the parent/guardian.

## Lice

Children should be checked regularly at home and treated when head lice are found. Parents should learn to recognize head lice and teach their children not to share hats and scarves or personal hair care items, such as brushes, combs and hair ties. We require that children be free of nits before returning to camp.

# Behavior

## Rules We Live By

The following are general guidelines of our expectations and rules that we require campers to follow to ensure the safety of themselves and others as well as to ensure they have the best summer possible.

- Follow the CORE Values of the YMCA at all times:
  - **Caring**- Treat others the way you would like to be treated
  - **Honesty**- Be truthful to yourself and others at all times
  - **Respect**- Respect campers, staff, volunteers and Nature
  - **Responsibility**- Be responsible for yourself, your actions, and your items
- Follow Directions
- Keep your hands/feet to yourself
- Use appropriate language
- Stay with your group
- Leave rocks and sticks on the ground
- Do not use electronics

## Management

Our camp advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention and the development of self-discipline. We remind campers that camp rules are established for safety, to keep campers organized, and to ensure a common standard of behavior. This is done in a positive manner so that campers feel the staff cares about them, and will work with them to develop a solution for behavior problems.

If a behavior becomes chronic or persistent, disciplinary actions may need to be taken which include supervised time-outs (never longer in minutes than camper is years old) or loss of privileges. Continued behavior problems will be immediately communicated to Parent/Guardian's and problems after that will result in a meeting with the Camp Director and family.

Discipline will never include physical contact, public humiliation, or anything that does not promote the healthy development of a child.

We teach children to resolve conflicts by peaceful and non-violent means. We expect that campers, staff, families, and visitors treat each other with respect and understanding. Serious incidents or continued unacceptable behavior may warrant suspension/expulsion with no refund. As stated in the Parent Agreements:

- The YMCA reserves the right to dismiss a camper whose behavior is detrimental to other campers, themselves, staff and/or camp.

Unacceptable behaviors that may warrant dismissal from our program include but are not limited to: profanity, mental or bodily harm, continued disruption of activities, violation of law, engaging in sexual activity, possession of weapons, racism, and harassment.

## **For the Families**

- At any time, parents have the right to review background checks, healthcare, and discipline policies. To do so, please contact the Camp Director.
- If at any time parents or families want to file a grievance, please take the following steps:
  - Please contact the Camp Director Lauren Caprile at the Camp Shepard Office number: 413-568-8952
  - If the Camp Director is unavailable please contact the CEO of the YMCA, Andrea Allard: 413-568-8631 ext.301
  - If neither is available, please visit the front desk of the YMCA or call 413-568-8631 and you will be assisted.

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