



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®**  
**FOR HEALTHY LIVING**  
**FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **BEST SUMMER EVER**

## **2025 Summer Camp Parent Handbook**

Locations:

**Camp Big Hollow**

7000 N. Fleming Ln. Peoria, IL 61614

**Camp Limestone**

Jim Thome Dr. Bartonville, IL 61607



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

**Greater Peoria Family YMCA**

**CARING | HONESTY | RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY**

## WELCOME TO DAY CAMP

Thank you for choosing YMCA Day Camp for your child's summer camp experience! You've given your child a wonderful gift - the opportunity to experience the natural world, learn new skills, make meaningful new friendships, and rediscover themselves outside the pressures of the modern world. We're looking forward to a safe and fun summer that instills confidence in your child and creates wonderful memories. All programs at the YMCA are designed to promote positive values. The YMCA focuses on four primary character values; each assigned a color that helps the staff in character education. YMCA staff are hired based on their commitment to accept and demonstrate these positive values in their own lives. The four values are:

**Caring:** Help others

**Respect:** Value the worth of every person and myself

**Honesty:** Tell the truth

**Responsibility:** Do what ought to be done

## YMCA MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. Our impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, a mentor inspires a child, and a community comes together for the common good.

**DISCLAIMER: This program is not regulated by state licensing requirements. The YMCA and its camps are not licensed or controlled by DCFS. [The YMCA is exempt from licensure under the Child Care Act 2.09.](#)**

## OVERVIEW

- Traditional Day Camp offers campers the most well-rounded outdoor youth development experience. Campers enrolled in traditional camp will be provided swim time weekly, field trips, crafts, science, different community vendors, and Vacation Bible School through Bethany Baptist Church (Camp Big Hollow Only). This camp is recommended for all first-time campers and children interested in learning, exploring, and having fun!

## ELIGIBILITY

- A camper must be school-age to participate in the Summer Day Camp program. Campers must be at least the age of 5 by their first day of camp.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

- Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 5:30 pm
  - Before Care- 7:00 am-9:00 am
  - Program Hours- 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
  - After Care- 3:30 pm-5:30 pm
- Camp will be closed on Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Fourth of July.
- Children **MUST** be signed in every day by 9:00 am.
- Children arriving late will not be accepted into camp without prior notice to leadership or a doctor’s note.

**Late pick-up occurs after 5:30 pm, and each student is charged a late fee of \$1 per minute.**

## VISITOR POLICY

- Family visitors can visit us at camp as we have an Open Door Policy. However, if you or other family members would like to visit, any notice you can give our Camp Director at (309) 692-7631 ext. 104 is greatly appreciated. This will allow our front desk to be prepared for visitors dropping in and also enable us to confirm that your child is on-site and not on a field trip.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION & PAYMENT

- Camp fees will be automatically drafted on Mondays, one week before the week you are registered for. The cost of camp is only offered in weekly rates, which do not change based on your child’s attendance. Please see the payment schedule outlined below:

Week	Start Day	Payment Due Date
1	05/27/2025	05/19/2025
2	06/02/2025	05/26/2025
3	06/09/2025	06/02/2025
4	06/16/2025	06/09/2025
5	06/23/2025	06/16/2025
6	06/30/2025	06/23/2025
7	07/07/2025	06/30/2025
8	07/14/2025	07/07/2025
9	07/21/2025	07/14/2025
10	07/28/2025	07/21/2025
11	08/04/2025	07/28/2025

- If you apply for Child Care Connection, you will be responsible for partial payments until approved. **Non-refundable registration fees apply to all.**

- Financial Assistance is available to all YMCA families who qualify. You must apply through Child Care Connection before you apply for financial assistance; if Child Care Connection denies you, you may apply for financial assistance.
- **Any unpaid programs, membership, or financial aid must be paid before attending camp.**
- **If you are with Child Care Connection, you must attend camp at least 4 times per week. If there is a reason you cannot, please reach out to YMCA leadership. Failure to do either of these could result in losing a spot.**

### CANCELATIONS/CHANGES

- With weekly billing, refunds will **only** be given if an illness or injury prevents your child from attending for the whole week. If possible, our camp director should be notified before the billing cycle. It is the YMCA's right to ask for a doctor's note explaining the illness. If you choose to cancel or change services, we need a change of status notice **EIGHT BUSINESS DAYS before the first day of the week your child is registered.** You will be responsible for payments if we do not receive the status change notification eight business days before cancellation. Refund processing can take 7-10 business days. Please see the outlined cancellation schedule below.

Week	Start Day	Cancellation Notice Due By:
1	05/27/2025	05/14/2025
2	06/02/2025	05/21/2025
3	06/09/2025	05/28/2025
4	06/16/2025	06/04/2025
5	06/23/2025	06/11/2025
6	06/30/2025	06/18/2025
7	07/07/2025	06/25/2025
8	07/14/2025	07/02/2025
9	07/21/2025	07/09/2025
10	07/28/2025	07/16/2025
11	08/04/2025	07/23/2025

- **Children suspended from camp will not be refunded for the week; parents will be responsible for payment that week.**
- If you choose to cancel a registered week of camp, your spot will be forfeited and offered to a child on the waiting list. If you wish to re-enroll after canceling, you will need to rejoin the waiting list, and placement will be subject to availability. We cannot guarantee that a spot will reopen once it has been forfeited.

## **CAMP CHECK-IN & PICK-UP**

- There will be a check-in/billing table and a camp questions table. You are responsible for signing your child in and out of camp at check-in and pick-up. Adults must be 18 years of age to sign campers in or out. Please allow yourself enough time to sign in due to the number of participants in the program. Please have your Driver's License in hand for the first few weeks of camp to verify pick-up. **Anyone not on the pick-up list will be unable to pick up any child.** If you cannot pick up your child, please call and let us know so we can authorize a new pick-up person.

## **CUSTODY/PARENTING PLANS**

- Legal documents (copies: court order, divorce decree, parenting plan, etc.) must be on file and current at the program regarding divorce/custody arrangements.
- In the event of a parent's divorce or separation, we must release the child to either parent unless a court order states otherwise.
- Divorced parents should submit a copy of the court order, divorce decree, or other legal documentation to prevent an unauthorized pick up by the non-custodial parent. Documentation must be kept in the child's file.
- Any deviation of the child custody agreement will require a written formal agreement with notarized signed approval by both parties acknowledging "In Direct Contradiction to the Stated Court Order" before allowing pick up.
- In the absence of a court order on file with the childcare program, both parents will be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The YMCA cannot, without a court order, limit one parent's access at the request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, the YMCA suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.
- A legal restraining order must be on file with the childcare program if an individual cannot pick up the child.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

- In the unlikely event that the YMCA decides to evacuate the camp, we will attempt to contact the family, starting with the parent or guardian that registered the child, then the emergency contact person, in that order. At that time, the person we make contact with will be given further instructions on how the evacuation will proceed. For this reason, we must have accurate contact information for parents and emergency contacts during your child's camp experience.

## **FIRST AID & ILLNESS**

- All staff are certified in CPR and First Aid. In an emergency or illness, camp staff will notify parents/guardians. Refunds will only be given if an illness or injury prevents your child from attending for the whole week. If possible, our billing department should be notified before the billing cycle. It is the YMCA's right to ask for a doctor's note explaining the illness.
- Parents will be contacted immediately if their camper shows signs of illness. It is better to be overcautious than to risk exposing the rest of the campers and staff.

### **Campers will be sent home for the following reasons:**

- Earache (if they have not been on medication for at least 24 hours)
- Fever over 100.1 degrees. Campers may return when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without medication
- Strep throat (if they have not been on medication for at least 24 hours)
- Stomach Ache
- Anything contagious (i.e., chicken pox, hand, foot, and mouth disease)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Contagious rashes or rashes of unknown origin
- Head lice, including visible nits. Staff will check head upon return.
- Pink Eye (conjunctivitis) (if they have not been on medication for at least 24 hours)
- Significant runny nose (discolored mucous)

## **HEAD LICE**

- Head lice can become an issue anytime you gather children at camp, daycare, or school. It is not indicative of uncleanliness, and anyone can get them. Because lice are easily transmitted and require several steps to eliminate, we cannot keep children with nits or head lice at camp. If your child gets head lice and needs to miss a week, please get in touch with the School Age Director regarding a refund.

## **MEDICATION**

- For the safety and well-being of all campers, our camp staff will only administer emergency medications, such as EpiPens, inhalers, and other life-saving prescriptions. Parents/guardians must provide written authorization from a healthcare provider, along with detailed instructions for administration. All emergency medications must be in their original packaging with the camper's name and dosage information clearly labeled. If needed, your pharmacy can provide you with extra packaging for your child's emergency prescription.

- Non-emergency medications, including over-the-counter pain relievers, allergy medications, and daily prescriptions, will not be administered by camp staff. Parents/guardians are responsible for making arrangements if their child requires such medications during camp hours.
- Please remember that our staff are not medical professionals. We are not required by law to administer medication.
- If you have any questions or special circumstances regarding your child's medical needs, please contact camp leadership prior to the start of camp.

## **WEATHER**

- Most rainy-day activities will occur inside different parts of the building and under the pavilion. However, campers should be prepared with proper rain gear for transitions to and from areas.
- On days when the weather is extremely hot, campers can get water and spend time in the shade or indoors.
- Sunscreen should be applied **before** campers arrive. We are an outdoor camp, so please give your child plenty of sunscreen to re-apply throughout the day. **Counselors can help apply spray sunscreen only.**

## **WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP**

- Campers should bring a backpack to and from camp each day. In the backpack should be lunch (if one is not provided), a drink (no soda), a towel, a bathing suit, sunscreen, bug spray, and extra clothes. **Campers must wear CLOSE-TOED SHOES at all times.** Sandals are not allowed for safety reasons. Fair-skinned campers are encouraged to wear a hat on sunny days. **All items should be marked with the camper's name.**

## **WHAT TO KEEP AT HOME**

- Campers may not bring MP3 players, cell phones, tablets, iPods, video games, trading cards, matches or knives, or any other toys from home. The YMCA is not liable for any child's lost, broken, or stolen items. Any camper bringing any weapons will be immediately removed from the program.

## **CAMPER PHONE USE**

- The camp experience allows children to develop a greater sense of independence. Therefore, no phone is available for campers to make or receive phone calls routinely. However, should your child need to call home, directing staff will arrange a time, and, together with the camper, they will make the call home. **Personal cell phones are not allowed.** Cell phones will be confiscated and returned to the parent or another authorized pick-up person at the end of the day.

## LOST AND FOUND

- Lost and found items accumulate very quickly. Please label your child's belongings. Socks and underwear are immediately discarded; everything else will be on a lost and found table and donated after two weeks. **The YMCA is not responsible for broken, lost, or stolen items.**

## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

- Each week, a newsletter will be emailed to parents that will provide an overview of field trips, special activities, swim times, and helpful reminders will be given out. In the event of inclement weather, schedules will be modified. Physical copies of the newsletter will be available for parents beginning the Friday of each week, which will cover the following week.

## CHILD PICK-UP

- Anyone picking up the child must:
  - Be listed on the child's authorized release list and be prepared to show staff a picture ID if the staff does not know them. **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WHO IS NOT ON THEIR AUTHORIZED PICK-UP LIST.**
  - Additional people may be added to the authorized pick-up list in person during drop-off. In an emergency, you may call (309) 692-7631, ext. 104, and we can add a name via phone.
  - Our procedure for when a parent has not arrived after the close of care is to:
    - 1) Attempt to contact the parent.
    - 2) Call authorized people on the emergency contact list.
    - 3) Call the police and report the child as abandoned 15 minutes after the program's close.

## LATE DROP OFF/ EARLY PICK UP

- The camp office must be notified of any late drop-offs or early pick-ups to adjust schedules. Children arriving late or getting picked up early will not be accepted into camp for the day.
- If children have a visit from a case worker, they must provide a work badge and driver's license. If children are on a field trip, they cannot pick them up at the destination.
- We enjoy having all our campers at special events! If you need them to stay back at camp, you must find care for your child that day. We cannot allow parents, guardians, case workers, or relatives to drop children off or pick children up at other drop-off points.
- **Late pick-up occurs after 5:30 pm, and each student is charged \$1 per minute late.**



## **TRANSPORTATION & FIELD TRIPS**

- The YMCA transports children by bus. If you need to pick your child up earlier or during the field trip, please contact Camp Leadership so we can ensure your child does not attend the field trip. The YMCA does not allow children to be picked up or dropped off from off-site locations. The YMCA does not pick children up for camp. Students may be left out of a field trip if the YMCA staff does not feel they can represent the organization well in public.

## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (CAMP BIG HOLLOW ONLY)**

- As a Christian organization, campers are involved in V.B.S at Bethany Baptist Church during Week 2, June 9<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>. This has been a huge success in the past, and campers love to attend. **There are no exceptions; parents cannot drop their children off at the church.**

## **STAFF RATIOS**

- The YMCA camp has a counselor-to-camp ratio that does not exceed 1:20.

## **YMCA CAMP STAFF**

- We are dedicated to recruiting and developing an outstanding group of directors and counselors committed to providing each camper with the best possible day camp experience. We believe that the success of our program lies in the quality of our staff. Staff people are selected based on their experience, ability to lead camp-related activities, and commitment to role modeling positive values. We strive to retain seasonal staff people from summer to summer. Your child may already know many of our staff from camp last year. This seasoned staff brings excellent knowledge and experience to the YMCA summer camp program. Each staff member receives training and is certified in First Aid and CPR, a certified DCFS-mandated reporter, and certified in Child Development Health & Safety Basics. In addition to background checks and fingerprinting.

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE & CHILD ABUSE POLICIES**

- The YMCA provides our youth and teens with the highest quality services. We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing, empowering environment for youth and promoting growth and success. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth or teens or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and investigated. No form of abuse will be tolerated, and any staff, volunteer, member, guest, teen, or youth who is accused of abuse of a youth or teen will be immediately removed from the facility and prohibited from all YMCA property and activities for the duration of an investigation. If the investigation establishes that abuse is believed to have occurred, the staff member's employment or the volunteer's ability to volunteer will be immediately terminated. All

individuals found to have abused youth will be permanently prohibited from all YMCA property and activities. The YMCA will both report to and fully cooperate with law enforcement and the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services regarding allegations of abuse that are made and require investigation. How the YMCA responds to suspicious or inappropriate interactions, policy violations, and incidents or allegations of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individuals involved and the damage to the organization. Once a staff member, volunteer, youth, teen, or parent has expressed concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a youth or teen, swift and determined action must be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth, teen, the accused staff member, or volunteer, and to the organization. Because the YMCA is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that every staff member and volunteer actively participates in the protection of youth and teens. Suppose staff or volunteers observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other staff or volunteers. In that case, they are responsible for immediately reporting their observations. As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at the Greater Peoria Family YMCA are required by law to help DCFS become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, and daycare/childcare workers are mandated reporters. Thus, it is the policy of the Greater Peoria Family YMCA to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DCFS immediately by telephone or by online submission.

### **DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE**

- All children are entitled to a safe and harmonious environment. The safety rules and structures of the summer camp program are in place to provide a safe and consistent program. At the Greater Peoria Family YMCA, we believe that guidance should be positive and approached in a fair and caring manner, consistent with the developmental needs of individual children. Clear behavior expectations are set and modeled, and reasonable guidelines are explained. We encourage and guide children to develop self-control and to handle conflicts in a peaceful, effective, and acceptable way while still protecting the safety of the other children and staff. Positive behavior is reinforced to discourage inappropriate behavior and use the character development program values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. Redirection away from problems and towards constructive activity and immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior are used as the situation warrants.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

- Please understand that some actions warrant immediate suspension, and in the case of three suspensions, the child will be dismissed from the program. **The suspension starts at one day, the second will be three days, the third will be one week, and the final will be dismissal from the program.** If your child is suspended, fees will still be due for the child's spot. The YMCA reserves the right to warn, suspend, or dismiss children from the program if:
  - They require an inordinate amount of attention from the staff, thereby causing inadequate supervision for the remainder of the participants or members.
  - The child's behavior poses a danger or threat to themselves, other children, or YMCA staff.
  - Their behavior is determined to be inappropriate within the scope and spirit of the YMCA values.
  - For any reason within the discretion of YMCA Management.
  - Disruption of program activities that negatively impact the experience for other students
  - There is no positive behavior change after working with the child's parent or guardian.
  - Their parent yells at or use inappropriate language with employees.
  - **PLEASE NOTE: If YMCA Leadership requests that your child is picked up before the end of standard program time, then an authorized adult on the pick-up list must PROMPTLY come to pick up the child. If pick-up is refused, the issue will then go to DCFS and/or the Peoria Police Department as child abandonment.**

**We are not licensed therapists, psychologists, or teachers. We are not qualified to do any one-on-one special treatment for campers. We are always willing to listen to the campers and support them with their struggles to ensure they are safe and having fun at camp.**

**Parents/Guardians should not rely on us to fix their child(ren)'s behavioral issues or expect us to "treat" a camper medically. We are not legally allowed to do that. If we believe your child(ren) cannot follow the Greater Peoria Family YMCA's rules/expectations, they will be removed immediately.**

## POTTY TRAINING POLICY

- Students in the YMCA Summer Camp program are required to be potty trained. YMCA staff **CAN NOT** assist in changing or cleaning a child. If a child needs assistance cleaning up and changing, a parent or guardian will be required to come and help. YMCA staff can

give a child clothes to change into but will wait outside the bathroom so the child can clean up and change themselves. We will be operating our potty-training policy on a three-strike basis. The student will be allowed to have two accidents, parents/guardians will be notified if there is an accident, and the accident will be documented. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> accident, it will be our discretion to determine whether the child is not potty trained, and they will be dismissed from the program.

### **PARENT/STUDENT AGREEMENT / CODE OF CONDUCT**

- The Greater Peoria Family YMCA is a youth-serving, community-based membership organization dedicated to putting Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Participation in the organization's programs is subject to the observance of the organization's rules and procedures. We also ask that parents clearly understand that if YMCA leadership calls and states that a child needs to be picked up, then an authorized pick-up must come and get the child promptly. The activities outlined in the following list are strictly prohibited. Any program participant, staff, volunteer leader, or parent who violates this code is subject to discipline, up to and including removal from the program.
  - Abusive language toward a staff leader, volunteer, or program member.
  - Possession or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs on Peoria Family YMCA property or reporting to the program while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  - Bringing dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons, or other similar items onto YMCA property.
  - Discourtesy or rudeness to a fellow program member, staff leader, or volunteer.
  - Verbal, physical, or visual harassment of another program member, staff leader, or volunteer.
  - Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group.
  - Conduct endangering the life, safety, health, or well-being of others.
  - Failure to follow any agency policy or procedure.
  - Bullying or taking unfair advantage of any program member.
  - Failing to cooperate with an adult supervisor, leader, or mentor.
  - Not demonstrating the YMCA values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility.

### **YMCA STAFF DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

- No YMCA employee may strike a child for any reason.
- Children will not be threatened with physical punishment.
- Children will not be allowed to show disrespect to YMCA employees by actions or words.
- Discipline will be handled maturely and fairly. Demeaning words will not be used.

- Children will be told WHY they are being disciplined. The staff attitude will be, "I like you, but I don't like what you did."
- Abusive language, equipment mishandling, or property defacing will not be tolerated.
- Food will never be denied as a punishment.
- Children who wet their clothing will not be shamed or punished.

#### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

- If you want to volunteer, complete a volunteer form, get fingerprinted, and authorize a background check.

#### **CONTACT US TODAY!**

**School Age Director**, Taylor Pope

(309)692-7631 ext 104

[Taylor.Pope@peoriaymca.org](mailto:Taylor.Pope@peoriaymca.org)

**School Age Coordinator**, Candice Ditman

(309)692-7631 ext 120

[Candice.Ditman@peoriaymca.org](mailto:Candice.Ditman@peoriaymca.org)