



## OVERNIGHT CAMP PARENT HANDBOOK



# OVERNIGHT CAMP MANKATO FAMILY YMCA

**AND WE WILL COME BACK HOME...**

# OVERNIGHT CAMP ADMINISTRATION



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## Business Office Administrative Assistant

- Contact for questions on Camp Payments.

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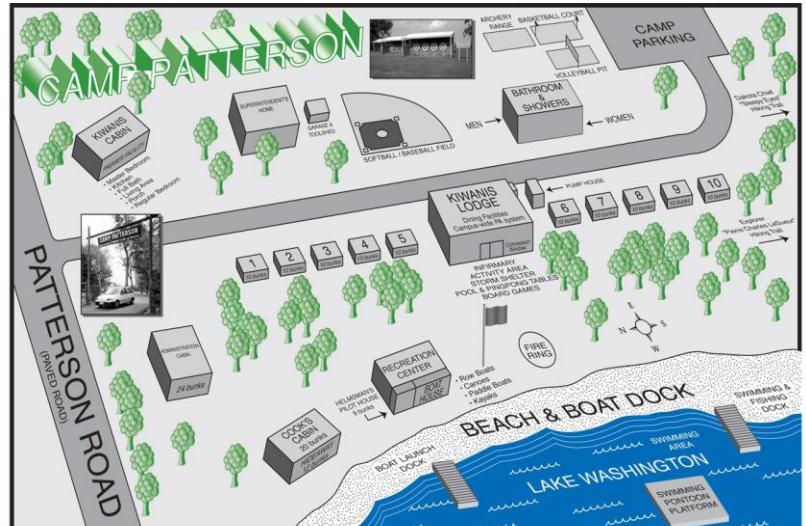
Dear Patterson Campers & Families,

Thank you for choosing YMCA Overnight Camp Patterson! We are incredibly excited for the upcoming summer and all the memories, growth, and adventure it will bring. At Camp Patterson, our mission is to provide every camper with a safe, fun, educational, and transformational experience rooted in the YMCA's core values: Caring, Honesty, Responsibility, Respect, and Faith.

We truly believe camp can have a lasting and meaningful impact on a child's life. Through strong relationships, time spent unplugged from the modern world, and the support of our dedicated and passionate staff team, your camper will have the opportunity to explore, discover, and grow in ways that only camp can offer. From new friendships to newfound confidence, we can't wait to be a part of their journey.

Thank you again for being part of the Camp Patterson community. We can't wait to welcome you soon!

Dustin



## **YMCA Mission**

To put Christian principals into practice through programs and services that build a healthy spirit, mind, body, and social well-being for all.

## **Camp Purpose**

The purpose of the Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp program is to create a safe, fun, and inclusive environment where every child has the opportunity to develop and feel valued.

## **Program Goals**

1. Promote a sense of self-confidence, self-efficacy, and independence.
2. Build positive relationships with peers and other adults.
3. Provide a variety of activities that develop skills in the fields of arts, STEM, and games.
4. Teach character development using the core values; caring, honesty, responsibility, respect and faith.

## **Camp Sessions**

- Patterson 1: Sunday June 7 – Friday June 12, 2026
- Patterson 2: Sunday June 14 – Friday June 19, 2026
- Patterson 3: Sunday June 21 – Friday June 26, 2026
- Patterson 4: Sunday August 2 – Friday August 7, 2026

## **Payments**

All camp balances must be paid in full by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the camp your child(ren) attends.

- June camps by May 15<sup>th</sup>
- August camps by July 15<sup>th</sup>

For questions on camp payments contact Susan Lyons, [slyons@mankatoymca.org](mailto:slyons@mankatoymca.org) 507-345-9800.

## **Financial Assistance**

The Mankato Family YMCA is committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to participate in our programs, regardless of financial circumstances. YMCA Financial Assistance is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and is dependent on funds provided through donations, grants, and special campaigns such as the Penguin Plunge.

The application period opens in February and remains open until all available funds are distributed. Applicants will be notified of their award status and the amount of assistance via email. Financial assistance applications can be completed online at [www.mankatoymca.org](http://www.mankatoymca.org) or picked up in person at the YMCA front desk.

Additionally, the Greater Mankato Area United Way offers scholarship assistance through their Connecting Kids Program, which can be accessed at <https://www.connectingkidsmankato.org/>.

This ensures families have multiple resources to help make YMCA programs accessible to all.

## **Summer Camp Drop Policy**

Those who wish to withdraw their registration for a camp must do so no later than two (2) full weeks before the camp is scheduled to start. No refunds will be given after the two (2) week policy prior to the start of camp. The \$25 deposit used to register per session is non-refundable and non-transferable. Membership withdrawal notice: If you are registered for a program and you cancel your membership, you will be billed for the nonmember rate of the program.

## Communication

At the Y, we are committed to keeping you informed and engaged in your camper's experience. Families can expect timely and relevant updates throughout the summer, including surveys, weekly previews, and daily/weekly communication. After your camper's session concludes, a feedback survey will be emailed to you—we strongly encourage you to complete this survey to help us continually improve our program.

### **REMIND – Primary Communication Tool**

REMIND is our primary and most efficient method for families to communicate directly with camp staff. To join REMIND, please email our Camp Director at [dslaughter@mankatoymca.org](mailto:dslaughter@mankatoymca.org).

We strongly encourage all parents and guardians to enroll in REMIND. Important updates, schedule changes, and reminders are shared exclusively through this platform. Families who choose not to enroll may miss essential information, and the Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp Program cannot be held responsible for any missed communication resulting from non-enrollment.

## **Follow Mankato Family YMCA Youth Programs on Social Media**

@Mankato Family YMCA Youth



@mankatoymcayouth



### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

No person shall be denied the opportunity to participate in the YMCA as a participant, employee, or volunteer based on race, sex and/or gender, or religious beliefs. The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life working side by side to strengthen communities. Together we work to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our core values are caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith – they guide everything we do.

The YMCA Summer Camp program is a large-group program designed to foster participant development in a positive manner. In order for participants to be successful, please review the recommended program readiness standards.

## **Child Safe Environment**

At the Mankato Family YMCA, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for every child is our highest priority. We maintain rigorous supervision standards and follow all Child Abuse Prevention Policies set by the YMCA. All staff and volunteers complete comprehensive training, including our Code of Conduct and mandatory reporting procedures. In addition, every team member undergoes criminal and child protection background checks and is certified in CPR and First Aid. Our commitment to safety guides every aspect of our program, helping us create a secure and positive experience for all participants.

## **Child Abuse Prevention**

At the YMCA, safeguarding children is a fundamental responsibility. We believe every child deserves a safe, supportive environment where they can learn, grow, and thrive. As mandated reporters, YMCA staff are required by law to report any incident or concern that may indicate intentional, reckless, or knowing harm to a child. Our team receives comprehensive training in identifying and reporting suspected child abuse, and we maintain clear guidelines for safe, appropriate interactions between staff, youth, and families. Below are examples of behaviors that align with our Child Abuse Prevention Practices:

- Physical Interactions
  - Appropriate: Side hugs, handshakes or elbow bumps, high fives or fist bumps, pats on the shoulder or back
  - Inappropriate: Full frontal hugs, kissing, lap sitting, any form of unwanted or intrusive physical contact
- Verbal Interactions
  - Appropriate: Positive reinforcement, age-appropriate and respectful humor, encouragement, praise
  - Inappropriate: Name-calling or belittling language, secrets between staff and youth, cursing, derogatory remarks, or sexual language

These guidelines help ensure that all interactions remain safe, professional, and supportive. Our commitment to child abuse prevention is central to the mission of the YMCA and the trust families place in our care.

## **Parent Responsibility**

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring they are actively enrolled in all communication platforms used by the YMCA Day Camp program, including REMIND and email. If you have previously opted out of YMCA emails, please follow the steps below to opt back in:

1. Log in to your Online Account and navigate to your Dashboard.
2. In the top left corner, locate the box containing your profile picture and information.
3. Within that box, select the "Edit Profile" button or the Settings icon (gear symbol).
4. Click the Settings button and choose "Email Settings."
5. A window will appear stating that an email will be sent to update your preferences. Select "Send Email".
6. Open the email you receive and update your email preferences accordingly.

## **General Camp Rules**

1. Shoes must be worn at all times
2. Listen to your counselors
  - a. This includes your cabin counselor and any program staff
3. Have FUN!

## **Directions**

Directions to Camp Patterson from Mankato: Est. distance: 15 miles

1. Take MN-22 North
2. Turn RIGHT onto CR-2/490<sup>th</sup> St. Continue to follow 490<sup>th</sup> St.
3. Turn LEFT onto CR-104/Ridge Top Rd.
4. Turn LEFT onto N. Shore Dr.
5. Stay STRAIGHT to go onto PATTERSON Rd./CR-103.

Address: 5050 Patterson Rd. Madison Lake, MN. 56063

## Pets

Please leave pets at home. Camp has plenty of animals for campers to enjoy (fish, birds, deer, raccoons, etc.)

## Arrival & Check-In

Check-In takes place on Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the Sunday of your camper's session. Camp gates will remain locked until this time. Once gates open, please follow staff directions to park in the large field across from the Kiwanis Lodge Dining Hall.

After parking, proceed to the Kiwanis Lodge Dining Hall to complete check-in. This includes:

- Receiving your camper's cabin assignment
- Turning in all medications to the Medical Coordinator
- Visiting the camp store
- Dropping off or writing letters to your camper

Once all stations are complete, proceed to your camper's cabin to meet their counselor. Please do not unpack your child's belongings. Allowing campers to unpack and make their own bed helps build independence and confidence. Counselors are available to assist if needed and will use this time to get acquainted with your camper.

We recommend keeping drop-off fairly brief to help ease the separation—goodbyes can be tough, especially for parents! You are encouraged to plan for a longer visit at Friday pick-up, when your camper can show you around camp and share their week.

If your camper will need to arrive later than the scheduled Check-In window, please contact Camp Administration through REMIND before check-in to let us know.

## Check Out

Check-Out takes place on Friday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.. For safety, camp gates will remain closed until staff are ready to begin the check-out process. We appreciate your patience as campers and staff finish their final goodbyes from a full week of camp.

When the gates open, a staff member will greet you, verify your identity, and check your camper out. All campers must be signed out by an authorized adult with a valid photo ID.

Parents/guardians will then stop at the Medical Coordinator to collect any medications dropped off at check-in, including empty containers.

Next, please follow staff directions to park in the field across from the Kiwanis Lodge. You may then walk to your camper's cabin to reunite! This is a great time to meet their counselors, say hello to cabinmates, and take photos while your camper shares highlights from the week.

After loading all belongings, please follow the designated traffic flow to exit camp safely, ensuring a smooth and safe environment for everyone on camp property.

## **Visitors & Communication with your child at Camp**

- Communication via REMIND: Parents and guardians are required to communicate with camp staff through REMIND, including reporting camper absences.
- Visiting your camper during their camp session is highly discouraged as it can affect the development campers undergo while at camp.
- Electronic Devices: Cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices are not permitted at camp. If a device is discovered, it will be confiscated. Campers are not allowed to make phone calls without permission from camp staff.
- Emergencies & Social Support: In the event of an emergency or to support a camper's social adjustment, camp staff will contact parents/guardians directly. While it can be challenging to be apart from your child, the camp experience is designed to help children unplug from devices and fully engage in activities, friendships, and the overall camp experience.

This policy ensures campers remain safe, focused, and fully immersed in their time at camp.

## **Cabin Assignments**

Camp is a wonderful place for campers to make new friends and share exciting adventures! Campers are assigned to cabins before each session, based on age, gender, cabin mate requests, and available space.

Traditional campers will stay in our newly refurbished cabins, each with 5 bunks (10 beds) and 1 counselor cot. Bathhouses are nearby and feature private individual shower stalls. Some of the larger cabins, typically reserved for Teen Leaders, are also equipped with window air-conditioning units.

Living closely with a group for several days can sometimes lead to challenges. How campers handle these situations is an important part of their growth and learning at camp. Our counselors support campers in resolving conflicts and building communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills in a safe and respectful environment.

## **Cabin-Mate Requests**

YMCA Camp Patterson welcomes campers who wish to attend camp with a friend and will make every effort to honor cabin-mate requests.

- Campers may request up to two friends within one year of their age at the time of registration.
- The Camp Director may separate groups larger than three to reduce the impact of cliques and ensure a positive cabin experience for all.
- Each camper must list the other as their requested cabin mate on the registration form to confirm mutual interest.
- If you feel your situation requires special consideration, please contact the Camp Director.

Please note that cabin mate requests cannot be guaranteed due to enrollment numbers or other logistical considerations. Even if campers are not in the same cabin, they will still have many opportunities to spend time together during the week through activities, games, and mealtime.

## Packing for Camp

We've found it's beneficial to have your camper help pack their items so they know what they've brought and where to locate it in their bag. The camp staff will do everything they can to help your camper keep track of their belongings, but they are NOT responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.  
Please LABEL ALL ITEMS with your child's name.

**Suggested packing list: We play and get dirty, don't send new clothing.**

<b>CLOTHING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Long sleeve shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Jacket with hood or Rain Coat <input type="checkbox"/> Sweatshirts (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Pants (3) <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts (5) <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts (3-4) <input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas/ Sweats (3-4) <input type="checkbox"/> Socks (6 pairs) <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear (6 pairs) <input type="checkbox"/> Swim suit(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Shoes <input type="checkbox"/> Sandals	<b>MISC:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Sun Screen & Lip balm <input type="checkbox"/> Insect Repellent <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries (toothpaste, soap, toothbrush, shampoo, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> White T-shirt for tie dying or \$10 for Resident camp shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight <input type="checkbox"/> Book/Reading material <input type="checkbox"/> Refillable Water bottle
<b>BEDDING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping Bag or Sheets (twin) <input type="checkbox"/> Pillow with pillowcase <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Towels (1-beach & 1-shower) <input type="checkbox"/> Stuffed Animal ( <i>optional</i> )	<b>OPTIONAL:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary/Envelopes/Stamps <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing Gear <input type="checkbox"/> Camera <input type="checkbox"/> Hat <input type="checkbox"/> Dirty clothes bag <input type="checkbox"/> Musical Instrument

<b>Items NOT allowed at Camp</b>	
	Cell Phones
	Weapons
	Electronics
	Tobacco/Drugs/Vapes
	Alcohol
	Toys/Trading Cards
	Money
	Inappropriate Clothing

## Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed at camp under any circumstances. Our goal is to provide your child with the best possible camp experience, which includes the opportunity to unplug from technology and fully engage with their cabin, counselors, and friends.

Any cell phones found will be collected and securely stored by the Camp Director for the duration of the camp session and returned at check-out.

## Sample Daily Schedule

### Morning:

- 6:45 Rise & Shine with the Fitness Fun Challenge (optional)
- 7:15 Wake-Up Call
- 7:35 Flag Raising / Morning Message
- 7:45 Breakfast
- 8:15 Cabin Clean-up / Cabin Time
- 8:45 Skill Rotation 1 (8:45-9:40)
- 9:45 Skill Rotation 2 (9:45-10:40)
- 10:50 Color Wars Challenge / Waiter Call
- 11:10 Lunch/Announcements/Songs
- 12:00 BOB (Body on Bunk to Rest & Relax)

### Afternoon:

- 1:00 Put Swimsuits & Sunscreen on
- 1:15 Period 1 for Swim Time1 & Free Choice Activities
- 2:00 Period 2 for Swim Time2 & Free Choice Activities
- 2:45 Snack
- 3:15 Period 3 for Swim Time3 & Free Choice Activities
- 4:00 Cabin Time
- 4:40 Waiter Call
- 5:00 Dinner/Announcements/Songs
- 5:45 Change for Evening All Camp Activities
- 6:00 Flag Lowering
- 6:15 Evening Program begins
- 7:15 Change and go to Campfire for Snack
- 8:10 Campers dismissed to showers & cabin time
- 9:00 Age appropriate Cabin reflections & debrief
- 9:45 Lights Out



## Camp Activities

At YMCA Camp Patterson, we focus on making every activity fun, engaging, and meaningful.

### Fitness Fun

Exercise is never a chore at camp! Campers can participate in activities such as Yoga, Road Runners Club, Polar Bear Swim, Fishing, and Book Club, allowing them to stay active while having fun.

### Morning Skill Rotations (Monday–Thursday)

For Traditional Campers (grades 3–8), mornings are all about exploration and discovery. Campers rotate with their cabin between four specialized program areas: Canoeing, Arts & Crafts, Archery, and Outdoor Education. Each rotation introduces new skills and experiences, helping campers explore personal interests while learning through games and hands-on activities.

### Afternoon Free Periods

Afternoons give campers a chance to experience independence. Each day at lunch, counselors announce the available activities, and campers choose what they want to do. Options may include:

- Arts & Crafts
- Archery games
- Field and court sports
- GAGA ball
- Swimming
- Watercraft activities (canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking)
- Fishing
- Indoor games such as air hockey, ping pong, billiards, or board games in the Rec Room

### Evening Programming

Evenings bring all campers together for camp-wide activities that promote teamwork, creativity, and fun:

- Sunday Night: OMC (Organized Mass Chaos)
- Monday Night: Camp Olympics
- Tuesday Night: Skit Night
- Wednesday Night: Capture the Flag & Sandcastle Building
- Thursday Night: Patterson Party

Each activity is designed to foster friendships, personal growth, and lasting memories for every camper.

## Dress Up Themes

Each night at camp features a large-group evening activity, often considered the highlight of the camper experience. These activities have fun dress-up themes to create lasting memories:

- Sunday: No theme
- Monday: Red, White, & Blue
- Tuesday: Skit Night (costumes are usually created at camp)
- Wednesday: Color Wars (Red, Yellow, Blue, Orange) – each camper receives a bandana in their assigned color at check-in
- Thursday: Hawaiian/Tie-Dye Night

Every camp session includes traditional evening programs, such as Capture the Flag, Skit Night, and the Patterson Party, giving campers the opportunity to dress up, participate fully, and make memories together.

## **Christian Emphasis**

The Mankato Family YMCA is a Christian organization that is non-denominational and welcome campers from all backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on Christian values from the YMCA of the USA Character Development Program that focuses on the core values of caring, honest, responsibility, respect & faith.

- We carry on the long-standing tradition of offering prayers of thanks before meals. Campers choosing not to participate in these activities must be respectful to those that are.

## **Food**

The Kiwanis Lodge Dining Hall has been recently updated with a new deck, expanded space, and air-conditioning units for a comfortable dining experience. Campers are served three healthy meals each day—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—along with afternoon and evening snacks. Meals are enjoyed family-style with cabin peers, providing a welcoming environment to share stories, build friendships, and practice good mealtime habits.

Our camp menu is thoughtfully crafted to introduce campers to new foods while keeping familiar favorites on the table. Every meal is designed to fuel adventure, build community, and help every camper feel at home.

We're proud to partner with Sadaka's Deli located in the Madison East Mall in Mankato, MN, where owner and chef Susu Sadaka brings her remarkable talent and heart to our camp kitchen. Susu is more than a cook—she's a cherished part of our camp family. With her passion for fresh, flavorful food and her commitment to hospitality, she ensures that every meal is a positive and inclusive dining experience.

From accommodating food allergies to offering creative meal options, Susu's attention to detail and care help make camp a place where every child feels valued, included, and loved. Her dedication reminds us daily that a full stomach and a welcoming table are essential parts of the camp experience.

## **Dietary Restrictions/ Allergies**

To ensure the safety and well-being of all campers, it is essential that all dietary restrictions and allergies are listed on your child's registration form. We must be aware of these needs before the camper's arrival to properly plan and accommodate their meals.

Camp is able to accommodate reasonable dietary restrictions and allergies, including gluten-free, vegetarian, nut-free, and shellfish allergies. In some cases, families may be asked to provide allergen-free foods for their camper. While we strive to accommodate picky eaters, allergies and medical needs take priority.

Providing this information in advance helps our kitchen team create a safe and enjoyable dining experience for every camper.

## Mail

To help your camper feel connected and encouraged during their stay, we welcome letters, but please do not send care packages.

- Bring letters to Check-In: USPS mail can take several days to arrive, so we recommend dropping off letters at check-in.
- Label properly: Place each letter in an envelope with your camper's name and the day you'd like it delivered. A table will be available at check-in where you can write letters on-site.
- Letter content: Positive, encouraging messages help campers feel secure. Suggested phrases include: "*We're so proud of you*," "*We love you*," or "*See you soon!*" Avoid focusing on how much you miss your child, as this can increase homesickness. Asking about camp activities is encouraged.
- No food or candy: These attract bugs and rodents and are not allowed.

After camp: Packages or letters received after your camper's session will be returned or forwarded at the sender's/camper's expense.

**Mailing Address:**  
YMCA Camp Patterson  
c/o: *(Camper's Name)*  
5050 Patterson Road  
Madison Lake, MN 56063

## Lost and Found

The Lost & Found table is located near the Kiwanis Lodge at the end of each camper's session. We encourage families to check this area before leaving camp to retrieve any missing items. To help prevent lost items, please label all your camper's belongings. Clearly marked items make it much easier for staff to return lost items to their owners.

All unclaimed items will be held at YMCA Door A for two weeks following the session. After this period, any remaining items or equipment will be donated to a local charity.

## Jobs and Awards given at Camp

These activities encourage teamwork, responsibility, and creativity while adding extra fun to the cabin experience.

### Waiter Call

Each cabin is assigned to Waiter Call, helping the kitchen and leadership staff with meal preparation tasks such as setting tables and assisting with food service. This is a fun way for campers to contribute to the camp community.

### Cleanest Cabin Award

At the end of each day, campers and counselors tidy their cabin by making beds, putting away clothes, sweeping floors, and keeping the space organized. The Camp Administration team evaluates each cabin, and the "Cleanest Cabin" is awarded Rocky the Raccoon for the day.

### Messiest Cabin Challenge

Tuesday is a camp favorite! Cabins are challenged to create the messiest cabin possible, including messy beds, open suitcases, and playful creative ideas. (Please note: bringing in dirt, leaves, or other natural elements is not allowed.) The Camp Administration team evaluates the cabins and awards "Sir Frederick III" to the messiest cabin of the week.

## Progressive Archery Program

Our archery program is designed to challenge campers at a variety of distances and targets, allowing them to progress through levels of achievement at their own pace. Year after year, archery remains one of the most popular activities, giving campers the chance to develop focus, confidence, and skill as they work toward becoming a Master Archer.

Campers no longer receive paper awards for archery accomplishments. Instead, they earn a lanyard and collectible archery pins as they complete each level, creating a tangible and exciting way to celebrate their progress.

Archery Levels	# of Arrows	Distance	Score
Bowman	30	5 yards	50
Pro Bowman	30	5 yards	100
Junior Archer	30	10 yards	50
Archer	30	10 yards	100
Master Archer	30	15 yards	200
Chief Archer	30	20 yards	200

## Swim Test & Evaluations

Camp Patterson is located on the shores of Lake Washington, and for safety, our waterfront rules are stricter than typical pool standards. All campers participating in swimming or boating activities are encouraged to take a swim test to determine their ability. While the swim test is highly recommended, campers cannot be forced to participate.

On Sunday, each cabin unit will report to the waterfront to complete the swim test. Campers are then classified into one of three swim levels—Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced—which determines how far out they may swim. All boating activities require life jackets, which are provided by Camp Patterson.

### Swim Levels:

#### Beginner:

- Test: Camper either refuses the swim test or does not pass the Intermediate level.
- Restrictions: Can enjoy swimming and water activities while wearing a life jacket.
- Considerations:
  - Fear of open water, seaweed, or drowning
  - Inability to float on the back or stomach for 10 seconds

#### Intermediate:

- Test: Half the distance of the swimming area from the end of the dock without touching the bottom of the lake.
- Considerations:
  - Ability to go underwater without plugging the nose
  - No fear of open water, seaweed, or drowning
  - Ability to tread water and maintain a swimming stroke for a short distance

#### Advanced:

- Test: Swim one lap around the floating raft from the end of the dock using front crawl, breaststroke, or side stroke, and tread water for 30 seconds or touch the bottom.
- Indicates campers have the ability to swim efficiently and safely in open water.

## Teen Leadership Programs

- The Leadership In Training (LIT) (Entering grades 9-10) program offers a transformative experience for young campers, focusing on building essential leadership skills, fostering self-awareness, and understanding the power of giving back to the community. Through this program, LITs will develop invaluable qualities such as empathy, emotional intelligence, resilience, and a strong sense of individuality. They will not only gain transferable skills for their future but also cultivate a deeper sense of purpose and confidence. Join the Leader In Training program this summer and empower your child to grow, lead, and make a lasting impact
- The Mankato Family YMCA Overnight Camp Counselor In Training (CIT) (Entering grades 11-12) Program offers a unique opportunity for individuals to explore the mission and purpose of our camp while developing valuable leadership skills. CITs will have the chance to shadow experienced staff in specific program areas, guide younger campers through their favorite activities, and plan three exciting afternoon events for younger campers. This hands-on experience is designed for campers who are passionate about working with children and have the aspiration to become a YMCA Summer Camp staff member in the future. It's the perfect way to build confidence, gain practical skills, and deepen your connection to the YMCA community.
- The Junior Counselor (JC) program at the Mankato Family YMCA Overnight Camp offers an exciting opportunity for individuals who have completed the Counselor in Training (CIT) program and are eager to gain hands-on experience before becoming a full-time camp counselor. Designed for those not yet 18, this program allows participants to immerse themselves in the daily life of a cabin counselor. JCs will be actively involved in cabin time, leading both large and small group activities, assisting with mealtime, supporting check-in/check-out processes, and experiencing the full scope of a counselor's responsibilities. Paired with an experienced mentor, JCs will receive guidance, build meaningful connections with fellow staff, and gain the skills needed to succeed in future camp roles. This program is perfect for those who are aspiring to become a camp counselor in the coming years. To apply, please contact our Director of Youth Development for more details.

Because of the intimate social and educational nature of our leadership programs; LIT, CIT and JC campers who consistently exhibit behaviors that are disruptive to the learning of the other campers may be removed from the program, even if their behaviors would be tolerated in traditional camp programs. Furthermore, because our teen leadership programs are co-ed, maintaining camp-appropriate social relationships is paramount for success in the program and is taken extremely seriously by camp staff. There is no refund if a camper is expelled from the program due to such issue.

## **Emergency Procedures**

The safety of our campers is a top priority at the YMCA. All camp staff are thoroughly trained in Emergency Action Procedures (EAP) and receive comprehensive instruction on how to respond to a wide range of situations, including severe weather, medical emergencies, lost campers, and other unexpected incidents. Staff practice these procedures regularly to ensure they can act quickly, confidently, and effectively to keep all participants safe.

In the event of an emergency, camp staff will contact parents/guardians promptly via REMIND with updates and instructions as needed.

Our extensive training and preparedness allow us to maintain a secure environment, giving parents peace of mind while campers enjoy a fun and engaging experience at YMCA Summer Camp.

## **Inclement Weather & Rainy Days**

- Summer Camp activities are primarily held outdoors, so campers should come prepared for all types of weather.
- In the event of inclement weather, activities will be modified for safety, and parents/guardians will be notified via REMIND.
- Campers will take shelter immediately in the presence of lightning, thunder, high winds, or extreme heat.
- Campers should be prepared for rainy days by bringing appropriate clothing, such as a rain jacket, sweatshirt, or waterproof shoes.
- We encourage sunscreen, hats, and water bottles on sunny days, as outdoor activity continues whenever it is safe to do so.

## **Illness**

The Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp program follows the Minnesota Department of Health guidelines and recommends that campers stay home if they exhibit symptoms of illness. Campers may be excluded from activities for the following reasons:

- Vomiting or Diarrhea: Camper may return 24 hours after the last episode.
- Fever: Camper may return 24 hours after being fever-free without the use of medication.
- Undiagnosed Rash: Contact your medical provider before sending your camper to camp.
- Impetigo, Strep Throat, Ringworm: Camper may return 24 hours after beginning treatment.
- Chickenpox/Shingles: Camper may return once all blisters have dried into scabs.
- Head Lice: Camper may return once treatment has been completed.
- Hand, Foot, Mouth: Fever-free for 24 hours minimum.

If a camper becomes ill while at camp, they will be isolated and supervised to prevent the spread of illness. Parents/guardians will be contacted and are required to pick up their camper within 30 minutes. For communicable diseases such as chickenpox, lice, impetigo, and strep throat, the YMCA will notify other parents in writing on the same day so they can monitor for symptoms and the incubation period. Please notify camp staff immediately if your camper has contracted or been exposed to any of the above illnesses.

## Injuries

All YMCA Summer Camp staff are trained in CPR and First Aid to provide prompt and appropriate care for campers.

- Minor Injuries: Campers with minor injuries will receive basic first aid and care until they are ready to safely return to activities.
- Serious Injuries: For more significant injuries—including severe falls, lacerations, sprains/fractures, or head injuries—camp staff will contact parents/guardians immediately and complete an injury report documenting the incident.
- Emergency Situations: In the event of a medical emergency, staff will call 911 and notify parents/guardians. Emergency personnel will determine the appropriate course of action, and if further medical attention is required, the camper will be transported to the nearest medical facility. Parents/guardians are responsible for all medical expenses incurred.

**Parent/Guardian Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that camp staff have accurate and up-to-date contact information and the ability to reach all authorized individuals listed for emergency contact.

## Medications

- Do not pack in Luggage: Medications should not be packed in your camper's luggage.
- Submission at Check-In: All medications must be given to the Medical Coordinator upon check-in. The Medical Coordinator will review each medication and clarify any questions if needed.
- Original Packaging Required: Medications must be sent in the original container with the pharmacy label. Medications not in the original container will not be accepted.
- Administration: Camp staff will collect all medications at the beginning of the week and administer them as prescribed on the label.
- Return of Medications: Any unused medications will be returned to the parent/guardian on the last day of the session.
- Self-Administered Emergency Medications: Campers who use asthma inhalers or allergy medications (e.g., EpiPen) may keep them on their person, but may only use them under the supervision of the Medical Coordinator.
- Over-the-Counter Medications: Common over-the-counter medications are available at camp. The Medical Coordinator will contact you if your camper requires any.
- Camper Health & Pick-Up: YMCA Camp Patterson reserves the right to send a camper home if advised by the Medical Coordinator or Camp Director. If you will be away during your camper's week, please ensure a relative or friend is authorized to pick up your camper if they become ill. Include this information in your camper's emergency contact section on the registration form.

## Bedwetting

We want both you and your child to feel comfortable and at ease during their time at camp. Bedwetting can be embarrassing for campers, whether it is a common occurrence or happens occasionally.

Camp staff are committed to handling these situations discreetly and respectfully. Please notify staff if your child has a history of bedwetting and send any protective apparel so we can proactively plan cabin placement and bedtime routines. Reassure your child that camp staff are there to support their needs and will help them navigate these challenges with care and sensitivity. We do encourage parent/guardians to speak directly with their child's cabin counselor about tricks/tips (avoid drinking after certain time, bathroom breaks, etc.) to eliminate or prevent bedwetting privately. This helps us best serve your child.

## Camper Mental Health

The past few years have been challenging, and while our campers are resilient, they may sometimes need extra encouragement, someone to talk to, or a friendly ear. Camp provides a supportive environment where campers can feel comfortable discussing their struggles or simply take a break from daily stressors.

YMCA Camp Patterson has partnered with YMCA of the USA to incorporate mental health and wellness activities into evening cabin time. These activities include mindfulness exercises and guided self-reflection. They are short, intentional, and designed to enhance the camper experience, helping children build resilience, self-awareness, and coping skills in a safe and positive setting.

## Homesickness

Feeling anxious or homesick is a normal and healthy part of the camp experience. For most campers, these feelings pass within a day or two. Campers who arrive healthy and well-rested are less likely to experience extended homesickness. These feelings are most common during “down time” such as Body on Bunk (BOB) time or before bed. Even campers experiencing homesickness typically enjoy daytime activities and are fully engaged.

### Supporting Homesick Campers

Camp staff are trained to help campers ease fears, normalize homesick feelings, and stay engaged with activities. If a camper experiences homesickness consistently for 24 hours, the camp will contact you for input on the best approach. In rare cases, if a camper is unable to participate in activities due to extreme distress, a parent or guardian may be asked to pick them up.

If your child leaves early due to homesickness, please focus on the success of how long they stayed and celebrate their effort. Campers who leave early will not receive a refund.

### Phone & Communication Policy

The camp phone is reserved for business and emergencies only. Campers may not make phone calls without the Camp Director’s permission. **In many cases, calls from home can increase homesickness rather than ease it.**

Cell Phones should be kept at home. If discovered, they will be confiscated. We understand it can be difficult as a parent to be away from your camper, but the experience is greatly enhanced when children are unplugged and fully present in their camp community.

## Accommodations

The YMCA Summer Camp program is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to support the physical, emotional, and social development of every camper. The Director of Youth Development will work closely with families to gather information and determine what accommodations can be implemented to ensure a safe, inclusive, and successful experience.

Honesty and transparency from families are essential to helping staff understand and meet the unique needs of each camper. The camp’s goal is to create an environment where all participants and staff feel valued and included.

## Realistic Expectations

YMCA Camp Patterson is dedicated to self-discovery, confidence, and self-esteem, fostered through positive reinforcement, encouragement, and acceptance. Our campers thrive in a community built on friendship, inclusiveness, and independence.

To help your child have the best experience at camp, consider the following tips:

- **Discuss Homesickness:** Talk with your child about the possibility of missing home and reassure them that it is normal to miss family, pets, or familiar surroundings.
- **Set Realistic Expectations:** Remind your child that they may not enjoy every single moment of camp and that is completely okay. Encourage a balanced view of the ups and downs they may experience.
- **Build Confidence:** Convey confidence in your child's ability to cope and succeed, and reassure them that challenges are a normal part of learning and growth.
- **Letter Writing:** Discuss how you will stay in touch through letters. Encourage letters that are supportive, enthusiastic, and focused on pride rather than missing them. For example:
  - *"I'm so proud of you and I can't wait to hear about all the awesome things you're doing at camp. What has been your favorite part so far?"*
  - Avoid emphasizing how much you miss them, as this can heighten homesickness.
  - You may send a letter ahead of time so it is waiting for your camper upon arrival.
- **Prepare for Separation:** Children pick up on parental anxiety. Showing confidence and excitement about camp will help your child feel secure and prepared.
- **Avoid Conditional Statements:** Refrain from telling your child, *"If you don't like camp, just call me and I'll come pick you up."* This can undermine motivation and make it harder for your child to adjust.

By having honest, supportive conversations before camp and reinforcing confidence and independence, you help your child embrace the camp experience and grow from it.

## Program Readiness

The Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp program follows best-practice readiness standards to ensure campers have a safe, positive, and enriching experience. Our programs are designed to support social-emotional learning by helping campers develop skills in self-management, social awareness, relationship building, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making. YMCA school-age programs are not designed for one-on-one care, so parents/guardians should carefully evaluate if the program is appropriate for their camper.

Campers are most successful in our programs when they can:

- **Demonstrate independence:** transition between locations, dress, eat, and maintain personal hygiene without assistance.
- **Regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in a variety of situations.**
- **Express and recognize emotions and thoughts effectively.**
- **Show empathy and respect for others, including those from diverse backgrounds.**
- **Build and maintain healthy relationships, including effective communication, listening, cooperation, and resisting inappropriate behaviors.**
- **Make safe, healthy, and respectful choices for themselves and others.**

These readiness skills help ensure that each camper can fully engage in camp activities, grow socially and emotionally, and enjoy a positive camp experience.

Parents/guardians are expected to collaborate with program staff to support their camper's growth and development, ensuring that accommodations are effective and the camper can fully engage in all aspects of the program. This partnership helps guarantee that every camper has the opportunity to thrive, learn, and enjoy their camp experience.

## Behavior Management

The goal of the Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp program is to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all campers and staff. Our programs focus on teaching and reinforcing the YMCA core values: Caring, Honesty, Responsibility, Respect, and Faith.

Campers are expected to follow behavior guidelines and interact appropriately in a group setting. These guidelines include:

- Caring: Campers will care for themselves and those around them.
- Honesty: Honesty is the foundation for all relationships and interactions.
- Responsibility: Campers are responsible for their actions and choices.
- Respect: Campers must respect others, themselves, and the environment.
- Faith: Campers have faith in themselves and others to overcome challenges and handle incidents positively.

## Behavior Expectations

The Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp program is committed to providing a safe, positive, and respectful environment for all participants and staff.

- Keep Everyone Safe
  - Campers use their bodies and words in ways that keep themselves and others safe. This includes keeping hands, feet, and objects to themselves, using kind and appropriate language, respecting personal space, and making choices that help everyone feel secure and welcome.
- Care for Our Space and Belongings
  - Campers treat YMCA facilities, equipment, and personal belongings with care. This means using materials properly, cleaning up after activities, and respecting the property of others. Families are responsible for any damage caused by their camper.
- Participate Positively in the Program
  - Campers stay with their group, follow staff directions, and make a genuine effort to take part in activities and transitions. This helps ensure that the day runs smoothly and that everyone has a fun and meaningful camp experience.
- Live the YMCA Core Values
  - Campers are expected to model the YMCA Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Responsibility, Respect, and Faith in their words and actions by showing kindness, being truthful, taking ownership of their choices, and treating others with dignity

The following behaviors are considered inappropriate:

- Threats to Safety: Any behavior that directly or indirectly threatens the safety of participants or staff, including but not limited to: hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, choking, throwing objects, verbal threats, disrespectful language, inappropriate gestures, inappropriate touching, or sexualized behavior.
- Destruction of Property: Any behavior that intentionally damages YMCA property or the property of participants or staff, including graffiti, malicious destruction, or intentional misuse of equipment. Parents/guardians are financially responsible for any damages caused by their camper.
- Disruption of Program: Behavior that consistently disrupts the camp environment, such as leaving the program area or building without permission, refusing to follow directions, or being unable to transition between activities.
- Failure to Follow Core Values: Any behavior that does not align with the YMCA Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Responsibility, Respect, and Faith.

Camp staff will address behavioral issues as appropriate. Participants sent home for disruptive behavior will not receive a refund

## **Grounds for Immediate Dismissal**

There will be no refund of any amount for campers sent home due to cigarettes, tobacco or vaping tools, alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons, sexually explicit material, and/or behavior.

### **Zero-Tolerance Policy**

The Mankato Family YMCA Summer Camp program has a zero-tolerance policy for serious behavior issues. The behaviors listed below are grounds for immediate removal from camper for the remainder of the day, week, month, or year. Each incident is evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the best course of action.

- Any kind or type of physical assault, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, or biting
- Endangering the health or safety of themselves, other campers, staff, members, etc.
- Inappropriate touching of themselves or others or sexual misconduct
- Theft, damaging, or destruction of YMCA property
- Leaving the YMCA Summer Camp program without permission
- Using profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity frequently or mental harm

## **Disciplinary and Dismissal Process/Intervention**

The YMCA Summer Camp program strives to provide a safe and positive environment for all campers.

When a camper demonstrates negative or disruptive behavior, the following steps may be taken:

1. Redirection: Staff will redirect the camper to more appropriate behavior, reminding them of camp rules and behavior guidelines.
2. Parent Notification: If the behavior continues, parents/guardians will be notified. Staff will explain the behavior, the strategies used to redirect the camper, and how the behavior is affecting the camp environment.
3. Behavior Meeting: If the behavior persists, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian, camper, staff, and Camp Director to discuss the behavior and establish clear expectations moving forward.
4. Dismissal: If the behavior continues despite these interventions, the camper may be dismissed from the YMCA Summer Camp program.

YMCA administrative staff reserve the right to take immediate action if a camper's behavior poses a threat to their own safety or the safety of others.

Important: No refunds will be issued for campers who are dismissed due to behavioral issues.

## **Bullying**

The YMCA Summer Camp program is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every camper. If you feel your child is being bullied or struggling within the program, we encourage you to follow the grievance procedures outlined below.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior between individuals that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- Imbalance of Power: Individuals who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to private information, or popularity—to control, intimidate, or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and differ between situations, even if the same individuals are involved.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors occur more than once or have the potential to recur; a single incident is not considered bullying. If bullying is suspected, the Summer Camp lead staff and Camp Director will conduct a thorough investigation. If confirmed, the YMCA reserves the right to terminate enrollment to ensure the safety and well-being of all campers.

In the event of multiple incidents or extreme circumstances of inappropriate behavior, the YMCA Summer Camp program will implement the follow policy:

#### *Altercation Policy for Mankato Family YMCA*

*This policy is to define what an altercation is and how the Mankato Family YMCA will handle each situation to better serve our members, guests, community and staff. The following is a basic guideline and is not all encompassing, the below lists what an altercation is defined as and a minimum consequence to be given for violating the policy. This policy covers the majority of incidents, but it is also not limited to the below incidents or consequence guidelines and are subject to change based on the severity of the incident.*

- *Physical Altercation definition: An act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict mental or physical harm upon another.*

*MN Statute 609.02 Subd. 9.6 subd. 10 to comply with MN guidelines.*

*The above covers the following but is not limited to the list: Hitting, Punching, Slapping, Pinching, Kicking, Spitting on, Biting, Pushing, Grabbing, Throwing objects at or around someone, Tripping, etc.*

*Incident Investigation In the event of a violation of this policy the YMCA will conduct an investigation into the matter. While the investigation is ongoing the individual/s who are involved will be suspended from the Mankato Family YMCA facilities and all programming until the conclusion of the investigation. There will be a minimum suspension of 48 hours or 2 standard business days to conduct the investigation, following that 48 hours or 2 standard business days those who were involved will get an update via phone call or email with either the results of the investigation or informed more time is needed to conduct the investigation.*

*2 Standard business days are Monday – Friday 8am-5pm*

*If the incident happens on a Friday anytime the offender/s will not be allowed in/on the Mankato Family YMCA properties or in any program at minimum until Wednesday, the following week. Monday and Tuesday would be the 2 standard business days after the altercation.*

*Each altercation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and the consequences are determined by a panel of 3 individual directors (full time staff) 1 of the area where the incident occurred, that person's direct supervisor and 1 individual from the safety committee (rotating).*

*The 3 will determine the severity of the altercation, history of past events and other extenuating circumstances that lead to the altercation.*

- *First Consequence violation results in a minimum 48 hour (2 Standard business days) for the investigation.*
- *After the investigation process the consequences can vary, based on the severity of the include but are not limited to 2 days, 1 week, 1 month, 1 year, until the age of 18 (for minors), permanent suspension (adult and minors) from the Mankato Family YMCA properties and programs.*
- *Should the offender/s not be in a program the following week but in subsequent weeks following the offence, this consequence will be imposed on the next registered program. This will be communicated to the member/members guardians via phone or email.*

#### *Reinstatement*

*For reinstatement a letter of apology must be given to the affected areas director and a meeting must be held between the director and a member of the investigation committee assigned to the incident. In this meeting there will be a code of conduct signed and given to the members along with a copy retained by the YMCA. Any further incidents (if not already permanently suspended) can lead to permanent suspension from the Mankato Family YMCA and all properties/programs.*

*If asking for reinstatement to the Mankato Family YMCA see below for different incident types:*

- *Permanent Suspension- If under the age of 18 when suspension is levied depending on the suspension reason a letter can be sent for consideration after the age of 19 is reached. This matter will be reviewed by the safety committee within 5 business days, and a letter will be sent with the determination. There is no guarantee of reinstatement.*
- *Two day, One week - Follow regular reinstatement protocol listed above. A meeting must be held with the director of the area and a member of investigation committee. A code of conduct must be signed and understood any further incidents can lead to but are not limited to permanent suspension from the Mankato Family YMCA.*
- *One Year Suspension – A letter of apology and a meeting with the affected area director, member of the investigation committee and executive director must take place. A signed code of conduct must also be received at the end of the meeting. The 3-person committee will then render a decision within 2 business days of the meeting, a letter will be sent to the member seeking reinstatement along with a phone call with the determination.*
- *If it at any point the member cancels the membership, the already mentioned will still apply for reinstatement of the membership. A meeting will need to be held along with a letter of apology to reinstate the membership.*

## **Grievance Procedure**

If you have a concern or grievance regarding bullying or any other camp-related issue, please follow these steps:

1. Contact Lead Staff via REMIND or speak with Leadership Staff during pick-up to discuss the concern.
2. Contact the Camp Director via REMIND or email if the issue is not resolved. A phone call or meeting may be scheduled to address the concern.
3. Contact the YMCA Executive Director by phone or email if all previous steps do not resolve the issue.