

Resident Camp Family Handbook

Summer 2027

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp
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USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Overview

Core Values and Mission

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

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

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

Goals and Expectations

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

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

A Typical Day at Camp

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

Preparing Your Child for Camp

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

Missing home usually manifests as sadness, crying, and mild anxiety about being away from home. This is managed by our trained staff as they know the signs and have many strategies for alleviating these negative feelings, ranging from "get to know you" games, one-on-one

conversations, writing letters home, as well as creating an exciting and energetic schedule of activities. You may receive a letter early in the session from your camper relaying strong feelings of missing home during this transitional period; this is normal.

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

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

Preparing Parents for Camp

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

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

Registration

How to Register

- Via the website at www.mysticlakecamp.org
- Via phone at (517) 827-9650

Required Forms

All forms may be completed in your YMCA account:

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

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

Registration Fee

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

Final Balance

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

Refund Policy

- Registration fees are nonrefundable.
- In case of dismissal due to poor behavior or voluntary withdrawal, there is no refund of fees.
- A medical excuse must include a physician's authorized signature to be considered for a refund less the registration fee.
- Campers that simply don't show up will not be refunded.

Financial Assistance

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

Arrivals and Departures

Check In

Check In at Camp will be staggered by last name to help control the number of people arriving at the same time. Family may accompany the camper to the cabin and help get them settled in.

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

Check In at Bus (pre-registration required, $35 each way) begins at 11:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required. The bus will leave the Parkwood YMCA at approximately 12:00 p.m. The bus location is the Parkwood YMCA 2306 Haslett Road East Lansing, MI 48823.

Check Out

Adults picking up campers must be listed as an authorized pickup person on their camper release form and have a photo ID.

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

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

Packing List

Label everything! Those campers staying for multiple weeks laundry will be done for them on Saturday for the following week. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items. Please leave valuables and important items at home.

Clothing

- 4 pairs shorts
- 2 pairs blue jeans and/or pants
- Heavy sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket
- Pajamas
- 6 shirts (1-2 long sleeved)
- Swimsuit

- Rain gear/poncho
- Flip-flops or sandals for beach/showers
- Underwear and socks
- Closed-toe shoes

Equipment

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

Bedding and Toiletries

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

Optional Items

- Camera
- Fishing pole & tackle (we have equipment at camp)
- Writing & reading material
- Stamps & envelopes (pre-addressed is best!)
- White T-shirt for tie dye (available for sale $5)
- Small fan
- Swim goggles

Prohibited Items

The following are not permitted: cell phones, personal music devices, smart watches, Fitbits, laser pointers, video games, electronics, tablets, food/snacks, or fireworks. These items will be held at the camp office.

Lost and Found

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

Nutrition & Food Service Policies

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

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

Campers sit and eat with cabin groups for all meals.

Health and Safety

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

Insurance

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

Medications

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

Health Care

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

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

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

Campers with Accommodations

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

Camper Behavior Expectations

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

Camper Behavior Management

The goal of our camp program is to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to a variety of skills and relationships while allowing children to enjoy healthy activities.

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

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

If an incident occurs where a camper conducts him/herself in a manner that jeopardizes their safety, the safety of others, the enjoyment of the program or is otherwise not in accordance with our mission, the following steps will be taken:

1. Counselors will guide campers by setting clear, concise, and fair behavior expectations. They will redirect the camper toward behaviors and activities that are acceptable. They will attempt to resolve any conflicts and listen when campers talk about their frustrations and feelings. They will remind campers about the rules and why it is important to follow them.
2. If camper behavior continues after step 1, the counselor will involve the Village Coordinator. The Village Coordinator will assess the situation, meet with the camper, and address the behavior. Village Coordinators may contact parents or guardians to ask for advice on how to handle the situation with their camper or have the camper speak with their parents or guardians to establish clear expectations moving forwards. Next steps will be discussed with parents or guardians.
3. If camper behavior continues after step 2, depending on the severity of the behavior, the camper may be removed from programming and placed under the supervision of the Village Coordinator and/or Program Director. In conjunction with the Program Director, parents or guardians will be contacted and asked to pick their camper up from camp.

Depending on the severity of the incident, a camper may be removed from programming at any time, at the Program Director's discretion. All behavioral incidents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. In any situation, a camper will not be deprived of food or sleep, be without

supervision or observation, and shall not be subjected to hazing, ridicule, threat, corporal punishment, excessive physical exercise, or excessive restraint.

Bullying

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

Safety and Risk Procedures

Camp staff ensure that the site and facilities do not present a fire, health, or safety hazard, and they will be responsible for their group at all times. This includes ensuring that equipment used is in good repair and safe for campers. In the event of a fire, natural disaster, lost camper, or accident, the following steps will be taken:

- Face-to-name counts will be conducted between each significant activity including but not limited to field trips, swimming, entering and exiting buses, movement from one area to another, etc.
- In the event of a fire, the children will be removed from the building/area of danger, and the local fire department will be called.
- In the event of a natural disaster such as a tornado or electrical storm, children will be directed to the designated area of safety.
- In the unlikely event of a lost camper, the local authorities and parents will be contacted immediately after all other steps have been taken to locate the child.
- Camp-specific evacuation routes, emergency procedures, and exposure control plans will be onsite. All staff will be familiar with and trained on these procedures.
- To ensure all campers are prepared in case of emergency, a fire drill will be completed on the first day of each week of camp and these will be documented for camp licensing inspections.

Child Protection

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp and the YMCA of Lansing has been awarded the Accreditation by Praesidium, the leader in abuse risk management, Praesidium Accreditation ® is a prestigious honor demonstrating that Mystic Lake Camp has worked to achieve the highest industry standards in abuse prevention and specializes in preventing the abuse of children and vulnerable adults. This Accreditation aligns with Mystic's current MI State Licensing and American Camp Association Accreditation requirements.

Communication

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

- Focus letters on all the fun your child is having at camp and all the new friends they are making. Letters that include how much the family dog misses them can trigger missing home—keep the content positive!
- Campers are encouraged to reply by writing letters as they are not allowed to use the phone or computers. Please send your child pre-addressed envelopes.

Care Packages

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

Letters

We strongly recommend delivering any letters, cards, gifts, etc. to the Camp Office at check-in. The USPS mail is typically very slow, and some mailed items may not make it in time.
If you do mail things, send to:
Mystic Lake YMCA Camp
Camper Name, Cabin Name, Dates Attending
PO Box 100
Lake, MI 48632

E-mail

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

Emails will be delivered Monday - Friday. Final emails will be delivered Friday at 12:00 p.m.

Scheduled Contact from Camp

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

In preparing your child for camp

Going to camp can be a challenging experience for a child of any age. Short term separation from parents and learning independence are important parts of growing up. Talking with your camper prior to camp lets them know you have confidence in their ability to cope with the new camp lifestyle. Focus on the positive aspects of camp: making new friends, exciting activities and how proud you will be when they succeed. We keep campers so busy and having so much fun with their new friends, they have little time to miss home, though it tends to come up at bedtime. When setting up your child for success, explain Sunday – Friday is the timespan of camp. They will have a great time at camp, but they may have tough moments; explain to them they are able to make it through the week!

Miscellaneous

Contact with Staff Outside of Camp

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

Camp Store

From water bottles and t-shirts to sweatshirts and stress balls, camp offers a wide range of souvenirs and snacks for your child to purchase. The average store account is typically $50 for one week of camp. Camp store accounts can be set up during the registration process, so your child has an account waiting for them when they arrive at camp. All store accounts must be set up with a credit/debit card.