



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**YMCA CAMP  
ALGONGQUIN  
YMCA Of Barry County**

**FAMILY  
HANDBOOK**

# 2019 Summer Camp

## Family Handbook

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# WELCOME TO YMCA CAMP ALGONQUIN

## Our Mission

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

## Our Core Values

The YMCA is guided by four core values:

Caring	Honesty
Respect	Responsibility

## Our Focus Areas

### For Youth Development

At YMCA camp Algonquin, our focus on youth development includes allowing children to discover new things about themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world around them.

### For Healthy Living

At YMCA Camp Algonquin, we promote healthy lifestyle choices by providing opportunities for a healthy spirit, mind and body through programs, interactions and healthy food choices.

### For Social Responsibility

At YMCA Camp Algonquin, everyone is welcome. We believe diversity enriches and enlivens our camp and Y community. Campers will have the opportunity to learn about social responsibility through programs and interactions.

## A Message from the Camp Director

Welcome to another summer of adventure and fun at Camp Algonquin. I'm looking forward to seeing some familiar faces from last summer and meeting many all of our first time campers. Endless laughter, stories shared and lifelong friendships make camp a very special place. I'm excited to be a part of that again this year.

Like last summer, As Camp Director, I have two priorities: safety and fun. I will ensure that every camper, staff member and adult who enters camp feels safe and secure in an environment where they can try new things and be themselves. Secondly, I want everyone to leave camp at the end of their time here feeling like they had the time of their lives. It is all about the campers discovering new things, making new friends and having FUN!

Camp is a unique experience where children make memories and friendships that last a lifetime and will help shape them into the young women and men we need for the future. Camp was and still is a place that has helped shape me into who I am today and I feel that every child is worthy of this same opportunity!

This guide has been designed to provide detailed information that you will need and answer frequently asked questions that may come up as your family prepares your camper. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

I look forward to making sure that your camper has the best summer ever!

Yours in Camping,

*Hanna "Fidget" O'Toole*

269.945.4574 Ext. 108

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### CAMP CONTACTS

At the YMCA we strive to provide our members with the highest level of customer service. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us immediately.

#### **YMCA of Barry County/Camp Algonquin**

269-945-4574

office@ymcaofbarrycounty.org

### YMCA CAMP ALGONQUIN STAFF

We hire a selective group of individuals from the United States as well as from abroad to celebrate worldwide connections. Camp staff are carefully chosen and interviewed for their skills and abilities, belief in the ideals of the YMCA, love of the outdoors and responsible interest in children. Many are college students, as well as former campers and YMCA activity participants. All staff complete intensive training related to their position, including first aid, CPR, camp craft skills, child development, and waterfront skills.

### ASKING FOR HELP

At YMCA Camp Algonquin, every counselor, staff member, and employee is there to help. Our goal is to provide a safe, memorable, and fun experience for your camper. Talk to them ahead of time about asking for help when needed and how to share it with camp staff. Remind your camper that while very talented, the counselors can't read minds and they will need to ask for help and that is ok.

Similarly for parents, the staff and directors are more than happy and willing to assist in any way, but we can't help if we don't know there is a problem. Please email or call if you need anything.

## GROUP AGREEMENTS and BULLYING

Our Core Values and general guidelines at camp are as follows;

1. Be Caring
2. Be Honest
3. Be Respectful
4. Be Responsible

When these four things happen, then everyone will be able to have fun which is what camp is about. Using these as a starting point, campers will develop group agreements with their counselors and other campers which will determine the guideline they want to live by during their stay at camp.

In fitting with the guidelines above, Campers are not permitted to use, or have in their possession, tobacco, alcohol, or drugs in any form. No illegal substances will be permitted at camp.

Anyone in violation of this policy or anyone behaving in a manner that is dangerous to themselves or others will be sent home at the parent/guardian's expense. If you or your camper has specific concerns, please contact the Camp Director prior to checking into camp.

### NO BULLY ZONE

There is a zero tolerance policy for bullying at YMCA Camp Algonquin. Our staff is trained to watch for and detect signs of bullying behavior. We encourage any camper to share any concern they may have with the way they or any other person is treated while at camp.

### INCLUSION

Every child should have the chance to go to camp. If your camper requires special accommodations (dietary, physical, behavioral, etc.), please contact us immediately so any necessary accommodations may be made prior to your camper's arrival. To discuss your camper's special needs, please contact Camp Director, Hanna O'Toole.

## CAMP MERCHANDISE

Each camper will receive a camp T-shirt as part of their stay. The Camper Care Packages can be ordered prior to your camper's stay by updating your online camp registration. A wide variety of other camp merchandise will be available at the YMCA Camp Algonquin Camp Store.

## CAMP STORE

The Camp store is your source for camp souvenirs, gifts, T-shirts and many other fun camp accessories! Each camper will have multiple opportunities to visit the camp store. Cash, check or credit card can be used to set up a store account. Any money not sent with registration will be collected at check-in and logged to the camper's account. If you find the need to add store money after you have dropped off your camper, please call the camp office for assistance. Any funds remaining in the camper's account at the end of the week will be available to you at the camp store during check out. Any money not collected will go directly to our campership funds.

Purchases at the camp store are optional. While campers can purchase food options from the store, camp will provide healthy snacks two times daily. We recommend 15 to 25 dollars for store money. The camp store will be open during overnight camp check-in and check-out for families who want an additional opportunity to purchase camp merchandise.

The YMCA of Barry County is not responsible for any items purchased at the Camp Store that are lost or stolen during your camper's stay.

## CAMPER SURVEYS

All campers will be asked to complete an evaluation during their camp session. Parents of campers will also have the opportunity to complete an online survey asking for

feedback on their campers experience at camp in the weeks following the session. Your input on the camp experience is important. This information is used to make improvements to the camper experience. We THANK YOU in advance for completing this survey.

## DAY CAMP SPECIFICS

It will be beneficial for day camp families to read this whole handbook. However, there are a few specifics for our day camp programs.

Check-in and check-out will happen each day by the parking lot in the big field. **Please make sure to check you camper out each day with the staff.**

Adventure Day Campers and Tiny Tots are asked to pack the following items in a backpack each day:

- A change of clothes
- Bathing suit (needs to be appropriate for water sports such as a one piece, tankini or other sport style suit) and towel
- Water bottle
- A light jacket/sweatshirt
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Tennis shoes that can get dirty

## ADVENTURE DAY CAMP

Adventure Day Camp will go on a field Trip on Tuesdays to the Battle Creek Outdoor Education Center. They will use public transportation to get there and will be back in time to go for a swim before heading home. On Wednesday nights, they are invited to stay overnight at camp. This is an optional overnight and campers not staying will need to be picked up by 5:00 p.m. This gives campers who do choose to stay the opportunity to learn about overnight camp

and experience staying overnight with a group of friends. They will do the zip line (weather depending), enjoy the themed dinner, and have a campfire. New this year, Day Campers will have the opportunity to choose to sleep outdoors or inside the program room on the floor. **There will not be an overnight for the Mini Day Camp week.**

Extra items needed for the overnight:

- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Second change of clothing
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Pull ups or briefs (if needed)

You may pack any other items you see fit from the overnight packing list but please make sure not to pack more than what your camper can carry on their own.

## TRIP SPECIFICS

Things to note:

- Trip campers will not have store accounts. They will be allowed to bring money to camp with them but are responsible for their own money.
- Trip Campers will not be on site to participate in all of the normal camp activities and should not expect to do any of them.
- Families with a trip camper will receive an e-mail with specifics that may not be included in this handbook including a specific packing list and off site procedures at least two weeks before their trip.
- Families should note that this is a co-ed camping opportunity.
- All normal camp rules included in this handbook will still apply.

## PREPARING FOR CAMP

### PREPARING YOUR CAMPER

One of the primary goals of camp is to offer progressive experiences that allow children to develop new skills and confidence. Coming to camp and being away from home and family for an extended time provides a great opportunity to grow.

It is important that each camper be able to care for their own general well-being. While counselors are always there to support them, campers are expected to eat meals, shower, groom, dress themselves, and communicate their needs with camp staff. Please note that we only have showers available at camp. There are not bathtubs.

Help your camper get ready for camp by being excited! Let your camper know that you want them to have fun and learn new things. Emphasize that your camper is "going" to camp, instead of saying you are "sending" them. If your camper has any anxiety about the dark, bugs, night noises or being away from home, please start preparing them for these things now.

### PREPARING FOR CAMP

- Have overnights at friends' or relatives' homes.
- Plan some outdoor activities as a family to get your camper used to outdoor weather.
- Encourage your camper to pick out their own clothes and help with packing.
- Pick out a security item like a teddy bear or blanket to bring.
- Help them learn how to make their bed and set and wipe the table.
- Make sure they are comfortable doing personal care routines like showering, brushing teeth/hair and dressing on their own.
- Homesickness is normal. Discuss what it may feel like and suggest ways to help

your camper overcome it if they experience it.

- Talk to other parents and friends who have attended camp so you know what to expect.
- Write notes/letters for your camper and bring them to camp during drop off to be delivered to them during the week.

## **PREPARING YOURSELF**

It's totally normal for parents and guardians to have mixed feelings when their camper goes away – whether it's their first time away or not. Remember, you have chosen a fun and safe place and your camper will be well cared for. The staff is trained to deal with any problem from homesickness to first aid. Try not to let your camper know how much you are going to miss them. Be strong! You don't want them to worry about you while they are at camp.

## **PACKING FOR CAMP**

By following these easy tips, your camper will be prepared for anything during their camp adventure.

- Pack your camper's possessions in a duffel bag or plastic tub with a secure lid.
- Encourage your camper to pack everything into one suitable sized container for their session. This helps ensure things do not get lost.
- Mark all clothing and equipment with the camper's name, including luggage or tubs.
- Pack comfortable, lightweight clothing that is easy to clean. Clothes WILL get dirty at camp.
- Have your camper wear good fitting, sturdy shoes to camp. Campers wear

sturdy shoes every day due to the natural hazards at camp. Sturdy sandals with a heel strap are acceptable for some camp activities however tennis shoes will be needed. Flip flops may only be worn in the shower.

- Remember to pack extra clothing/shoes in case of rainy weather.
- Zip Lock bags are great for keeping items dry and keeping wet items from leaking on clothes.

## **CHECK IN ITEMS**

**Do not pack away in luggage.**

- **Medication\***
- **Store money (optional)**

## **ITEMS TO LEAVE AT HOME**

- Food! It only attracts unwanted critters. Camp Will provide opportunities for snacks.
- Halter tops, tube tops, any clothing or equipment advertising inappropriate material.
- No pocket knives or other weapons.
- Any item that would cause distress if it was lost or damaged.

If these, or any other items found to be disrupting to the camp program are brought to camp, they will be collected by a staff member and returned to the camper upon check-out.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost items are displayed to be claimed every day at meals and are laid out during check out. Unclaimed items will be held at YMCA Camp Algonquin until September 1st. Any items left unclaimed by then will be donated to Goodwill Industries.

## THE PACKING LIST

### CLOTHING

- Shorts for each day and extras
- Shirts for each day and extras
- Long pants or jeans for hiking, horseback riding and cooler days
- Underwear for each day and extras
- Socks for each day and extras
- Pajamas
- Lightweight sweater, jacket or sweatshirt
- Bathing suit (needs to be appropriate for water sports such as a one piece, tankini or other sport style suit) and towel
- Two pairs of good fitting shoes that can get wet and dirty. One pair needs to be tennis shoes while other may be a sandal with a sturdy heel strap. (No crocs, jelly shoes, or clogs)

### PERSONAL ITEMS

- Soap
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Hair brush and/or comb
- Hair bands or other hair accessories
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Towels and washcloths
- Deodorant
- Feminine hygiene supplies\*
- Eye care needs\*
- Dental care needs\*
- Other toiletries as needed\*

### EQUIPMENT

- Sleeping bag
- Extra sheets and blankets for cool nights if desired
- Pillow
- Raincoat or poncho
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Hat with brim
- Laundry Bag
- Insect repellent

- Water bottle with camper's name
- Sunscreen
- Backpack or daypack

### OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Inexpensive camera with batteries or charger
- Bandana
- Sandals or flip-flops for shower
- Stationary or postcards, addresses, pens or pencils, stamps
- Sunglasses
- Books, magazines, or journal for down time
- Watch
- Boots or rain boots
- Extra swimsuit and towel
- Water shoes/aqua socks
- Safety strap for glasses/sunglasses\*
- Personal fan for bunk

### EXTRA COUNSELOR IN TRAINING ITEMS

- Notebook with pen/pencil
- Craft and game ideas/books
- Watch
- Khaki Shorts

\*if applicable

## SAFETY AND WELLNESS

### WELLNESS TEAM

A nurse or health supervisor is on duty at camp at all times. In emergencies and in cases of non-routine illnesses and injuries, parents/guardians will be notified immediately. In cases of minor injuries or illnesses (ex: bug bites, scrapes, headache, minor sunburn, etc.), treatment will be provided. If health service staff has questions or concerns regarding these minor cases, parents/guardians will be contacted.

### HEALTH INFORMATION

Health information is required for all participants, regardless of session and program. Health forms are available when registering or by calling the office. All campers must complete the record of immunization section. A current tetanus booster (administered within the last 10 years) is required for all campers.

The security, confidentiality and privacy of your camper's personal health information will always be protected. Only our Wellness Team will have access to camper health information.

## **MEDICATIONS**

**All over-the counter and prescription medications must be in original containers with the correct, current label, including the camper's name. All medication should be checked in on opening day with the Wellness Team, who will oversee proper administration of all medications. Medications may NOT be kept by campers.**

Camp is a different environment from home and school, with new procedures and rules. We want your camper to have a positive experience. If your camper takes prescription medication for any health related condition, we strongly advise that they continue these medications under the supervision of our Wellness Team. This will ensure the transition to camp life is smooth and successful. Please let us know if your child's doctor has advised that your camper not take their medications during camp.

## **OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS**

The Wellness Center has a supply of common over-the-counter medication. Unless your camper takes an over-the-counter drug as a part of her regular medication regiment, we recommend you leave over-the-counter drugs at home and use the camp's supply if needed.

The following medications are available at the Wellness Center and are recommended by our camp physicians through our standing orders. They will be administered under the health supervisor's or designee's supervision; dosed as appropriate for weight and/or age.

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen (Motrin)
- Decongestant (Sudafed)
- Antihistamine (Claritin)
- Antacid (Tums)
- Antidiarrheal (Pepto-Bismol)
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
- Naphazoline/Pheniramine (Visine)
- Expectorant (cough suppressant, cough drops)
- Topical Corticosteroid (Hydrocortisone Cream)

## **HEAD LICE**

YMCA Camp Algonquin has a no lice, no nit policy. The presence of nits, live lice or dead eggs will require the camper and their belongings to have treatment before admittance to camp. The camper's laundry will also need to be treated to ensure it is lice free. No camper will be admitted back to camp until all lice and eggs (nits) have been removed after the application of a lice killing product. All belongings, including clothes, pillows and sleeping bag must be laundered in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. The camper will need to be completely nit free to return to camp. There are no exceptions to this policy and no refunds for the camp session.

## **HOMESICKNESS**

Though not very often, common, or long-lasting, homesickness can occur at camp. We have an experienced staff that is trained to work with homesick campers. If it occurs, homesickness usually happens in the beginning of the week and quickly dissipates as the camper gets settled in to camp life. The first few hours and days are a normal

transition phase for everyone and it is typical for campers to all adjust at different paces.

There are a few things a parent can do ahead of time to help prevent long-lasting homesickness:

- Explain what homesickness is and let them know that it is normal, what it might feel like and that it will go away.
- Give them some ideas of things they can do to help alleviate homesick feelings.
  - Think about the fun things you will be doing later
  - Take a special stuffed animal or book that makes her feel secure
  - Talk to your counselor or a friend
- Show confidence in your camper that they will do great and will not experience too much homesickness.
- Let them know that you want them to have a good time and make new friends.
- Avoid bargaining. Saying something like “if you’re really homesick, I promise I’ll come pick you up right away” sends the message to your camper that you are not confident in their ability to succeed.
- Provide them with stationary and self-addressed, stamped envelopes to write you notes.
- Consider preparing letters and bringing them to check in to be delivered to your camper throughout the week.
- Do not suggest that they call you if they feel homesick. Often, calling home makes homesickness worse and campers do not have access to the camp phone.
- Lastly, should your camper ask “what if I get homesick?” remind them of the many people at camp who are there to help.

Here are a few things to remember once you have checked your camper in:

- Once you get your camper moved in, try to leave as soon as possible so your camper can start making new friends and get involved with activities.
- Keep upbeat when you say goodbye. Save your tears until you get to the car where your camper won’t see you.
- Be aware that your camper’s counselors will engage the campers in singing songs and playing games as soon as you leave.
- You can stay connected to your camper by sending them mail and email while they are at camp.
- You will have access to a secured site with regular posts and photos from all the sessions at camp each week.
- You are always welcome to call or email to check in on your camper.

If you believe your camper is prone to homesickness, please share this information when filling out their health information. You can also discuss it with a staff member at check-in (without involving your camper).

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Access to camp property is limited, controlled, and only authorized visitors are allowed on site. To ensure the safety and security of camp, please limit interruptions in the camp program, and prevent homesickness among campers, unauthorized visitors are not allowed on site. If you need to stop at camp please call the camp office prior to arrival.

## **SEVERE WEATHER**

At camp we have a communication system to alert all staff and campers of any weather watches and warnings. Our staff are trained and drilled in emergency procedures and participate in drills to make sure they are prepared in case of a weather related emergency. Campers are also aware of what

happens during different types of emergencies.

In case of a weather related emergency, updates can be found on the YMCA of Barry County [Facebook Page](#).

## CAMPER COMMUNICATION

Campers love to hear from home while they are away at camp. We offer a number of options for you to communicate with your camper.

### SNAIL MAIL

Campers love cheerful letters from home. You can mail a letter before your camper leaves for camp or after you drop them off. Please address mail as follows:

Camper Name, Session Name  
YMCA Camp Algonquin  
PO Box 252  
Hastings, MI 49058

Send your camper with stationary, pre-addressed envelopes and stamps, and we will help them get the letter in the mail.

### E-MAIL- New this year

You can stay connected to your camper by sending them an email while they are at camp. Simply send an e-mail to [office@ymcaofbarrycounty.org](mailto:office@ymcaofbarrycounty.org) with your campers name as the subject line. The staff will print it out and deliver it to your camper during mail time. The cost is 50 cents per e-mail and will come out of your camper's store account. **E-mails received after 11:00AM are not delivered until the next day.**

### TIPS FOR CAMPER COMMUNICATION

**DO** tell them:

- You know they are having a good time.

- You can't wait to hear all about their new friends, the fun activities their doing, to see their art projects or to learn all of the new songs they are singing.
- You hope they are writing down songs, names of new friends and taking lots of pictures.
- Use positive words like love and proud.

**DON'T** tell them:

- About trips or fun things their missing out on.
- About how a sibling cried all night because they aren't home.
- About how much you miss them.
- About an ill relative or hurt animal.

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We kindly ask that all electronic devices are left at home. With youth development being one of the focus areas of the YMCA, we would like to encourage participants to be engaged in the programs offered at camp. If any electronics are brought to camp the staff will collect them. Electronics will be stored securely in the camp director's office and returned to the parents during checkout.

## CAMP ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Everyone is excited for the first day of camp. Every effort is taken to make the check-in process as efficient as possible. However, several steps must be taken to ensure that your camper has a healthy and fun camp experience. Please be prepared to spend some time to get through the check-in process. Come dressed for the weather and be prepared to walk and stand.

### ARRIVAL

As you arrive at camp, there will be staff on hand to help direct you where to go. Ask any staff member if you need help. The check-in

will take place at the camp lodge and will begin promptly at the check in time listed. Please wait patiently if you arrive to camp early. When you arrive at the lodge, you and your camper will visit a few stations to be sure your paperwork is complete and open your store account if desired. Your camper will complete a quick health check including a lice check in a private area. This will be done upon arrival to avoid parents having to return to camp and reduce the chance of anyone leaving with it.

You can expedite the check in process by making sure your camper has the items listed below out and ready.

- Completed registration and forms on CampBrain prior to arrival.
- Store money – optional
- All medication – All inhalers, medicated creams, prescription and non-prescription drugs need to be checked in with the wellness team upon arrival. **They must be in original containers with labels and doctor’s release.**

Once check-in is complete, families will be directed to their camper’s cabin. Families are invited to help their camper move into the cabin, meet the counselors and ask any last minute questions. Please try to keep this process quick as prolonging good-byes can promote homesickness in your camper.

### **HEALTH CHECK**

All campers will have a general health screening before they are checked into camp. This will include an inspection for head lice. Braids and ponytails may need to be taken out so you may want to wait until after the health check to braid hair.

### **Arrival and Departure Times**

#### **Overnight Camp**

Check-In (Sunday) 3:00-4:00 p.m.  
Check-out (Friday) 4:00 p.m.

#### **Jr. Overnight Camp**

Check-In (Wednesday) 9:00-9:30 a.m.  
Check-Out (Friday) 4:30 p.m.

#### **Adventure Day Camp**

Check-In (M-F Daily) 8:00 a.m.  
Check-Out (M-F Daily) 5:00 p.m.

#### **Tiny Tots Day Camp-Morning**

Check-In (M-F Daily) 8:00 a.m.  
Check-Out (M-F Daily) 11:00 a.m.

#### **Tiny Tots Day Camp-Afternoon**

Check-In (M-F Daily) 2:00 p.m.  
Check-Out (M-F Daily) 5:00 p.m.

#### **Trip**

Check-In (Sunday) 3:00-3:30 p.m.  
Check-out (Wednesday) 4:00PM

### **CHECK OUT**

Please verify your check-out day and time and plan to pick up your camper at the appropriate time. On time pick-up eases your camper’s nerves during the anticipation of going home. If something happens and you are running late, please call the camp office so we can let your camper know you are on your way and keep them busy until you arrive.

Please note that prior to the pickup, campers are busy finishing activities so we ask that you not pick up your camper prior to their check-out time. We understand that things come up and schedules are busy. If your camper needs to be picked up early please

notify camp as early as possible so we can assure your camper is prepared.

If someone other than a parent is picking up your camper, notify camp staff during check-in. The person picking up each camper will be required to show a photo ID. No campers will be released to unauthorized persons or persons without a photo ID.

**Please do not take your camper home without signing them out with their counselor.**

### **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Your camper's program activities begin immediately and we don't want them missing out on this valuable time to get to know their fellow campers and settle into camp life.

Campers who must arrive late, depart early or leave during a session are asked to make this request to the camp director prior to the camp session.

### **PETS**

Pets are not allowed on camp property. Please leave pets or other animals at home or in the car when dropping off or picking up your camper from camp.

WE ARE EXCITED TO SEE YOU THIS SUMMER!

-The YMCA Camp Algonquin Staff