



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



**YMCA Camp Y-Owasco
2017
Winter Camp
PARENT
HANDBOOK**

ADVENTURE KNOWS NO SEASON.

Auburn YMCA-WEIU
27 William Street
Auburn, New York 13021
315-253-5304



www.auburnymca.org
www.y-owasco.org

**Skaneateles YMCA
& Community Center**
97 State Street
Skaneateles, New York 13152
315-685-2266

A Letter from the Camp Director:

Dear Parents and Guardians,

WINTER CAMP. Winter Camp is a remarkably summer-like experience just when kids need it most. It provides a needed break from school and other activities. We may not have the trees and cabins, but we have each other and our camp spirit, and that's what makes Winter Camp camp! I'm thrilled to welcome you and your camper to the Camp Y-Owasco Winter Camp, and I hope that your camper is as excited as I am about this unique experience at the Auburn YMCA where they'll be sure to see old friends from the summer while making new ones as well.

When Joe Murphy started Winter Camp, we started a few unique Winter Camp traditions, such as the Winter Camp Olympics and Pajama Fashion Show, and we're looking forward to continuing those traditions in our two-night program format! As well as starting new traditions. Since Winter Camp is still a relatively new program, We are constantly looking for feedback from parents, campers, and staff, so please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or ideas!

Just as in the summer, Winter Camp will include our dedication to providing a fun, memorable experience that builds character and values while maintaining rigorous physical and emotional safety standards. Friendship knows no season, so there's every reason in the world to look forward to a little dose of summer camp in the winter! My goal is the development of every child in spirit, mind, and body while providing the utmost nurturing and caring environment focused on the values of caring, honesty, and responsibility.

In the spirit of camping,

Joshua Scott "Papa Bear"
Family & Camp Director
315-253-5304 ext. 115
joshua@auburnymca.net

Mission Statement

Camp Y-Owasco will put Christian principles into practice through the use of its programs, facilities, and natural surroundings to strengthen family life, provide for positive value development, foster health and personal growth in an outdoor setting, promote friendship and intercultural understanding, and explore principles of environmental stewardship and conservation.

Contents

- Staff
- Camp Fees
- Forms
- Camper Placement
- Check-In & Check-Out
- Visitor Policy
- Cell Phones, Calls, & Visits
- Personal Equipment
- Lost & Found
- Meals
- Snacks & Drinks
- Homesickness
- Waterbottles
- Medical Policy
- Medications
- Insurance & Injuries
- Discipline
- Activities
- Swim Tests & Bands
- Camp Attire & Dress Code
- What NOT to Bring List
- Directions
- Parking
- Reminders

Disclaimer:

This Parent Handbook contains important information for PARENTS AND GUARDIANS of campers. It may contain information that some parents or guardians may not wish their child to read. Parents are advised to review the information in this handbook before allowing their child to read it. Thank you very much!

Staff

Winter Camp staff have all worked at Camp Y-Owasco a previous summer or currently work at the Auburn YMCA . Prior to Winter Camp, all Camp Y-Owasco staff undergo an orientation to the program and refresh their camp-counseling skills. All staff have been through a child abuse prevention training. All aquatic staff receive required training, certifications. Program staff receive training specific to their program area and certifications where applicable. Our staff have been trained in topics such as teaching, childcare, camp policies, group dynamics, conflict prevention and mediation, leadership skills, friendship facilitation, YMCA values, and child abuse prevention, just to name a few subjects. A criminal background check and sex offender registry check are conducted on all staff.

Camp Tuition/Cancellations

Payment for camp services are due in full at the time of registration. Refunds are not made if a camper has attended any portion of the camp session. **Should you cancel before a session after full payment has been made, a \$30 service fee is non-refundable. If a camper's session is cancelled within a week of the session starting or after the session has begun, there is no refund of any portion of the camp tuition.**

Visitor Policy

Camp Y-Owasco strongly recommends NOT dropping in to visit your child while he or she is at Winter Camp. It can contribute to a child missing home or other distress. All parents, guardians, and visitors coming to camp must first go the Front Desk and sign in. All staff will question those who are unfamiliar and send you to the Front Desk if you do not have a visitor's pass. Please be aware that YMCA staff may ask you for a picture ID. We do this for the safety and protection of all campers.

Cell Phones, Calls, & Visits

With 90 years of experience behind us, we have found that visits and phone calls by families and friends can be disruptive to a child's camping experience.

If there is an emergency, or if you want to check on your camper's progress, call the YMCA or family & camp director. We would be happy to pass along a message, fill you in on your camper's progress, or allow your child to speak on the phone if an emergency arises.

Cell phones are NOT allowed at Winter Camp. At Winter Camp, we hope to create a close-knit community in a short amount of time, and that will be difficult with influence and constant communication with the outside. Also, because of privacy issues that may arise from their use and potential damage to the phone, cell phones are not allowed beyond the lobby of the YMCA.

Forms

It is important for the safety of your camper that all forms are filled out accurately and completely. The forms are a valuable tool for our staff and they are required by the New York State Department of Health. **All forms are required at the time of registration, with no exceptions!**

If you arrive at Winter Camp and all mandatory forms are not turned in (or with you when you arrive), your child will not be allowed to stay at Winter Camp until all necessary paperwork is in the camp's possession.

Camper Placement

Campers are placed in cabin groups, called tribes, during their stay at camp. Each tribe consists of 6 - 12 campers of the same sex, and each tribe is supervised by at least 2 counselors. Tribes will be arranged so that campers are as close in age as possible. These groups allow for positive relationships to develop between campers and staff. Tribes will be sleeping on the floors of classrooms in the Preschool section of the YMCA. Counselors will be in the rooms all night with the campers.

At Winter Camp, tribes may be split into Olympic Teams for the traditional Winter Camp Olympics. These teams will be even as possible, taking into account physical and emotional maturity of all campers in the program.

Please do not request specific tribe or program assignments.

Check-In & Check-Out

Check-in time is between 3:00 and 4:00 PM on Wednesday evening. There is only municipal parking around the Auburn YMCA, and we will do our best to expedite the check-in process. We ask that you please be patient.

Parents and campers are required to check-in together. Please report to the B-Gym for check-in. Staff will be available at stations inside to check your camper on the roster, confirm that all forms are in, check-in medication with the Medical Director, and perform a head lice check on your camper. Head lice checks are required for the safety of all campers and staff. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Check-out time is between 10:00 am and 11:00 am on Friday morning in the YMCA Preschool. All parents/guardians must sign out their child with camp personnel and pick up any medication. **PLEASE have a photo-ID for check-out!!**

Should a camper be arriving late or departing early, please notify the Camp Director in writing what time your camper will be arriving or departing.

Should something occur that would force us to change the times above, the Auburn YMCA will make every effort to contact you to inform you of the change in plans.

Personal Equipment & Electronics

Please do not bring any personal equipment, such as gym or sports equipment, to camp. Camp Y-Owasco and the Auburn YMCA are **NOT** responsible for lost, broken, or stolen goods.

Personal electronics (CD players, gameboys, cell phones, mp3 players, etc) will NOT be allowed at Winter Camp. We are not responsible for stolen or broken property.

Please, NO knives, axes or firearms. (Please see the "What Not to Bring List" for other forbidden items.)

Lost & Found

It's truly amazing the amount of items that are "lost" and "found" on a daily basis. After Winter Camp, all items remaining from are collected at the Y. They can be found in the maintenance office located in the basement. We will attempt to contact parents about lost items. After 2 weeks lost and found items may be donated to a local community agency for use.

Meals

Five well-balanced, hearty and nutritious meals are served daily. A cook is on hand to prepare, cook, clean and serve meals family style on the second floor of the YMCA. Meatless options are available for every meal. As a part of the Winter Camp tuition, Campers will receive dinner on Monday breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Tuesday and breakfast on Wednesday.

Snacks & Drinks

There will be no food and drinks, except water, allowed in with the camper at check-in. Unless a specific medical or emotional reason. Snack and drinks are not allowed in the sleeping quarters. This policy is in place because, at camp, we learn to live with a group of other people, some of whom may have severe food allergies, and we also need to respect the wishes of the people who use the space year-round for YMCA programs. We very much appreciate your cooperation. If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to call the Camp Director anytime.

Missing Home

Missing home is very common and occurs in some form in people of all ages at camp—even if they're only there for a couple nights! Rest assured that our caring staff is trained in reliable, comforting missing home curing methods. Missing home is a normal and developmental feeling that youth need to work through so they can be successful in the end. To prevent distress in your child, we ask that you refrain giving your camper a cell phone or dropping by after check-in. In severe cases the camp director will communicate with parents.

- Homesickness (or "missing home") is normal. In study after study, researchers found that 95% of boys and girls who were spending at least two weeks at overnight camp felt some degree of homesickness (Thurber, 2005).
- Homesickness builds confidence. Overcoming a bout of homesickness and enjoying time away from home nurtures children's independence and prepares them for the future. The fact that second-year campers are usually less homesick than first-year campers is evidence of this powerful growth. (Thurber, 2005).

For more information on the prevention of homesickness see this article by the top leading expert on homesickness:

http://campspirit.com/wp-content/themes/CampSpiritTheme/docs/magazine/Essentials_of_Homesickness_Prevention.pdf

Water Bottles

EVERY CHILD AT WINTER CAMP IS REQUIRED TO HAVE A WATER BOTTLE. Your child is going to be very active at Winter Camp—probably more active than usual—and, even though it is the Winter and we won't be far from drinking fountains, your child may choose to forego a water break to participate in activities. Please help us help your child stay happy and healthy and pack a refillable water bottle!

Medications

If your child is taking medication or has a medical situation that must be dealt with, it is imperative that the Camp Director be informed. The policy for campers receiving medications at camp is as follows:

No medication will be given without a Doctor's order. This order must include the camper's name, name of medication, dosage, time and dates. **The medicine bottle label is not sufficient.**

Along with the Doctor's order, a written request from the parent for camp personnel to administer each medicine must be provided.

Medication must be in the original prescription container.

The Medication must be given to the Medical Director or Camp Director at check-in.

All medications—including over-the-counter medication—will be kept in a double lock-box.

Medical Policy

All medical information on the medical form is required by NYS Law, prior to attendance at Winter Camp. Campers will not be allowed to attend camp if their immunization records are missing or incomplete.

****IF your camper has been exposed to infectious or communicable diseases (i.e. chicken pox, scabies, etc.) in the two weeks prior to attendance, please don't send your child to camp. Call the Camp Director we will attempt to give a credit.**

A written record is kept of all incidents requiring first aid. The Camp Medical Director or Camp Director will contact parents if there is evidence of serious injury or illness.

If a camper sustains an injury or comes down with an illness that is untreatable at camp, requires follow up with a doctor, or has lasting effects after the camp session, the Camp Medical Director or camp director will call the parent or guardian and inform them of the situation.

Examples of injuries and illnesses we will inform you of: 2nd degree burns and higher, severe bleeding, sprained/twisted ankle, fractures, fever, vomiting, etc.

Examples of things we will not inform you of:

Minor scrapes, cuts, and bruises, minor stomach aches (unless they continue for a long period of time), minor burns (unless it is in a sensitive area such as the face), minor headaches, etc.

Insurance & Injuries

The YMCA carries accident insurance on its camp program participants. However this is an “excess” policy. The policy carried by the parent is the primary policy, and its benefits are to be exhausted first in the event of camper injury.

Should a serious injury occur, YMCA staff will take whatever steps are necessary to obtain proper care. These steps include:

Attempt to contact the parent/guardian.

Attempt to call the emergency contacts chosen by the parent/guardian.

Call EMS.

Discipline

Even in a place as wonderful as Winter Camp, there must be discipline. The camp staff spends a significant portion of their training learning about “Positive Reinforcement”, but at times we do encounter behavioral problems. A camper who exhibits consistent behavioral problems will spend some time away chatting with the Program and/or Camp Director. A phone call will also be made to the parent/guardian, so that we can work together to solve the problem. We encourage parents to keep open communication with the camp staff. Our staff is here to work with you and your child to provide a great camp experience. Should the problems persist, the child may be sent home from camp and not allowed to return for the rest of the session. The Camp Director reserves the right to make that call at any moment he feels necessary.

Activities

Our staff doesn't just teach craft or sport programs. We are eager to infuse character education into all our programs, enhance a camper's confidence, promote life skills, and develop friendships and memories that last a lifetime. At Winter Camp, it is customary for campers to compete with their teams in the “Winter Camp Olympics.” The Olympics feature events and challenges that are physical, intellectual, and creative in nature so that every child has a chance to be a champion for his or her team. During the session, campers may enjoy “Smorgasbord,” in which they choose from a variety of activities and can do something different everyday. After dinner, we will have an all-camp event, such as a campfire and “New Year's Eve Party.” In the morning after breakfast, we will have the legendary Pajama Fashion Show, so bring your funniest and “fanciest” PJs!

Swim Tests & Bands

On the first day of Winter Camp, all campers who want to swim in the deep section of the pool will be required to take a swim test. Campers who pass the deep-water test will be given a blue swim band to wear on their wrist for the 2 days they're at Winter Camp.

Camp Attire & Dress Code

Please label all belongings to increase the likelihood of their return. The Camp is not responsible for lost clothing and equipment. A clothing list is enclosed for your assistance. We strongly recommend you double check upon departure to be sure your camper goes home with everything they came with.

Keeping Clothing Camp Appropriate: One of our goals at Camp Y-Owasco is to develop character and respect for oneself and others. To help foster this objective, we have the following rules of dress to keep clothing camp appropriate.

*** Female Dress Code:** Shirts, pants/shorts, and shoes must be worn at all times. The only places campers and staff are allowed to be shoeless or only wearing a bathing suit are at the pool and inside the lockerroom. Low-cut shirts are prohibited. Shirts that show any part of a person's midsection are prohibited—shirts must meet the pants/shorts. Shorts must be long enough so that if the wearer extends her arms and fingers fully down her side, the shorts meet or exceed the length of her longest fingertips. Female campers are not allowed to wear string bikinis as swimwear. Please pack and dress accordingly.

* **Male Dress Code:** Shirts, pants/shorts, and shoes must be worn at all times. The only places a male camper or staff is allowed to be shirtless or shoeless is at the pool and inside the locker-room. Shirts must come low enough to meet or exceed the top of the pants/shorts. Shorts, pants, and swimwear should be worn high enough so that they are secure and do not fall off or show an excessive amount of underwear and/or anatomy. Please pack and dress accordingly.

* **References to Drugs, Sex, or Alcohol:** Clothing with references to drugs, sex, or alcohol is prohibited at camp. Please do not allow your child to include it in his or her luggage or allow them to wear it to Winter Camp.

* **If a camper fails to meet dress code,** he or she will be asked to change clothing immediately or he/she may be given something more appropriate to wear instead.

* **Cosmetic Make-up:** The use of cosmetic make-up is allowed, but our staff will discourage the use of make-up as a part of our character education and self-esteem development efforts.

“What NOT to Bring” List

Below is a list of items we do NOT allow at Winter Camp. PLEASE do not pack or allow your camper to bring these items!

- Firearms
- Ammunition (even if already used!)
- Knives of ANY sort (including pocket knives)
- Swords
- Razor blades
- Electronics (CD players, portable game systems, mp3 players [including ipods], cell phones, tape players, stereos, radios, televisions, walkie-talkies, etc.)
- Axes, hatchets, etc.
- Condoms
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Inappropriate clothing (see “Camp Attire” section)
- Food or Beverage, except water
- Personal Sports Equipment
- Money

The following item may be brought to camp but must be checked-in upon arrival:

- Medication (must be checked into with the Medical Director at check-in)

Campers found in possession with any of the above items will be subject to discipline. Campers in possession of certain items may be sent home immediately at the Camp Director’s discretion without a refund.

Directions

From Thruway (I-90): Exit 40, South on Rte. 34 to Auburn (about 8 miles), right on Genessee Street. At next light, turn left onto William Street, YMCA is on the right.

From I-81 North or South: exit at LaFayette, West on Rte. 20 to downtown Auburn. At second light after Wegmans take a left onto William Street, the Y is on your right.

From Skaneateles: Take US-20 west to Auburn. 20 turns into Genessee Street. Turn left on Loop Road, go past Wegman’s and turn left on South Street. Make a sharp right onto William Street. The YMCA will be on your left.

Parking

Parking is available in the municipal garage. Metered parking is available on William Street and Court Street until 5:00 pm, with free parking after 5:00 pm and on weekends. All of the spaces adjacent to the building are reserved for handicapped parking. Please do not park in the Professional Building lot on the corner of Westlake Ave and William Street. That lot is reserved for their tenants and clients; all others will be booted or towed at the owner’s expense.

Please Remember To:

- **Turn in all forms, including:**
 - **Parent Release Form**
 - **Pick-Up Authorization Form (If applicable)**
- **Review the Packing List (included in the rest of the Parent Packet)**

The Parent Release Form assures us that you have read this handbook, understand our policies, and agree to provisions for your child's safety. We need it on file to accept your child at camp.

The Pick-Up Authorization Form tells us whether you, the Parent or Guardian, approve of any one else picking up your child from camp. We will NOT release your child to anyone else other than you if this form is not in our possession. **Please note that anyone who wishes to pick-up a child from any Camp Y-Owasco program will need to furnish a photo-ID at the time pick-up!** Thank you!

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Camp Director!

We look forward to seeing you and your child at Winter Camp!

Reference

Thurber, Christopher (2005), *The Great News About Homesickness*. Camp Spirit. Retrieved from: <http://drchristhurber.com/2005/02/26/the-great-news-about-homesickness-2005/>



YMCA Mission:

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