



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



# CAMP POTAWOTAMI

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

Physical Address:  
7255 E 700 S  
Wolcottville, IN 46795

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 38  
South Milford, IN 46786

E [camp@fwymca.org](mailto:camp@fwymca.org)  
P 260-351-2525  
F 260-351-3915

[www.fwycamp.org](http://www.fwycamp.org)



## **Welcome!**

Welcome to YMCA Camp Potawotami!

We are thrilled that you have chosen YMCA Camp Potawotami as your child's summer camp. Our goals are that each camper gains a sense of accomplishment, makes new friends, and works on positive character traits. (We plan to have a blast along the way, too!)

At YMCA Camp Potawotami, we focus on what we call the A, B, C s of camping. We work to increase campers' sense of accomplishment and belonging while they learn about positive character traits and values. Our tools are well- trained staff, carefully planned programs, and safe, clean facilities.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENT**

Campers gain a sense of accomplishment by trying activities and developing new skills. For many campers, being away from home for a week is an important accomplishment in itself. We hope these real world accomplishments will raise the self-confidence and self- esteem of each camper.

### **BELONGING**

Making new friends and being a good friend helps campers learn about a sense of belonging. Living in a cabin with other children and counselors gives each camper a lesson in friendship building and teamwork. Each person has responsibilities and is a valued part of the YMCA Camp Potawotami community.

### **CHARACTER**

We discuss character traits and values in many ways during the week and place an emphasis on learning, growing and doing your best. Our core values are Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. Our unique Wampum Bead program also encourages campers to choose a character trait to work on during camp and the entire year.

We hope you'll see a positive difference in your child after attending camp. We want to be a partner with you in your child's development, so communication is important to us. Please feel free to talk with us about your questions and concerns, compliments and criticisms. Thank you again for choosing YMCA Camp Potawotami. It is an honor to be a part of your families memories. We look forward to sharing a healthy and happy camp experience with you.

Sincerely,

*The Camp Staff*

## **BEFORE CAMP BEGINS**

*In order for us to be ready for your camper to attend camp, the following must be completed by June 1st or at time of registration if after June 1st.*

**CAMPER FORMS:** HEALTH and RELEASE FORMS: We use Camp Brain for all camper information including Health Form and Camper Release Form. You should have received an email from Camp Brain with login information. You will need to scan/take a picture and upload the front of your Insurance Card.

**CAMP FEES:** All camp fees must be paid by May 1st. **All balances not paid by this time may be subject to cancellation.** *Please Note: There is a \$30.00 charge for any check returned to the camp office.*

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** All requests for cancellations must be made in writing at least three (3) weeks prior to attendance. The \$100.00 deposit is not refundable. One-half of the camp fee will be refunded if the registration is canceled less than three (3) weeks before attendance.

**REFUNDS:** No refunds will be given if a child leaves early due to homesickness or disruptive behavior. In the event of early withdrawal due to accident or illness, the camp fee will be prorated. *(No refunds will be made if the camper is removed from the camp program without the written consent of a health care specialist.)* The camp fee does not include medical or accident insurance.

**CABIN MATE REQUESTS:** We welcome campers who wish to come to camp with a friend. If two campers are within one year of each other's age, they can request to be in the same cabin. Please coordinate your cabin mate request with the other family. Both campers must list the other as their cabin mate on the registration form. Please remember that even if two persons are not in the same cabin, there are many opportunities to spend time together at camp. We can only honor one cabin mate request per camper.

**ADDITIONAL NEEDS:** We strive to serve all at camp. We welcome campers with additional needs that we are able to accommodate. Please communicate information about campers with additional medical, emotional, mental, social or physical needs prior to arrival at camp. We invite families of children with additional needs for an onsite private tour to help determine if the camper will be successful at camp. Also, a full description of all unique requirements must be included on the CampBrain Health Form so we can best care for your child while they are with us.

## **CHECK-IN: SUNDAY 2:30PM (MINI CAMP 1B & 4B ON WEDNESDAY)**

All campers must be checked in by their parents or legal guardians unless prior arrangements have been made. **We do not begin checking any campers in until 2:30pm, so there is no need to arrive early.** Camp activities begin promptly at 3:45pm, so please try to arrive on time. Staff members will help you with your luggage and answer your questions.

**PAPERWORK:** All paperwork must be done in advance so we can check everyone in quickly including all CampBrain forms.

**NURSE'S TABLE:** All medications, including over-the-counter medications, creams and vitamins must be turned into the Camp Nurse. **All medication needs to be in its original container and the name of the camper must be on the label.** Please only send enough medication needed for the duration of your camper's stay. It is also helpful to place the medication in a re-sealable sandwich bag labeled with your camper's name. **All campers will have a head lice check before heading to their cabins.** If lice are found campers will be asked to return home and treated or provide a doctor's note stating the camper has been treated and they are not contagious.

**MEET YOUR COUNSELOR:** After check-in, you'll accompany your camper to their assigned cabin so you may meet their counselor. Please feel free to ask questions of any camp staff as we wish to make your camper's stay as pleasant as possible.

## **CHECK-OUT: FRIDAY 5:30pm (MINI CAMP 1A & 4A ON TUESDAY)**

When you arrive at camp to sign out your camper **we will request a photo ID** and match it to the names on the **Camper Release Form**. *YMCA Camp Potawatami cannot release any camper to a person under the age of 18 or to anyone whose sobriety is questionable.* An "Exit Packet" with certificates will be provided with medications. Your camper and their luggage will then be brought to your car.

## **CLOSING CEREMONY—Friday 4:30 pm (Mini Camp 1B & 4B on Tuesday):**

Closing Ceremony is a chance to see your camper in action. You'll see Cabin Cheers, Activity Celebration, Song of the Week, Honor Campers, Staff of the Week and a hear few words from the Director

To attend Closing Ceremony arrive at camp by 4:30 pm. Park at your camper's cabin and walk to chapel. Closing begins at 4:45 pm. After closing camper's will dismissed to their cabins and parents will pick campers up from their cabin.

**EVALUATIONS:** A few days after camp, you will receive an email link to our Parent/Camper Evaluation. Please take the time to complete the evaluation. We want to know what we are doing right and what we can do better.

**EMERGENCIES/ILLNESS:** It is our policy to immediately contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact in the event of an emergency. In the event your child becomes sick, we will contact you if they are unable to return to camp activities within 3 hours.

**MAIL:** Campers love to receive mail and are encouraged to write home. Packing an envelope/post card that is self-addressed and stamped is an excellent idea. Please keep mail cheery to help avoid homesickness.

Please use the following format to address letters and packages...

Camper Name  
YMCA Camp Potawatami  
P.O. Box 38  
South Milford, IN 46786

**EMAIL:** You may email you camper if you would like. If you would like to send your camper an email, please send to [camp@fwymca.org](mailto:camp@fwymca.org) and put your camper's name in the subject line.

Mail and email is delivered at lunchtime, **please limit emails to one a day maximum** so staff can focus on campers. E-mails received by 11:30am will be delivered the same day at lunch. **Please do not attach photos to emails.**

**TELEPHONE CALLS:** Camp provides a unique environment to build confidence, community, and independence within campers. Campers cannot make calls while at camp. If you have any concerns, please call us (260) 351-2525 and we will be happy to check on your camper and call you back. Please remember, campers are not allowed to have cell phones or smart watches.

**PHOTO SERVICE:** You can securely view photos of campers for free while they are at camp, share the link with family and friends or purchase prints. We will post photos each night on [camppotawatami.smugmug.com](http://camppotawatami.smugmug.com).

**WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP:** Please do not send valuable cameras (disposable cameras work well). Spray cans, fireworks, knives, weapons and pets are not allowed. Alcohol, weapons, tobacco, and drugs are prohibited and will result in the camper's immediate dismissal. Please do not bring electronic games, MP3 players, iPods, CD players, cell phones, DVD players, smart watches, etc. We are trying to provide an outdoor, community-based experience for all. Do not bring personal sports equipment. Camp is not responsible for lost or broken items, including personal sports equipment. If your camper does have any of these electronic or expensive items, the items will be kept in the office until check out.

**CLOTHING:** Campers should have enough clothing to last the duration of their stay. Campers should bring clothing that can get wet and dirty without concerns. Clothing should be appropriate without slogans or pictures that are in poor taste, inappropriate, or immodest. YMCA Camp Potawatami reserves the right to require the camper to change any clothing deemed inappropriate. Campers are involved in overnight camping, hiking, rugged sports and general outdoor play.

**LOST AND FOUND:** Please label all clothing, towels, and personal items with a permanent laundry marker or labels. Please check items with your camper before camp so that the camper recognizes what he/she has brought to camp. Please discuss with your camper their responsibility in keeping track of personal items. If you discover something is missing upon your return home, please call as soon as possible. Camp is not responsible for lost items. **All unclaimed Lost & Found items are kept for 7 days after each week of camp then donated.**

**CLOTHING NOTES:** YMCA Camp Potawatami encourages modest swimwear. Boxer-style bathing trunks are recommended for boys, and one-piece or modest two-piece suits for girls.

Campers must have at least one pair of closed toe shoes. We do not recommend sandals. Sneakers, tennis shoes, cross trainers, hiking boots, etc. are all acceptable. Flip flops can only be worn at the waterfront or to and from the showers.

Campers should carry a water bottle with them during their stay with us. Please make sure these bottles are labeled with the camper's full name. The Camp Store will have water bottles available at Check-In if you need one.

**CAMP STORE:** Our Camp Store will only be available through care package preorder and during check in and check out. We stock great camp souvenirs, and a few extras in case you missed something while packing. The Camp Store is not open during camp, and campers do not need to bring any money.

## **DIRECTIONS TO CAMP**

**From Fort Wayne:** Take State Road 3 (Lima Road) to Highway 6 in Kendallville. Turn right on U.S. 6 and then left at the first stop light onto State Road 3 North. Follow State Road 3 through South Milford. Turn left onto County Road 700 S. Follow the signs to camp. Camp will be on the right.

**From Chicago:** Take Interstate 80/90 (Indiana Toll Road) to the LaGrange/Howe/State Road 9 exit. Follow State Road 9 through LaGrange. Turn left at the Messiah Lutheran Church/Adams Lake sign onto 700 S. Follow the signs to camp. Camp will be on the left.

**From Indianapolis:** Take Interstate 69 to Fort Wayne to the Kendallville/State Road 3 North exit. Follow directions above from Fort Wayne.

## **Safety at Camp:**

**Child Abuse Prevention Policy:** A main focus of the YMCA is to provide a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of children. Any suspected or reported child abuse shall be treated in accordance with applicable laws and approved policies. All YMCA employees must read and sign the Child Abuse Prevention Policy prior to employment annually.

Staff and campers must abide by **Rule of 3**. Campers are never to be left unsupervised, and at least one staff member must be with a group of campers at all times. The Rule of 3 indicates that if a camper needs to go anywhere on Camp, they must have at least themselves and two adults or themselves, another camper, and an adult. Campers are informed of the Rule of 3 during the All Camp Welcome on Sunday.

Two counselors are assigned per cabin. Occasionally there is a 17-year old counselor-in-training (CIT) that joins their group to assist. CITs are not staff members and cannot be the adult in the Rule of 3. Ratio numbers for staff to campers is 1:5

**Privacy at camp:** All campers have the right to privacy. All changing of clothes is done in a bathroom stall or shower stall. Camp Potawotami has a one camper per bunk bed policy. No other camper is allowed in another's bed for any reason. Disposable cameras are recommended. Photos are not permitted to be taken in the cabin or bathrooms. Cell Phones and smart watches are not permitted during the camper's stay at Camp. This is for the privacy and protection of all campers.

**Transportation:** Campers are only permitted in the YMCA Mini Bus supervised by 2 staff members. The Camp Director's vehicles are designated and approved for emergency transportation of campers only to the hospital accompanied by a Camp Nurse.

## **Employee information:**

All staff members, fulltime and seasonal are background and national sex offender registry checked annually as well as drug tested prior to employment.

All staff are trained in following topics: child abuse prevention, emergency procedures, supervision, bullying prevention, active shooter emergency, American Red Cross First Aid, CPR, AED, totaling a training time of 12 hours. Summer Staff receive a minimum of 80 total hours of training before campers arrive.

**Employee Policies:** Employees of YMCA Camp Potawotami are not permitted to be "friends" with or "follow" campers under 18 on any social media platforms. Relationships built between campers and counselors is a special bond, however The YMCA does not sanction, encourage or endorse the use of YMCA employees or volunteers for non-YMCA child care activities. Such activities are outside of the scope of an employee or volunteer's duties with the YMCA. Employees and volunteers shall not engage in any after-hours or post-childcare. This is a part of our Child Abuse Prevention policy.

If you have any questions about our employees or your child's safety at camp, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Inclusion policy YMCA of Camp Potawotami:** The spirit of the YMCA mission is that everyone has the opportunity to participate as we build the character traits of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

The YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne gives equal opportunity to all people who participate in the YMCA through employment, program participation, membership, and volunteerism without regard to race, color, religion, gender, citizenship, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, economic status, age, disability or veteran status. We recognize that the community is always changing and we are committed to providing a welcoming and safe experience at all times for all YMCA participants. We partner with families to determine how to best support individuals.

Our Y camp is inclusive and welcomes all. Standards of age appropriate behavior are expected. Changing clothes and showering is done in private, and camp staff supervision is in place. Personal information is kept private and will not be shared without permission.