

YMCA SUMMER DAY CAMP

YMCA Summer Day Camp Parent Handbook 2026

Welcome to the YMCA of Cape Breton Summer Day Camps! We're excited to welcome your campers for an unforgettable summer filled with adventure and growth. Our 2026 season is filled with fun activities, new friendships, and opportunities for skill development, all within a safe and nurturing environment.

At YMCA Summer Day Camps, we prioritize the core values of caring, honesty, inclusiveness, respect, and responsibility. We believe every child deserves to make lasting summer memories—whether it's through playing games, exploring nature, or learning new skills.

This handbook is your go-to guide for preparing your camper for their first day. Inside, you'll find essential information such as contact numbers, drop-off procedures, packing lists, and the camper code of conduct. If you have any questions after reading, please feel free to reach out to us!

Our Vision

Thriving communities where everyone can shine and feel they belong.

Our Mission

Connect and ignite the potential in people, helping them grow and give back to our communities.

Our Values

Caring, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Respect and Responsibility.



Communication

Positive parent-camp communication is the foundation of a memorable camp experience for your child. It is our commitment to deliver consistent communication to ensure that you and your child(ren) have a safe and fun camp experience.

Any questions or concerns with anything regarding camp can be directed to:

Patricia Watt

Manager of Recreational Programming and Day Camps

Email: patricia.watt@cb.ymca.ca

Our camp staff

Email: daycampinfo@cb.ymca.ca

Phone: (902) 563-9622 Option #1

Question regarding Financial Assistance please contact Pooja:

Email: pooja.pooja@cb.ymca.ca

Weekly Camp Newsletter

You will receive a newsletter before your child is enrolled in Camp. You will also receive our weekly newsletter with information regarding **weekly themes, updated procedures, and Camp's participation in special events!**

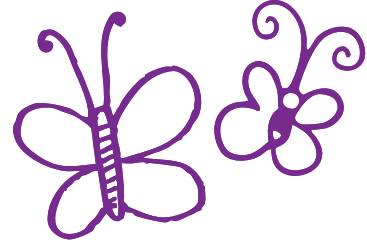


Camp Day in the Life

(schedule with time and activities)



Activity	Description
Drop-off/Free time	Drop-off takes place from 7:30-9:00 am. During this time campers will have the opportunity to take part in free play with their peers. Toys and equipment will be available during this time for children to use.
Outdoor Play	Campers will have the opportunity to participate in outdoor play at a local playground under the supervision of camp counselors (please refer to outdoor adventure policy). In the advent of adverse weather campers may instead attend the local library.
Craft or Activity	A craft or activity is planned each day for camp. Usually in accordance with our weekly theme, expect your camper to create artwork, try a new sport, practice yoga, conduct a science experiment and more!
Lunch	Lunch time takes place from 12-1:00pm to ensure campers have adequate time to eat. Once campers are done eating, they will be expected to clean up their lunch before participating in free play, group games and activities with peers and counselors.
Gym & Bounce House	During gym time, campers will have the chance to run around and burn off energy! Counselors will take out our children's toys and equipment and set up the bounce house for campers to use.
Pool	Campers will have the opportunity to participate in swim time under the supervision of both our lifeguards and counselors.
Pick-up	Pick-up takes place from 4:00-5:30 pm. During this time campers can choose to participate in free play, activities with their counselors, crafts, group games and more!



What to Bring to Camp

Each day your camper should be dressed appropriately for the weather, and bring the following along in a backpack:



Sunscreen - must be applied before dropping off (counselors will reapply throughout the day). Lotions only, no sunscreen spays.



Hat - help us keep the sun out of your camper's face.



Extra clothes - in case of emergencies.



Food and Water - lunch, snacks and water **are NOT provided** so please pack an adequate amount of food for your camper and bring water bottle! (Lunches and snacks must be peanut free!)

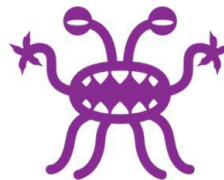


Bathing suit/swim gear - campers will be in the pool every day! We have swim belts and life jackets here at our Y but if you would prefer to bring one from home you are welcome to do so.

We encourage families to label all their camper's belongings (first and last name) to prevent items from becoming lost.

What to Leave Home

Stuffed animals and blankets, Toys of any kind, Electronics (cell phones, iPods, Gameboys etc.), Nut products, Pokémon cards (or any trading cards.)



Lost and Found

Our staff is not responsible for lost or missing items.

We ask that all the items your child brings to camp are clearly labeled with initials or their last name. We have one designated lost and found. Any items not claimed by the end of the summer will be donated or discarded. We encourage your campers to be responsible for keeping track of their personal belongings. No toys or special items should be sent to camp.



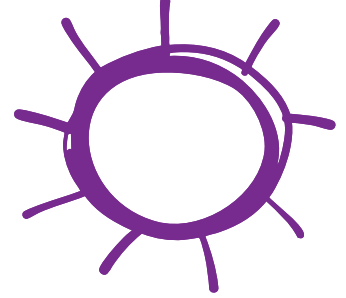
Camper Identification & Outdoor Play Policy

Campers are placed into groups corresponding to a counselor before the start of the week. Each counselor completes frequent head counts of their group throughout the day to ensure all campers are present and accounted for.

We require all campers to wear a pinnie while outdoors. We use pinnies to help us easily recognize Y Campers. Campers are provided pinnies that correspond with their group. Campers will receive their pinnie on Monday, and it will be collected at the end of each day to be washed for the following day.

Local Field Trips include walks to local playgrounds and places of interest, i.e. Fire Station.

Away Field Trips are offered alternate weeks. Campers travel by school bus. Permission Slips for away field trips are sent home the Monday before the Friday trip.



Adventure Policies and Procedures

Outdoor Play and Playground Policy

Outdoor play is an integral part of the daily schedule and plays an important role in the development of children's overall well-being. For children to thrive in outdoor play, it is crucial that there be opportunities for children to engage in active play and that the educators engage as active participants in the play. In addition to providing physical benefits, active outdoor play strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving and complex thinking. While these environments need to be safe, it is also important for them to provide children with interesting opportunities for a reasonable degree of risk-taking.

This policy sets out the responsibilities of YMCA of Cape Breton's staff, students, and volunteers in ensuring that the outdoor play provided is a safe and well supervised environment for children.

Playground Procedures:

When we are outdoors, safety is our top priority. Safety of the children includes monitoring for equipment safety (Playground safety checklist) and proper use of equipment (Observation). Staff are encouraged and expected to engage in activities with the children and/or lead them in games and activities while ensuring that all areas are properly supervised.

To view our complete list of Day Camp Policies and Procedures please email daycampinfo@cb.ymca.ca



Drop-off & Pick-up Procedure



Drop Off: 7:30am-9:00am
Pick Up: 4:00pm – 5:30pm



Frank Rudderham Family YMCA:

Campers are to be dropped off in the Community Room. Parents are required to sign their child in and out of camp daily.

NSCC Waterfront Campus:

Campers can be dropped off and picked up in **room B311 (3rd floor) Building B** at NSCC (just across the pedway). Parents are required to sign their child in and out of camp daily.

Please note that if you are dropping off/picking up outside of our designated drop-off/pick-up times, you must call the camp phone Downtown Camp (902) 202-9759 or NSCC (902) 202-9809 upon your arrival to coordinate a safe transition.

Late Departure Fee

If you or the person designed to pick up your child(ren) are going to be late, please notify Camp Lead immediately ((902)-202-9759 (Downtown) or (902) 202-9809 (NSCC).

Parents who pick up their child **after 5:30pm will be charged an additional fee of \$10 for every 10 minutes you are late. (We will provide one warning).** The fee will be applied to your Y account. We ask that parents adhere to our hours of operation and recognize that our staff also have other commitments. Parents who are consistently late may have their spaces terminated.

Media

The YMCA receives occasional requests from the media for photographic, audio or videotape material of YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department programs and activities. When agreeing to these requests, the YMCA will attempt to notify parents, and obtain permission for specific media events, but because of the time factor, this is not always possible. We ask that you be aware that this may occur, and that you discuss with the Camp Lead any concerns you may have regarding your child/family and the media.

A Consent to Photograph or Video Tape Form is enclosed with the registration package and will be kept on file.

Privacy

At the YMCA of Cape Breton, we respect your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy.

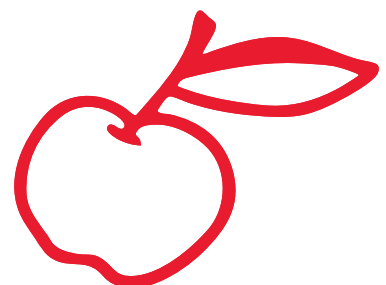
We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to deliver services and to keep you informed and up-to-date on the activities of the YMCA of Cape Breton, including programs, services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer or to give, open houses and more through periodic contacts.

If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts simply contact us by phone at 1-902-562-9622.

Lunch and Snack

Campers are required to bring a nutritious and allergen-aware lunch, two snacks, and plenty of cool drinks.

Please be advised that we are a nut-free camp and a nut-aware property. While Camp maintains a nut free environment, the Frank and NSCC are not nut free facilities. To ensure the safety of our campers with allergies, we ask that you do not send your camper(s) with any nut products.



Behaviour Guidance

The YMCA of Cape Breton emphasizes the provision of well-planned programs, which meet the needs of children, thereby generally eliminating most obvious opportunities for inappropriate behaviour. YMCA staff regularly incorporate many effective methods of encouraging acceptable behaviour by:

- Providing a sufficient number of interesting activities.
- Providing an opportunity for children to make valid choices.
- Setting clear and consistent limits for appropriate behaviour.
- Giving advance warning about transition times so children will know what happens next.
- Providing positive reinforcement.
- Providing positive re-direction to children.
- Promoting effective communication between children.

Under certain circumstances, YMCA staff may be required to use physical contact to guide a behaviour. An adult touch during a frustrating situation may have a calming effect on the child, thereby extinguishing the disruptive behaviour.

We Emphasize Positive Behaviour

The YMCA realizes the importance of families and YMCA staff working together as partners in the childcare process, in order to create a consistent and stable environment for children.

YMCA staff and families should inform each other of any behavioral concerns. If necessary, a meeting will be scheduled so families and staff can share information and form a consistent behaviour management plan.



We Do Not Permit

- Corporal punishment (i.e. spanking, striking with objects, shoving or any other aggressive physical contact).
- Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading response of any form: verbal, emotional or physical.
- Leaving a child alone and unsupervised in a room or hallway.
- With holding food, special activities, gym time, outings.
- Offering food to reinforce positive behaviours.

Aggressive Behaviour Policy

It is our responsibility to ensure the physical safety and total well-being of all children within our care. The YMCA has adopted the following policy regarding aggression.

Aggression means any physical, emotional, or verbal act which may result in placing one-self, other children and/or YMCA staff in the program in an emotional, physical, harmful, or unsafe situation.

When dealing with aggressive behaviour, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The child will be removed from the group and the YMCA's Behaviour Guidance Policy will be implemented by YMCA staff to redirect the child and stop aggressive behaviour.
2. All incidents will be documented in an objective and unbiased manner on an incident report form, discussed with and signed by the family at pickup, sent to the Camp Coordinator for signing off on it, as well as a copy kept in the child's file at the YMCA and on site.
3. If the aggressive behaviour continues to put the physical safety and well-being of any children and staff at risk throughout any part of the day, the family or alternate pickup person (in that order) will be contacted to immediately pick up the child. Documented report(s) of all incidents will be given to the family to sign at pickup, sent to the Camp Coordinator for sign-off, and a copy kept for YMCA file and site file.

Once the family has been called on more than one occasion relating to aggressive behaviour, the Camp Coordinator will consult with the Manager of Recreation and Camp and the Director of Member Services. A letter will be given to the family:

- a. Informing them of the consultation with the Manager and Director.
- b. Outlining previously shared incident reports.
- c. Advising that the child's behaviour will be monitored and that YMCA staff or the Camp Coordinator may contact the family to immediately pick up the child.
- d. Indicating that the YMCA will actively seek individualized supports to better meet the needs of the child.
- e. The Camp Coordinator will request the family's collaboration.
- f. Indicating that it is the YMCA's responsibility to ensure the physical safety and total well-being of all children and staff present in the program.
- g. Noting that should the aggressive behaviour continue, and the search for supplemental supports be unsuccessful by a specified date, the YMCA may determine it does not have the capacity to meet the needs of the child and may need to withdraw services.

Should Article 3(g) apply, or should the aggressive behaviour continue after supplemental, individualized support has been implemented regularly for a minimum of a predetermined period, or if at any time the child's aggressive behaviour results in what the Manager and Director deem to be serious physical injury to another child or adult, the Camp Coordinator will notify the family both verbally and in writing that the YMCA does not have the capacity to meet the needs of the child, and **services will be withdrawn immediately.**



Swim Safety

Camp goes swimming every afternoon and ensuring the safety of our swimmers is our number one priority. During swim time, trained lifeguards will be present to monitor the pool deck as well as our camp counselors who will be in the pool with your campers during swim time.

Every camper must complete a swim test on their first day of camp. The Y lifeguards are specially trained in assessment and will determine your camper's swimming ability. After completing the swim test each camper will be assigned a coloured bracelet coordinating with their swim ability.

-  **Red** - New swimmer, always needs a flotation device.
-  **Orange** - Intermediate swimmer, requires a flotation device when in the deep end
-  **Green** - Experienced swimmer, does not require a flotation device

These bracelets must be kept on throughout the entire week to ensure a safe and smooth swim time experience for campers. Bracelets will be removed after swimming on Friday afternoon. If your camper is attending multiple weeks of camp, they will be assigned a new bracelet on the Monday of each week.



Sun Safety

Outdoor play is an important component in our children's programs. There are many benefits to children's development and learning when children are encouraged and supported to spend sufficient time outdoors; however, outdoor play does present environmental risks. At the YMCA of Cape Breton, we prioritize safety in our programs and therefore, have procedures in place to mitigate the risks of sun exposure.

Procedure:

All staff are encouraged to lead by example. This means practicing and modeling all precautions expected of children. For example: wearing sunscreen and protective clothing, having access to water, and utilizing shaded areas.

Children should have access to water when outdoors. A child should carry a water bottle with them when going outdoors and during the day they should be encouraged to refill it.

All children are required to wear hats in the sun.

All children are required to bring sunscreen with them and arrive with sunscreen applied. Sunscreen is reapplied by camp counsellors throughout the day, especially after becoming wet or sweating.

Environment Canada’s UV Index report is used to determine outdoor usage and best practices when outdoors. See chart below.

All trip destinations have shade available on site. In cases of extreme weather walking trips and outdoor trips are shortened in duration or canceled altogether to ensure children’s safety.

UV Index	Procedures
Moderate (3+)	All children have hats, and children apply (with adult support) adequate sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30 on all exposed skin before going outside.
High (6-7)	Staff must reduce time in the sun between 11am- 3pm.
Extreme (8+)	Time in the sun should be avoided.

Allergies & Medical Conditions

If your child requires medication to be administer during the camp day or carries emergency medication i.e. EpiPen you will be asked to fill out a medical form at drop off or prior to camp.

Camp staff will collect medication at the beginning of each day, and it will remain in possession of your child’s councilor for the entirety of the day. Our councilors use fanny packs so they will always have the medication with them.

Please note any other important medical information on the registration form.

In a medical emergency: lifeguards, parents/guardians, and first responders (if necessary) will be notified immediately. Please email daycampinfo@cb.ymca.ca for full Guide on Policies and Procedures.



Head Lice

Head lice is a rite of passage we all hope to avoid. Y Camp recognizes that head lice are a concern, and we make every effort to prevent the spread of lice. As a result, Y Camp has implemented policies in an aim to reduce the spread of lice at camp.

Firstly, our lice motto is 'Hair Up, Hats On!' If your camper has long hair, we suggest keeping it in a ponytail and wearing a hat while at camp.

Secondly, no stuffed animals or blankets from home will be allowed to come to camp as these items can be carriers.

Finally, we want to encourage communication about lice. We ask that you notify the camp coordinator if your child has lice at any point throughout the summer. Please help us reduce the spread of lice by keeping up the communication with us. We have an open-door policy, and we respect everyone's privacy.

Camper Care

It is our top priority to ensure your camper(s) have a safe and fun experience at Y Camp. Which is why all camp staff complete a week of training before camp starts. We require that camp staff complete the following trainings and courses:

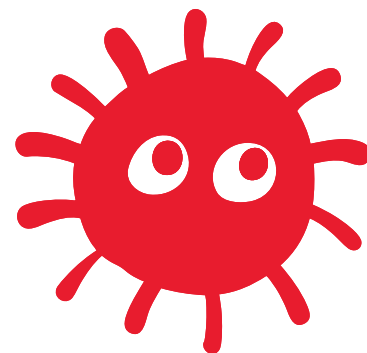
- First Aid and CPR
- High Five - Principles of Healthy Childhood Development
- YMCA Emergency Procedures
- YMCA Child Protection Training
- Bounce House Safety
- Pool Safety
- YMCA Camp policies and Procedures

All YMCA staff are also required to have current First aid and CPR, clear criminal record checks and child abuse registry checks.

Our Lifeguards complete all required training prior to lifeguarding at the YMCA.



Illness Protocol



Children may not attend camp if they have:

- A temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.4 degrees Celsius).
- Not been fever free for 24 hours.
- Vomited while at camp or within the last 24 hours.
- Diarrhea (abnormally loose, watery bowel movements that are much more frequent than usual)
- Been on prescribed medication for less than 24 hours for a condition requiring exclusion from the program according to the Communicable Disease Program.
- A rash that has not been identified by a physician to be determined as not contagious or that is worsening.
- Have a severe cold with fever, sneezing and heavy nasal drainage that affects their mood and ability to participate in the program.

The health and well-being of our members and staff is of utmost importance to us. Therefore, if your child is showing symptoms of illness, please make alternate childcare arrangements. Our "Common Childhood Diseases Chart" has been created by Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection. We ask you to adhere to the return (to childcare) dates given if your child develops any of the symptoms/diseases listed. Parents must develop back-up plans for their child's care in case of illness.

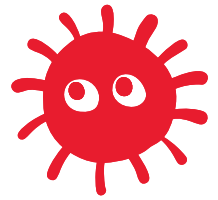
***If your child becomes ill during camp hours, a parent/guardian will be notified immediately to pick up your child. The child will remain in the care of our support staff until a parent/guardian arrives.**

Health and Wellness

The promotion of healthy development is fundamental to the YMCA. We know this is important to parents, therefore, please do not bring a sick child to any of our child care programs. A parent or emergency contact will be called to pick the child up should a child become unwell or develop symptoms while in program. We ask that your child be kept at home until all symptoms of the sickness disappear. We may ask for a doctor's note before re-admitting a child to our program. Children must be well enough to participate in all of our daily routine.

Medication

Day Camp Staff is authorized to dispense medication only after the necessary forms are completed and signed by the parent.



Types Of Medication

- Prescription Drugs – may be administered as ordered by the physician, and as stated on the original (readable) prescription container for the child, once a **YMCA Medication Permission Form has been filled in by the Parent.**
- Non-prescription Drugs- may only be administer by YMCA Staff if the medicine is supplied in the original container and the parent fills in and signs the YMCA Medicine Permission Form to be kept on file.
- Parents must send dispenser/measuring utensils along with any medication.
- Medication of any kind is not to be left in a child's backpack or cubby! All medication should be given to the child's camp counselor. All medication and medical supplies must be properly stored in a locked cupboard or locked box in the refrigerator.

Washroom Policy

Safety is our top priority at YMCA day camps. With that in mind, we've implemented the following washroom policy:

No Y staff or volunteer will be alone with a camper inside a closed cubicle in a multi-stall washroom or inside a closed singular washroom.

Note: YMCA Day Camps are not equipped to conduct diaper or training pants changes; therefore, campers must be toilet trained when attending day camp.

Campers aged 4 and 5: will be accompanied to a washroom by a Y employee or volunteer, who will prop open the door before to do a safety check before the child goes in. The camp employee will remain outside the washroom (or cubicle if it is a multi-stall washroom) to wait for the child before escorting them back to the program.

Campers aged 6 to 8: may use the "buddy system," by travelling in pairs to the washroom. Only one pair of children will be allowed to leave the larger group for the washroom at one time and will be provided a "washroom pass."

Campers aged 9 to 12: may leave for a washroom break alone after letting their group leader know and receiving a "washroom pass". If a child does not return in five minutes, a staff or volunteer must check the washroom.

Toilet Independence Policy

To ensure a safe and supportive environment for all our campers and staff, all campers attending the YMCA Day Camp, including those registered in the inclusion program, must be fully toilet independent.

In the event of a toileting accident, our camp staff will provide verbal guidance to assist the camper in changing, and parents will be notified. However, if a camper experiences more than two accidents, a meeting with a parent will be required to determine best supports for child.

We understand that this policy may present challenges for some families, and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and positive camp experience for everyone.

Termination of Childcare Space

The Y recognizes that some summer camps are not appropriate for all children. Many supports are put in place to create a happy and successful placement for all children. In cases of severe behavior issues, it may be necessary to terminate the camper from the childcare space. A decision to terminate a child's space will be made in consultation with parents and staff. The Y's priority is for the safety of all children in its programs.

Custody Arrangements

Parents are asked to explain custodial arrangements when enrolling their children in Summer Camp. When special circumstances apply such as parent denial of access to one parent, we ask that you provide written documentation of custody and access schedules issued by the court.

Cancellation Policy

You can cancel or change your camp week up to one week before that week starts. All requests must be emailed to daycampinfo@cb.ymca.ca. Once approved, you will receive a refund for funds paid up to that date less a \$25.00 admin fee.

No refunds or cancellations will be accepted after Wednesday of the week prior to the registered camp week. After this deadline, full payment will be required, regardless of attendance.

Please note refunds can take up to 4 weeks to process. Failure to pay in full may result in your account being sent to collections and will restrict future registration for all YMCA of Cape Breton programs.

The full fee will apply to all sick, or non-attendance days or closures due to unforeseen circumstances out of our control.

Duty to Report -Child Safeguard Policy

If our staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected they will contact the local **child welfare agency**. Everyone has the duty to immediately report to a child welfare agency a suspicion that a child under 16 may be in need of protective services. Once a report is made, child protection staff considers the information provided to determine whether an investigation into the matter is necessary.

Financial Assistance

As a charity, the YMCA provides Financial Assistance with generous donations from businesses and individuals in our community. Contact the YMCA for details.



**YMCA Financial
Assistance Program**
ACCESS FOR ALL

