



Parent Handbook Day Camp

“The only thing better than learning a new skill is learning it with a group of friends cheering you on.” – Unknown





WELCOME

The YMCA is the nation's leader in camping, offering outdoor programming for over 100 years. YMCA Camp Thunderbird provides day and overnight camp programs each summer and we are excited to have your camper(s) experience it.

OUR AIM

Our program centers around improving the well-being of campers, while also encouraging them to reach for new heights. We believe in each camper's individuality and intentionally focus on three areas of development: friendships, accomplishment and a sense of belonging. We work to create a safe and vibrant environment that allows children to:

- Learn and master skills that nurture their passions, talents and potential.
- Bond with new friends and positive staff role models to create lasting memories.
- Know they belong so they feel welcome and free to express who they are

In addition, personal responsibility and group cooperation are also important elements of the camp experience. Well-trained, caring counselors work with campers on the importance of caring for one another, for camp, and themselves. We strive to imprint these characteristics on each camper so that it may carry outside of Camp Thunderbird, such as in school or at home.

CAMP THUNDERBIRD

Camp Thunderbird has impacted thousands of campers for over 85 years. Our campers come from all over the world to experience the sunny shores of Lake Wylie. The camp opened in 1936 and was donated to the YMCA in '50s by the Charlotte Observer. Our program operates with up to 200 campers on a beautiful 100-acre property

with over 2 miles of Lake Wylie shoreline! We provide a day camp experience unlike any other, providing the doorway to self-discovery for our campers.

YMCA Camp Thunderbird Physical Address:

- 1 Thunderbird Ln, Clover, SC 29710

CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

Camp Thunderbird will not discriminate by race, color, sex, national origin, creed or special needs. To help provide the best experience for all, we expect all campers to respect themselves, others, equipment and the facilities.

Examples of Behaviors that are not acceptable:

- Use of abusive or vulgar language
- Any physical altercation or unwanted contact
- Threatening other campers
- Harassment of others
- Theft or damage to camp property
- Using or possessing illegal substances, such as vapes, e-cigarettes and alcohol.
- Engaging in behaviors that put themselves or others in danger.

Bullying Policy

YMCA Code of Conduct: The YMCA is committed to providing a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment for all. We expect persons using the YMCA programs and facilities to behave in a mature and responsible way, and to respect the rights and dignity of others.

YMCA Camp Thunderbird reserves the right to dismiss any camper who does not follow the expectations outlined above. The parent will be expected to coordinate an early pick up and there will be no refund of any session fees.



BEFORE CAMP BEGINS

1. An online registration **MUST** be completed for each camper to be enrolled in Day Camp. At the time of registration, a non-refundable \$75.00 deposit will be collected. Rates/Dates are available online. Registration is completed via our website at [🌐 Camp Thunderbird Day Camp](#).
2. An online Health Form, via UltraCamp, **MUST** be completed for each camper to attend. Please refer to the Health Center section below for more information.
3. Final camp payment must be made by the 1st of the month prior to the start of your camper's session.
 - a. Please see Payment/Fee Schedule below:
 - i. Any Day Camp sessions in June must be fully paid by 5/1/25
 - ii. Any Day Camp sessions in July must be fully paid by 6/1/25
 - iii. Any Day Camp sessions in August must be fully paid by 7/1/25
 - b. Unless payment is made in full at the time of registration, payments for the remaining balance will be billed to your credit card on file on the first of May, June, or July.
4. Cancellation and Refund Policy
 - a. Written cancellation request required with at least a 21-day notice before session start date. No refunds if cancellation request is received fewer than 21 days before the start of the session.
 - b. If you have a change in plans and need to request a cancellation or change of session, please visit our Customer Support Hub to do so. You can find it by clicking "Contact Us" on your account page, or visiting tinyurl.com/YMCACustomerSupportHub. We must receive cancellation requests in writing through the Customer Support Hub - we can not process cancellations over a phone call or email.
 - c. Parents/Responsible Party will be accountable for the entire balance of their session if they do not follow the cancellation timeline stated above.

Health Center

In partnership with Atrium Health of Charlotte, our Health Center is staffed and open for urgent medical situations during program days and hours. To ensure good health and ability to enter into normal camp activities, the health history from via UltraCamp must be completed. Accident insurance is not included in the

camp fee. Routine scrapes and cuts can be treated by our trained staff members. In case of serious illness or accident involving your camper(s), the camp will contact you directly. In the event you cannot be reached, your authorization signature on your camper's health form allows us to secure prompt treatment.

UltraCamp

UltraCamp helps us to provide the best possible care for our campers and staff. All registered campers will receive an email detailing instructions for completing camper forms prior to scheduled sessions. Please complete your child's UltraCamp profile and forms in full prior to their first day. This will allow us to serve all families timely and minimize any wait time.

Please take the time to fill out the camper confidential portion in UltraCamp. This allows our counselors the necessary information to best serve your camper. Please provide anything that is helpful to ensure the best experience possible. There is no such thing as too much information when taking care of our campers.

All friend requests must be written in UltraCamp. Each camper can make up to 2 requests. We do our best to accommodate all requests but there are no guarantees. They must be attending the same session. We will not honor request if campers are separated by more than 12 months of age.

Before camp, you will be asked to complete the following on UltraCamp:

- Upload Medical Insurance card
- Complete the following forms:
 - Camper Health Profile
 - Camper Confidential
 - Atrium Health Waiver
- Provide a list medications that may be dispensed at camp.

Add-On Activities

The following can be added on as extras during registration to enhance your camper's experience at YMCA Camp Thunderbird:

- South Charlotte ThunderBus
- Horsemanship Lesson - Older Camp Only (ages 9-12)
- Overnights - On Select Weeks Only (Must be enrolled for that week)

Fees and registration information is available online.

If you are interested in one of our add-ons and didn't sign up for them during your initial registration, please email campthunderbird@ymcacharlotte.org.



WHAT TO EXPECT

Attending summer camp is a very exciting experience for campers and parents/guardians alike. It is also very natural for everyone to be a little nervous about the first day at camp. We are hopeful that the following information will familiarize you with “A Day in the Life” for our campers and minimize any pre-camp jitters. Camp Thunderbird has well-trained staff that are focused on providing a safe and fun environment for our campers.

SUGGESTIONS FROM “EXPERIENCED” FAMILIES

Dress for the weather. THE CAMP DAY WILL CONTINUE RAIN OR SHINE.

- Campers are very active during their day. Therefore, we recommend that your camper(s) attend camp in “playwear” that can become dirty.
- Send swimwear, a towel, aquatic shoes and a water bottle daily. A modest backpack is useful for campers to keep their personal items together. DO NOT send valuable items to camp. YMCA Camp Thunderbird is not responsible for any high value items being misplaced or destroyed.
- Label all items with camper’s name, including but not limited to: clothes (playwear and swim wear), hats, towels, water bottles and backpacks.

WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

Clothing

Please send appropriate clothing with your camper(s), taking into consideration their level of activity, the weather forecast, and the type of activities. For example, on rainy days, campers will need a poncho or raincoat. Please be sure your camper wears closed toe shoes and socks daily with a pair of aquatic shoes

packed for water activities in the afternoon. For safety reasons, sandals or Crocs are not permitted during land activities.

Please examine your camper's selection of clothing for any offensive slogans or symbols. In a large camp community, these items can result in discord between campers. Our goal is to create a community where all persons feel welcomed and accepted.

Swimwear

Swimwear should provide complete coverage, fasten securely and be designed for active wear. A modest two piece suit is allowed. No triangle bikini tops and bottoms that tie are allowed.

At the start of the session, each camper must undergo a swim test to determine their swimming abilities*. As a safety procedure, your camper(s) will be given a swim band that they wear on their wrist to help staff distinguish between swimmers and non-swimmers. Please be sure that the camper(s) wear this swim band to camp every day. *You can view the entire swim test in detail on our website under Day Camp: Parent Resources.

Additional Backpack Supplies

- Hat: Great for those bright summer days and sunburn prevention
- Water Bottle: Hydration is key to your camper's experience. Campers will be active and outside the majority of their day with many water breaks to keep from the summer heat.
- Sunscreen: To help prevent sunburn, we ask that parent/guardians apply sunscreen prior to arriving to camp. In addition, we recommend they provide sunscreen to keep with them throughout the day. Staff will aid campers in applying sunscreen throughout the day as needed.
- Wet/Ziploc Bag: having a separate pouch or bag for campers to place their wet clothing is beneficial in keeping their spare clothes dry and less likely to lose any items of clothing while changing.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Camp is a natural setting to retreat from the amenities of technology and be social with one another. Cell phones, wearable devices (Apple Watches, Gizmo, etc.) radios, handheld consoles, toys and other electronics do not fit in this setting. Counselors are instructed to give any of the above items to Day Camp Directors if they are disruptive to the program and brought to camp. They will be returned to the parent/guardian at the afternoon pick-up. Please leave these items, money or any valuable items at home.

YMCA Camp Thunderbird cannot be held responsible for any of the items listed above being misplaced or destroyed

Any firearms, knives, fireworks, matches, lighters, tobacco products or illegal drugs and alcohol brought to camp are immediate grounds for dismissal from the program.

LOST AND FOUND

We will make every effort to collect and return lost and found items to campers at the end of each day. Please mark all items with a permanent marker or laundry label with your camper's first and last name for easy identification. Lost and Found items will be kept for one week after a child's camp session and then will be donated to a local charity. If you discover something is missing, please notify leadership staff at drop off/pick up or email a Day Camp Program Manager (contact information listed at the end of the Handbook).



A DAY IN THE LIFE

The Day Camp program is structured to offer activities that are progressively challenging to each camper according to their age. As a result, we have Younger Camp (ages 6–8) and Older Camp (ages 9–12). Younger Camp is focused around introducing a wide variety of activities, along with providing opportunities for creative expression. While Older Camp is focused around introducing more challenging activities, encourage team building, and allow individual skill development.

Camp Arrival and Departure

Drop-Off at Camp

Please bring your camper(s) to camp between 7:30 – 8:30AM. Please follow the signs for drop-off, where you will eventually meet a member of the staff team to check you in. A staff member will let the camper out and direct them to his/her group in the Amphitheatre. Opening Ceremonies begin promptly at 8:30AM, any drop-offs after 8:30AM must check in at the Main Office.

Pick-Up at Camp

Daily Pick-Up is from 5:00–6:00PM. Please follow the signs to join the pick-up line, where you will be greeted by a staff member that will check-out the camper(s) once Authorized Pick-Up information is verified.

Parent/Guardians and Authorized pick-up individuals will be responsible for providing the correct identification when signing out a camper. To ensure camper safety, YMCA Camp Thunderbird reserves the right

not to release a camper to “unauthorized” individuals. Proceed to follow traffic and the camper will be escorted to their vehicle by Camp Thunderbird staff.

Early Pick-Up

Parent/Guardians who wish to pick-up a camper early may do so, we highly encourage you to pick up your camper prior to 3:30. If you are not able to pick your camper up prior to 3:30, please be prepared to wait at least 15 – 25 minutes for us to gather your camper and their belongings. If you will be picking up early, please send a note with your camper at drop-off, call ahead or e-mail a Day Camp Program Manager, so we can arrange to have your camper ready for you.

ThunderBus Transportation (Add-On)

Drop-Off: Please drop-off at Harris YMCA (5900 Quail Hollow Rd, Charlotte, NC 28210) between 7:15–7:40AM. The bus will depart promptly at 7:45AM to ensure campers arrive on time for scheduled activities.

Pick-Up: Please pick-up at Harris YMCA (5900 Quail Hollow Rd, Charlotte, NC 28210) between 5:30–6:00PM. **Parent/Guardians and Authorized pick-up individuals will be responsible for providing the correct identification when signing out a camper. To ensure camper safety, YMCA Camp Thunderbird reserves the right not to release a camper to “unauthorized” individuals.**

Daily Schedule

Time	Activity	Details
7:30–8:30AM	Drop-Off/Rides In	Curb-side service
8:30–8:55AM	Opening Program and Morning Thought	All Campers
9:00–10:05AM	Land Activity Period 1 	Refer to list below
10:10–11:15AM	Land Activity Period 2	Refer to list below
11:25–11:55AM	Lunch 	Each group enjoys lunch “family style”; Dietary restrictions can be accommodated
12:00–12:25PM	Change for Water Activities	Full coverage swim suits, details under What to Bring to Camp
12:30–1:30PM	Water Activity Period 1 	Refer to list below
1:35–2:35PM	Water Activity Period 2	Refer to list below
2:40–3:00PM	Change From Water Activities	
3:05–3:40PM	Electives	Campers are allowed to choose from a pre-determined list of activities
	Group Scoop and Canteen	

3:45–4:05PM		Group time for reflection and daily recognition; Dietary restrictions can be accommodated
4:10–4:30PM	Closing Program	ThunderBus leaves promptly at 4:30PM
5:00–6:00	Camp Pick-up/Rides Out	*5:30–6:00PM ThunderBus Pick-Up

Lunch

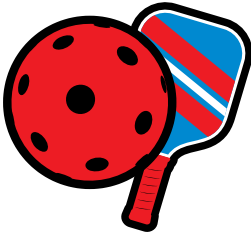
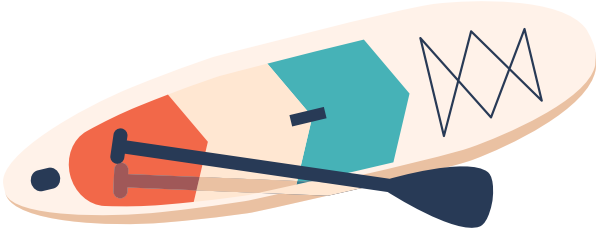
Campers will eat lunch in our dining hall each day, where a kid-friendly and filling meal is served. Our team can accommodate most dietary restrictions and allergies – please note any in your camper’s Health Profile in UltraCamp, and reach out if you have any specific questions. If you would prefer to send your child with lunch from home, you are welcome to do so. Please note that camp does not have refrigeration available and campers are responsible for their lunches. Our kitchen does not serve any foods containing nuts. Foods brought from home also need to be nut-free in order to maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Meals are served family style with groups sitting together. Campers take a quick break and enjoy some fellowship. In addition campers are expected to assist with Cleanup duty after each meal. Recognition for effort and tidiness are a long tradition of service to others and self-care at camp.

Canteen

The Camp Canteen will be open every afternoon for campers. We provide one snack item per day at canteen that consist of, but are not limited to: chips, pretzels, fruit snacks, baked goods, etc. A camper’s special dietary and food allergy needs will be met when necessary.

Activities

Land	Water
Aerial Adventure	Corcls
Archery	Canoeing
Arts & Crafts	Kayaks
Backyard Games	Large Inflatables
Basketball	Paddleboards (ages 9-12)
Challenge Courses	Recreational Swim
Disc Golf	Sailing (ages 9-12)
Flag Football	The Banana
GellyBall	The Blob
Pickleball	The Hotdog
Soccer	Tubing
Tree Climbing	Wet Willie
	



COMMUNICATION AND ACCESS

Throughout the year, Camp Program Managers host several tours, virtually or in-person, to provide as much information possible on the camp experience we offer. It is an opportunity for parents/guardians to see portions of camp and ask any questions they may have directly to camp staff. These dates can be found on our website: <https://www.ymcacharlotte.org/camps/camp-thunderbird> or follow us on social media outlets for more updates.

In-Session Communication

An informative email will be sent a week prior to the start of your session. It will include details ranging from camp arrival/departure, packing list, health profile completion, accessing camp photos and other important updates pertinent to your session. In addition, it will include Program Manager information for open and direct communication, as well as reminders on Friend Requests and Authorized Pick-Up updates.

Friend Request

Each camper can request up to TWO other campers in a session for group placement via their UltraCamp profile. We will do our best to accommodate their request given that it also meets the following requirements:

- The request is received a week prior to the start of the session
- The request is submitted in UltraCamp
- Campers who are requested are within 12 months of age of each other and within the same registered camp (Younger v. Older Camp)
- Standard ratios within groups can be maintained. * While we do our best to meet requests, we cannot guarantee that all requests will be accommodated.

Authorized Pick-Up

Please ensure that all Authorized Pick-Up/Emergency Contact lists are up to date within your UltraCamp profile. You can do this by following these steps:

1. Go to your UltraCamp Home Page
2. Expand the Pickup Authorization section
3. Add any individual that may be picking your camper up.

We will access this list at time of pickup and will only release a child to an individual on the list with matching identification. A valid form of identification (Driver's License, State ID, etc.) **MUST** be presented at time of pick-up. Camp Thunderbird reserves the right to deny access and/or release of a camper to anyone that does not meet these requirements for the safety of our campers.

Security and Emergencies

Safety

The Safety and Security of our Campers is our main priority. We want to ensure that all our participants can enjoy what camp has to offer in a safe and protected environment. Therefore, we have set procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of Camp.

- YMCA Camp Thunderbird is a private property that is only open to registered participants or pre-approved personnel.
- Therefore, ALL visitors are required to check into the main office to receive approval and a visitor badge before being escorted around camp by a staff member.

Emergencies

YMCA Camp Thunderbird has an extensive Emergency Action Plan for Weather, Fire, Health concerns and several other incidences. These plans are in place to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for our campers. As a result, we may, at any given time, choose to execute a "Drill" of Emergency procedures to keep our staff educated and prepared for any emergency.

Contact Information

Main Office

P: (704) 716-4100 E: campthunderbird@ymcacharlotte.org

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 9:00AM – 4:00PM

Sydney Blair, Senior Program Manager – Outdoor Education

P: (704) 716-4121 E: sydney.blair@ymcacharlotte.org



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Thank you for choosing YMCA Camp
Thunderbird as your summer
destination**

