



# 2025

## Resident Camp

## Parent Guide



# 10

WEEKS TO PLAY

# 50+

ACTIVITIES TO CHOOSE

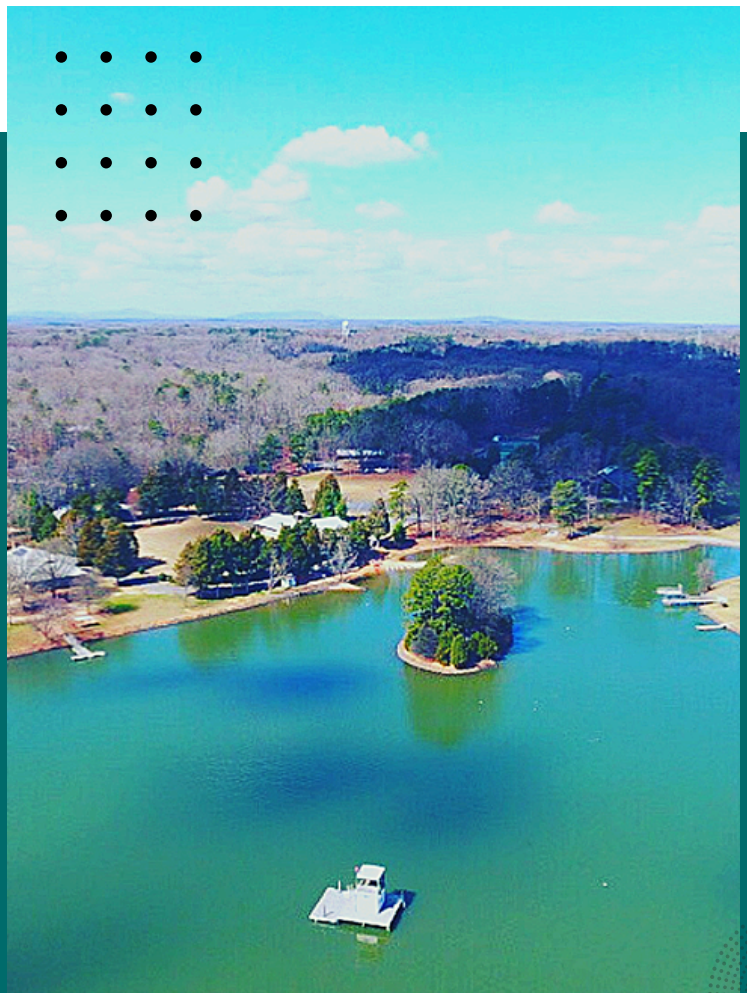



# Welcome Parents

Thank you for trusting us with your child this summer! Our primary goal is to provide your camper with a safe, magical experience to discover their best selves in mind, body and spirit. We are committed to an atmosphere of collaboration, communication and support in our relationship with every parent. This guide is designed to share the key information you may need to prepare yourself and your camper for their best summer ever!


## History

Camp Thunderbird has impacted thousands of campers for over 88 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 the 50s by the Charlotte Observer. Our program operates with 500 overnight campers on over 100 acres and over 2 miles of shoreline on Lake Wylie! We are a traditional camp where each camper gets to pick their journey of activities with a challenge by choice through our bandana program.





# Camper Code of Conduct



Camp Thunderbird would love for everyone to discover their best selves at camp. To help provide the best experience for all, we expect all campers to respect themselves, others, equipment and our facilities.

## **Examples of Behaviors that are not acceptable:**

- Use of abusive or vulgar language
- Any physical contact
- Threatening other campers
- Harassment of others
- Theft or damage to camp property
- Using or possessing illegal substances, vapes, e-cigarettes and alcohol
- Engaging in behaviors that puts themselves/others in harm's way

## **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 session fees.





# Preparing for Camp

**We strive to make planning for camp as simple as possible for parents and campers. Parents must complete three things before campers arrive:**

- Registration/Payment - Campwise
- Medical Forms - Camp Doc
- Activity Preferences & Friend Requests

## Registration/Payment

Rates/dates are available online. Registration is via our website at [campthunderbird.org](http://campthunderbird.org)

Early Bird rates are in effect through November 15th, 2024. Payment can be made in full at registration, or by using our payment plan.

The payment plan requires an up-front payment of \$400. After registration, camp will contact you to select a customized payment plan. All payments must be made by May 1st.

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## Friend Requests

All friend requests must be completed in CampWise and they must be a mutual request. Each camper can make 2 requests. We do our best to accommodate all request but there are no guarantees. We will not honor requests when campers request a two week camper and they are a one week camper. They must attend the same session and timeframe. We will also not honor requests if they are separated by more than two years in age. Older campers will age down to be with younger friend requests.

To complete a friend request during the initial registration process:

On the Optional Processes page during registration, a pop-up box will appear asking if you need to “add friend requests”. Click “Yes I do” and then “Manage Friends”. Enter the first and last name of one or two friends and their parent /guardian email if known.

Click Save/Next and your cabin requests will be included in your registration.

To add a friend request after registration has been completed:

When you log into Camp Wise, you can go to the Home tab and click on Optional items, “Manage Friends”. Enter the first and last name of one or two friends and their parent/guardian email if known.

Click Save/Next and your cabin requests will be included in your registration.

## CampDoc

CampDoc 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 health care information in April 2025 (or within two weeks of later registrations.) Please set register@campdoc.com as a safe sender to avoid delivery to a junk/spam folder. Please complete your child’s CampDoc profile in full at least one week prior to check in. This will allow us to serve all families timely and minimize wait time.

Please take the time to fill out the camper confidential in CampDoc. This allows our cabin counselors the necessary information to best serve your child. 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 someone’s child.

Before camp, you will be asked to submit the following online:

- Medical Insurance card
- Prescription Insurance card (if different)
- Camper immunization record
- A doctor’s plan for any diagnosed chronic condition
- Atrium form to treat
- A confidential camper health profile
- Prescription Medications – dosage and time of administration

## Activity Preferences

To ensure your camper creates a camp adventure best suited to their preferences, we use technology to collect and schedule all the land activities at camp. In May, we will send instructions for you and your child to choose their 10 favorite land activities together online. The overall daily schedule will be based on these choices. After camp begins, there may be flexibility to switch one or two activities, depending on availability for our two week campers.

All campers participate in every water activity with their cabin, so choosing water activity preferences is not necessary. Water activities include wake sports, sailing, paddle sports, pool time and lake toys.

## Add-on Activities

The following activities can be added on as extra activities during registration to enhance your camper's experience at YMCA Camp Thunderbird. You can log back into Campwise and add activities below up until a week before your scheduled session.

- Advanced wake sports- takes place of 3 land activities.
- Horseback riding- 2 land activities
- Private horseback riding lesson (Only available to 2 week campers)
- Paintball- 1 land activity
- Advanced pottery-2 land activities (Only available to 2 week campers)
- Bus transportation to Atlanta
- Airport Pick up & Drop off

Fees and registration information is available online.

Wake sports is included in all experiences, the add-on is for those campers who want to enhance their skills on the boards. This is for 3 hours, twice a week on a master craft with a total of 6 campers and two instructors. This a great way to learn more!

# Opening / Closing Day & Transportation

## Arrival & Pick Up Times

- Drop off is from 3 – 5 PM on an opening Sunday
- Pick up is from 9 – 11 AM on a closing Saturday
- Sessions 2B, 4B, 5B and 6B drop off is at 2:00–3:30pm and pick up for 2A, 4A, 5A and 6A is 9–10am on Saturday.

Staff will be available to help you unload, so please remain in your cars on opening and closing days. We have a really small window to check-in over 500 campers, and we need to keep traffic moving.

## Arriving by Car

Please plan to arrive between 3–5pm, our gates will open at 3pm. Directions to camp are found on our website, or you can enter our address into your mobile device mapping application:

1 Thunderbird Lane, Lake Wylie, SC 29710 or 1 Thunderbird Lane, Clover, SC 29710.

## Departing from camp on closing day (Atlanta only)

We provide safe, supervised bus transportation to Atlanta at the end of two-week sessions. Any camper needing transportation to Atlanta is welcome to add this option.

We drop off at the 9115 Westside Pkwy, Alpharetta GA, 30009 in the Cognia office building parking lot. To sign up for the bus please email [campthunderbird@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:campthunderbird@ymcacharlotte.org)

## Arriving by airplane

We offer supervised shuttles to and from the Charlotte International Airport (CLT). Parents who wish to send their child to camp via air must complete the airport form and email it to [Liz.Dulski@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:Liz.Dulski@ymcacharlotte.org) for confirmation. Please find the form on our website under Parent Resources and attached to the guide.

## Sending luggage separately – Required for campers who fly

Any items not accompanying a camper should be shipped to camp at least one week prior to their session start. We deliver early luggage to cabins the morning camp begins. You are responsible for all costs of shipping luggage to camp. We will be happy to assist you in shipping your camper's luggage home. Please provide a pre-paid shipping label for the carrier of your choice, and your camper's name and date of birth.

Send labels to: YMCA Camp Thunderbird, Attn: Luggage, One Thunderbird Lane, Lake Wylie, SC 29710



# Packing for Camp

## What to Bring

Camp is not a time for special clothes, brand names, or valuables, because campers are too busy making friends, learning skills, and being themselves. Please be sure all items are clearly marked with the camper's full name. Camp Thunderbird provides all the necessary equipment for all activities. Duffel bags, trunks, or plastic bins must fit in the 24 inch space below the bunks during camp. You can find our packing list on our website and attached to the guide.

## Themes on Packing List

Please plan to pack items so your camper can participate in our daily theme wear! Sunday- Camp color, Monday- Neon, Tuesday- Tropical, Wednesday- Tie Dye, Thursday- Jersey, Friday- Funky hat. These are easy and your camper can participate how they choose. Don't forget about our field party themes for our two week campers.



## Spending Money & Valuables

No spending money is needed at camp. Everything is included in the cost of camp (snacks every evening included). Please do not send any cash or anything that has high value to you or your camper. The Camp Store will be open on Opening and Closing days during drop-off/pick-up. Additionally, online orders can be placed and delivered to campers during their session.

## Laundry

Laundry service is offered once for campers who stay for two weeks and three times for campers who stay for four weeks at no charge. We provide one laundry bag per camper to be sent on Thursday and returned by Saturday morning each week.

## Packing Tips

- Please add names to everything.
- Nothing of value.
- Trunk must be able to fit under the bed. Less than 24 inches high.
- Pack spray sunscreen so our staff can assist campers.
- Pack a twin bed pad for our light sleepers.
- A clip on fan is helpful for all campers.
- Pack fun card games, board games or anything your camper will enjoy.
- For our little campers, pack each set of clothes in a Ziploc bag with the day on it, so staff can help them choose clothes.





# Communication during Camp

## 1st Time Parent

First time campers will get a phone call from their camper's Head Counselor before the end of the day on Wednesday. This will be an update on how their camper is enjoying camp and your opportunity to ask any questions. The Head counselor will be your point person for all questions regarding your camper's experience.

## Homesickness

We will work with all campers who become homesick and keep you posted. We encourage parents to not present the option of coming home if the camper is nervous prior coming to camp. We are great at what we do and can help kids get through it to enjoy their camp experience. If you are really concerned, please add this to the camper confidential in camp doc. That will help the cabin counselors.

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## Campwise Emails

Parents are invited to email campers while they are at camp through Campwise. Emails are printed and delivered to the campers each day. Please understand that campers don't return emails, it is just for them to read. You can send your camper with stationary, envelopes and stamps to write home. Please do not include really sensitive information in these emails incase others come across it. If you have something happen at home that you want your child to know and it's serious, please give us a call.

## Photos

Camper photos will be posted on Campwise. Campers are never identified by name in photos. We do our best to get as many campers as possible in photos daily but there is no guarantee that your child will be in a photo daily.

## Care packages and US mail

**We do not accept outside care packages or letters. Please order care packages from our camp store online. ALL outside care packages will be opened and held at the office for pick up on closing day.**

**Camp Store:** <https://camp-thunderbird.square.site/>

## Birthdays at Camp

Many campers celebrate their birthdays at camp. We make a special effort to ensure that campers are recognized and feel special. An ice cream cake and the whole camp sing happy birthday is how we celebrate.

If you would like to coordinate something special for your camper, please reach out to:  
[lexie.ratliff@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:lexie.ratliff@ymcacharlotte.org).

## Handwritten Letters

Cabin Counselors will write a letter to camper parents on the second Monday of a two-week session to be e-mailed by Wednesday. Please be on the lookout for an update for all of our two week campers. The letters will also be handed out on closing day. We email for a more live update on their session.

## Social Media

Please follow us for more live updates and photos of what is happening at camp! Instagram is [ycampthunderbird](#) and Facebook is [YMCA Camp Thunderbird](#).

# Life at Camp

## Typical Daily Schedule for Campers

7:30 AM Rise & Shine – Reveille

7:45 AM Cabin clean-up

8:15 AM Flagpole – Blessing

8:20 AM Breakfast

9:15 AM Morning water and land activities

12:15 PM Return to cabins, prepare for lunch

12:45 PM Lunch

1:20 PM Rest period

2:45 PM Afternoon water and land activities

6:00 PM Return to cabins, prepare for dinner

6:15 PM Flag lowering and blessing

6:25 PM Dinner

6:55 PM Supervised free time

7:30 PM Evening program

9:00 PM Return to cabins

9:30 PM Devotion

10:15 PM Lights out – Taps

## Bunk Information

All cabin assignments will be done by age, not grade. We keep our one week campers together, our two week campers together and our four week campers together. However, it is not guaranteed but we will do our best. Careful consideration will be given to each request; however, the final decision rests with the Directors. Requests must be made at least three weeks prior to opening day in Campwise. Campers are grouped in cabins of 10 – 18 by age and 2 – 4 counselors will be housed there, depending on the camper's ages.

Cabins are equipped with comfortable and modern conveniences including bunk beds, air conditioning, full bath facilities including hot and cold water, ample electrical outlets and cubbies. Trunks need to be 24" high or below to fit under the beds. Bunks and cubbies are pre-assigned. The oldest boys in each session (ages 13+, usually) are assigned to our most traditional cabins, with open air screened windows, ceiling fans, and a shared bath facility. These cabins stay cool at night with the breeze coming off the lake and are awesome! A clip on fan is all you need.

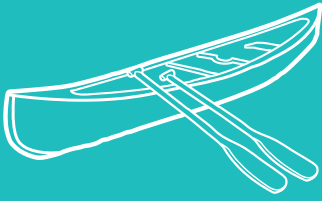
## Cabin Books

This is a time for a conversation every night with a staff member. We love to get daily feedback from our campers to make sure their experience is going well and they are staying healthy! Please encourage your camper to ask for help with let us know if something is wrong.



## Water Schedule

Every camper participates in all water activities, which usually last 45 – 90 minutes:



### Paddle Sports

Corcls  
Canoeing  
Paddleboards  
Kayaks  
Sailing



### Wake Sports

Skiing  
Kneeboard  
Wakeboard  
Wake Skating  
Wake Surfing



### Lake Toys

The Banana &  
Hot Dog  
The Blob  
Large Inflatables  
Tubing  
Water Slide



### Swimming

Recreational Swim  
Swim Lessons  
Pool Basketball

## Land Activities

Aerial Adventure  
Archery  
Arts & Crafts  
Athletic Conditioning  
Backyard Games  
Baseball  
Basketball  
Challenge Course  
Cheerleading  
Dance  
Digital Media  
Disc Golf  
Drama  
Fishing  
Flag Football

Future Engineers  
Gellyball  
Geocaching/Orienteering  
Guitar  
Lacrosse  
**ATLAS (Teen Leadership)**  
Outdoor Living Skills  
Pickleball  
Pottery  
Soccer  
Softball  
Target Sports  
Tennis  
Tree Climbing  
Ultimate Frisbee  
Volleyball

## Counselors

The majority of our counselors were once Thunderbird campers themselves! Because they experienced and loved camp themselves, our staff is uniquely qualified to create a magical experience for your camper. New staff are recruited through college camp fairs as well as through word of mouth, from those who have served Thunderbird in the past. We will again have some international staff joining our team in 2025.

## Bandana Program

This is an award program designed to stretch our campers through program progression, goal setting and skill performance. It is also known as challenge by choice. Each activity has a red, blue, silver and gold card to work towards while they are at camp. A red card is worth 1 point, a blue is worth 2, a silver is worth 3 and gold is worth 4 points. All the points add up over their time at camp and allow them to earn bandanas. We keep track of those points from year to year and you can view that progress. The bandana levels are 15 for red, 45 for blue, 90 for silver, 140 for gold and 260 for double gold. Each camper will receive a card book listing all the challenges and requirements for each activity.

## Evening Programming

Evenings are a special time for campers, when memories are formed and relationships strengthened. Talent shows, sports challenges, field parties, and campfires give campers a showcase for their talents, recognition of new skills, and most importantly, opportunities for deeper connection to other campers and counselors.

## Dining Hall

We consider the dining hall part of the fun! Children have different palates, so meals include a delicious entree AND other choices like cold cereals, pasta bars, salad bars, soup and fruit. Expect variety to meet every need and a commitment to nutrition! Vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free options are available (please be sure to note these dietary needs in CampDoc.) Meals are served family style with cabins sitting together at all mealtimes. Campers relax and enjoy fellowship during their busy schedules. Campers are expected to assist with Cleanup/KP duty before and after each meal. Recognition for effort and tidiness are a long tradition of service to others and self-care at camp.

## Lost & Found

Please write the camper's name on everything. Do not pack anything that is your camper's favorite. Things do get lost at camp and we do everything we can to get it returned. We will display all lost items for that session at the Duke Pavilion on closing days and hold items for two weeks. Once two weeks have passed, we will donate all items.