

Camp Locations

Camp Munsee & Discovery Travel Camp:

65 High Street Metuchen, NJ 08840

Camp Oakcrest:

970 Inman Avenue Edison, NJ 08820

Camp SAY:

200 John T. O'Leary Boulevard South Amboy, NJ 08879

Camp Lenape:

520 Hoes Lane Piscataway, NJ 08854

YMCA of MEWSA



Summer Camp Parent Handbook

Summer of 2025

**Department of Health
Camps**

Welcome to Camp!

We are thrilled to have your family join us for a summer full of adventure, growth, and unforgettable memories. Our camps are designed to offer a fun and safe environment where children can explore new activities, make lifelong friends, and create moments that will inspire them all year long.

We cannot wait to see your child thrive and discover all the exciting opportunities we have in store. Here at the YMCA, we believe in fostering a sense of community, kindness, and fun – and we are so excited to share this special summer with you!

YMCA of MEWSA Cause & Mission

At the YMCA, we know that lasting personal and social change comes when we all work together. That's why, at the Y, strengthening our community — in mind, body and spirit — is our cause. Every day, we work side by side with our neighbors to make sure everyone has the opportunity to be the best they can be.

We are dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities through programs that develop values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The YMCA serves all people, regardless of age, religion, gender or financial means and is committed to helping everyone develop a healthy spirit, mind and body.

In this handbook, you can find information on:

- Camp Contact Information
- General Camp Day
- Staff Trainings
- Policies & Procedures
- Bullying
- Expectations of Parents
- Expulsion Policy
- Guidelines for Positive Discipline
- Camp Discipline Policy
- Personal Property
- Babysitting
- Cell Phones
- Lunch/Snacks/Trips & Trip Money
- Cancellations, Credits, and Changes
- Credit Policy
- Camp Forms
- Medical Information
- Early Pick-Up
- Late Pick-Up
- Camper Absence & Attendance
- Sign-In & Sign-Out Procedures
- Dispensation of Medicine
- Illness During Camp Hours
- Parent Notification

If, for any reason, you need a better understanding of anything outlined, or have additional questions not answered in this handbook, please reach out to your respective Camp Director.

General Camp Day

- Weekly Camp Activities will include swimming, sports, arts & crafts, games, and more.
- Each campsite will have weekly themes throughout the summer. Various themes may ask campers to wear a costume, dress up, or bring items in from home on select days. Parents/Guardians should stay up to date with our weekly themes to ensure the best camp experience for their child.
- Personal belongings have a way of getting misplaced during camp. Please label campers belongings to help reduce the occurrence of lost items during the summer (ex: hats, sunscreen, clothes, etc.).
- There will not be credits or refunds issued for any absences.
- Campers need to bring in their own sunscreen and is applied throughout the day. Young campers who need assistance putting on sunscreen can ask for help from a camp counselor.

Staff Trainings

Camp staff are selected on the basis of responsibility, the ability to relate to children, and the sensitivity to accommodate each child's individual needs. Staff undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including detailed application forms, an interview process, reference checks, National Sex Offender checks, and criminal background checks.

Additionally, staff complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program. All staff are required to attend at least 16 hours of additional pre-camp training each summer.

These camp training topics include, *but are not limited to*:

- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention + Policies; Mandated Reporting
- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Playground Safety
- Transportation Safety
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Positive Discipline Policies
- Bullying Prevention
- Medication/EPI Pen Use
- CPR/First Aid
- Etc.

Policies & Procedures

Confidentiality

Any information that does not require reporting to the state regarding a child, the child's family, or any other matters discussed with the Director and staff will be held in confidence. Each child's file will include personal information given at the time of registration, written correspondence to and from a parent/guardian, and any documented assessments. This information will remain strictly confidential unless requested by the state or law enforcement.

Special Needs

The YMCA of MEWSA believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive – especially at camp! We are proud to offer integrative programs and services with special needs to help make a meaningful impact in the lives of those individuals and their families. YMCA staff will strive to provide the best day camp experience for every child and will look to accommodate any children with special needs to the best of our ability. Close communication between the YMCA staff and families are essential to ensure that appropriate quality care is provided. Communication is welcomed by all Camp Directors for any questions, comments, or concerns.

Swimming

All campers will have the opportunity to go swimming with their group. Proper swimming gear is required (bathing suit, towel, bathing cap). Swim testing will be done each Monday to make counselors and lifeguards aware of your child's swimming capabilities. Campers will be responsible for bringing their own swimming gear.

Swim Test: Test, Mark, & Protect

Test: Every individual who wants to enter the pool. If a child is under 8, you may automatically mark them as a non-swimmer. Anyone not swim tested can be automatically marked as a non-swimmer.

Mark: Everyone entering our pools will utilize breakaway neckbands or wristbands. This allows the lifeguards and adults to know everyone's swimming ability, and to identify non-swimmers and give them the attention they need.

Protect: All non-swimmers are encouraged to sign up for swim classes. They will stay in arms reach of an adult. Staff will ensure they wear properly fitted, Coast Guard approved life vests at all times. Please note that these measures do not replace the requirement to provide lifeguard supervision.

For more information, please contact your branch's aquatics director.

Bullying

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt another. Bullying happens when a person or group of people wants to have power over another and use their power to get their way, at the expense of someone else. Bullying can also happen through cyberspace; through the use of emails, text messaging, instant messaging, weblogs, personal websites, other social media platforms, and other less direct methods. This type of bullying can also lead to people being hurt during or between the camp seasons and can be especially hurtful when people are targeted with meanness and exclusion.

At the YMCA of MEWSA, we have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. Each camper is expected to treat all other campers with respect, and to help each other achieve the best possible experience. If a camper has difficulty meeting this expectation, parents may be called upon to assist. We look forward to working together as a team to ensure that campers gain self-confidence, make new friends, and leave our camps with great memories!

Bullying (continued)

Our leadership team will address all incidents of bullying seriously and will train staff to promote communication and comfort to promote positive camper experience. It is important to our teams that we build relationships with program participants and families so that we are alerted in a timely manner when these incidents arise. In simple terms, we cannot manage what we aren't aware of and are eager to provide continued support for families as we advocate for safety for all.

Expectations of Parents

One of our goals of the YMCA of MEWSA is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this goal is the responsibility of the staff, but also to teach each adult who enters this program. Parents of enrolled campers are asked to behave in a manner consistent with the Y values and with decency, courtesy, and respect.

Parents are expected to adhere to the following:

- Use appropriate language when in the programs.
- Treat all camp participants with respect.
- Treat all YMCA staff with respect.
- Smoking is prohibited anywhere on YMCA property.
- Parents must accompany children to the site locations for pick-up and drop-off.
- Parents must follow all YMCA policies and procedures while on the camp premises.

Parents/Guardians Actions for Childs Expulsion

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms (including child's immunization records).
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child.
- Physical/Verbal Abuse/Threats against YMCA participants.
- Physical/Verbal Abuse/Threats against YMCA staff.
- Failure to comply with YMCA policies.

Childs Actions for Expulsion

- Failure to comply with YMCA policies.
- Inappropriate behavior, actions, or gestures.
- Physical/Verbal Abuse/Threats against YMCA participants.
- Physical/Verbal Abuse/Threats against YMCA staff.
- Poses a physical threat to self or camp participants.

Actions to Prevent Expulsion

- Staff will redirect negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess the environment and activities.
- Staff will discipline using positive methods/language.
- Staff will praise appropriate behavior.
- Staff will apply appropriate consequences when needed.
- A brief time-out in correlation with child's age will be given so the child can regain control.
- Child's behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/Guardian will be notified verbally during pick-up.
- Parent/Guardian will receive a copy of behavior reports.
- If necessary, the Camp Director and Parent/Guardian will have a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.

A Parent/Guardian May Take Up the Following Actions:

- File a complaint to the Office of Licensing.
- Report abuse or neglect.
- Question Camp Policies or Procedures.

****These actions will not negatively affect a camper's enrollment**

Guidelines for Positive Discipline

At the YMCA of MEWSA, you can expect that we will NOT:

- Use an inappropriate tone or language to shame, humiliate, threaten or intimidate children. We refrain from name-calling and labeling.
- Use corporal punishment or any physical contact as a means of showing disapproval or punishment. (This would include, but is not limited to spanking, pushing, pulling, biting, grabbing).
- Use food as a reward or punishment in any way, nor will we force or withhold sleep.
- Withhold or force physical activity.

Instead, you can expect us to follow the following outline of positive discipline.

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group and the adult.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

Positive Discipline is Effective When Planning Ahead

- Have a few consistent clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults.
- Anticipate potential problems.
- Have a well-planned daily schedule.
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor.
- Include some group decision-making.
- Provide time and space for each child to be alone.
- Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group.
- Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences.
- Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about our room, our equipment.

Positive Discipline Can Be Used by Intervening When Necessary

- Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior.
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
- Use time-out (monitored by staff) by removing a child for a few minutes from the

Positive Discipline Can Be Used by Intervening When Necessary (continued)

- Divert the child and removed from the area of conflict.
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child.

Positive Discipline Can Be Used Showing Love and Encouragement

- "Catch the child being good". Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing.
- Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior.
- Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
- Overlook small annoyances and deliberately ignore provocations.
- Build and nurture a caring relationship with every child every day.
- Appreciate the child's point of view. Be loving, but do not confuse love with license.

area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control.

Camp Discipline Policy

To maintain the quality and safety of our camp programs, the YMCA of MEWSA has set guidelines and limits for all participants. Constructive methods of discipline will be implemented in compliance with our guidelines for positive discipline to support, focus, and emphasize the Y core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

The YMCA does not tolerate campers who harm other participants or YMCA staff in our camp programs. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Degrading or demeaning other camp participants.
- Physical/Verbal threats against another person.
- Harassment and intimidation against another person.

In the event where a child's behavior negatively affects other participants of the camp, the following actions will go into effect:

First Warning: Discussion of incident with Camp Director.

Second Warning: Detailed behavior report followed up with a meeting with parent or guardian, the counselor, and the Camp Director. In the event that the camper is suspended, there is no refund on fees.

Third Warning: Camper will be dismissed from camp. All fees for that current session are forfeited.

The above statements hold true in many circumstances. However, in serious incidents, suspensions or dismissal may be the first step. This is at discretion of the Camp Director.

Lunch/Snacks/Trips & Trip Money

Campers must bring their lunch every day. Lunch should be packed in a paper bag with your child's name written clearly on it. Please make sure you pack a FULL lunch for your child including extra drinks and snacks as our days are long and active. Campers are not allowed to visit the vending machines during camp hours, unless they are with their guardians.

An example of a well packed lunch:

- Water or a sugar-free drink
- A small freezer pack to keep the lunch cool
- A sandwich well wrapped in plastic wrap, aluminum foil, or a sandwich bag (plastic or reusable).
- Fruit, vegetables, and protein.
- Other healthy snacks.

Things to avoid in packed lunches:

- Sugary drinks or sodas
- Sugary sweets
- Peanut butter (to the best of your ability – we are not peanut free but want to be mindful of campers who are).

For Discovery Travel Campers: Campers may have the opportunity to visit a gift shop or snack bar after they have completed their lunch from home. Campers will be responsible for their own money, but we do not

recommend sending more than \$25. We recommend putting money in an envelope or wallet with your camper's name for trips.

Babysitting

YMCA staff are not permitted to babysit any child enrolled in any YMCA programming. If you have a pre-existing relationship with a staff member, you must submit written documentation informing us of the pre-existing relationship.

Cancellations, Credits, and Changes

All cancellations and changes must be made in writing to your YMCA camp's front desk. *Camp fees and deposits are non-refundable.*

Please review our credit policy below in the event a parent needs to cancel a camper's registration.

Credit Policy:

- All campers must be current members of the YMCA of MEWSA (Family or Program) or join under a "Camp Registration Fee" membership type.
- For each week of camp, a \$50 deposit is required for each child.
- Any changes to any existing registrations will incur a \$10 fee.
- Financial Assistance is available on a limited basis. Applications must be turned in Camp Director's by the date communicated, or the first day of camp.
- After registering for camp, you will receive payment information and access to medical authorization and healthy history forms to be completed. These will be due by a date communicated by the Camp Director, or no later than two weeks before camp.

Personal Property

The YMCA of MEWSA and each of its branches are not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please make sure that all personal items are labeled. We strongly advise that your child does not bring personal items to camp (ex: Nintendo systems, iPods/iPads/iPhones, cell phones, tablets or other electronic devices, toys, etc.).

Personal sports equipment should not be brought to camp unless instructed in advance by counselors or other camp staff. In the event that they are brought into camp they will be held by the Camp Director and returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the day.

Cell Phones

If your child brings a cell phone to camp, it must remain off and in camper's bags. If there is ever a time when they need to call their parents, the Camp Director will allow them to use the YMCA phone or use their own personal device in the Camp Directors office.

Camp Fee Payments Due Dates

- Weeks 1-3: Due on or before May 1
- Weeks 4-6: Due on or before June 1
- Weeks 7-10: Due on or before July 1
- Week 11 (if applicable): Due on or before August 1

Camp Forms

All campers at the YMCA of MEWSA are required to have the following forms submitted in person before the start of camp (or an earlier date communicated by the Camp Director):

- Immunization Records
- Health History Form
- Medical Authorization Form
- Emergency Treatment Plans (if applicable)

Additional helpful forms include:

- IEPs or 504 interventions
- Behavioral notes
- Intervention strategies used at home

These are required by our NJ State Licenses and cannot be negotiated. These forms will be sent via email, and are also available on our website at www.ymcaofmews.org.

All other waivers will be signed on Daxko at the time of registration.

Medical Information

Relationships have been made with each camp location and their local doctors as well as the JFK Hospital in Edison.

Please make note of the following as your family prepares for camp:

- It is important to inform the YMCA of all allergies to medications, insects, and/or foods.
- All medications sent to camp must be sent in the original container, accompanied by the proper medical release form specifying dosage. This form can be obtained at the YMCA or online at the camp page.

Please do not send your child to camp if they have any of the following:

- A temperature over 99
- Sore throat
- Ringworm
- Rashes
- Earache
- Impetigo
- Vomit/Diarrhea
- Covid-19
- Any other communicable diseases

Early Pick-Up

Early pick-up from camp is permitted as long as there is a note from a parent/guardian informing the staff of who will be picking up their camper and when their camper will be expected to be picked up. Campers and YMCA staff are not always in the building as activities may take place outside.

Please note that early pick-up will not be available for Discovery Travel Campers because the children and staff will not be at the camp site location.

Late Pick-Up

Late fees will be assessed for any camper picked up after camp closing. The late fee is \$5 for the first 10 minutes and \$1 per minute after that.

Services can be denied if this late fee is not paid, and excessive tardiness can result in removal from programming.

The following steps will be taken when a camper is left past closing time:

- Phone calls will be made to the parent and or emergency contacts in the campers file.
- If the Y has not been contacted by the parent/guardian within 1 hour of camp closing, the police will be notified to assist in locating the parents/guardians.

Camper Absence and Attendance

The YMCA of MEWSA does not offer make-up days.

There will be no credits or refunds issued for any missed days unless authorized by Camp Director.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures

Signing In

- Campers may sign-in at 7 a.m. for before care (if registered).
- Campers may sign-in at 8 a.m. for regular camp hours.

Signing Out

All children must be picked up by the end of the camp day. Camp operational hours will be communicated by the Camp Directors before the start of camp, and can additionally be found on our website at www.ymcaofmews.org.

Adults authorized to pick up campers will be required to sign their child in and out daily. An attendance sheet or system will be available at every site location.

Campers will only be released to authorized adults outlined in their camper files, or via written permission from their legal parent/guardian. The person picking up the camper will be required to show a photo I.D.

YMCA staff are not permitted to release campers to any impaired individuals, anyone without proof of photo I.D., or anyone a YMCA staff member would deem unsafe at the time of arrival. Situations will be documented and communicated to Camp Directors, branch Director of Operations, and/or other senior leaders within our association as needed.

Dispensation of Medicine

Children must have current medical records prior to the start of camp. No medication prescription, or over the counter medicine, will be distributed without a doctor's note and a medication form has been signed off on. A medication form must be filled out and given to the camp director stating the following:

- The child's name
- The name of the medication
- The reason for the medication
- The dates to be administered
- The time to be administered
- The dosage to be administered

Each medication must have a separate form completed. This form can be found on our website at www.ymcaofmews.org.

You must deliver the medication to the camp director in it's original package before the start of camp.

Illness During Camp Hours

If a child becomes ill during camp hours, a parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person(s) for that child is contacted to pick up the camper. The child will wait in the Director's office until they are picked up. Please pick up your child immediately. If you are unable to pick up your child, it is your responsibility to find an alternate pick-up person.

Parent Notification

Any injuries/incidents that occur during our child's day will be communicated to you at pick-up. If your child has a head injury, or an advanced medical personnel is needed, then you will be called immediately. Phone contact with a parents/guardian is established as an emergency, but is not limited to severe injuries requiring a physician's visit or incidents requiring immediate pick-up from camp due to a child's behavior or actions.

Each campers file will contain a health form and additional contact information for parents/guardians + additional authorized adults. This process is initiated by the Camp Director but can also be delegated to an appropriate staff member. The general camp practice is to contact parents when there is concern about a person's safety.

TABLE OF EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Respiratory Illnesses	Gastrointestinal Illnesses	Contact Illnesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chicken Pox• German measles*• Hemophilus influenzae*• Measles*• Meningococcus*• Mumps*• Strep throat• Tuberculosis*• Whooping Cough*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giardia• Lambila• Hepatitis A*• Salmonella*• Shingella*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impetigo• Lice• Scabies

