

Summer Camp Parent Handbook

Summer of 2026

Department of Health Camps



Department of Health 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

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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.

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 of MEWSA, 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.

YMCA Character Development

At the Y we strengthen community by focusing our efforts on developing youth, improving healthy living for all and fostering social responsibility to create positive and lasting personal and social change. YMCA of MEWSA day camp provides priceless opportunities to promote and help instill the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. We provide staff role models and activities that are conducive to positive character development.

Annual Support Campaign

At the YMCA of MEWSA, camp is more than a place for children to spend their summer. It is a place where they build confidence, make friends, and feel a sense of belonging.

For many families in our community, this experience would not be possible without support.

Each year, the YMCA of MEWSA Annual Support Campaign raises funds to provide financial assistance for children and families who need it most. This includes many of the campers who participate in our programs. These funds help ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend camp, learn, grow, and be part of something meaningful.

When you see children at camp laughing, trying something new, or building friendships, there is a good chance that the Annual Support Campaign played a role in making that experience possible.

Participation in the campaign is completely voluntary. Families who wish to support can learn more or make a contribution by visiting:

<https://ymcaofmewsa.org/support>

Every contribution, no matter the amount, directly supports children and families in our community.

General Camp Information

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday

7:00am-6:00pm

Camp Name	Leadership
Camp Munsee & Discovery Camp	Michael B. Naumenko, Camp Director E: michael.naumenko@ymcaofmewsa.org P: 732.548.2044 x2255
Camp Oakcrest	Michelle Dock E: michelle.dock@ymcaofmewsa.org P:
Camp SAY	Tony Brewster, Camp Director E: tony.brewster@ymcaofmewsa.org P: 732-553-9622 ext 4208
Camp Lenape	Darius Griffin, Programs Director E: darius.griffin@ymcaofmewsa.org P: 732-562-2302

Daily Schedule

Camp operates on a structured daily schedule that includes a mix of indoor and outdoor activities such as sports, arts and crafts, group games, and swimming.

- Before care 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM
- Regular camp hours begin at 8:00 AM -5:00 PM
- After care 5:00 PM-6:00 PM
- Daily schedules may vary slightly by site and age group

Campers rotate through activities throughout the day with their assigned group. Some activities may take place outside or off-site depending on the program. Parents/Guardians should stay up to date with our weekly themes to ensure the best camp experience for their child

For a detailed daily schedule specific to your child's camp location, please contact your Camp Director.

Field Trips, Swim Days, Swim Test

- Some programs include field trips or special on-site events
- Advance notice and permission requirements will be communicated by the camp team
- Campers must follow all safety expectations during trips and off-site activities

Swimming & Swim Test

All campers may have the opportunity to participate in swimming. 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 levels are identified using wristbands or similar markers. Non-swimmers remain within arm's reach of staff and use appropriate safety equipment

Swim safety follows the **"Test, Mark, Protect"** approach

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.

What to Bring/What Not to Bring

Campers Should Bring:

- Backpack labeled with child's name
- Refillable water bottle

- Sunscreen (applied at home and brought to camp). 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.
- Bathing suit and towel on swim days
- Lunch and snacks
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Close-toed shoes

Please note that all items should be clearly labeled

Do Not Bring:

- Electronics (phones, tablets, gaming devices)
- Valuable personal items
- Toys or personal sports equipment unless requested by staff

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 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.

If prohibited items are brought to camp, they may be held by staff and returned at the end of the day. Personal belongings have a way of getting misplaced during camp.

Lunch and Snack

Campers must bring a packed lunch and snacks each day.

Lunch Guidelines:

- Pack a full lunch with enough food for an active day
- Include water or a low-sugar drink
- Include a balance of items such as protein, fruits, vegetables, and snacks
- Use a freezer pack to keep food fresh when needed
- Please do not pack food that needs to be microwaved

Please Avoid:

- Sugary drinks or soda
- Excessive sweets
- Peanut products (to the best of your ability - we are not peanut free but want to be mindful of campers who are)

Campers will not have access to vending machines during camp hours.

Trips (if applicable):

- Campers may bring limited spending money (recommended maximum of \$25)
- Money should be labeled and secured in an envelope or wallet

Daily Operations

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Parents/guardians are responsible for escorting their child to and from the designated camp location each day.

Campers must be dropped off and picked up during scheduled camp hours. Camp activities may take place indoors or outdoors, so families should follow site-specific instructions for arrival and dismissal.

Sign-In & Sign-Out Procedures

All campers must be signed in and out daily by an authorized adult.

A sign-in/sign-out system will be available at each site

A valid photo ID is required at pick-up.

Campers will only be released to individuals listed as authorized contacts in the camper's file or with written permission from a parent/guardian.

Camper Absence & Attendance

The YMCA of MEWSA does not offer make-up days for missed camp days. No refunds or credits will be issued for absences unless approved by the Camp Director.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the camp if their child will be absent.

Release of Children

For the safety of all campers, children will only be released to authorized individuals.

YMCA of MEWSA staff will not release a child to:

- Any individual not listed as an authorized contact
- Anyone without valid photo identification
- Any person who appears impaired or is deemed unsafe

If an authorized individual appears impaired, staff will not release the child and may contact emergency contacts or local authorities if necessary.

All situations will be documented and escalated to camp leadership.

Authorized Pick-Up, ID Requirements, and Custody Considerations

Parents/guardians must provide a list of authorized individuals permitted to pick up their child.

Authorized individuals must present a valid photo ID.

Changes to authorized pick-up must be submitted in writing.

If applicable, the parent/guardian should provide the YMCA of MEWSA with the appropriate legal documentation on file for any custody restrictions.

Staff will follow all legal documentation provided regarding custody and release of children.

Early Pick-Up

Early pick-up is permitted with prior notice.

A written note or communication must be provided indicating who will pick up the child and the expected time.

Campers may not be immediately available due to scheduled activities.
Early pick-up is not available for off-site or travel camp programs.

Late Pick-Up (Fees and Escalation Process)

Campers must be picked up by the end of the scheduled camp day.

Late pick-up fees:

- \$20 for the first 10 minutes
- \$2 per minute after

If a child is not picked up:

- Staff will contact parents/guardians and emergency contacts
- If no contact is made within 1 hour of closing, local authorities may be contacted

Repeated late pick-ups may result in suspension or removal from the program.

Registration Requirements

All campers must be registered prior to attending camp.

A completed registration and required deposit are needed to secure a spot.

Campers must have all required forms submitted by the communicated deadline or prior to the start of camp.

Enrollment is not considered complete until all documentation and payments are received.

Required Forms

The following forms must be completed and submitted prior to the start of camp (or by the deadline provided by the Camp Director):

- Immunization records
- Health history form
- Medical authorization form
- Emergency treatment plans (if applicable)

Additional supporting documents may be submitted to support your child's experience:

- IEPs or 504 plans
- Behavioral notes or intervention strategies

Failure to submit required forms may result in delayed start or removal from camp until documentation is complete.

Camp Fee Payment Schedule

Camp fees must be paid according to the following schedule:

- 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

Failure to meet payment deadlines may result in loss of enrollment.

Deposits and Fees

A \$50 non-refundable deposit is required for each week of camp, per child.

A \$10 fee will be applied to any registration changes.

All camp fees and deposits are non-refundable unless otherwise stated.

Cancellations, Credits, and Changes

All cancellations and schedule changes must be submitted in writing to the camp's front desk.

Changes to existing registrations are subject to applicable fees.

Requests are processed based on availability and program guidelines.

Credit Policy

Credits are not issued for missed days or absences.

Any exceptions must be approved by the Camp Director.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance may be available on a limited basis.

Applications must be submitted by the communicated deadline or prior to the start of camp.

Assistance is not guaranteed and is based on available funding.

Healthy and Safety

Medical Information

The YMCA of MEWSA has established relationships with each camp location and their local doctors, as well as JFK Hospital in Edison.

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

It is important to inform the YMCA of MEWSA of all allergies to medications, insects, and/or foods

All medications sent to camp must be in the original container and accompanied by the proper medical release form specifying dosage

Dispensation of Medication

Children must have current medical records prior to the start of camp.

No prescription or over-the-counter medication will be administered without:

- A doctor's note
- A completed medication authorization form

The medication form must include:

- Child's name
- Name of medication
- Reason for medication
- Dates to be administered
- Time to be administered
- Dosage

Each medication requires a separate form.

Medication must be delivered to the Camp Director in its original packaging prior to the start of camp.

If the medication ends at camp, the container it is in will be returned to the parent/guardian for proper disposal.

Allergy and Emergency Response

All allergy information must be documented on required camp forms and supported by a care plan when applicable.

In the event of an allergic reaction, trained staff will respond immediately in accordance with the child's documented care plan. This may include the administration of emergency medication (such as an EpiPen) and contacting emergency medical services. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately in the event of any allergic reaction.

Illness Policy

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

Illness During Camp Hours

If a child becomes ill during camp hours, a parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person will be contacted to pick up the camper.

The child will wait in the Camp Director's office until they are picked up. Parents/guardians are expected to arrange for immediate pick-up. If unable to do so, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide an alternate authorized pick-up person.

Parent Notification

Any injuries or incidents that occur during the camp day will be communicated to parents/guardians at pick-up.

If a child experiences a head injury or requires advanced medical attention, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

Emergency phone contact may be made in situations including, but not limited to:

- Severe injuries requiring medical attention

- Incidents requiring immediate pick-up due to behavior or health concerns

Each camper’s file includes emergency contact information. This process is typically initiated by the Camp Director but may be delegated to an appropriate staff member.

Communicable Diseases

The YMCA of MEWSA follows health guidelines regarding communicable diseases. The following illnesses are considered excludable:

Respiratory Illnesses	Mumps	Hepatitis A
Chicken Pox	Strep throat	Salmonella
German measles	Tuberculosis	Shigella
Hemophilus influenzae	Whooping Cough	Contact Illnesses
Measles	Gastrointestinal Illnesses	Impetigo
Meningococcus	Giardia Lamblia	Lice
		Scabies

Supervision and Child Protection

Active Supervision Expectations

The YMCA is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all campers.

Our staff maintain active supervision at all times by:

- Keeping all campers within sight and sound
- Staying engaged and present during all activities
- Monitoring campers during transitions and throughout the day

Supervision is maintained during all activities, including indoor and outdoor play, transitions, restroom use, and off-site programs.

Head Counts and Transitions

To ensure all campers are accounted for, staff conduct regular head counts throughout the day.

Head counts take place:

- Before and after transitions
- When entering or leaving activity spaces
- During field trips and off-site programming

Bathroom and Changing Procedures

Staff support campers during bathroom and changing routines in a way that prioritizes both safety and privacy.

- Campers are supervised while maintaining appropriate privacy
- Staff remain nearby and aware of all campers
- Appropriate boundaries are always maintained

Mandated Reporting Expectations

The YMCA takes the safety and well-being of all children seriously.

All staff are mandated reporters and are trained to:

- Recognize and respond to safety concerns
- Follow required reporting procedures

Any concerns related to a child's safety are handled promptly and in accordance with state guidelines.

Staff Responsibilities and Reporting Process

YMCA staff are expected to:

- Maintain professional and appropriate interactions with all campers
- Follow all supervision and safety procedures
- Report any concerns related to safety or well-being to camp leadership immediately

Our leadership team monitors programs regularly and supports staff in maintaining a safe, respectful, and positive camp environment.

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 Administration/EPI Pen Use
- CPR/First Aid
- Supervision

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.

Behavior and Discipline

Guidelines for Positive Discipline

At the YMCA of MEWSA, we use positive discipline to help children learn appropriate behavior in a supportive and respectful environment.

We do not use:

- Harsh language, shaming, or intimidation
- Physical punishment of any kind
- Food, rest, or activity as punishment

Instead, staff guide behavior by:

- Setting clear and consistent expectations
- Anticipating challenges and planning engaging activities
- Redirecting behavior when needed
- Offering choices and appropriate consequences
- Encouraging and reinforcing positive behavior
- Supporting children in developing self-control and problem-solving skills

Positive discipline focuses on teaching children what to do, building confidence, and creating a safe and respectful camp environment.

Camper Code of Conduct

All campers are expected to:

- Treat others with respect
- Follow staff directions
- Use appropriate language and behavior
- Keep hands and bodies to themselves
- Respect camp property and materials

Campers are expected to contribute to a safe and positive environment for everyone.

Bullying

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt them. It occurs when a person or group seeks to gain power over another at the expense of someone else.

Bullying can also occur through electronic means, including emails, text messages, social media, and other online platforms. These behaviors can impact campers both during and outside of camp.

At the YMCA of MEWSA, we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Each camper is expected to treat others with respect and contribute to a positive camp experience.

All incidents of bullying are taken seriously and addressed by camp leadership. Staff are trained to support positive peer interactions, encourage communication, and respond to concerns appropriately.

We encourage families to communicate any concerns with camp staff. Building strong relationships with campers and families helps us address concerns early and support a safe environment for all.

Escalation Process

When behavior concerns arise, staff will work to support the camper and address the situation appropriately.

Steps may include:

- Redirection and coaching
- Removal from an activity to regain self-control
- Documentation of behavior
- Communication with parents/guardians
- A meeting with camp leadership if needed

The goal is to work in partnership with families to support positive behavior.

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 are implemented in alignment with our positive behavior approach and the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

The YMCA does not tolerate behavior that harms other campers or staff. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Degrading or demeaning others
- Physical or verbal threats
- Harassment or intimidation

When a camper's behavior negatively impacts others, the following steps may be taken:

1. **First Warning:** Discussion of the incident with the Camp Director
2. **Second Warning:** Written behavior report and meeting with parent/guardian, counselor, and Camp Director. If suspension occurs, fees are non-refundable
3. **Third Warning:** Dismissal from camp. All fees for the current session are forfeited

In serious situations, suspension or dismissal may occur immediately at the discretion of the Camp Director.

Actions to Support Positive Behavior

Staff take proactive steps to support campers and prevent behavior concerns from escalating.

These may include:

- Redirecting behavior and adjusting activities
- Reassessing the environment to better meet camper needs
- Using positive language and reinforcement
- Applying appropriate, age-based consequences
- Providing brief, supervised time away from activities when needed
- Documenting behavior and maintaining confidentiality
- Communicating with parents/guardians at pick-up
- Providing written behavior reports when applicable
- Meeting with families to develop strategies for success

Suspension / Expulsion Policy

The YMCA is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all campers.

A camper may be suspended or dismissed from the program if behavior:

- Poses a safety risk to themselves or others
- Involves physical or verbal threats
- Repeatedly disrupts the camp environment
- Does not improve after intervention and support

In some cases, serious behavior may result in immediate suspension or dismissal.

If a camper is suspended or dismissed:

- Parents/guardians will be notified

- Fees for missed time are non-refundable

The YMCA also reserves the right to remove a camper if families do not follow camp policies, including payment, pick-up procedures, or respectful conduct.

Parent Expectations

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.

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.

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

Please sign and return this page to your Camp Director prior to your child's first day of camp.

We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and engaging camp experience for all children. Our policies are designed to ensure the well-being of every camper and the smooth operation of our programs.

By enrolling your child in YMCA of MEWSA camps, you acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to follow the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

You also understand that:

- Policies are in place to protect the safety and experience of all campers
- Failure to follow camp policies may result in suspension or removal from the program
- Policies are applied consistently across all YMCA of MEWSA camp locations

Communication

We value strong partnerships with families and encourage open communication throughout the camp season.

If you have questions, concerns, or need support, please contact your Camp Director.

Acknowledgment Signature

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Camper Name(s): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____