

YMCA CAMP PINWOOD

Parent Information Guide

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

With what organizations is Pinewood affiliated?

YMCA Camp Pinewood is owned and operated by the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. As a YMCA, our mission is, "To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy mind, body and spirit for all."
We Build Strong Kids, Strong Families and Strong Communities.

Are you licensed or accredited by any organizations?

We are licensed by the State of Michigan as an overnight summer camp. In order to gain this license we are required to follow rules and guidelines as set by the state.

In addition, we are inspected annually by a State of Michigan Department of Human Services representative. This license is also dependent annually upon passing both fire and health inspections.

We are also accredited by the American Camping Association. The ACA sends other camp directors to inspect our camp every three years to ensure that we are running safe programming at safe facilities.

Why is accreditation through the American Camp Association important?

Accreditation indicates that a camp is willing to have its operations scrutinized and reviewed by camping professionals who know and value quality camping. The ACA logo is your assurance that Camp Pinewood is committed to the highest standards established for the camping industry.

Aside from the traditional activities (archery, swimming, etc.), what special activities will my camper enjoy?

Beach Day – During two-week sessions all campers take a one day trip to Muskegon State Park for a beach extravaganza. This trip usually occurs on Friday and is attended by all camp staff.

Evening Activities – Evening Activities occur each day, beginning around 8pm. These activities typically involve the entire camp population in cabin challenges and camper games. Some examples are: Capture the Flag, Carnival, Pinewood Idol, Hawaiian Luau, Stink Tag and the Dutch Auction.

Outpost Camping – To enhance the wilderness experience, we offer cabin groups the chance to sleep in teepees or platform tents for a one-night overnight. Campers pack their gear, head out to their campsite, and enjoy games and nature activities led by their counselors. Campers return to camp the following morning for breakfast.

Raggers Program - The optional YMCA Raggers Program is designed to help campers grow in spirit, mind and body. This is done through personal goal setting. Campers who are **12 years or older**, can choose to accept the challenge of the Ragger. Campers work with camp counselors to plan goals that will help them: **(1)** Improve their relationship with God, **(2)** Better themselves, and **(3)** Become more a part of their community or school. Then they will put together action steps on how to achieve these goals throughout the school year, as well as at camp.

What does camp do for campers celebrating their birthdays while at camp?

Birthdays - Campers celebrating their birthday at camp will receive a camp-baked birthday cake to be enjoyed with their cabin mates. A reminder phone call to us 3 – 4 days in advance is helpful if the birthday is on the first or second day of the camp session. Birthdays at camp are a lot of fun, especially when the entire camp sings "Happy Birthday!" When camp counselors celebrate their birthdays at Camp Pinewood, it is a camp tradition to toss them into Lake Echo!

How can I keep in touch with my camper while they are at camp?

Mail –Mail is very important to campers. Plan on letters taking 3 to 4 days to reach camp. We can hold letters received before camp starts and deliver them on the first day of camp. Mail is separated into cabin mailboxes and distributed by snack time each evening.

Address camper mail to:

Camper's Name
Session #
YMCA Camp Pinewood
4230 Obenauf Rd.
Twin Lake, MI 49457

Fax – This is a great way to contact your camper and to not have to worry about the timing of letters in the US Mail. Please make sure your fax cover letter has your campers' name, the camp session number, and cabin name. Fax # 231-821-0487
Limit only 3 faxes per camper per week.

Care Packages - If sending a care package, we ask your cooperation in sending **ONLY ONE CARE PACKAGE TO YOUR CAMPER PER SESSION, PLEASE!** Any food sent must be consumed the day the package arrives. No food can be stored in the cabin due to animals and insects. Cards, party favors, and goofy toys usually found at dollar stores make for excellent substitutions for food in care packages.

What about phone calls and/or email?

Phone Calls - Our policy on phone calls has been made in the best interest of the campers. We do not allow campers to make or receive phone calls, except in an emergency, under the guidance of the Camp Director. It has been our experience that phone calls to or from home make the adjustment to camp life more difficult.

Email – E-mails can be sent to your child through Jessica, our Summer Camp Coordinator, at johlmann@ymcachgo.org. Please make sure that you have the camper's name and session number on the subject line of the email. Please do not send e-mails that require viewing by the camper (e-cards or large photos). E-mails are printed out and delivered in cabin mailboxes. Limit only 3 emails per camper per week.

How is health care managed at camp?

Camp Health Center - All of our staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. In addition, a health officer lives on-site to handle any illness or injury. To manage all cases of illness and injury on site, camp is equipped with: rescue and backboard equipment, first aid kits in all cabins and program areas, an AED for use in cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis kits for major allergic reactions, and a general supply of over the counter pain relievers, cold and flu medicine, and remedies for upset stomachs. In the event that outside medical facilities are needed, our local emergency department provides help within 10 minutes. We have 3 hospitals and a medical center all located within 25 minutes of the camp. The medical center is typically our first choice when using outside medical facilities.

Health History - The health and well-being of your child is our number one concern. The attached Health History Form must be completed and signed by the camper's parent/legal guardian and a doctor. **Please bring your camper's Health History Form to the bus stop or to camp when you drop off your camper for their session.** If your child needs special medical care, please call and inform the director so that we are aware and can explain our health care procedures.

All returning campers need to complete a new Health History Form each year, although physicals can be accepted if they have been done within 24 months prior to the camp visit.

Medications - Please indicate on the Health History Form if your camper takes any medication. If the camper has medication: indicate the purpose, dosage and frequency to be given. If your child has occasional allergies or asthma, be sure to send the medication even if they are not currently taking it. Please do not take your child off any current medications for ADD or any related conditions.

All medications must be in their original bottle, labeled with camper name and correct dosage or they will be returned to you at check in time. Please put all medication bottles, vitamins and directions in a zip lock bag and label appropriately. You will need to turn in all medications at the bus stop or check-in table – **DO NOT pack medication in your child's luggage.**

The Health Center is stocked with over the counter medications for pain relief, fever care, and stomach upsets. While you may send such over the counter medications for your child, it is not necessary. All medications are kept in the camp's Health Center and are dispensed by the Camp Health Officer.

Asthma - If your child requires an inhaler to be with them at all times, then it will be carried by their counselor throughout the day. As-needed inhalers are kept in the Health Center. If your child's asthma is very sensitive to the outdoors, in woodsy and warm conditions, contact the director to discuss options.

Special Needs - Please indicate on the Health History Form if your camper has any special non-medical needs that the staff should be aware of. We can also make accommodations for those needing to bring supplemental food due to food allergies.

Medical Notification Policy - The Camp Health Officer and/or Camp Director will notify parent/guardian immediately in the event of a *serious* illness or accident. Please be sure to include all home, work, cell, pager and emergency contacts and numbers on the health form. Generally, parent/guardians will not be notified in the event of basic first aid (ex. Small cuts, scrapes, etc.) or the administration of over the counter medicine for minor illness (ex. Upset stomach, head ache, etc.).

How does camp handle instances of bedwetting?

Bedwetting - Our staff is trained to deal with bedwetting discreetly, working with your child one-on-one. Campers are instructed to ask their counselor for help and every effort is made to prevent accidents. We encourage parents to talk to their child's counselor about bedwetting on opening day at camp. If your child is riding the bus, send a note with him/her for the counselor. Soiled laundry is discreetly washed daily. The dignity of every camper is of the highest priority to our staff.

How does camp handle homesickness?

Homesickness - Occasionally campers become homesick – usually between the first and second night of camp. Our staff are trained to identify this early and to take actions such as pairing the camper with a friend in the cabin and taking extra measures to prevent down-time. Rarely do campers become so homesick that these measures won't work.

As parents, it is important that you refrain from talking about homesickness prior to camp or in your letters to them. Campers look forward to hearing from their parents. We recommend 2-3 letters per session. Keep your letters cheery and newsy without implying that you can't get along without them. We don't want to discourage anyone, but we usually have more "childsick" parents than we do "homesick" campers. Please do not present "going home early" or "calling home" as an option, as it only encourages homesickness. In the event that staff efforts to get a homesick camper involved do not work, the camp director will work with the parents to achieve a positive end result.

What does our camper need to pack?

Clothing – A packing list is included with this packet. On that note, campers should bring enough clothing to last the entire session. Pack simple clothes that you don't mind getting dirty, muddy, wet or possibly ruined. **Please clearly label all clothing** so that it may be returned promptly should it become misplaced. Laundry service is not available to campers, but in special circumstances (illness, accidents, etc.), clothing / belongings will be washed by staff on site.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CLOTHING ITEMS TO CAMP:

- T shirts that are sexually suggestive or explicit.
- Clothing that advertises alcohol or tobacco.
- Clothing that contains symbols, which are drug, tobacco, alcohol, or gang related.
- Clothing that does not appropriately cover the body or underwear (spaghetti strap tank tops, halter tops, ripped shorts, short skirts, etc.)

**One rule of thumb is: if you can't wear it at school, you can't wear it at camp.
Parents: know what your children are packing and advise them appropriately.**

**Camp Pinewood is not responsible for the loss or theft of articles.
Campers are encouraged not to bring valuable items or expensive clothing to camp.**

Luggage - Mark each piece of your camper's luggage with the camper's name and return bus stop or the word "driving". Masking tape and duct tape work well. This helps our staff and you in avoiding misplaced luggage. Don't forget to mark your camper's dirty laundry bag, sleeping bag and pillow.

Spending Money – NO CASH!!! While at camp your child will have access to our camp store. Items available for purchase include: shirts, hats, stuffed animals and other souvenirs. It is not required that you establish a store account for your child. For parents who wish for their children to have access to this store there is only one method of payment for store accounts:

- You may provide a credit card number in advance that will be charged with the exact amount spent by your camper. Charges will be applied to your credit card after the end of the session. Please complete the enclosed credit card form and bring it to the bus stop or check in.
- **No cash** will be accepted for payment at Camp Pinewood. Please do not allow your camper to bring cash to camp to avoid it being misplaced.

The use of money is an important step in a child's development. We encourage you to discuss with your child how best to budget and spend their (your) money. The counselors will also help to make sure that they do not spend all of their money at one time.

What items need to be left at home?

Camping is a great opportunity for your child to socialize, meet new people, and try new things. Sometimes items brought from home can get in the way of that goal, or create problems within the cabin. Please refer to this list, but also use your best judgment as far as the goals you and your camper have in mind for their experience at camp.

Items with Restrictions:

Cell Phones are collected from all campers and stored in our camp safe during the duration of their camp stay. These are returned upon departure from Camp Pinewood.

iPods and Gaming Systems are only allowed inside the camper's cabin, and then only used at the discretion of the camper's counselor. iPods and Gaming Systems that are used at inappropriate times or outside of the camper's cabin will be collected and stored in the camp safe during the duration of the camper's stay.

Video Recording is not allowed at Camp Pinewood. Any device used to record videos will be collected and stored in the camp safe during the duration of the camper's stay.

DO NOT BRING:

Lap Top Computers, Knives, Fireworks, Tobacco Products, Alcohol Products, Expensive Jewelry, Family Heirlooms, Trading Cards

**ANY CAMPER DISCOVERED WITH TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ALCOHOL, FIREARMS OR
KNIVES MAY BE SENT HOME.**

How is lost and found handled?

Lost and Found – The general rule of camp is, "If you want it to return home, then you better put your name on it." Mark each article that your child brings to camp. The best method is to use permanent ink to mark items with your camper's FULL NAME. DO NOT USE INITIALS! Remember that we have close to 1,200 campers here each year.

If you find that your camper has left some articles of clothing, please call camp. We will make every effort possible to locate your child's missing item(s). If your child's item is found, we will send them back to you through the U.S. Postal Service. Any unclaimed item at the end of the summer will be donated to one of several local charities.

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How are behavior issues handled at camp?

Behavior Management – When campers first gather as a cabin group, their cabin counselors lead them through the development of a cabin behavior contract. Campers discuss what behaviors will contribute to a terrific session at camp. They also discuss what behaviors would bring down the cabin group.

Finally, the campers agree on lines of action to be taken if someone is displaying these negative behaviors. Generally the consequences include counselor speaking privately with those involved, small chores around the cabin, and those bringing the group down apologizing. To help manage behavior beyond this cabin contract, there are several lines of administrative staff to help encourage the cabin to work together and to reverse negative behaviors. Campers who are disruptive, unruly, display inappropriate behavior, or require an undue amount of attention from the counselors will meet with the Camp Director to evaluate their behavior. Parents will be notified, and at any time, the camper may be sent home.

It will be the parent's responsibility to arrange transportation for the child if he / she is being sent home.

Corporal Punishment - YMCA Camp Pinewood **DOES NOT** subscribe to corporal punishment as a means to discipline campers. A camper will never be deprived of sleep or food, placed alone without supervision, or subjected to excessive physical exercise or restraint. Camp Pinewood staff will never withhold kindness from a camper because of any behavior issue.

Fighting - YMCA Camp Pinewood does not tolerate campers who harm other campers; whether it is physical or verbal fighting, including: degrading, demeaning, threatening other campers, or making fun of others. Any camper involved in fighting is subject to discipline and may be sent home. The parent/guardian will be contacted by the Camp Director.

It will be the parent's responsibility to arrange transportation for the child if he / she is being sent home.

Gangs – In order to maintain a peaceful and safe atmosphere, it is requested that:

Campers must refrain from any gang-related activity while at camp. No camper shall:

- Wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs or other things which are evidence of membership or affiliation with a gang.
- Commit any act or omission, or use any speech, either verbal or non-verbal (gestures, handshakes, etc.) showing membership or affiliation with a gang. Any camper who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

Obscenity - Obscene, profane or vulgar language, written, oral or expressed by symbols is not tolerated. Being respectful to staff and other campers is important and expected. Any camper who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Social Conduct - At camp, camper conduct should reflect concern for others. Camp Pinewood is the wrong place for any type of public displays of affection. Intimacy and physical contact are treated as a disciplinary matter.

Stealing - Stealing is a violation of Michigan law. A camper who becomes involved in a theft of camp property, another camper's belongings, or a staff member's belongings is subject to disciplinary action and possible police involvement.

Search and Seizure - A camper and/or the camper's belongings may be searched by camp administrators whenever they have a reasonable suspicion that the camper has violated or is violating both the law or camp rules bearing on order or safety and that the search will produce evidence of the violation. The camper will be invited to be present for the search when feasible. Any items found in violation of the law or camp rules will be confiscated and may be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Our first and foremost concern is to maintain the integrity of the camp's environment and the protection of our staff and campers.

Vandalism - Campers involved in vandalism or malicious mischief either against the camp property or against another camper or staff member are disciplined immediately.

Payment to repair damage incurred as a result of the vandalism is the responsibility of the camper's parent / guardian.

In the event of an emergency at home, how can I contact someone at camp?

Emergency Contacts at Camp – In the event of a home emergency, please feel free to contact camp at any time and speak to one of our directors: Erik Bengston - Executive Director, Billy Rankin – Director of Camping

Phone Number: 231-821-2421

When is my balance due for all camp fees including bussing?

Fees - Balance of fees (including transportation fee) must be paid 30 Days prior to your camp session. Registrations received within one month of the beginning of the session will be required to pay the full fee at that time.

What is camp's policy on refunding my money in the instance of illness, behavior problems, or homesickness?

Refunds/Cancellation - The \$100.00 deposit is non-refundable, but may be transferred to another camp session within the same calendar year. Balance of fees minus the deposit is refundable only if canceled 2 week prior to camp or for a medical reason. A signed doctor's note must be sent to the Camp Pinewood Office for any medical reason. Campers going home during the session due to medical illness will receive a prorated refund. Refunds are not issued for campers going home early due to disciplinary action or homesickness. Refunds will be made in the same form as the main payment. Credit card reimbursements should appear within two weeks of your request. Check or money order reimbursements will be sent by mail 4 – 6 weeks after cancellation.

YMCA Camp Pinewood – Registration Office

4230 Obenauf Rd.
Twin Lake, MI 49457

Phone: 231.821.2421
Fax: 231.821.2421