

San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA Camping Services Branch

YMCA Camp ELK & YMCA Camp Coulter Pines



Resident Camp Parent Handbook



Notes/Questions



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA Camping Services

Resident Camp Parent Handbook

Congratulations and thank you for choosing the San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA for your summer camp experience. Ever since the YMCA came to America over 150 years ago, camping has been a strong tradition and cornerstone of YMCA work. The San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA Camping Services Department strives to continue this fine tradition.

Our two residential camp locations are situated in the heart of the Angeles National Forest in California's San Gabriel Mountains. We provide a wide range of engaging, unique, and fun camp activities and programs to build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

We invite you to come and share the YMCA camp experience.

YMCA Mission

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Our Philosophy

At YMCA Camp E.L.K. and YMCA Camp Coulter Pines, we believe every camper should have the following opportunities:

To participate actively in a community in which they are accepted for who they are

To receive guidance and support in setting and achieving new goals

To learn new skills

To increase self-awareness, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-esteem

To expand their sense of responsibility for the shared experiences of the community

To develop healthy, supportive relationships with peers and mentors

To explore and appreciate nature in a beautiful outdoor setting

We put these beliefs to work

At YMCA Camp E.L.K. and Camp Coulter Pines, we understand the value of learning how to be an active and productive citizen of the community and the world. We want our campers to learn from and with people different than themselves. We take care in hiring a staff which reflects a wide range of backgrounds in order to expose our campers to an array of cultures and experiences.

In addition, our outdoor activities encourage campers to expand their sense of their own capabilities, while also helping them participate in the achievements of the group. We believe in making use of reflective activities to help campers incorporate their experiences into a larger worldview.

Our activities include values clarification and character development through non-denominational devotionals, daily reflections at the end of the day, cabin chats, and ceremonies.

We also make sure our campers have tons of fun! Campfire time is filled goofy skits, stories and sing-alongs. Campers have many opportunities to be adventurous during games and activity times, to play, sing, splash, and have a great time while learning valuable skills.

Program Content

Camp consists of both group and individual experiences in the following areas:

- Educational Activities: Home safety, accident prevention, daily living skills, games and activities to promote cognitive development.
- Recreational Activities: Sports, games, crafts, dramatics, hiking, archery, low ropes, climbing wall, canoeing and swimming will be offered.
- Social/Emotional Activities: Large and small group games, role-playing, peer relationship building, team building, campfire, good self-esteem and leadership qualities will be included.
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner: The YMCA will provide all meals. You must pack a sack lunch for arrival day. We follow the State Department of Education's guidelines for nutrition. Our staff will try to accommodate most dietary needs. There is always plenty of nourishing food available.
- Resting Time: We have a short resting time during camp each day. During this time, campers must remain in their bunk resting but not necessarily sleeping.
- Every week, campers get to go on a hike to expose them to the surrounding forest and nature. Campers are evaluated on endurance to see which hike best fits their abilities.
- Themes are used during the week to help make meals fun for all. Different themes used are Crazy Dress Up, Hawaiian Night, Sports Dinner, Etc...

Program Sites and Staffing

The San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA has administered a Resident Camp Program for almost 65 years. In 1994 we purchased YMCA Camp Coulter Pines and in the summer of 2001 we purchased what is now called YMCA Camp Edward L. Kopszywa "ELK". Both facilities are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). American Camp Association is the national accrediting body for camp programs. ACA camps meet over 300 standards for health, safety, staff, and program quality.

YMCA Camp ELK is located at an elevation of 5750' and YMCA Camp Coulter Pines is located at an elevation of 6100'. Both camps are located just outside of Wrightwood, California in the beautiful Angeles National Forest.

Staff and volunteers are hired for their experience, related education, enthusiasm and expertise in working with school-age children. All staff and volunteers undergo extensive training and background checks and clearance through the department of justice and certification in such areas as lifeguard, CPR, first aid, waterfront lifeguard, archery, ropes course, etc. Adult program staff members supervise each program area. Each cabin is supervised by at least one adult cabin leader. In most cases, a Counselor In Training "CIT" is also assigned to each cabin group.

Enrollment

All registrations will be on a “first come, first served” basis with until each session is full. To enroll in a camp session, contact your local San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA branch or the Camping Services office at 760-249-3822

Each child must have all forms completed and turned into our office at least two weeks prior to the start of the camp session. If forms are not completed and turned in, the child will not be allowed into the program. Remember all deposits and payments are non-refundable and non-transferable. The San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA accepts all children regardless of national origin, race, sex or religious beliefs.

Medical Exam

Your child must have a medical examination performed within 12 months of arriving at camp. If your child has had an examination for some school, sports or activity, you may fill in the results obtained from your doctor’s office. Examination is for determining fitness to engage in strenuous activities.

Medications and Health Care

Do not pack medications in your child’s luggage. This includes vitamins and over-the-counter medication. **Please include enough medication for the entire camp session plus four more additional days. The reason for the additional medication is in case of emergency, we will have enough medication to continue to care for your child in the event the child must stay at camp longer than the scheduled camp session.** Give medications to staff at the check in table on departure day. All medication must be in the original packaging or prescription bottle/package with the dosages indicated by the doctor. Do not send any unlabeled medications to camp with your child. All dosages and indications must match the prescription. If your child’s dosage of a particular medication is different from indicated on the bottle/package you must get the prescription changed by your doctor prior to attending camp. Place all medication containers in a plastic bag with the campers name printed on the front with clear instructions. The YMCA staff includes health care personnel trained in CPR, First Aid and Health Care procedures. Personnel are on site 24 hours a day to handle any first aid and issue all medication. In the event a camper needs additional medical attention, the camp is in close proximity to county EMS services from multiple agencies. Safety is stressed from the beginning to the end of camp with our “buddy system”, complete safety orientations, and practiced fire / emergency drills.

Payment Policies

- A. All fees must be paid in advance. All fees and deposits are **NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE.**
 1. Make checks and money orders payable to: San Gabriel Valley YMCA.
- B. Late Payments, Returned Checks, Late Pick-Up
 1. Returned checks must be paid in full in cash, money order or cashier’s check. There is an additional fee of \$35 for each returned check.
 2. Children must be picked up at the return site no later than 3:00 pm. A \$25.00 late fee per family is charged for every 30 minutes after 3:00 pm.
- C. Withdrawals, Drops and Absences:
 1. There are no refunds for absences or no-shows.
 2. There are no refunds for going home early for any reason. This includes dismissal, exclusion, illness or medical reasons.

Subsidy or Scholarship Information

To receive a scholarship, families must meet eligibility requirements. Parents must complete a financial assistance application prior to receiving approval and provide verification of the following:

- Income Verification (must be the most recent Income tax W 1040 Form).
- Current paycheck stub.
- Picture ID (driver's license or CA ID).

Sign-in / Departure Day

Campers can start checking in at 8:00 am. Please try to park on the street, as the parking lot is full of children and parents. A parent or guardian must accompany the child for drop off on departure day. Parents must sign in their child for Camp at the tables in front of the YMCA and confirm we have all the required documentation and payment has been made in full. After you have checked in your child will be screened by camp staff for lice, athletes' foot, recent illness and any other noticeable ailment. Take luggage to the bus area and obtain a luggage tag from the camp staff. Luggage is limited to two bags plus sleeping bag. Please put your child's name on all luggage and personal items going to camp including sleeping bags. Please stay with your child until they load the bus.

Each camper is required to bring a sack lunch on the first day of camp. Please do not pack this lunch in your child's luggage and make sure their name is on it. The bus will depart to camp at approximately 9:30 am from the YMCA facility. If a child is late on departure day and misses the bus, the parent / guardian will be responsible for transporting the child to camp and the costs incurred.

Sign-out / Return Day

We will return from camp around 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm. You can call the YMCA for a more precise time. You can pick up your child from the YMCA. ***A full signature (first and last name) and photo identification is required.*** People authorized on the information and emergency forms may only pick up children. This is for your child's protection. **Anyone without proper authorization or identification will not be allowed to sign-out the child.** In case of an emergency, a parent may give temporary permission for a child to be picked up. The temporary permission must be in writing; no phone calls will be accepted. The Camp Services Office fax number is 760-249-4492 or contact you YMCA branch office.

No person under the age of twenty-one (21) may drop-off or pick-up a child (ren) unless the person has written permission by the parents, releasing the San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA of all liability.

If you are anticipating a late pick-up, please contact the YMCA and inform them of your late arrival. The following will take place:

1. If we have not received a call by 4:00 pm, then the emergency contacts will be contacted.
2. If you or an emergency contact person has not picked up your child by 5:00 pm; then the local police authorities will be contacted.

Emergencies

If your child becomes ill at camp, he or she will be isolated from the other children. You may be contacted to come and pick your child up, as our facilities are not equipped to take care of ill children for long periods of time. If you are unable to leave work, you must arrange for another person to pick-up your child. If you cannot be reached, we will contact someone on your authorization list. Please keep the camp staff informed of current home, cell and work telephone numbers of all persons listed on the emergency form.

If you plan to be out of town during the time your son or daughter is at camp, you must state so and give a number where you can be reached and have another designated adult available to pick up your child if the situation warrants. If your child is injured, the camp director will take whatever steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care if warranted. These steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attempt to contact a parent or guardian.
2. Attempt to contact you or any persons listed on your emergency information
3. If we cannot contact you and/ or the authorized people on the emergency form, we will do one or all of the following:
 - Call paramedics
 - Call an ambulance
 - Have the child taken to the nearest hospital accompanied by two staff members.

In case of a major emergency, camp staff will stay with the children as long as necessary and will take whatever steps necessary to insure their safety. In the event of evacuation you will be contacted and told where your child can be picked up or call the Covina YMCA office at 626-339-6221. Children will only be released to the authorized people listed on the enrollment documents. ID is required for pick up of child. If, in the opinion of the staff, a child needs immediate medical attention, the San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA will not assume any financial responsibility for this action. You, as the parent or guardian, are responsible for any medical costs incurred as a result of injury or illness while your child is at camp. Be sure to provide accurate information regarding your insurance on the Health History Form.

Cabin Assignments

Cabin assignments are based primarily on age and by gender. When brothers or sisters come to camp together, it is our practice to put them in separate cabins. They still have opportunities to see each other during the week, and generally have a more positive experience by NOT being in the same cabin group. You may request to have your child with a friend (if they are about the same age)... there is a space to indicate this on the registration form. Groups of three or more cannot be guaranteed the same cabin assignment.

Camp Animals

Camp is located in the Angeles National Forest and is home to all kinds of animals. Bears, squirrels, chipmunks, snakes, coyotes, birds and much more inhabit the surrounding forest. Camp staff takes every precaution when it comes to the safety of your child. Campers are instructed how to act when and if they encounter any of the wildlife at camp. Camp also has domestic animals such as camp dogs and camp cats. Each camper is assigned a buddy for the day and or week. Campers are not allowed to walk camp without their buddy. No animals of any kind shall be brought to camp.

Clothing / Additional Items

Activities planned are sometimes messy; please dress your child in play clothes. Do not pack new school clothes. Please mark all clothing, jackets and bags with your child's name. Lost and found items will be kept one month and then discarded.

Camp is at an elevation of 5700 feet – 6400 feet. Your child will spend 90% of their time outdoors. Please provide sun block and lip balm for their protection. Other helpful items to make your child's stay at camp more enjoyable are bug spray, water bottles, disposable camera, post cards, and stamps. **Please do not send any money to camp.** Money will only get lost. There is nothing to spend money on at camp. We believe in an inclusive experience for all participants regardless of financial status. Therefore, all participants receive the same experience creating for an equal experience for all.

Non-Acceptable Clothing

1. Tube tops
2. Open-toed shoes of any kind (i.e. sandals, flip flops, partially open front or back)
3. Inappropriate slogan shirts, hats or clothes (profanity, sexual content, alcohol, drug or tobacco related content).
4. Inappropriate swimwear. One-piece suits are preferred.

If you think that an item is not appropriate, it probably is not, please do not bring it. If you still have questions, call our office for clarification. The directors have the right to determine what is or is not appropriate.

Toys and Belongings from Home

Since our program provides a wide variety of toys and games, we discourage children from bringing personal toys, electronics or other such items. If items from home are brought to camp, staff cannot be responsible for their safe return. The following items are not allowed at camp:

- Drugs, alcohol, materials with sexual content/nudity
- Radio or tape player, MP3's, Hand held video games, TVs
- Animals
- Cell phones, blackberries, I-phones or any other communication device.
- Fireworks, matches, lighters
- Personal Sports Equipment
- Knives or any other weapons
- Motorized vehicles of any kind
- Money

If you think that an item is not appropriate, it probably is not, please do not bring it. If you still have questions, call our office for clarification. The directors have the right to determine what is or is not appropriate.

Swimming

Children must follow the regulations in order to participate. Other activities will be provided for children not interested in using the swimming pool. Please read and discuss the following topics with your child.

Regulations

- All participants must take a swim test at the start of the camp session to demonstrate their ability to swim. Non-swimmers will be noted by the staff and given a bracelet indicating they are a non-swimmer and may only use the shallow end of the pool.
- All children must shower/rinse before entering pool.
- Only children 7 years or older are allowed to swim on their own.
- Any child or person with an open wound, lesion or scab will not be permitted in the pool.
- No rough play is allowed in or around the pool. Any one caught participating in any rough play will be put on time out. Splashing, spitting, slapping water or pushing people into the pool will not be tolerated.
- No gum chewing is allowed in or around the pool area.
- No food or drinks are permitted in or around the pool area.
- No running, diving, pushing or other activity deemed inappropriate by the staff.

Acceptable Clothing/Swimming Devices

- Swim suits only
- NO leotards or body suits
- NO Jean shorts or cut offs
- No shorts below the knee
- Swimming goggles allowed
- One-piece swim suits for girls are preferred and suggested.

Homesickness / Letters / Care Packages

Homesickness is a very normal reaction to being away from the comforts and routines of family life. It is normal and in fact is not confined to young children away from home for the first time but also to older campers as well.

Therefore, if you think your child may be homesick the first and most important factor in ensuring your child's success is to let your child know it is normal. Let your child know that you have full confidence that despite a little homesickness camp will be an incredible experience. Do not tell your child "how much you will miss them" prior to camp. In some cases, the parent is more the cause of homesickness than the child is.

Mail / Care Packages

Receiving a letter at camp is one of the most exciting times for a camper. Some of our campers have never experienced how it feels to receive mail. If you plan to send mail to your child, we suggest sending the mail as early as the week before your child comes to camp but no later than Monday of the camp session. We encourage all of our campers to write and send mail. You can also fax your child at 760-249-4492. Campers are not allowed to fax back.

If you would like to send a care package to your child, do not forget to send enough items for the entire cabin unit, about 13 people. We encourage sharing at camp.

You can send care packages through the U.S. Postal Service. Please address mail to your child as follows:

For campers at YMCA Camp ELK:

YMCA Camp ELK
(Your child's name)
(Session Dates)
P.O. Box 2828
Wrightwood, CA 92397

For campers at YMCA Camp Coulter Pines:

YMCA Camp Coulter Pines
(Your child's name)
(Session Dates)
P.O. Box 2828
Wrightwood, CA 92397

Behavior Management

Children are expected to respect the adult leaders in the program and to follow their directions. All rules are directed towards avoiding injury to participants, staff, administrators and property. Staff works to establish an environment of positive discipline. The rules are:

- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Follow directions of adults respectfully.
- Treat other campers with courtesy and respect.
- Use appropriate language (NO PROFANITY)
- Settle disagreements by discussing them.
- Use equipment properly.
- No playing outside of camp boundaries.
- Stay in your own cabin.
- No running.
- Do not enter off limit / staff areas.
- Do not enter activity areas unless supervised.

Corporal punishment is not used at any time with the children. Staff may use some or all of the following methods helping children follow these rules:

- Positive statements.
- Redirect to another activity.
- Problem solving by child verbalizing concerns and finding acceptable solutions.
- Give acceptable choices.
- Give privileges and duties for good behavior.
- Have children make the rules within program policy.
- Time out from activities

If necessary, staff will keep parents informed of their child's problem(s) and what has been done to solve the problem. If the above methods do not accomplish the self-control necessary for the child to fit into camp, the staff will request a phone conference with the parents to discuss the incident(s) and /or problem(s).

If it is decided that the program does not meet the needs of the child or that the child is unable to fit within the structure of the program, the child will have to withdraw from the program and parents will need to pick up their camper at the campsite. There are no refunds for any camper being sent home.

Please keep us informed of any concerns or problems so that staff can be sensitive to each child's needs. The staff would like to work as a team with parents to provide the best environment for your child's growth and development.

Grounds for Immediate Dismissal:

1. Child physically confronting staff leader, adult or another child.
2. Child running away from group, leaving camp facility without authorization.
3. Damage to property. Parents will be held financially responsible for the damage to any property (including another child).
4. Repeated unwillingness to cooperate or comply with program rules and expectations on the part of either the child or parent/guardian may also result in dismissal.
5. Act of physical and/or verbal violence or threat thereof from either parent/guardian or child.
6. Possession of weapons of any type is prohibited.
7. Sneaking out of your cabin.
8. Found in another cabin without permission.
9. Drugs, tobacco, sexual materials or alcohol.

All rules and policies are strictly enforced. The safety and security of our campers is of paramount importance to our staff. Therefore, any criminal act(s) or failure to abide by camp rules will result in dismissal and removal from camp with NO REFUND.

In addition, parents, guardians, or relatives are responsible for picking up their camper in Wrightwood (including expenses to do so) should it become necessary to send a camper home.

Thank you for choosing the San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA for your camp experience. We hope you have found this handbook helpful. If you have other questions please contact your local YMCA branch for help or contact the Camping Services Office.

San Gabriel Valley Family YMCA
Camping Services Office
YMCA Camp E.L.K. & YMCA Camp Coulter Pines
P.O. Box 2828
Wrightwood, CA 92397
760-249-3822 phone
760-249-4492 fax
Email: jemery@sgvymca.org or tdelgado@sgvymca.org