

## WELCOME TO DAY CAMP!

The YMCA is the nation's leader in camping, offering outdoor programming for over 100 years. The McGaw YMCA serves approximately 200 children in day camp programs each summer and we are excited to have your camper experience what the YMCA has to offer. You are in for a fun-filled, exciting summer!

## MCGAW YMCA MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

**MISSION:** The McGaw YMCA is an open, charitable membership association that promotes growth in spirit, mind and body through programs and services for all.

**VISION:** The McGaw YMCA will be Evanston's lead collaborative partner in strengthening the community.

### OUR 4 CORE VALUES

- **Caring:** We demonstrate sincere concern for others, their needs and wellbeing.
- **Honesty:** We tell the truth and demonstrate reliability and trustworthiness.
- **Respect:** We treat others as we would want to be treated and value the worth of every person.
- **Responsibility:** We do what is right and are accountable for our choices and actions.

## ABOUT OUR CAMP

At Day Camp, our goal is to provide a safe, creative, active environment for campers to experience outdoor adventures, try new things and grow physically, mentally and creatively. Our focus at day camp is to encourage campers to demonstrate our four core values; Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility while promoting an environment that promotes belonging, achievement, and positive relationships. Keeping our mission and purpose in the forefront allows us to reach our goal of the YMCA pillars of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

## OUR STAFF – PROFESSIONAL ROLE MODELS

Our Day Camp program is committed first to the safety of your child. A YMCA professional supervises all day camp staff, recruited through colleges, leadership organizations, and local youth-serving organizations. We place serious emphasis on safety standards by offering a reasonable counselor to camper ratio and requiring our counselors to complete 40 hours of pre-camp training, including CPR, First Aid, AED and Child Abuse Prevention along with specific training in the areas of working with children, discipline, group dynamics, safety and programming. All YMCA staff go through background checks prior to hiring. We take pride in the high expectations we set for our summer camp staff each year and evaluate them throughout the summer.

## STAFFING STRUCTURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

For most needs, you can contact the Children's Center front desk at (847) 475-8580 or email [daycamp@mcgawymca.org](mailto:daycamp@mcgawymca.org).

**Andrea Hillsamer (She/Her)**  
Director, School Age Programs  
[andrea@mcgawymca.org](mailto:andrea@mcgawymca.org)

**Manny Luna (He/Him)**  
Manager, School Age Programs  
[Mannyl@mcgawymca.org](mailto:Mannyl@mcgawymca.org)  
*iHablo español!*

**Chanda Perkins (She/Her)**  
Manager, School Age Programs  
[Chandap@mcgawymca.org](mailto:Chandap@mcgawymca.org)

**Alex Richardson (She/Her)**  
Family Support Advocate  
[alexr@mcgawymca.org](mailto:alexr@mcgawymca.org)

**Eileen Canafax (She/Her)**  
Manager, Admissions & Membership  
[eileenc@mcgawymca.org](mailto:eileenc@mcgawymca.org)

**Max Yas (He/Him)**  
Director, Children's Center Operations  
[maxy@mcgawymca.org](mailto:maxy@mcgawymca.org)

**Sam (Marin) Allen (She/Her)**  
Manager, Admissions & Data  
[samanthaallen@mcgawymca.org](mailto:samanthaallen@mcgawymca.org)  
*iHablo español!*

**Nicole Woodard (She/Her)**  
Chief Learning & Innovation Officer  
[nicolew@mcgawymca.org](mailto:nicolew@mcgawymca.org)

---

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 2026 CAMP OPERATING DAYS/TIMES

Program Dates: June 8- August 14 (10 weeks)

*Camp is organized by weekly sessions. Each session will have a new theme, but the overall structure will remain the same.*

Camp Days/Hours: M-F from 8:00am-5:30pm

### DAY CAMP LOCATION

McGaw YMCA Summer Day camp is held in 2 locations – McGaw YMCA Children's Center and Dewey Elementary School.

### DROP OFF AND PICK UP

- All campers must be physically signed in by an authorized adult between 8am and 9am. You may not drop off after 9am, unless prior notice has been given.
- Campers may be physically signed out by an authorized adult between 4:30pm-5:30pm. If you need to pick up your camper prior to 4:30pm, you must arrange with the camp leadership ahead of time. If you arrive to pick up

your camper before 4:30pm without notice, be prepared to wait, as they will likely be involved in an activity away from the building.

## **PICKING UP YOUR CAMPER**

Pick-up time is from 4:30pm to 5:30pm. The McGaw YMCA recognizes the need to provide a safe and secure site for all children in our Day Camp programs. As a result, the Y will only release a child to an adult who is listed on the "Authorized Pick-Up list" provided on the registration form. The Y staff will adhere to the rules below to protect children in their care. Adults picking up children must initial the program sign-out sheet each day upon pick up and will be asked by a Y staff member to show a picture ID.

**Changes to the pick-up list:** Any changes to the pick-up list must be submitted in writing to the Y by the primary party responsible for them. For our records, any court orders declaring changes in custody should also be provided to the McGaw Y registration team or School Age Program Director. Do not give court orders to your camper's counselor. The primary responsible party is the only person who can amend the authorized pick-up list.

## **ADULTS NOT LISTED ON THE PICK-UP LIST**

If an adult who is not on the authorized pick-up list comes to pick up a child, the child will not be released to the adult. This applies to any adult not on the list, including a biological parent. Y staff will contact the primary responsible party, who must clarify the situation as outlined above. This person can authorize the adult to pick up over the phone; however, it is ideal if the primary responsible party complies by providing a written and signed notice. If the responsible party is not available to authorize the adult to pick up, the camper will be held until we can contact them. If the responsible parties cannot be reached within 1 hour, YMCA staff will:

- 1) Contact and involve a McGaw Y School Age Program Director and/or the Chief Learning & Innovation Officer immediately and/or
- 2) Contact local law enforcement or social services.

## **CUSTODY CONCERNS**

In cases of separated and divorced parents, where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the child to such parent unless a **court decree or separation document** is in our file expressly forbidding a parent from picking up the child from our program, or from picking up at a time not allowed by the court decree. If an individual is specifically not allowed to pick up your child, please list them under the "Not Authorized" section on the Day Camp registration form.

## **LATE PICK-UP OR FAILURE TO PICK UP**

Staff are scheduled until 5:30pm. However, per our Child Safety protocols, staff will not leave a camper unattended.

A late fee of \$1 per minute per child will be applied for late pick-up. Chronic late pick-up may be grounds for extra fees and/or dismissal from the program. If you fail to pick up your child, the following will happen:

- All the phone numbers we have on file for your child will be called.
- If no contact can be made at those numbers, we will continually call until someone is reached. Your child will never be left alone at the program site.
- We will notify the School Age Program Director and call the Chief Learning & Innovation Officer to determine the appropriate next steps, which may include calling the police and/or social services.
- Staff are not permitted to walk or drive campers home in their personal vehicles.

## **IMPAIRMENT**

Your child's safety is our priority. At times, we are called to make judgments concerning a camper's safety. If a YMCA staff member suspects that a parent, guardian, or other adult authorized to pick up the child is in an incapacitated condition (drugs, alcohol, etc.) and presents a risk to the camper when he or she arrives to pick up the child, the YMCA will keep the child at the program facility until alternative transportation can be arranged. The YMCA will first try to contact another authorized pick-up individual listed on the child's registration form. The YMCA reserves the right to involve appropriate authorities if necessary to protect the child and the YMCA.

## **CONTACTING CAMP STAFF**

### **CAMP PHONE**

We know staying connected is essential, and we want to ensure your questions and concerns are addressed as quickly as possible. Since our team actively engages with campers throughout the day, we appreciate your patience when reaching out.

### **How to Reach Us:**

**Call the Children's Center at (847) 475-8580** – Your call will be transferred to us. Please note that we do not have a front desk, and if we don't answer, we are handling camp responsibilities.

### **Helpful Reminders:**

- **Phone Hours:** We return calls Monday–Friday between 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM. Please understand that response times may be delayed during drop-off and pick-up.
- **Voicemail:** If we don't pick up, please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.
- **Emergencies:** Call the Children's Center at (847) 475-8580. They can reach us directly on our cell phones.
- **Running Late?** Call the Children's Center if you're delayed for drop-off or pick-up.

- **Need to Talk?** For concerns or important discussions, please email Andrea at [andrea@mcgawymca.org](mailto:andrea@mcgawymca.org) to schedule a time. Drop-off and pick-up are not ideal for lengthy conversations.
- **Absences:** Please report absences by calling the Children's Center front desk or email us at [daycamp@mcgawymca.org](mailto:daycamp@mcgawymca.org).

Thank you for working with us to ensure smooth communication! We appreciate your understanding and look forward to a great camp experience.

## **EMAIL**

You may email a member of the camp leadership team at any time. We will respond to your email as soon as we are able. We do not reply to emails after 5:30pm or on the weekends.

## **CAMPER GROUPS**

Camp staff work very hard to group campers in the best way possible. We start by dividing campers into groups (classrooms) by grade level. When we reach capacity for that classroom, we will look at camper's birthdays. There will be some groups with mixed ages.

If you have a request for your child to be with a specific camper, you must let us know during the time of camp registration. Keep in mind, it is only a request. We do our best to accommodate all requests, but in some cases, it is not possible. We agree it is valuable for campers to see a familiar face. Thankfully, we provide many opportunities throughout the camp day for children to interact with campers from other groups. We believe a benefit of the camp experience is meeting new friends!

## **RATIO**

We operate at a ratio of 1:12, counselor to campers.

## **BATHROOM PROCEDURES**

No camper is ever alone, and no camper is ever alone with a single staff member. All campers will take trips to the bathroom with the entire camp and/or groups of 3 campers of the same gender identification. Bathrooms are regularly inspected for safety and cleanliness. Campers will be sent into the restroom by the number of stalls present – 3 stalls, 3 campers.

On field trips, camp staff inspect restroom stalls before campers enter. They also remain in the restroom's doorway to monitor campers' safety at all times. Individuals who are not part of our camp are not permitted to enter while we are occupying the restroom.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

We encourage you to share your talents, hobbies, and/or profession with your child's camp group. If you are interested

in doing this, don't hesitate to contact the Director of School Age Programs to discuss your options. Visitors must remain with the camp group during their visit. They are required to stay in sight of camp staff at all times. Visitors are not permitted to be alone with a single camper or group of campers at any time – even if you have a previous or current relationship with the child(ren) outside of the camp setting.

## **VOLUNTEERING AT CAMP**

Volunteers are encouraged at the YMCA. Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older, and those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Those wishing to volunteer (including parents) must complete a volunteer application and a background check form. All paperwork must pass YMCA and DCFS standards before volunteer participation in an activity begins.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

If your child is participating in summer school through District 65, you must let us know at the time of registration. We only know to expect your camper late if *you* tell us. You will need to contact the D65 transportation department to inform them your child is to be dropped off at the YMCA Day Camp location. Be sure your child knows where to get off the bus for YMCA Day Camp. We do NOT offer discounted rates for children attending half-day camp due to summer school.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The McGaw YMCA takes allegations of abuse and neglect very seriously. Staff are trained each year in Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention. The YMCA reports all suspected child abuse and neglect. Reports are made to the Child Abuse hotline: 1-800-25-ABUSE.

## **BABYSITTING POLICY**

YMCA employees are not permitted to babysit or transport campers anytime outside of the program. Violation of this policy is grounds for the employee's immediate dismissal.

## **DAY CAMP REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT**

### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Each camper is required to have a completed camp registration form with a signed YMCA waiver. Full payment for each registered week is due prior to the start of camp. Registration applications can be picked up at the Children's Center or you can apply online through the McGaw website.

If we cannot guarantee a space upon registration, your child will be placed on a waitlist for that week. We will not require any deposits or payment until a space is offered. We register all campers on a first come, first served basis as

long as all required registration paperwork is completed.

## **ENROLLMENT PAPERWORK**

Once you have paid the camp deposit and are offered a space, registration is not complete until you have filled out all required forms in the Summer Day Camp Enrollment Packet, which you can access on our website or request at the front desk at the Children's Center. Completed enrollment packets are due by April 30<sup>th</sup> or upon enrollment if registering after this date.

## **DEPOSITS**

Deposits are non-transferable and non-refundable. Summer Day Camp requires a \$25 deposit per week, per child.

Camp fills up quickly and a deposit is required to reserve a space on a first come, first serve basis.

If you are currently utilizing the Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) and can provide a previous approval letter with your application, a \$5 deposit per child, per week is required. If your co-pay is less than \$5, and you will not be returning to the Children's Center for the following school year, we will refund your deposits once your child has completed their camp experience and met the 80% attendance requirement.

If you are applying for a camp scholarship through the McGaw YMCA, a \$12.50 deposit per child, per week is required.

Your scholarship application + proof of income must be turned in at the time of registration in order to qualify for the reduced \$12.50 deposit rate per week.

## **YMCA CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS**

The YMCA offers financial assistance to those who qualify based on our sliding scale. Scholarship applications can be obtained at the Children's Center front desk or online and they should be turned in along with your most recent 1040 tax form at the time of camp registration. All returning campers are required to fill out a new application each summer.

Your child must be a McGaw YMCA member for the duration of camp to receive the YMCA scholarship. Scholarship funds are limited, and you may be placed on a camp scholarship waitlist once all award money is allocated.

Once you have turned in your scholarship application and proof of income, you will receive a separate notification about your scholarship award. If you decide the scholarship award is not sufficient to meet your needs, we will refund your deposit. You must notify us by the due dates specified in your scholarship award letter to be eligible for a refund of your deposit.

## **WAITING LISTS**

In the event that a camp fills prior to your registration, you may place your child on our waiting list. You will be contacted if a spot becomes available 3-5 days prior to the session start date. After camp has started in June, we do

accept new applications for upcoming weeks pending space availability. Registration for each week of camp officially closes the week before the next camp week begins.

### **AGE EXCEPTIONS**

Campers must be the age indicated in the camp brochure by the camper's start date. For any exceptions, please contact the Director, School Age Programs.

### **ABSENCES & CANCELLATIONS**

Please contact the McGaw YMCA Day Camp staff at (847) 475-8580 if your child will be late or absent. Parents who pay in full before the week begins, but do not attend camp on Monday and fail to notify the YMCA of an absence may be cancelled for that week. We do not prorate camp tuition for any reason, and camp is non-refundable.

If you wish to withdraw or add a week of camp, you must fill out the Summer Day Camp Transfer/Withdrawal form as official confirmation/notice. These forms can be requested from the Registration Manager via email or at the Children's Center front desk. Full payment will be required for any camp weeks added.

Camp deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. Classes missed due to weather, holidays, choice of parent/guardian, disruptive behavior, or COVID closures and quarantines required by IDPH may not be made up, credited, or refunded.

### **TUITION PAYMENTS AND DUE DATES**

Full payment for each session is due on the dates listed below. After the due date, camp fees are not refundable. Please be aware that due to the high demand for summer camp enrollment, non-payment may result in cancellation of your child's registration.

Full payment for each session is due as follows:

WEEKS 1 & 2: April 3

WEEKS 3 & 4: April 17

WEEKS 5 & 6: May 1

WEEKS 7 & 8: May 15

WEEK 9 & 10 : May 29

Please note if you have signed up for an automatic draft from your checking account or credit card, your payments will be automatically deducted on the dates listed above.

### **FORMS OF PAYMENT**

We accept Credit/Debit cards, checks, cash, or money orders payable to the McGaw YMCA Children's Center. You

may also pay online or over the phone by calling our front desk at 847- 475-8580.

## **REGISTRATION SCHEDULE AND FEES**

Camp registrations after May 15<sup>th</sup> incur a late registration fee. To receive the camp “YMCA Member Rate” your child must be a current YMCA member or purchase a membership on the date of registration. Please contact the Children’s Center for membership rates and fees.

## **OUR DAILY ADVENTURES**

It is important to us that your child has a wonderful “first”, second” ...or “fifth” camp experience. Therefore, our goal is to create an atmosphere of trust and friendship so that each camper will feel happy and confident at camp. Campers’ activities include but are not limited to character development, variety activities, team building, arts & crafts, field trips, sports, STEAM projects, and more.

## **A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP**

The activities can be camp-wide, personally selected, or unit-based. Each camp offers a different set of activity choices designed to optimize the child’s camp experience.

We take special care of our campers. The program is progressively structured to challenge children according to their age. Campers will be accompanied by their counselors throughout the entire camp day.

## **WEEKLY THEMES**

We strive to create an outstanding experience for your camper, so we ask that they participate in weekly themes. Each week, you will receive a newsletter outlining more details, and we ask that you encourage your campers to participate by helping them with specific camp initiatives prior to arrival.

## **WACKY WEDNESDAY**

This is a special day to dress silly according to the week’s theme. Examples for Wacky Wednesday themes are pajama day, hat day, mismatch day, etc. No need to purchase anything, just go into your closet and put your imagination to use.

## **MEALS**

We partner with the City of Evanston to provide breakfast and lunch each day. Breakfasts and lunches are prepared at Evanston Township High school then delivered to the camp site. A menu of breakfast and lunch meals will be provided to you before the start of camp. Campers will eat in their classroom or cafeteria, depending on their age group.

## **WATER**

We ask that campers bring their own water bottle to refill throughout the day. Water bottles or cups will be provided to those who do not bring their own. Groups will take frequent breaks to rest and drink water throughout the day.

## **FOOD FROM HOME**

Your child can bring breakfast, lunch, and/or snack from home instead of eating the provided food. We ask for those lunches from home:

- Nutritious, balanced meals for your camper and include a healthy drink. Please do not send junk food.
- Do not require refrigeration or heating. Camp does not have refrigeration or microwaves for lunches. Please do not send milk or mayonnaise-based products.
- A disposable lunch in a brown paper bag is preferred.
- Include hydrating drinks, such as water, instead of carbonated drinks. Please do not send your child with soda.
- **Food from home may not contain nuts of any kind.**

## **SNACKS**

Snacks are provided by the McGaw YMCA Children's Center. Snacks generally consist of 2 components, for example: chips and salsa, cheese and crackers, apple and soy nut butter.

## **SEVERE WEATHER**

Day Camp has an emergency plan for all possible situations. In the event of weather or other emergency, the School Age Program Director will send an email to all parents with updates, as well as be in continuous communication with the McGaw YMCA Children's Center in order to help parents receive information. We ask that parents wait to be notified before trying to call camps, as the staff need to focus on the safety of the children and any emergency. If water or electricity remains off at our camp location for more than 1 hour, we will contact parents to pick up their campers as soon as possible.

During heat advisory days, we will take extra precautions to keep children in shaded areas and well hydrated. When possible, indoor spaces will be utilized. Activities will be modified to give campers plenty of rest time in extreme heat. We use the DCFS *Weather Guidelines for Children* to advise us on how to proceed with outdoor activities. In the event of severe weather such as thunderstorms or tornado warnings, we will take immediate cover. The Camp Director will stay alert for weather advisories issued over the radio. We will not operate vehicles during severe weather conditions. Counselors are trained to handle emergency situations. It is imperative to keep emergency contact information current so we can reach you in an emergency.

## **PLAYGROUNDS**

When operating at a school campus or other non-YMCA owned and operated facilities, we do not maintain

playgrounds and they may not meet the requirements of State Licensing. Our staff are trained to monitor and check the safety of grounds and equipment daily. We work closely with school and building administrators to ensure playgrounds meet all requirements of the YMCA as well as any standards of the organizations or schools that own and maintain them.

## **SWIMMING**

- This is a YMCA-certified swim lesson, as with any other swim lesson we offer.
- Campers should **bring a swimsuit, towel and goggles** on swim days. They should also **bring an extra full set of clothing** to keep in their locker at camp.
- Campers will **take a swim test during their first trip to the pool**. They will be grouped with swimmers of their same skill level. If they are not currently swimmers, that is ok! There will be many other campers who have little to no experience swimming as well. Our Aquatics team is highly skilled and experienced in working with swimmers of all levels.
- Campers will be in the water with a certified swim instructor and their camp counselors. The pool is monitored closely by a certified lifeguard. All camp counselors have undergone 40 hours of staff training, which includes Risk Management - specifically related to the pool, on-deck pool safety training and American Red Cross CPR/First Aid training.
- Campers will **walk to the McGaw YMCA** (1000 Grove St) for swimming. They will walk back to Dewey when their swim lesson is over. **You may NOT drop off or pick up from McGaw YMCA.**
- It is ideal for campers to **come to camp wearing their swimsuit** on swim days. They will have the opportunity to change into regular clothing after their lesson.
- Swim lessons will focus primarily on water safety and allow campers to practice skills in and around water.
- You are welcome to watch swimming from the observation deck located at the pool. For the safety of all campers, we ask that you do not come onto the deck.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips will take place once per week. Our goal is to provide a variety of experiences that will introduce campers to new places and engage them with the world around them. We will use the First Student bus company for all our trips. Some examples of field trips from years past are: Museum of Science and Industry, Climb Zone, AMC movie theatre, YMCA field day, Lincoln Park Zoo, and so many more!

The current year's Camper T-Shirt is required on all field trips. Campers will also be provided with a safety bracelet that has the YMCA name, address, and telephone number. More information, including a full schedule of trips, will be provided later this spring.

## **MONEY ON FIELD TRIPS**

Do not send your camper with money at any time. We will cover all the costs of the field trip. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen money.

### **PICK-UP/DROP-OFF AT FIELD TRIP SITES**

Parents/caregivers are not permitted to pick-up or drop-off campers on offsite field trips. If for some reason, your child needs to arrive late, or leave early on a field trip day, you will need to keep them at home or make other arrangements for childcare.

### **BUS/Y VAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

- The Camper Behavior Code of Conduct applies while riding the bus.
- Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus.
- Riders must remain seated and wear seat belts at all times.
- The rider's hands, arms, etc. may not extend outside the bus at any time.
- Riders must not tamper with the bus emergency door.
- Riders must obey the driver.
- The driver is in charge of the bus and has the right to administer disciplinary actions including assigned seats to maintain order and promote safety.
- Riders may not throw objects on the bus, shout, or display any other behavior that may distract the driver and compromise the safety of those on the bus.

## **WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP**

### **BACKPACK**

We recommend campers bring a small backpack to hold all their items. Campers will be assigned a locker to keep their backpack and any projects they create at camp. Any items left at camp at the end of the summer will be donated to a local charity.

### **CLOTHING**

Please dress your child appropriately. You should take into consideration the weather forecast and the camp activities. Campers must wear play clothes and sneakers/crocs as they will be participating in outdoor activities. For safety reasons, open-toe shoes and sandals are not permitted at camp. A full change of clothing is recommended, as campers sometimes get messy or wet during camp activities. Please clearly label ALL items with your camper's first and last name.

### **CAMP SHIRT**

Campers will receive a Day Camp 2026 t-shirt. Campers are required to wear their Day Camp t-shirt on field trip days. This is a safety measure. Campers who do not wear their Day Camp shirt on field trip days will be required to purchase a replacement shirt for \$10.

## **SUNSCREEN**

We make it a priority to help keep your child safe from the sun. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends that all kids — regardless of their skin tone — wear sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. It is good practice for parents to apply sunscreen prior to arriving at camp. Campers spend a large amount of time on outdoor activities. Parents should also send campers with spray sunscreen (labeled with the camper's first and last name) to keep with them throughout the day. Staff are able to help campers apply spray sunscreen only.

Camp staff will provide sunscreen for campers who need it. If your child needs a particular type of sunscreen or you do not want your child to wear sunscreen, you must provide us with a doctor note.

## **SCREENS**

No screens – Day Camp is committed to providing a screen-free experience for campers and will be reminding campers and families of this expectation each week. Any devices brought to camp will be taken and locked in a cabinet until the end of the camp day.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

We will make every effort to return lost and found items while your child is at camp. Please mark all items with your child's first and last name with a permanent marker or laundry label for easy identification. If you discover something is missing, please notify camp staff immediately. The items left will be donated to the local charity. The more time passes, the less likely it can be found. The YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged clothing or equipment.

## **CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

The Y expects all participants to demonstrate the four YMCA character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

### **Restorative Philosophy**

Restorative Practices represent a philosophy that recognizes the importance of prioritizing the relationships and connections between and among all people within a community and provides a framework for creating a positive school climate and culture.

Campers who fail to exhibit character value traits are counseled by YMCA staff using restorative practices. Y staff respect children and do not participate in any forms of physical or corporal punishment, including spanking, hitting, using exercise as a punishment, withholding food/water, etc.

Campers and parents are required to read and sign the Y code of conduct. Should discipline problems arise that require parent involvement, the Y will follow the steps below:

### **Behavior Consequences and Restorative Practices Policy**

At McGaw YMCA Day Camp, we are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment where all campers can grow, learn, and have a positive camp experience. Central to our approach in managing camper behavior is the utilization of restorative practices. We believe in teaching campers valuable life skills, fostering personal growth, and encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions.

Restorative practices are rooted in the belief that when conflicts and behavioral issues arise, they present an opportunity for learning and growth rather than just punitive consequences. We seek to address behavior in a way that:

- 1. Repairs Harm:** Restorative practices aim to address the harm caused by the behavior, whether it affects individuals or the camp community as a whole.
- 2. Promotes Accountability:** Campers are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, make amends, and learn from their mistakes.
- 3. Builds Positive Relationships:** We value positive connections within our camp community and believe that addressing issues restoratively can strengthen these relationships.

### **Behavior Expectations**

Campers are expected to adhere to a code of conduct that promotes a respectful, safe, and enjoyable camp environment. This includes:

- Treating others with kindness, respect, and empathy.
- Respecting camp rules and staff instructions.
- Taking responsibility for one's actions and their impact on others.
- Promoting inclusivity and a sense of belonging for all campers.

### **Consequences and Restorative Practices**

In cases where a camper's behavior deviates from the expected standards, the following restorative practices will be implemented:

- 1. Counseling and Reflection:** The camper will have a conversation with a camp counselor/Site Director to reflect on their behavior, the impact it had, and ways to make amends.
- 2. Restitution:** Campers may be asked to take actions that help repair the harm they caused. This could include apologies, community service, notes or other acts of kindness.
- 3. Conflict Resolution:** For interpersonal conflicts, campers involved will be encouraged to engage in a conflict resolution process mediated by camp leadership staff.

**4. Community Circle:** Campers may participate in a community circle where they can discuss their behavior and its impact on the group. This allows campers to hear and express feelings, understand each other, and find resolutions.

**5. Parent Involvement:** In cases of more severe or persistent behavioral issues, parents or guardians may be informed and involved in the restorative process.

### **Repetition and Serious Offenses**

When a camper displays repeated behaviors or commits a more serious offense—especially those that violate our camp “non-negotiables”—a progressive discipline approach will be implemented. Depending on the situation, this may include one or more of the following steps:

- **Behavior Contract:** A written agreement outlining expected behaviors, supports, and consequences. This contract will be reviewed and signed by the camper’s caregiver.
- **Program Adjustments:** Modifications such as a shortened camp day, a change in camper group, temporary suspension, or removal from camp for a specified period of time or for the remainder of the program.
- **Additional Support:** When appropriate, involvement of outside support services or professionals to better meet the camper’s needs.

We are committed to using restorative practices whenever possible. Our goal is to help campers understand the impact of their actions, learn from their experiences, and develop the skills needed to make positive choices that support a safe, respectful, and inclusive camp community.

We also ask caregivers to keep camp leadership informed of any significant changes or difficult circumstances their child may be experiencing (such as family transitions, emotional challenges, or major life events). Sharing this information allows our staff to be better prepared to support your child. We strive to take a preventative approach rather than a reactionary one, working proactively with families to set campers up for success.

For any questions or concerns regarding the *Behavior Consequences and Restorative Practices Policy*, please contact Director of School Age Programs, Andrea Hillsamer.

### **List of Non-Negotiables**

1. Inflicting physical harm on another individual.
2. Making verbal threats that may cause physical or mental harm to another individual. This includes threats made through text or other social media sites.
3. Making verbal threats that may destroy property. This includes threats made through text or other social

media sites.

4. Possession of a weapon, controlled substance, or alcohol.
5. Bringing drug paraphernalia to camp.
6. Use of foul language with the intent to hurt another person.
7. Inappropriate touching of another individual.
8. Campers not staying within the boundaries of the camp (running away from staff).
9. Endangering the health and safety of other campers or staff.

These non-negotiable rules are essential for maintaining a safe and respectful environment at your camp. The YMCA Camp team reserves the right to suspend or expel a child immediately for violation of the Non-Negotiable guidelines without refund.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

At the McGaw YMCA Children's Center, we are committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all campers, staff, and parents. Our Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct outlines expectations for parents and guardians, promoting positive interactions and collaborative solutions when conflicts or issues arise. Restorative practices are at the core of our approach to handling behavioral concerns.

### **Expectations and Responsibilities**

1. **Communication:** Parents/Guardians are expected to maintain regular communication with the Day Camp Director, Managers, and Registration Team. Open and constructive dialogue is encouraged to ensure the best experience for campers.
2. **Custody Situations:** In the event of custody situations, parents/guardians must provide detailed information to the Program Director, ensuring the safety and well-being of the child.
3. **Behavior and Health:** Individuals whose behavior or health status poses an immediate threat or danger to campers' health and safety should not be present when campers are signed in. This includes the following guidelines:
  - Do not confront campers or staff in a threatening manner.
  - Do not confront other parents/guardians in a threatening manner.
  - Using profanity in the presence of a child is prohibited and against the law.
  - Any threats toward a YMCA staff member, child, or another parent/guardian will result in contacting 911.

**4. Alcohol and Controlled Substances:** The consumption and/or possession of alcohol or controlled substances in any form are strictly prohibited on YMCA premises. Children will not be released to parents, guardians, or authorized adults if YMCA staff believe they are under the influence of such substances.

**5. Smoking and Tobacco Products:** Parents/Guardians must not smoke, use tobacco, or marijuana (Cannabis) products at the YMCA/Program Site, indoors or on the premises, on the playground, or in vehicles during field trips.

### **Restorative Practices and Resolution**

The McGaw YMCA Children's Center is committed to addressing behavioral concerns using restorative practices, promoting understanding and growth in the following ways:

1. **Dialogue:** We encourage open communication between parents, guardians, and camp staff to discuss and address concerns in a respectful and solution-oriented manner.
2. **Mediation:** When conflicts arise, we may use mediation to facilitate discussions and resolutions between involved parties, including parents, guardians, and staff.
3. **Resolution Plans:** Restorative resolution plans may be developed to address specific behavioral issues, aiming to repair harm and promote understanding.

### **Consequences**

In cases of parent or guardian misbehavior, the Day Camp Director will evaluate the situation and determine an appropriate response, which may range from a verbal warning to the maximum penalty of the parent's removal from the building or the camper's removal from our program.

### **Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities**

Parents and caregivers are expected to adhere to all policies and procedures outlined in the YMCA Day Camp Handbook, including pick-up, payment, late pick-up, and cancellation policies.

Additionally, parents should stay informed by regularly reviewing communications from the YMCA, including emails, newsletters, flyers, the Y website, and social media. It is the responsibility of parents to read and review the Camper Code of Conduct with their children regularly.

### **Stay Informed**

We are committed to keeping parents informed about our programs and your child's experience. We use various communication channels, including weekly newsletters, social media, signs at sign-in/out tables, phone calls, in-person meetings, and email. To ensure you receive important updates, we require parents to provide email addresses.

If you ever have questions or want to know more, please contact the McGaw YMCA Children's Center and speak with

our School Age Programs Director or a member of our team.

We appreciate your commitment to creating a positive and cooperative camp environment for all children.

## **OUR STAFF'S ROLE IN RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

### **Restorative Practices and Positive Guidance Policy**

At the McGaw YMCA Day Camp, we are dedicated to fostering a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment for all campers. Our staff is committed to using restorative practices and positive guidance techniques to promote personal growth, positive behavior, and the well-being of every child under our care. The following policy outlines our approach:

#### **Positive Guidance Techniques**

- 1. Positive Techniques of Guidance:** Our staff will prioritize positive techniques such as redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement over competition, comparison, and criticism when addressing camper behavior. We believe in reinforcing good behavior to promote positive growth.
- 2. Age-Appropriate Conversations:** Our staff will engage in age-appropriate conversations with campers, setting clear guidelines and creating environments that minimize the need for disciplinary actions. We aim to create an atmosphere where campers understand expectations and can make informed choices.
- 3. Hands-Off Discipline:** Staff will not use their hands for discipline unless it is necessary to protect a camper from immediate harm. Physical discipline is strictly limited to instances of imminent danger.
- 4. Dignity and Respect:** Every child will be treated with dignity and respect. Our staff will create an atmosphere of understanding and empathy.

#### **Behavior Expectations and Communication**

- 1. Daily Program Expectations:** Our staff will review program expectations, rules, and procedures with participants daily to ensure clear understanding and adherence.
- 2. Atmosphere of Appropriate Behavior:** Staff will work to establish an atmosphere of appropriate behavior through positive role modeling and proactive behavior management.
- 3. Timely Communication:** Any behavioral and/or social issues involving campers will be communicated to their parents and the Camp Director in a timely and constructive manner. We believe in proactive communication and collaborative problem-solving.
- 4. Delivery of Program Components:** Staff will deliver program components appropriately, consistently demonstrating the YMCA's Core Values and the mission of the McGaw YMCA. These values include respect,

responsibility, honesty, and caring.

**5. Program Information Updates:** Staff will provide program information updates and reminders regularly via weekly newsletters, email, social media, flyers, and other communication channels to keep parents and guardians informed.

**6. Privacy and Confidentiality:** Our staff will respect the privacy of program participants and adhere to established confidentiality policies to ensure the well-being and security of all campers.

**7. Safety and Training:** All camp staff are required to complete 40 hours of training before the first day of Day Camp. This training program includes instruction in behavior management, conflict resolution, planning and facilitating age-appropriate activities, and risk management.

In addition to program policies and procedures, staff training covers child safety and emergency procedures. Each counselor is a DCFS Mandated Reporter and holds certifications in American Red Cross CPR/First Aid and AED. Our staff also learn techniques for effective interaction with children, building self-esteem and confidence, and mastering songs, games, skits, and arts & crafts projects.

We are dedicated to creating a positive and nurturing camp experience for every child, and our staff is committed to implementing restorative practices and positive guidance techniques to achieve this goal.

## ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

We will take all precautions to keep your child safe at camp. In the event that a minor injury occurs, First Aid will be administered at the camp location by the camp staff. The following procedures will be followed:

- First Aid will be provided, and the incident recorded in an incident report.
- The child will periodically be observed after First Aid has been applied.
- We will provide you with a copy of the incident report at sign-out.

In the event of a medical emergency, the staff, as per your orders on the camp registration form and policies and waivers will take immediate action. Please be sure to keep emergency forms updated at all times.

In general, in the event that a major injury or health problem arises, and professional medical care is required, the following steps will be taken:

- 911 will be called.
- Immediate First Aid will be administered by the camp staff person until professional services arrive.
- You will be contacted. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be notified.
- A staff person will accompany your camper to the hospital and remain until you or your emergency contact

person arrives.

- The incident will be documented in writing on the YMCA accident report form.

Please notify us immediately when there is a new work, cell, or home phone number or if you have a new address. If your child is sick or injured, we must be able to notify you immediately.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

It is our sincere desire to provide quality care for your campers while they are participants at Camp. If a child becomes ill during the program and is unable to participate in activities, we will contact the parent/guardian. Any child running a temperature over 100.4 degrees, vomiting or having diarrhea, will be required to go home.

Please be advised that staff will not exclude your camper from activities unless one or more of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the camper from participating comfortably in camp activities.
- The illness results in greater care needed than the counselor can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other campers.
- The camper has any of the following conditions:
  - Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath, Sore throat, Vomiting or diarrhea, Chills/repeated shaking, Muscle Pain, Headache, Loss of Taste or Smell, Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye), Head lice, Signs of Possible Severe Illness: Examples include lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs – until medical evaluation allows inclusion, Signs of communicable illness (rash, lice, etc.)

If your camper has any of the conditions/symptoms listed above or is removed from camp because of the above-listed condition, you will be contacted by the Camp Director for appropriate next steps and criteria for returning.

## MEDICATION

The YMCA Day Camp prefers that all medications be administered at home before the camp day. All prescription medication must be in the original container that identifies your child's name, the prescribing physician, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the frequency of administration. Medication cannot be expired.

Over-the-counter medication can be administered at camp. It must be in the original container and not expired. We will follow the instructions provided on the bottle unless a doctor's note is included indicating different instructions.

All prescription and over-the-counter medication will be stored in the camp office. Refrigeration will be provided for medication if necessary. **DO NOT PACK MEDICATION IN BACKPACK OR LUNCH BAG.** Medication must be given directly to leadership staff at drop-off along with the "Medicine Administration" form.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICATION**

If your child requires emergency medication, you must complete an “Allergy Action Plan” form at the time of registration. Bring the medication to camp on your child’s first day and give it directly to a member of the leadership team. Do not give emergency medication to your child’s counselor or keep it in your child’s locker or backpack. All medication must have your child’s name, including the dosage and instructions for administration. Emergency medication will be kept with your child’s camper group, in a red emergency backpack at all times.

All camp staff are trained in First Aid/CPR and AED including the administration of emergency medication such as epi pen and asthma inhaler. If your camper requires emergency medication other than these listed, we may ask you to train us in the administration of the medication.

## **SPECIAL EMOTIONAL OR PHYSICAL NEEDS**

At McGaw YMCA Day Camp, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and enriching environment for all campers. We recognize that some campers may have special emotional or physical needs, which may include an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as part of their educational support. We are dedicated to working collaboratively with parents and guardians to ensure the best possible camp experience for every child.

### **IEP Notification and Review**

Campers with an IEP should be identified, and their needs communicated to Family Support Advocate, Alex Richardson, at least two weeks prior to their scheduled arrival at camp. Parents or guardians are required to email the IEP document and any other relevant information during this period.

The School Age Program Director will review the submitted IEP and any supplementary information provided. We understand the importance of timely communication and aim to provide a response within 48 hours upon receiving the documentation.

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

Upon review of the camper's IEP, our team will assess how we can best meet the needs of the camper while maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all campers. McGaw YMCA Day Camp is committed to making every reasonable accommodation possible to serve children of all abilities. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Modification of camp activities or curriculum.
- Provision of additional support from camp staff.
- Ensuring appropriate facilities and equipment are available.

We strongly encourage open and ongoing communication between camp staff and parents or guardians of campers with special needs. This dialogue is essential to ensuring the camper's well-being and a successful camp experience.

We believe that every child, regardless of their unique abilities, should have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the camp experience. By working together, we can create an environment where all campers can thrive and make lasting memories.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Special Emotional or Physical Needs policy, please contact the School Age Program Director, Andrea Hillsamer, at [andrea@mcgawymca.org](mailto:andrea@mcgawymca.org) or the Family Support Advocate, Alex Richardson, at [alex@mcgawymca.org](mailto:alex@mcgawymca.org).

#### **CHILD SAFETY**

- YMCA Staff and Volunteers are not allowed to transport children at any time outside of YMCA programs.
- Parents may not leave children at the YMCA or program site unsupervised.
- The YMCA is a federally mandated reporter of any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- YMCA staff is not allowed to babysit any campers involved in any YMCA programming.
- Any traumatic experience from home that might reflect camper behavior should be reported to the Camp Director