

# YMCA CAMP PINWOOD

## Parent Information Guide

### Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

#### *With what organizations is Pinewood affiliated?*

YMCA Camp Pinewood is operated through 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.*

We are also a fully accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA) and have an equestrian program that aligns with curriculum from the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA).

#### *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?*

**CHA Horseback Lessons** – Campers who are **pre-registered** for lessons will enjoy one and one half-hour sessions, for four days. These lessons cover various Western trail riding techniques as well as general care of horses and riding equipment. Campers must bring a good pair of sturdy shoes or boots and jeans. Helmets and equipment are provided. If you would like to add these lessons to your child’s camping experience, please call our registration office.

**Horseback Trail Rides** – Campers may opt to spend an hour of their evening on a scenic trail ride around camp. Trail rides cost **\$25 per ride**. Campers participating in trail rides must bring a pair of sturdy boots and wear jeans. Helmets and other necessary equipment are provided.

**Beginning and Intermediate Adventure Trips** – For campers who are at least 12 years of age, we offer a variety of one, two, and three day trips. These trips include backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, and road biking throughout Michigan. Eligible families were sent registration forms in the mail prior to camp. If your child would be interested in participating in one of these great trips, please call the camp registration office before your child comes to camp. These trips do cost extra; the fees are charged to camper’s store accounts.

**Beach Day** – During two-week sessions, all campers are bussed to Muskegon State Park for a one-day beach extravaganza. This trip usually occurs on Friday and is staffed by all camp counselors and program directors.

**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, enjoy games and nature activities led by their counselors. Campers return to camp the following morning for breakfast.

**Raggers Program** - The 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!”

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

**Mail** – Letters sent via US mail are the standard in parent-camper communication. Mail is very important to campers. Occasionally the first letter you receive may imply homesickness. Usually by the time a parent receives a letter, the child has forgotten that he/she has been homesick. If you are concerned, please contact one of our directors and they will look into the situation. Don't worry if you do not receive mail; it usually means that they are active and happy. 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 distributed every day after lunch. Any mail received after your child returns home will be forwarded.

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, and cabin name.

**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. Well-meaning parents can actually create homesickness.

**Email** – E-mails can be sent to your child using our e-mail account, [info@camppinewood.com](mailto:info@camppinewood.com). Please make sure that you have the camper's name and session number on the e-mail.

### ***How is health care managed at camp?***

**Camp Health Center** - All of our staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. In addition, a registered nurse 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 at the waterfront, first aid kits in all cabins and program areas, an automatic electric defibrillator 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.

We also have a doctor that is on call 24 hours a day in case of an emergency. We have 911 services and are 25 minutes from three major hospitals.

**Health History** - The health and well-being of your child is our number one concern. That is why every camper is required to have a physical exam by a physician within the past **24** months. The enclosed Health History Form must be completed and signed by the camper's parent/legal guardian and camper's doctor. Physicals already completed within the past **24** months can be attached to the form as long as they have a doctor's signature.

**Please do not mail your health forms to the Camp Office.** Bring your health forms with you to the bus stop or to check in at camp. Campers will not be permitted to board the bus or to check in at camp without your signature and your doctor's signature on their Health History Form. 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. Previous winter camp and summer camp health forms are *not* kept on file.

### ***How is health care managed at camp? (Continued)***

**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.

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.

Do not pack medications in your camper's luggage. 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 they will be permitted to do so. As-needed inhalers are kept in the Health Center. If your child's asthma is very sensitive to the outdoors, in woody 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.

### ***How does camp handle homesickness?***

**Homesickness** - Occasionally campers become homesick – usually between the first and second night of camp. 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. Homesickness can be overcome and will allow the child to take another "Magic Step" in growing up. 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. We will have a camp dance during each session, if your camper would like to bring nice clothes for that evening that is fine. **Please clearly label all clothing** so that it may be returned promptly should it become misplaced. Laundry service is not available to campers. In the event of an emergency, laundry service will be provided at a drop off laundry facility.

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

1. Articles or clothing that are not in good taste or appropriate for promoting a healthy society, such as:
  - 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, causing distraction to others of the opposite sex (spaghetti strap tee's, halter tops, ripped shorts, 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.**

*What does our camper need to pack?(Continued)*

**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** – While at camp your child will have access to our camp store. Items available for purchase include: shirts, hats, stuffed animals and food items. 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 are two methods of payment for store accounts are available:

- You may provide a credit card number in advance that will be charged with the exact amount spent by your camper. **Camper spending will be limited to a maximum of \$75 per week, unless otherwise specified by the parent.** Charges will be applied to your credit card after each week. You will be provided with a copy of your camper's store account. Please complete the enclosed credit card form and mail it to the registration office prior to your child's camp session.
- You may bring cash, check, or a credit card slip to the bus stop or at camp on check-in day. This money will be collected by a staff member and put into your camper's store account. **We will not refund any money that is brought in the form of check or cash therefore we encourage parents to use credit cards.**

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.

Camper store account money is also used to pay for the following:

Horseback Trail Rides	\$25
Canoe/Backpack/Mountain Bike Trips	\$15 - \$50
Camp Session Group Photo (8x10)	\$10

*What items need to be left at home?*

**Pagers/Cell Phones** - Paging devices and cellular phones have no place at camp. Campers are too busy with camp programs and activities. Please do not send these items to camp. If for any reason parents/guardians need to contact their camper during the session, they are asked to call the camp office. The Camp Director will make arrangements to pull your child out of the camp program to come to the office to receive the call.

**CD Players/MP3 Players/Walkmans** - It has been our experience that it is best to leave these things at home. Part of the camp experience is hanging with new friends and being active in activities. Wearing headphones shuts you out to these experiences. We do allow personal music devices, but only on the bus trip or in the cabin if the counselor allows. Any walkmans worn around camp will be put in the Director office until check-out day. Each cabin will have a radio/cd player for the counselor to play appropriate music. Our advice is to leave that stuff home and open your mind to all that's around you at camp. Please remember that camp is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to these items.

<b>Other Items Best Left at Home -</b>	CANDY, JUNK FOOD, POP	RADIOS	PETS
ELECTRONIC GAMES	CD'S OR CASSETTE TAPES	KNIVES	JEWELRY
EXPENSIVE WATCHES	TOBACCO PRODUCTS	FIREWORKS	LASER POINTERS
NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS	ALCOHOL		
YU-GI-OH OR OTHER TRADING CARDS			

**ANY CAMPER DISCOVERED WITH TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ALCOHOL, FIREARMS OR KNIVES WILL BE SENT HOME IMMEDIATELY!**

### *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 or mail to camp a complete, written description of all items missing. 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 C.O.D. Any unclaimed item at the end of the summer will be donated to one of several local charities.

### *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 group discussion with the member, counselor speaking privately with those involved, 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.

**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 is the parent’s responsibility to make immediate arrangements to pick up your child up in the event of a fight. Please coach your children well on this policy so you won’t have to drive to camp in the middle of the night.

**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.

**Intimidating or Bullying** - Any camper found to be harassing, making fun of, or intimidating another camper is subject to disciplinary actions and may be sent home.

**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. YMCA Camp Pinewood reserves the right to search all belongings.

**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 John Schmitz, Executive Director or Billy Rankin, Program Director.

**Phone Number:** 231-821-2421

**Pager Number:** 231-315-8236

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

**Fees** - Balance of fees (including transportation fee) must be paid in full by May 1. If payment is not received by May 1<sup>st</sup>, your spot will be opened to those on our waiting list. **Campers registering after May 1<sup>st</sup> need to pay in full upon registration.**

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

**Refunds/Cancellation** - The \$100.00 deposit is non-refundable. Balance of fees is refundable only if canceled 30 days prior to camp or for a bonafide medical reason. A signed doctor's note must be sent to the Camp Pinewood Office. Campers going home due to medical illness will receive a prorated refund. Refunds are not issued for campers going home early due to disciplinary action or homesickness. Approved refunds will be sent by mail 4 – 6 weeks after cancellation.

**YMCA Camp Pinewood – Registration Office**

4230 Obenauf Rd.

Twin Lake, MI 49457

231-821-2421

Fax 231-821-0487