



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# THE BEST SUMMER EVER



## YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee 2019 Parent/Camper Manual

revised May 22, 2019

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL FORMS AND FINAL PAYMENT ARE DUE ONE  
WEEK PRIOR TO THE START OF THE CAMP  
SESSION**

Questions regarding registration? Contact:  
(256) 571-2494  
Jennifer Lockhart, Office Manager  
Jennifer.Lockhart@ymcahuntsville.org  
www.chalakee.org

## Welcome Camp Families!

We are so happy that you have chosen YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee this summer, and we look forward to your arrival at camp. It is our hope that you have the best summer ever, and this guide is designed to ensure that your child is prepared to have the best experience possible while at camp. Our top priorities are that your child will develop new friendships and feel a sense of belonging where everyone is safe, valued and respected.

Included in this guide is a lot of useful information about preparing for camp and what you can expect from your child's experience. By putting a little effort into preparing for camp now, you will help us be better prepared to provide an extraordinary experience for your child this summer.

Please review this manual right away so that you are aware of important deadlines for forms, arrival and departure times, what to pack, and how to best prepare your child for their adventure ahead. Remember that the camp staff is only an email or phone call away for any questions you might have as you prepare for camp. **By email, you will hear from CAMPSPACE with a link to all the forms that need to be completed. These forms must be completed prior to arrival at Camp.**

## The Cha-La-Kee Way

We ask campers and staff to focus on these guiding principles in every area of camp life to help each other become the best they can be while they are at camp and when they come back home.

- CARING
- HONESTY
- RESPECT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- ATTITUDE
- DETERMINATION

## The Y's Mission

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

## The Y's Cause

At the Y, strengthening community is our cause. We believe that positive lasting personal and social change can only come about when we all work together to invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. That's why we focus our work in three areas:

- Youth Development – Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.
- Healthy Living – Improving the nation's health and well-being.
- Social Responsibility – Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.



## Basic Program Information

### Overnight Camp – Ages 8 to 14

- Opening day arrival time is between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Check in at the lodge to get cabin assignment, meet Camp Leadership staff and the Health Officer. Parents should plan to depart by 5:00 p.m. Cabin orientation and Camp tours begin promptly at 5:00 p.m.
- Pick up time on Friday, the last day of the session is between 6:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. at your child's cabin.
- Have your child eat lunch before arriving. The first meal is not until dinner @ 6 p.m.
- **Please leave pets at home for drop off & pick up of your Camper.**
- Camper to staff ratio is no more than 1:12.
- Late arrival, early departure, and leaving the camp during the camp session are strongly discouraged and can only be accommodated with permission from the Camp Director.
- Photo id is required by anyone signing out a Camper, including parents. Only authorized individuals will be allowed to sign a Camper out.

### Day Camp – Ages 6 to 12

- Drop off time for Hogan Y Shuttle service is 7:00 a.m. – 7:15 a.m., shuttle leaves promptly at 7:30 a.m.
- Hogan YMCA Shuttle returns from Camp Cha-La-Kee at 5:45 p.m.
- Drop off time for Southeast Y Shuttle service is 7:00 am – 7:45 a.m., shuttle leaves promptly at 8:00 a.m.
- Southeast Y Shuttle returns from Camp Cha-La-Kee at 5:00 p.m.
- Those dropping their Camper off at Camp Cha-La-Kee can do so between 7:30 a.m. & 9:00 a.m.
- Pick up time for drop off Campers is at 5:30 p.m.
- Staff to camper ratio is no more than 1:12
- Photo id is required by anyone signing out a Camper, including parents. Only authorized individuals will be allowed to sign a Camper out.

## Cancellation/Refund Policy and Payment

If you cancel sessions prior to June 2, 2019, camp tuition minus the registration fee (deposit) will be refunded in full. The registration fee (deposit) is non-refundable and cannot be transferred to another child or deferred to a future program or year. Families enrolled in two sessions who cancel one session will lose the registration fee for the cancelled session.

If after June 2, 2019, your child cancels, chooses not to come on opening day, or leaves for any reason other than a medical emergency and/or death in the family during the session there will be no refund of any tuition or registration fee. Cancelling at a late date makes it near impossible to find a replacement camper for the space that was reserved.

If paying by check, please help us by including the following information on the memo line:

- Child's full name
- Session for which the payment is for



## FIVE REASONS WHY SUMMER CAMP IS GOOD FOR KIDS

1. **ADVENTURE:** Summer camp is all about a wide variety of fun adventures and new experiences, especially exploring the outdoors.
2. **HEALTHY FUN:** Day and overnight camps offer fun, stimulating activities that engage the body and mind and also help children and teens learn the importance of healthy eating habits.
3. **PERSONAL GROWTH:** Youth have a chance to learn new skills, develop confidence and independence by taking on new responsibilities and challenges.
4. **NEW FRIENDSHIPS:** Amidst the fun of camp games, songs, swimming, canoeing and talent shows, campers meet new friends and strengthen existing friendships.
5. **MEMORIES:** Summer camp is an unforgettable experience that will give each camper memories (and campfire stories) that will last a lifetime.

Overnight Camp Daily Schedule:	Day Camp Schedule:
7:00am – wake up	9:00am – shuttle arrives at Camp
7:45am – flag raising/hoppers to DH	campers split into groups
8:00am – breakfast/morning meds	daily schedule reviewed
8:30am – cabin clean-up	group chat & snack
8:45am – activity period 1	9:45am – activity period 1
10:00am – activity period 2	11:00am – lunch
11:15am – activity period 3	12:00pm – activity period 2
12:30pm – lunch & meds distributed	1:00pm – activity period 3
1:15pm – rest period	2:00pm – open swim & boating
2:30pm – cabin activities	3:30pm – snack
3:45pm – open swim/boating	highlights of the day
5:00pm – flag lowering/hopper to DH	prepare for departure
5:15pm – dinner & Meds distributed	4:00pm – pick up for non-shuttle campers
6:00pm – cabin activities	5:00pm – shuttle arrives at SE Y
7:00pm – evening program	5:45pm – shuttle arrives at Hogan Y
8:30pm – cabin time	
showers	
meds distributed	
snack	
10:00pm – lights out	
*schedule subject to change	*schedule subject to change



## Who Should You Contact with Questions or Concerns?

Lamont Singleton, Interim Summer Camp Director, can be reached at (256) 571-2494 or [campdirector@ymcahuntsville.org](mailto:campdirector@ymcahuntsville.org).

## Helpful Hints for a Successful Camp Experience

There are a wide range of feelings that both parents and campers experience as camp approaches. While we are all excited, there is sometimes anxiety about facing a new experience. Here are some suggestions for campers to help parent and child make the most of the transition.

### A few things you can do to help your camper:

- Pack for camp together. This allows your camper to know where everything is and begin to get a sense of being responsible and capable. A list of packed items taped to the inside of luggage can also be used to remind campers of what has been packed.
- Use positive messages about camp. Share with your child positive messages such as "You are going to have such a great time!" or "What a great opportunity to meet new friends!"
- Help your overnight camper learn a valuable skill - sending letters! Send pre-addressed stamped envelopes for letters home, especially for younger campers who might get confused about their address. Discuss possible topics and encourage them to write to you. Make a realistic commitment to them to write as well.
- Help your child understand what to expect at camp. Review the Camper Code of Conduct, Opening Day, Daily Schedule, Activities, and Health & Safety sections of this guide with your child. This is a great chance to explore any possible anxiety your child is having and create strategies for camp success.
- Phone calls between parents and campers should be limited. If there is a need for you to speak with your camper, you should notify Camp leadership and they will make the necessary arrangements for a telephone call. In case of homesickness, and once camp leadership has made arrangements for the call, the call should be short and positive. **Cell phones should not be brought to camp.**
- Encourage your child to enjoy camp. Good parenting advice from child experts, psychologists and therapists say that, no matter how much your camper hesitates about going to camp, do not tell them that they can come home if they don't like it. Giving your camper an "out" may reassure them in the short term (and make you feel better), but when they finally get to camp every tiny discomfort reinforces the feeling that they cannot succeed. Bargaining sends them the message, "I don't think you have what it takes to make it on your own, so it will be okay to quit." Believe and deliver this positive message to your child: **YOU CAN DO THIS!** Reinforce their confidence in themselves if they attempt to convince you otherwise.



## Behavior Management

All camp staff members participate in a staff training program in which they learn about camp life and caring for campers. During training, we teach positive behavior management techniques that staff members use to guide and encourage children. Staff members use techniques based on the child's level of development to create clear guidelines for behavior. Severe or cruel forms of punishment such as corporal punishment, humiliation, shaming, or the withholding of food or any other basic necessity as a form of punishment are strictly prohibited.

At all times, staff members are guided by the principle that all children and adults deserve to be treated in a respectful and caring manner. Campers are expected to treat fellow campers and staff with respect and to abide by all camp rules as well. All camp rules are discussed the first day of camp, and campers are given an opportunity to ask questions and to learn the consequences of not following the rules. Individuals are accountable for their own actions.

Staff members support campers by clearly defining expectations and responsibilities. Campers are expected to participate in daily duties such as setting their table, cleaning the cabin and bathhouses, picking up litter on the camp grounds, and keeping their personal space tidy.

When behavior problems arise, the camp staff may consult with parents and together they will develop a plan for behavior management. In the event the camper's behavior does not improve after staff members have exhausted all reasonable avenues of intervention or when one camper's actions are detracting from the experience of others, the camper will be sent home.

There are some actions that require immediate dismissal from camp; fighting, bullying, sexual harassment, jeopardizing the safety of oneself or others and continuously not following camp rules and guidelines. **Campers sent home for any reason other than for medical reasons and/or death in the family will not be entitled to any refund of fees and parents will be responsible for all transportation.**

YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee is not equipped to deal with (nor is the staff trained to handle) campers with severe emotional issues, chemical dependency, severe eating disorders, violent behavior or campers who routinely violate rules and policies. We can refer you to programs designed to accommodate these special needs. If your child has severe behavior problems or is unable to live a chemical-free life while at camp, we ask that you choose a facility appropriate for your child's needs.

Campers may be asked to leave camp early if they require a disproportionate amount of leaders' attention (or need consistent one-on-one support) which takes attention away from other campers in their cabin group.



## YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee Code of Conduct

**Parents please review the following code of conduct with your child prior to camp.**

**At Camp Cha-La-Kee, we do what is right.** We treat others the way that we would like to be treated, and we work hard to make everyone feel welcome and safe. We follow the tenets of the Camp Cha-La-Kee Way by being respectful, telling the truth, being brave and courageous, and being kind and fair to everyone.

### Camper Pledge:

- I will be honest and truthful with my cabin mates, my counselors, and all the Camp staff.
- I will not use bad language and I will not use my words to hurt anyone's feelings.
- I will not bully or exclude my fellow campers, and I will tell a Counselor if I see someone being bullied. I will stand up for other campers, and promise to treat everyone with respect, even if I am feeling frustrated or upset.
- I will not take part in anything that may hurt me or anyone else at Camp and know that I can talk to my counselor if I am not sure what to do.
- I will not steal anything, do any pranks, or cause any damage to anything here at Camp.
- I understand that fighting is never acceptable, no matter what.
- I understand that if I do not walk away from someone who is breaking a rule, I am also breaking the rule.
- I understand that I make a difference at Camp Cha-La-Kee, and that what I say and do matters to those around me so I will choose kindness.
- I understand that not keeping this promise means that I may have to leave Camp Cha-La-Kee.
- I understand that the possession of, use and discussion of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks is not tolerated at Camp.



## **Cabin and Group Placement**

We view the cabin group and the activities this group pursues together as the most important and most growth-producing part of our camping program. Counselors help each camper set goals and do his/her best to relate well to others.

Each camper is assigned to a cabin/group suited to his or her grade, age, and maturity. The grade/age distribution of campers varies yearly and consequently affects cabin placement. The assignment of campers to cabins creates a blend of new and returning campers with varied interests and backgrounds. We strive to initiate new friendships by putting no more than one requested friend with another. You may make your cabin/group request on the Camper Registration Form. Cabin assignments cannot be made or changed on opening day. We can only guarantee one mutual request and only if the campers are within a year/grade of each other.

## **Food**

Meals will be nutritious and well balanced. We ask your cooperation in not sending or bringing candy or other food items - especially peanuts - to camp unless it is for medical reasons. We are a peanut-free camp. Food in cabins creates sanitation and storage problems; therefore, we must prohibit campers from keeping food items in the cabins. Please relay this information to grandparents, other family members and friends! Alternate food to address allergies and other food sensitivities will be kept in either the kitchen or camp infirmary.

Vegetarian options at meals are available with prior notice. Please indicate if your child is a vegetarian on the Medical Form. Please contact the Camp Director to discuss other dietary restrictions or major food allergies to determine if we can accommodate your specific needs. If your child has a severe allergy which restricts what he or she may eat you may need to supply food to supplement your child's diet.

For our day campers, a hot lunch and two healthy snacks will be provided each day. Please refrain from packing additional snacks, foods, and soda. We try to refrain from sodas during the camp day as they are dehydrating and not suitable to adequately hydrate your child for the outdoor environment. We will provide water and assorted juice during all meals. Campers may bring water bottles to sip on.



## **Packing for Camp**

The camp assumes no responsibility for loss or damage by any cause to personal property of campers. Campers must be responsible for their belongings. Everything should be marked with the camper's full name. Label everything. We strongly discourage money or valuable items being brought or sent to camp.

## **Overnight Packing List**

- 6-8 changes of casual clothes including underwear and socks. Please choose modest clothing appropriate for outdoor play: no spaghetti straps, short shorts, or shorts/pants with writing on the rear. Campers will be playing outdoors, and this can be rough on clothing, so please don't send anything you mind them getting dirty.
- Extra socks and underwear
- 2 pairs of long pants or jeans
- 2 swim suits or pairs of trunks (Keep in mind that lake water may stain suits)
- Pajamas
- Rain gear such as a poncho or light raincoat or shell
- Tennis shoes and water shoes, or shoes that can get wet
- Twin sheets, light blanket, and pillow for cabin, or a sleeping bag
- 3 towels (1 for swimming, 2 for bathing)
- Toiletries including soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, in a carry bag or container for taking into the bathroom
- Flashlight
- Laundry bag
- Non-aerosol insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Stationery and pre-addressed stamped envelopes for writing home
- Small backpack or bag for carrying change of clothes for between activities
- Water bottle
- Lip balm or Chapstick

## **Day Camp Packing List**

Pack these items in a backpack for your camper to carry with them:

- Bathing suit
- Towel
- Plastic bag for wet items (plastic grocery bags work well for this)
- Extra clothes for younger campers
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen and insect repellent

Please do not send electronics, toys, games, iPods, cell phones, iPads etc. to camp. These items are expensive, and YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee will not be responsible for them if they become lost, stolen, or broken.



## **Additional Packing Information**

**Water Bottles:** Campers are required to bring water bottles to camp so that they can drink water throughout the day in order to stay hydrated. All water bottles should be clearly marked with the camper's name.

**Socks & Shoes:** Our health service requires that campers wear socks at all times to avoid blisters and other foot injuries that can disrupt a happy and healthy camp experience. Campers are asked to wear sturdy, closed-toed/closed-heeled shoes to most activities. Old tennis shoes work great. Campers may bring athletic sandals with straps on both the toes and heels but they must be worn with socks and only where appropriate to the activity. The use of shoes that do not offer proper support, do not cover the foot or that are inappropriate for the terrain will be limited or restricted at camp.

**Bed linens/sleeping bag for Overnight Campers:** It is important for overnight campers to bring both sheets and blankets or a sleeping bag. If your child wets the bed, please include a rubber sheet plus 2 extra sheets. You may also want to consider sending Goodnites or other specialized underwear which saves your child from the anxiety around potential bed wetting incidents. You know your child the best; send what makes them the most comfortable. If your child wets the bed, help them develop a plan for camp. We use the thumbs up/thumbs down policy. Thumbs up=no accident; thumbs down=my sheets need to be changed. *After camp, make sure to wash all of your campers' belongings.* We are in a woodland environment. You don't want any camp critters setting up camp in your home.

**Horseback Riding:** Campers must sign up for horseback riding in advance and pay the appropriate fee in order to participate in riding lessons. Boots with a defined heel are encouraged; lace up shoes and long pants are mandatory. Helmets are provided.



## Health & Safety

Good health and safety are our top priorities at camp. While the staff will make every reasonable effort to minimize exposure to the known risks associated with activities, all hazards cannot be foreseen. By participating in our programs, campers and their parents willingly and knowingly assume all risks/hazards associated with participation in a summer camp program. Campers and their parents should understand that occasional accidents do happen even after reasonable precautions have been taken.

There are several keys to good health and safety while at camp. You can assist the efforts of camp staff and help your son or daughter make the best possible decisions while at camp by talking to them about the following key health and safety issues.

- **Hand Washing and Germs:** Before camp, talk to your child about the importance of washing their hands often, particularly before meals. Discourage sharing of personal items such as combs and especially water bottles. Camp staff will reinforce these practices while at camp but depend on the cooperation of the campers. Be sure to send adequate personal care equipment or explain to children that they can purchase items such as combs or bottles in the camp store.
- **Menstruation:** If you have a daughter nearing puberty, discuss the possibility of menstruation starting during the camp session. Feminine hygiene products are available at the infirmary, but a girl may be too shy to ask for these items. You may want to send supplies with her in the event menstruation begins. If your child has already begun her menstrual cycle, ensure that she is adequately prepared.
- **Bedwetting:** If your child wets the bed, help them develop a plan for camp. We use the thumbs up/thumbs down policy. Thumbs up=no accident; thumbs down=my sheets need to be change. Staff members are trained to deal with bedwetting as discreetly as possible, but they need to be informed of the issue ahead of time. Please call camp prior to opening day if you would like to discuss this issue.
- **Good Eating Habits:** Discuss good eating habits while at camp. Campers will be encouraged to eat a well-balanced meal, but encouragement from parents is always helpful.
- **Drinking Water:** Explain to your child how important it is to drink plenty of water while participating in summer camp. The staff encourages campers to carry their water bottles with them to activities.
- **Sunscreen/Insect Repellent:** Encourage your child to use sunscreen and insect repellent regularly; make sure they bring an adequate supply to camp. Camp Staff will reinforce the need to use both regularly.

Each child has a role to play to ensure their own safety and well-being while at camp. Please encourage your child to report immediately to a staff member if they feel ill or have a medical/health concern.



## Health Records

YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee requires that all campers be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox, unless they have had the disease). *These are all part of your child's routine immunizations.*

In addition, current recommendations include a booster dose of the varicella vaccine for all children over the age of 4–6 years. Immunization with bold Tdap (tetanus and whooping cough) and meningococcal vaccine (often referred to as 'the meningitis vaccine') is also recommended for all children over the age of 11 years. Hepatitis A vaccine is also recommended for all children. *Though none of these are requirements, we strongly recommend that you discuss these with your child's pediatrician if they have not been given.*

YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee strongly encourages a complete physical examination within one year of the camper's arrival at camp for overnight camp, but this is not required. Completion of the Health History Form for each camper is required and must be in the camp's possession by opening day for all camps in order for us to accept a child. Children not having a 2019 Health History Form on file with YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee cannot be allowed to stay at camp. The Health History Form must be accompanied by a copy of both sides of the child's health insurance card.

## Required Immunizations

Written documentation of immunization shall be required for all campers and staff as follows:

For campers and staff under 18 years of age

- 1) Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. A minimum of one dose of MMR vaccine(s) must be administered at or after 12 months of age. A second dose of live measles-containing vaccine given at least four weeks after the first is required for all campers and staff who will be entering grades K-12 or college in the school year immediately following the camp session (or in case of an ungraded classroom or the camper/staff does not attend school/college, campers or staff five years or older). Laboratory evidence of immunity is acceptable.
- 2) Polio Vaccine. A minimum of three doses of either inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV) are required. If a mixed (IVP/OPV) schedule was used, four doses are required.
- 3) Diphtheria and Tetanus Toxoids and Pertussis Vaccine. A minimum of four doses of DTaP/DTP/DT or at least three doses of Td is required. Td is to be substituted for DTaP, DTP or DT vaccine.

Exceptions:

- A) Religious Exceptions. If a camper or staff member has religious objections to physical examinations or immunizations, the camper or staff member shall submit a written statement, signed by a parent or legal guardian of the camper, to the effect that the individual is in good health and stating the reason for such objections.



B) Immunization Contraindicated. Any immunization specified as required should not be required if a certification by a physician that he or she has examined the individual and that in the physician's opinion the physical condition of the individual is such that his or her health would be endangered by such immunization.

## Medications

We cannot dispense expired medications. Please make sure all prescriptions or other medications brought to camp are valid through the end of your child's stay at camp. Please only bring essential medications for your camper since non-essential medication distribution (like vitamins or supplements) takes up the time of not only our health officer but also of your camper.

In order to provide our health staff with clear moral and legal authority in administering medications, and after review of applicable ACA standards and Alabama state law, the medical advisors to our Camp Committee have established the following policy:

Our camp infirmary will administer only those medicines prescribed by the camper's physician or by the examining physician in writing on the examination form. Non-prescription medication must come in the original package with written permission from the parents to administer. All prescribed medications sent to the camp must be in the original container bearing the pharmacy label which shows the prescription number, date filled, physician's name, name of medication, directions for use and the camper's name. Requests for dosage differing from the label or from the recommended dosage for a child's age/weight will only be accommodated with written instructions from a physician. Medication must be given to the health care staff at check-in for overnight campers and to the staff members for day camp. ANY medications (with the exception of inhalers and Epipens but including non-prescription medication) brought from home must be kept in the camp infirmaries BY STATE LAW and will be given AS PRESCRIBED. Medications must be in original container.

An authorization to administer medication form must be filled out and signed by parents for any medication (including vitamins) to be given to a camper. This form needs to be filled out when the medication is dropped off with the camp staff at camp or at the bus pick-up. There is no need to send common no-prescription medications such as Tylenol or Motrin to camp. The Infirmary stocks these medications, and they can be given to campers as needed. Please send only essential medications for your child.

Families who choose to have their child keep an inhaler or Epipen in their possession while at camp must do the following:



- Bring an extra inhaler/Epipen to be kept in the Infirmary in the event that a camper loses their medication. If a camper loses their inhaler or Epipen, parents will be asked to send a back-up inhaler or Epipen. This is to ensure that in the event of an emergency, the medication would be readily available to the medical staff.
- Ensure that their child be responsible for keeping track of the inhaler/Epipen. A family assumes all liability for misuse of medication by their child or another child at camp when the medication is in possession of their child. Parents will be asked to sign a separate authorization for inhalers and Epipens kept with a camper.
- Make sure their child understands both the appropriate use of the medication and that they must report immediately to the Infirmary if they have used an Epipen or inhaler for an allergic reaction and/or asthma attack in order to receive follow-up treatment.

Please note that inhalers and Epipens can also be kept in the health office to be available as needed. This would be preferred by our medical staff, as they can better monitor the use of the medication and any symptoms the camper may be having at camp.

The following forms **MUST** be completed online. You will be notified by CAMPSPACE once you have registered:

- Camper Code of Conduct
- Media Release
- Participant Waiver Form
- Camper Health History Form
- Camper Physical Examination Form
- Camper Release Form

**Camper fees must be paid and all forms completed prior to your child's arrival at Camp.**

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to having your child at YMCA Camp Cha-La-Kee!