



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE SUMMER OF THEIR LIFE

A Parent Handbook to Resident Camp
YMCA CAMP WILLSON

2018



YMCA Camp Willson
2732 County Road 11
Bellefontaine, OH 43311

2017 SESSION DATES

WEEK 1 June 10-16: Summer to Remember

WEEK 2 June 17-23 (*Explorers: June 17-20, 20-23*): Galaxy Week

WEEK 3 June 24- June 30 (No stay over between 3-4): Party in the USA

WEEK 4 July 1-4 (*Mini Week*): Camp Carnival

WEEK 5 July 8-14: Pirates Vs. Cowboys

WEEK 6 July 15-21: Your Minute To Win It

WEEK 7 July 22-28: Water Park Bash

WEEK 8 July 29-August 4: (*Always a camp favorite!*) Color Wars

CAMPS	AGES	WEEKS	COST
EXPLORERS	7-10	2a 2b	\$320
RANGERS	7-9	1 2 3 4(mini) 5 6 7 8	\$545
PATHFINDERS	10-12	1 2 3 4(mini) 5 6 7 8	\$545
FISHING CAMP	10-16	1 6	\$545
TRAIL BLAZERS	12-14	1 2 3 4(mini) 5 6 7 8	\$545
FRONTIER	13-16	1 6 7	\$565
LEAD OUT LOUD (PA)	13-16	5	\$600
TEENation	14-16	1 2 3 4(mini) 5 6 7 8	\$545
TEENxtreme	14-16	2 5 7 8	\$565
CIT	16-17	1 3	\$545
WIT (NEW)	16-17	1 (Horse CIT)	\$545
WRANGLERS	10-12	1 2 3 5 6 7 8	\$605
RANCH CAMP	11-16	1 2 3 4(mini) 5 6 7 8	\$605



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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your family's life this summer! Our goals are to create an environment of safety, character building and outdoor fun throughout the summer; as well as help each camper develop in spirit, mind and body.

For the past 100 years, YMCA Camp Willson has given children the experience of a lifetime – a place where kids can make friends. We are super excited to be celebrating our 100th birthday with all those who visit us this summer.

In addition to this Handbook, please check out our FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) about summer camp on our website. These FAQ's go into more detail concerning cabin life, our staff, program, health and safety, food service and check-in/check-out procedures. **Highlighted on the next page is our proactive stance on how YMCA Camp Willson is addressing the bed bug issue, which is prevalent in Ohio.** We hope this information will help you in preparing for your time at YMCA Camp Willson.

Please bookmark our website (ymcacampwillson.org) and don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you very much for sharing your child with us this summer!

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Dear Parents and Guests,

Bedbugs are a nuisance and we work very hard at providing the best programming and camping facilities in the area. We do not want bedbugs to detract from the wonderful experience. From our discussions with licensed professionals and others who are dealing with bedbugs, we believe heat is the best way to ensure bedbug elimination.

WE DO THE FOLLOWING TO ENSURE A CLEAN FACILITY

- Prior to your arrival, the cabins are cleaned and inspected.
- Upon arrival at camp, luggage is heated and delivered to your cabins. (This is why it is important to pack in drawstring or laundry bags made out of mesh or cloth). These can be purchased at a local dollar store or Wal-mart, etc)

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Please pack cloths, towels, sleeping bags, and linens into **laundry or drawstring bags** because these items can be heated easily. Pillowcases work well too.
- Rubbermaid tubs may **NOT** be used in the heating process. Suitcases may be damaged through the heating process.
- Personal items such as toiletries, makeup & shoes should be packed separately. A tote or tub may be used to store clothing after your clothing and bedding have been heated.
- Other items that should not be heated include Under Armour cold gear, foam sleeping mats, and shoes. Use your best judgment....If you are not sure whether it will melt, probably should not bring it to camp or give us a call!

We know these are not cure-all steps but we want to be as proactive as possible when dealing with this.

If you have any questions, please contact our Office at 1(800)423-0427.

Jim Sexstone

Executive Director

YMCA Camp Willson -- 500-Acre Memory Maker

(P) [937-593-9001](tel:937-593-9001) (C) [513-383-0204](tel:513-383-0204)

jsexstone@ymcacolumbus.org

THE WILLSON EXPERIENCE

Life Skills and Values

At the core of our program is the cabin group and the lessons that come from living together with eight to ten other people. Through this experience, campers learn life skills and values that will serve them throughout their life. Our focus and guarantee that your child will learn more about the character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility while at camp helps set us apart from other experiences. Campers gain a better understanding of working as a team, a connection with the outdoors, and a sense of independence.

Benefits of Coming to Camp

During your camper's adventure at Camp Willson, campers will get to experience so many new activities unique to our natural setting. During the week (or more!), activity and cabin groups will be able to explore our beautiful 500 acres, Lake Mac-O-Chee, participate in fun games like GaGa, work together to solve challenges, or even ride a horse! During their stay, campers, depending on age, get to participate in morning activities to help master skills like target sports, outdoor living skills, waterfront, creative arts, Wranglers (our horseback riding program for Pathfinders), and many others. Friendships grow deeper, children escape the frantic pace of life (especially without technology), and a sense of belonging to their groups and cabin mates can have a profound effect upon one's life. Our entire camp program is geared toward helping campers build friendships and develop a sense of community with one another.

Camper Ages and Programs

While we believe it is important for older and younger children to learn together, our camps are divided into programs that help ensure your child's experience is age appropriate. During some evenings, we participate in big group games for all camp interaction. Our campers range for age 7-17.

Affordability ... for all.

We feel strongly that Camp should remain affordable for everyone, and to that end, YMCA Camp Willson has created a Camp For All Fund. Through donations to Camp For All and our Annual Fund, you can help Willson fulfill our goals and stay strong ... for the next 100 years of Willson kids.

Our Staff is comprised of young adults who have completed at least one week of specialized training each year. Staff are chosen for maturity, commitment to children's growth and a love for making a difference. All Staff are CPR/First Aid certified.

REGISTRATION & FEES

Registering is easy! Simply register online and pay a \$100 non-refundable deposit to each session. You can call our Office at 937-593-9001 or log on to our Parent Dashboard for assistance.

Fees for each program are listed on the second page of this information packet or available online at ymcacampwillson.org.

Ways to Pay Your Remaining Camp Balance

- Authorize us to automatically charge your credit card monthly to spread the cost of camp over several months. (This can also be set-up online.)
- Mark your calendar, and mail or call in your final payment at least **three weeks** in advance of your camp session.
- If you register for camp online through our Parent Dashboard, you can make additional payments online as often as you would like. ymcacampwillson.org
- Make checks payable to YMCA Camp Willson.

Mail to:

YMCA Camp Willson
2732 County Road 11
Bellefontaine, OH 43311

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE TIMES

CHECK-IN: Sundays, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

1. **To receive a cabin assignment on check in**, your Camper must have the following completed **online**:
 - Health History Form, attach health and prescription insurance card information.
 - Parent /Camper Confidential form
 - Payment in Full **3 WEEKS PRIOR** to the start of camp
2. **Cabin assignments will be given out starting at 3:00 pm** on check-in day. Please **DO NOT** arrive early: our staff will not be ready for you, and your wait time will only increase. If you happen to arrive early, we will direct you to some hiking trails around camp or a local eatery in town.
3. **Please park in the lower parking lot** where you will meet our staff. This is where camper's luggage will be dropped off. You will then be directed up to the upper parking lot and Commons for check-in.
4. **Anyone with missing health forms or any other forms**, you will need to fill out paper ones before you can move on to the next stations.
RETURNING CAMPERS: Please update any Medical Forms and all yearly forms must be resubmitted (Authorization to Release Child, Parent/Camper Confidential, etc)
5. **At the check-in station**, you will be greeted by a Director and additional staff that will double check that we have all of your camper's forms, money in the store, trail rides, and any additional information.
6. **If you have any medications (prescription and over-the counter)**, proceed to the Nurses station for a quick check-in with the nurses regarding dosage. All medications must be in their original containers (including inhalers), with instructions printed on the bottle.
7. **Campers who have no medications** can proceed directly to the Health Check Area with a parent, for a quick general health and head lice check. Once your camper is cleared at the Health Check Area, he/she will receive a pass to move into their cabin. ALL campers must go to this station.

CHECK-OUT: Saturdays, 9:30 – 10:00 am.

- **All campers are to be signed out by parents/guardians or authorized adults with a picture ID**
- RANCH CAMP CAMPERS: A Bar W Ranch Parent Show will begin at 9:30 am. Please arrive at least 15 minutes early and bring your camera.

The Willson Food Drive

Help Us Help the Community

The Willson Food Drive occurs on opening and closing days of every session. Any can goods will be greatly appreciated!

Please... No Dogs!

We understand that your dog is a member of your family. However, because not all dogs like each other, we ask that you leave them home on check-in and check-out days.

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

7:45 a.m.	Cabin Wake-Up
8:00 a.m.	Cabin Clean-up
8:20 a.m.	Flag Raising
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 a.m.	Morning Paths (Areas of Focus)
11:40 a.m.	Cabin Activity
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Siesta
2:40 p.m.	Activity Period
3:50 p.m.	Activity Period
5:00 p.m.	Free Time
6:00 p.m.	Flag Lowering
6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:15 p.m.	Evening Watch (Reflection)
7:30 p.m.	Evening Program
9:00 p.m.	Cabin Talk/Ready for Bed
10:00 p.m.	Lights Out

- During the Morning Paths, Pathfinder campers will choose an activity that will be their Area of Focus for the week. Ranger campers will rotate to different activities each morning that will be age-appropriate.
- If a camper is signed up for Wranglers, their morning activity will be spent participating in that activity.
- During the Activity Periods, campers will be able to choose a different activity both time slots or stay at the same one if they so choose! All campers will have the opportunity to swim each day if they choose to do a water-based activity.
- Trailblazers and all teen programs will have a different schedule based on interests of the campers and activities offered. These schedules vary week to week but if you have any questions, please call or email the Summer Camp Director.

YMCA CAMP WILLSON ACTIVITIES

Areas of Focus

- **Outdoor Wilderness Living Skills** (OWLS)
- **Waterfront** (Swimming, Boating, sailboating, etc)
- **Extreme Adventure** (Target Sports, Zip Line, Climbing Wall, Sports Field)
- **Wranglers** (equestrian- additional fee)
- **Drama Camp**

Activity Period Activities (Activities subject to change each day)

- Soccer
- Flag Football
- Street Hockey
- Pickleball
- Volleyball
- Ga Ga
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Human Foosball
- Archery
- BB's
- Kickball
- Soccer Golf
- Carpetball
- Goofy Ball
- Softball
- Climbing Wall
- Trail Rides *(additional fee)*
- Hiking
- Outdoor Cooking
- Fort Building
- Farm Camp, Gardening and Animals
- Nature
- Arts & Crafts
- Drama
- Photography
- Orienteering / GPS / Geo-Caching
- Low Ropes / Team-building
- Canoeing
- Kayaks
- SUP (Stand Up Paddle Board)
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Water Trampoline
- Fun Bugs
- Diving Board
- Capture the Flag

CLOTHING EQUIPMENT LIST

Please pack all clothes in a Drawstring Bags or Laundry bags. **Toiletries, Swim Suits and shoes should be packed in clear plastic bags and easily removed from the bags.**

The following are items we suggest. It is not necessary to have a complete change of clothes for every day. Older play clothes and clothes campers enjoy wearing are recommended.

****Please put your camper's name on ALL items sent to camp!**

Packing List (based on a one-week stay)

- Sleeping Bag
- Sheet for Bed (Fitted or Flat)
- Pillow
- Jacket/Sweater
- Long Sleeve Shirt for Evening
- Flip Flops for Shower/Waterfront
- Shoes (broken in!)
- Sandals with Heel Strap (Optional)
- Boots with Heel (Horseback Riding)
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Jeans or Pants
- Socks and Underwear
- Rain Jacket or Poncho
- One-Piece Swim Suit
- Bag for carrying items (Drawstring/Bookbag)
- Pajamas
- Toiletries (Toothbrush, paste, travel size shampoo, soap, washcloth, etc in Carrier)
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Deodorant
- Shower Towel/Beach Towel
- WATER BOTTLE
- Stationary, pens, stamps (can be bought in camp store)
- Flashlight/Spare Batteries
- Books and Activities for Rest Hour
- Insect Repellant (30-70% Deet, non-aerosol)
- Suntan Lotion (SPF 15 or Higher)
- Laundry Bag (For Dirty Clothes)
- Items to decorate the cabin/costumes for theme

Supplemental Equipment List for Specialty Camps/ Trips

Campers from Frontier, TEENation, TEENxtreme, and CITs will have the option to have a limited amount of money taken from their store account for spending on out-of-camp trips. PLEASE DO NOT send additional money with camper.

Frontier:

- Insect Repellent
- Wide brimmed hat to protect against sun
- Sunglasses (optional)
- Elastic eyeglass band (optional)
- Old tennis shoes/sport sandals (cannot be flip-flops)
- Sleeping bag in a stuff sack
- Hammock (optional)

Fishing Camp: (available at Wal-Mart or local store)

- Rod & Reel, 6-8# line or less
- Tackle box
- 1 pack Jig heads 1/32 oz. (lead ball and hook)
- 1 pack 2" plastic white twisters
- 6" black plastic worms (10)
- 2 bobbers – stick type
- Hat
- Old sneakers/sport sandals/water shoes
- Sunscreen/sunglasses
- Elastic eyeglass band (optional)

Clothing Policies

These policies have been established for safety purposes and to make all campers and staff more comfortable at Willson

1. **Tops:** All attire should be casual or athletic. Tops must fully cover midriff.
2. **Swimwear:** One-piece athletic bathing suits are preferred. Bikinis and monokinis are not allowed. Speedos for boys are not allowed.
3. **Jewelry:** Refrain from bringing jewelry to camp. Earrings must be straight studs. Dangling jewelry can be dangerous and are not allowed. Camp is not responsible for lost items.
4. **Laundry:** Laundry is provided for Stay over campers only. Laundry will be gathered and taken to the local laundry mat on Fridays. Parents wishing to visit/take laundry home may do so on Saturdays.
5. **Footwear:** In order to prevent injuries, all staff and campers are required to wear shoes with heel straps at all times. Open-toed shoes are not-permitted, however, flip flops may only be worn inside the cabins and for showering or carried to a swimming activity
6. **FORBIDDEN ITEMS:**
 - Any Form of Electronic (Cell Phones, iPads, tablets, E-Readers, etc)
 - Food or Candy (Allergies within the cabin)

VISITORS & COMMUNICATION

We ask that parents and/or friends do not visit or call campers during the camping session as campers are busy playing, developing independence and being kids. Unplug for the week! Campers are not permitted to have cell phones at camp. This policy helps reduce homesickness and results in an improved program. Please feel free to call the camp office and speak with a Director for any extenuating or family situations.

We post camper pictures on our Facebook and Smug Mug pages daily, giving parents the opportunity to see our wide variety of camp activities. You might see your child in one of the pictures!

Mail Call!

Everyone loves to receive mail! Please send your camper several cheerful letters. You can plan out a whole week of letters by stopping by the Camp Store and dropping off letters into our mailbox and they will be delivered on the day you request.

How do I write a good letter from home? ([Via summercamphandbook.com](http://summercamphandbook.com))

A good letter from home is informative, upbeat, and encouraging. Your goal is to say a cheerful hello and give a positive report about what's been going on. You want to instill confidence and support your child's growing independence. Avoid mentioning sad things that your child can't do anything about. Save mild bad news until you can talk to your child face to face. (Obviously, if there is a major piece of bad news to report, and you need to tell your son or daughter immediately, you would not put that in a letter either. Instead, you'd call camp and talk to the director first.)

In a quality letter, it's fine to say that you miss your child, but don't say that you're miserable. Hearing bad news you can't do anything about makes kids feel helpless. Helplessness leads to homesickness, depression, and anxiety.

Here's an example of an informative, upbeat, and encouraging letter from home:

Dear Chris,

How is camp going? Did you get a chance to do archery yet? I know you were pretty excited about that when we dropped you off. I'm sure you're getting to try lots of fun new activities.

What's your cabin leader like? He sure seemed nice when I talked with him. I think that's pretty neat that he's going to the same college as Aunt Kathy went to. What a coincidence!

Yesterday, I worked until about 4:30pm and then came home to weed the garden. I was surprised to find four big tomatoes that were already ripe! I picked them and brought them inside for dad to make spaghetti sauce later this week.

Spot is doing great. Dad and I take turns walking him. Yesterday, he found a tennis ball under the Borozan's hedges and he was running around trying to get me to play catch. I did for a while, but then the ball got really slimy. Yuck!

Dad has been working hard, and looking forward to this weekend. On Sunday, he'll probably watch the game and then we're cooking dinner for the Rutars. Do you remember Mr. and Mrs. Rutar? Mrs. Rutar was Danilo's math teacher in fourth grade. I haven't seen her since April.

I'm so happy that you had the chance to go to camp this summer, Chris. What a wonderful experience! I just loved camp when I was your age. My favorite part was singing songs. Have you learned any camp songs? What about camp cheers?

Dad and I miss you and we love you a lot. We'll be there to pick you up on Saturday the 16th. Until then, have a great time. I'll write more soon.

Love, Mom

P.S. I cut out the last three Thunder Cat cartoons from the paper and enclosed them. I'll send the Sunday cartoons on Monday. Enjoy!

This letter sounds a little contrived because it is. You can surely write something more personal and sincere. The strength of this sample is that it contains the key elements of a good letter from home: It's informative, upbeat, and encouraging. Plus, it mentions when the parent will write again, and it contains a lot of questions. This invites the child to write back. (You can at least hope, right?) Finally, the letter includes some newspaper comics. Interesting, age-appropriate newspaper or magazine clippings add interest to your letters. You can also insert photographs or drawings or whatever you dream up that fits in an envelope.

Our Mailing Address:

Camper Name; Cabin
YMCA Camp Willson
2732 County Road 11
Bellefontaine, OH 43311-9382

Stay Connected To Your Camper

Facebook has become a valuable tool in allowing you to stay connected to your child while at camp. Pictures, videos and updates will be posted daily. All updates can be found at [facebook.com/ymcacampwillson](https://www.facebook.com/ymcacampwillson). A Facebook account is not required to view the pictures. Be sure to tag your photos so you can share them with your camper when they arrive home.

Staff-To-Camper Communication Policy

As part of our child abuse prevention policy, YMCA camp counselors are not permitted to communicate (email, social networking or telephone) and/or interact with campers after the camper departs. Our staff is asked to mark their social networking (Facebook, etc.) websites for private invitation only, preventing campers from viewing staff members' personal websites. We appreciate your cooperation in reinforcing this policy with your camper(s).

STAY IN TOUCH THIS SUMMER WITH ONLINE PHOTOS, NEWS & CAMPER EMAIL!

YMCA Camp Willson is very excited to announce that we now have multiple ways for you to keep in contact with your camper and follow the fun they are having while at camp. These options will give you opportunities to connect with your camper's experience through photos, emails, blogs and more.

Send Your Camper an Email

Sending an email to your camper while they are at camp just got a whole lot easier; and it is free! You can contact your camper daily through an email on our website located in the **Parent Dashboard**.

When you send your email, please put your camper's name and cabin name in the subject line of the email. All emails received before 11:00 am will be given to the camper that day.

See Photos of the Fun your Camper is Having

We now have 2 ways for you to follow your camper's adventure through photos.

Facebook: We will be continuing our Facebook page and will be updating it daily with pictures of all the fun taking place at camp. These photos will be free for you to observe and print. Please like our page at: facebook.com/YMCACampWillson

Smug Mug: This site allows you to view photos of the camp excitement as well and create keepsakes on mugs, shirts, puzzles etc. Please check out these wonderful items at: ymcacampwillson.smugmug.com

Social Media: A More Connected Camp Experience

Facebook facebook.com/YMCA Camp Willson

Twitter twitter.com/ymcacampwillson

Pinterest pinterest.com/ymcacampwillson

YouTube youtube.com/YMCACampWillson

Smug Mug ymcacampwillson.smugmug.com

ON HOMESICKNESS

Important Information

It may be your instinct to send a cellphone to Camp with your child, in an attempt to cut down on homesickness. Our experience consistently indicates exactly the opposite.

Talking to / texting with parents brings up memories of home, and we find it actually increases homesickness. This not only impacts your child but the children around them.

In addition, cellphones and other personal electronics reduce face-to-face connections that your child will make during their summer at Camp, and hinder their ability to make new friends.

BEHAVIOR & DISMISSAL POLICY

As a close-knit community, YMCA Camp Willson expects each camper to respect themselves and everyone at Camp, as well as the rustic facilities and surroundings. All members of the Willson community are expected to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times.

After reasonable efforts to modify irresponsible or inappropriate behavior (including but not limited to bad language, use of threats or fighting), a camper may be dismissed. Direct threats of significant physical harm to self or others are grounds for immediate dismissal, as is the possession or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol while in a Camp program.

Campers dismissed for disciplinary reasons are not allowed back in Camp for the remainder of the summer and may be asked not to return to Camp in the future.

AND THAT'S ALL FOLKS!!

I hope that after reading this Parent Handbook, you are feeling comfortable with YMCA Camp Willson. We want you and your camper to feel prepared and safe coming into a week adventure at Willson!

However, if you do have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at 937-593-9001 or email:

Jim Sexstone
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jsexstone@ymcacolumbus.org

Heather Beaver
Food Service Director
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