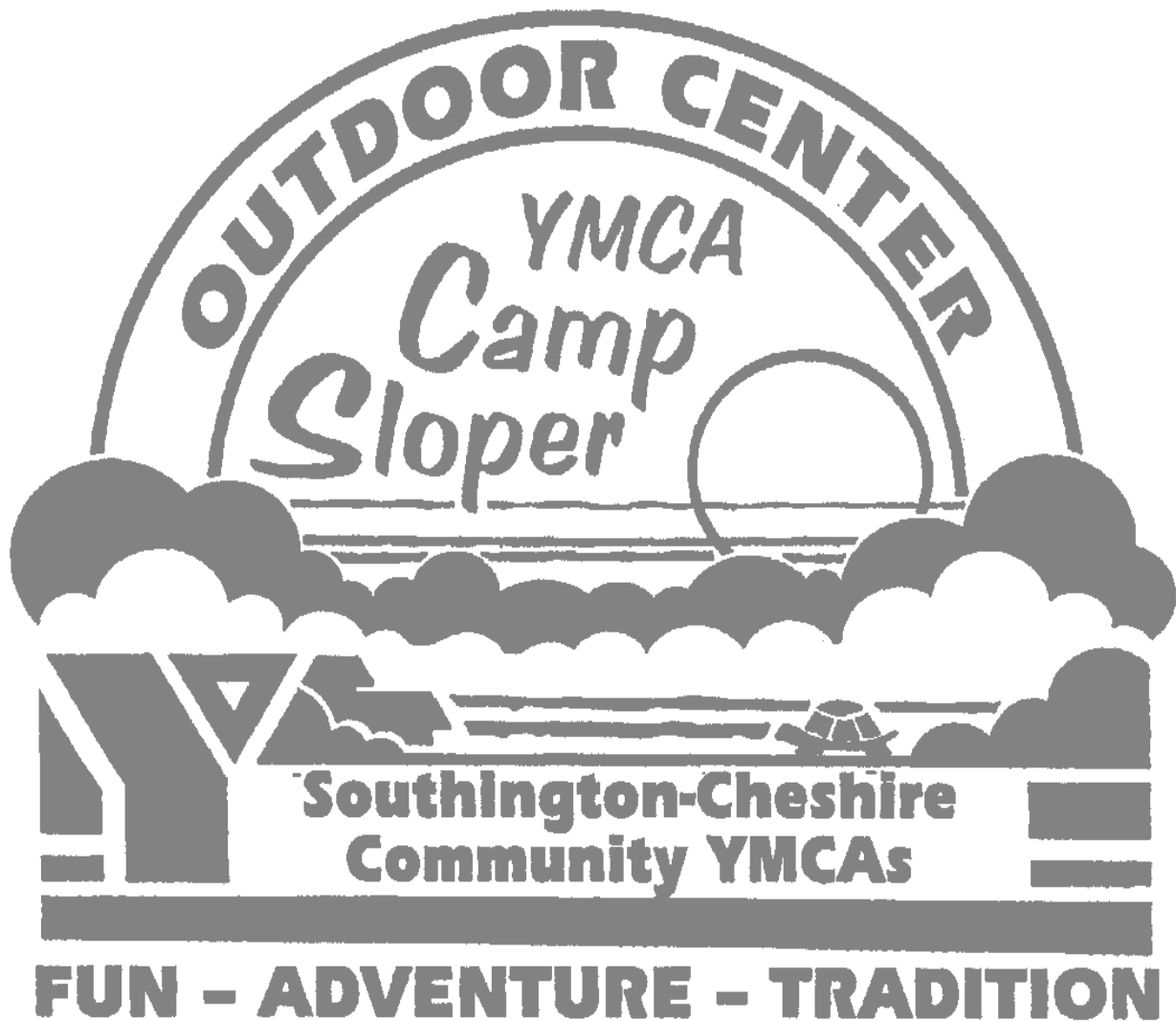


# **YMCA Camp Sloper**

## **STAFF HANDBOOK**



**YMCA Camp Sloper Outdoor Center  
Program Center of the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs**

**YMCA Camp Sloper : 860-621-8194  
Southington Y: 860-628-5597 Cheshire Y: 203-272-3150  
Website: [www.ymcacampsloper.org](http://www.ymcacampsloper.org)**



# *Thank you for Choosing YMCA Camp Sloper*

## **A letter from the director**

In 1949, a generous woman named Cornelia Sloper Neal willed this beautiful piece of property to our YMCA for the purpose of providing a quality camping program for boys and girls of all ages. Over fifty-six years later, through the hard work of many staff and volunteers; I have the distinct privilege of directing this day camp, rich in history and blessed with an exciting future. You will find that the unique combination of a caring and energetic staff mixed with a large variety of activities and programs offered in a majestic and magical environment makes YMCA Camp Sloper the perfect choice for campers of all ages.

As a staff, we strive to provide quality programs that meet the changing needs and interest of the children and teens we serve. Each year we make improvements to the facility and programs that help us best meet the needs of each camper. Our "stepping stone" program allows for new challenges and continued growth each year campers return. YMCA Camp Sloper offers fun, adventure, and tradition to over 2,800 campers each season. Our continued growth and great success over the years can be attributed to the many people who have invested time, money and hard work to ensure that YMCA Camp Sloper provides the highest quality day camp program.

It is with these great expectations that I welcome you as a member of the YMCA Camp Sloper team. Our staff philosophy is to: Be FUN, have FUN and give FUN everyday, and we expect you to do just that. Thanks for choosing to make a difference in a child's life this summer.

**Slopefully Yours,  
Mark Pooler  
Camp Director**

## YMCA Mission

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

## YMCA Camp Sloper Credo

Welcome to YMCA Camp Sloper. Here new experiences are introduced and lasting memories are never forgotten. We reach out to the child in everyone and build character in the leaders of tomorrow. We change lives, build smiles, and provide an environment for people to grow. Welcome to YMCA Camp Sloper; love it, share it, and preserve it for the next generation.

## YMCA Camp Sloper Staff Philosophy

Be FUN, have FUN, give FUN everyday!

## Character Development

The YMCA Camp Sloper program promotes four character development values in all of our programs & staff. During training, the staff is introduced to these values and asked to accept and demonstrate them throughout the summer. Each value is assigned a color that helps the staff & camper in the character value education process. The values are as follows:

### **Caring** (Red)

Help others  
Be sensitive of others feelings

### **Respect** (Yellow)

Treat others as I would have them treat me  
Value the worth of every person, and myself

### **Responsibility** (Green)

Do what ought to be done  
Be accountable for my behavior

### **Honesty** (Blue)

Tell the truth  
Make sure my actions match my values

### **Fun** (Orange)

Smile and laugh  
Have a great time; enjoy life

## Goals of the YMCA Camp Sloper day camp program:

- To instill the YMCA Character Values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility through our day camp programs and activities.
- To give all campers a day camp experience based on the YMCA Camp Sloper Credo and Sloper Staff Philosophy.
- To focus on specific developmental needs of each age group by offering a variety of age appropriate activities through traditional and specialty camp programs.
- To have participants achieve the camper outcomes for each of the Specialty Areas incorporated in the day camp program.
- To provide programs and activities that build leadership, self-confidence, independence and socialization skills in all campers.
- To offer programs that meet the changing needs of the Greater Southington-Cheshire communities.

## Outcomes of the YMCA Camp Sloper day camp program:

- Campers will understand the importance of the YMCA Character Values and being a person of good character that follow those values.
- Developmental needs of specific age groups will be nurtured and met through caring staff members and various day camp activities.
- Participants will strive to achieve the camper outcomes for each of the Specialty Areas that they participate in.
- Campers will develop leadership skills, increase self-confidence and gain a sense of independence through various group activities.
- Campers will develop their socialization skills through interaction with campers and staff in various group work settings.
- Campers will have fun while benefiting from being physically active in a safe setting.

## The Day Camp Program

Our day camp program is broken down into two program areas: the East Coast for younger campers and the West Coast for older campers. Each coast has specifically trained staff members, activities, and facilities designed to meet the needs of that particular age group. We feel this is an important and effective way to serve the large variety of age groups and interests of campers who attend YMCA Camp Sloper throughout the summer.

### East Coast Programs:

Our East Coast camp program is designed for children entering grades K through 5. Close and caring attention is given to campers while a variety of age appropriate activities are provided for each of the different programs. Please see the current brochure for a detailed description of the following East Coast programs:

<i>Wanderers</i>	<i>Sloperians</i>	<i>Explorer</i>	<i>Pioneers</i>
<i>Earth Camp</i>	<i>Fort Building Camp</i>	<i>Horseback Camp</i>	<i>Gymnastics Camp</i>
<i>Musical Theater</i>	<i>Sports Camp</i>	<i>Fishing Camp</i>	<i>Adventure Camp</i>
<i>Art Camp</i>	<i>Cheer &amp; Dance</i>	<i>Hiking Camp</i>	

### West Coast Programs:

Our West Coast camp program allows pre-teens and teens to be themselves in a fun and safe environment. Programs for children entering grades 6 – 10 are carefully designed to keep the changing interests of this energized age group. Campers on the West Coast get to enjoy all of the facilities and activities that our “stepping stone” program offers. Please see the current brochure for a detailed description of the following West Coast programs:

<i>Rangers</i>	<i>Trailblazer</i>		
<i>BMX Camp</i>	<i>Skate Camp</i>	<i>Media Arts Camp</i>	<i>Golf Camp</i>
<i>Sports Camp</i>	<i>Rock Climbing Camp</i>	<i>Mountain Biking Camp</i>	<i>Carpentry Camp</i>
<i>Aquatics Camp</i>	<i>Wilderness Camp</i>	<i>Musical Theater</i>	<i>Fort Building West</i>

## Traditional Camps

Traditional Camps are those programs that offer a well-rounded camping experience. Campers enrolled in Traditional Camps will be exposed to all the activities that YMCA Camp Sloper has to offer as well as special highlights offered for each of the different age groups. As campers graduate to the next age group, more activities, choices and special events are offered; which is why we refer to it as a “stepping stone” program. These camps are recommended for first time campers and children interested in all areas of camp.

## Specialty Camps

Specialty Camps are designed for campers with specific interests. These campers spend the majority of their day focusing on the desired area of interest; they have the afternoon Free Activity period left open to choose from some of the traditional camp activities. These camps are recommended for campers who have a specific area of interest at camp.

## Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Program

Our future leaders, Counselors-in-Training, spend four weeks (both Session 1 and Session 2) training and working with campers. They develop leadership skills, personal values, teambuilding and communication skills along the way. This is a great program to fulfill volunteer hours for church or other community organizations. Candidates must fill out a CIT application and will be interviewed by the CIT Director. CITs may be invited back for Session 2 and/or Session 4. (CIT must receive an invitation letter before re-registering at half price for Session 3 and/or Session 4).

## Sloper Service Corp Program

See a different side of camp and give back to Sloper. The Sloper Service Corp is for teens who still want to be part of camp, who enjoy working as part of a team and who want to leave a lasting legacy at Sloper. An alternative program to the CIT program and Jr. Counselor position, this unit at camp will be based around team-building activities, traditional camp fun and completing a new Sloper Service Project each session that will help improve camp. An application for the program is available at [www.ymcacampsloper.org](http://www.ymcacampsloper.org).

## Daily Schedule

Time	Traditional Camps	Specialty Camps
6:30-9:00 AM	Before Camp Program	Before Camp Program
9:00 AM	Morning Announcements	Morning Announcements
9:30 AM	First Activity Period	Specialty Camp Activities
10:30 AM	Second Activity Period	Specialty Camp Activities
11:30 AM	Lunch	Lunch
12:00 PM	Third Activity Period	Activity Period/Special Events
1:00 PM	LOGS - Camp Spirit Time	LOGS - Camp Spirit Time
1:30 PM	Free Activity Period	Free Activity Period
2:30 PM	Meet With Counselor	Meet with Counselor
3:00 PM	Buses Depart	Buses Depart
3:00-5:30 PM	After Camp Program	After Camp Program

### Activity Periods

\*Activity periods for Traditional Camps will be one of the following three activities:

1. Swimming – East Coast camper will be given swim instruction by the counselors while West Coast camper will have a choice of free swim, water park or organized games.
2. Unit Period – The entire unit of campers will gather for an activity organized and planned by the Unit Director
3. Rotating Activity Period – Counselors will lead their campers to one of the following activities per day. Some activities have minimum age requirements: Arts & Crafts, Archery, Boating, Field Games, Hiking, High Ropes (grades 6 and up), Playscape, Ropes, Superslide, Slip-n-slide and Tower (grades 4 and up).

## Wanderers Daily Schedule

Time	Wanderers Program
9:00 AM	Drop off at the Red Barn/Center Play upon arrival
9:30 AM	Circle Time (weather, song, get ready for the day)
10:00 AM	First Activity Period: Group Games
10:15 AM	Snack
10:30 AM	Second Activity Period: Arts and Crafts
11:00 AM	Story Time
11:30 AM	Lunch and changing for swimming
12:15 PM	Swimming
12:45 PM	Playscape
1:00 PM	Departure

## Free Activity

Free activity occurs after L.O.G.S (Lots of Good Stuff), our camp wide assembly. At this time, campers have the opportunity to select their own activities. They can choose from the following: arts & crafts, nature, swimming, climbing tower, high ropes, field games, hiking, court games, superslide, playscape, jewelry, painting, volleyball, music, coloring, low ropes and boating. Some activities listed above may have age restrictions for safety purposes.

## Our Facility

We are blessed with 143 acres of woods, fields, and streams ideal for a rewarding camp experience. Included on our property is a 19-acre pond with two waterfront areas for swimming and boating. We have a nurse's station and camp office, changing rooms and bathrooms, an arts and crafts cabin, four pavilions, and the Pirate's Point Tower. There are trails to explore, sports fields, basketball courts, 33' climbing tower, both high and low ropes courses, skate park, 80' superslide, playscape, amphitheater and more.

## Daily Responsibilities

### Arrival

- Staff is expected to be at camp by 8:30 a.m. and in their designated unit or specialty area, ready to greet their campers or begin the activity for first period.
- Staff will take attendance and turn it into their Unit Director each morning.
- Staff will collect camper's lunches and store them in the East or West Coast walk-in refrigerator; if campers do not have lunch, staff will mark them down on the No Lunch Form and hand it in to their Unit Director.

### Activities

- All counselors are expected to participate in specialty activities and help Specialty Directors as directed.
- Staff will lead campers and begin activities in a timely manner, according to the daily schedule.

### Lunch

- Specialty Directors and Waterfront staff will join a group of campers for the lunch period.
- Counselors will bring lunches from the walk-in refrigerator to the group, along with an orange/lemonade drink for each camper. Staff are expected to bring their own lunch daily.
- All staff is expected to remain with their groups during this time and maintain group control. Games, contests, and quiet activities are encouraged at this time.
- The camp bell will ring 4 times when it is time to leave lunch for third period.

### LOGS

- Staff will sit with their groups on their designated benches. Specialty and Waterfront staff will join a group for the period.
- Staff are expected to participate in the LOGS activities and maintain control of their group.
- At the end of LOGS counselors are required to turn in their clipboards to their Unit Director. Each clipboard must have a completed Free Activity Sign-Up sheet on the front page.

### Free Activity

- All staff is expected to plan or participate in an activity.
- Staff must report to their assigned activity area at the end of LOGS.
- When the camp bell rings 4 times, free activity is over.

### End of the Day

- Each unit or specialty camp has a designated meeting area. Staff is expected to be at this area as soon as free activity is over.
- Staff will continuously count their campers until all group members have returned to the area from free activity.
- Staff will keep campers with them until notified by the Unit or Coast Director to dismiss.

## Work Hours for Overnights

### **Pioneers / Specialty Camps East:**

Sessions 1, 2 & 3 – Overnight occurs on the second Thursday\* of the Session

Session 4 – Overnight occurs on the second Tuesday\*\* of the Session

\*Thursday 5:00 PM – Friday 3:30 PM

\*\*Tuesday 5:00 PM – Wednesday 3:30 PM

### **Rangers/ Trailblazers / Specialty Camps West:**

Rangers/Specialty Camps West – Overnight occurs on the second Wednesday\* of the Session

Trailblazers – Over night occurs on the second Tuesday\*\* of the Session

\*Wednesday 8:30 AM – Thursday 3:30 PM

\*\*Tuesday 8:30 AM – Wednesday 3:30 PM

## End of the Day Procedures

- The bell will ring to end Free Activity. At which time counselors and campers report to their end of the day meeting place. End of the day meeting places are usually by Unit and/or Specialty Camp and they, for the most part, remain the same the entire summer.
- Units and Specialty Camps will then do a check. Be sure all of your campers are accounted for. Notify your Unit and/or Coast Director immediately if you cannot account for a camper.
- Specialty Directors and Waterfront Staff remain in their areas to clean up. They then report to the bus lines as bus ambassadors no later than 2:55 P.M.
- Bus ambassadors are assigned to a bus. They are responsible for aiding the bus dismissal process by assisting the bus monitor with attendance and monitoring the campers' behavior.
- Bus monitors ride the bus in the morning and afternoon. They are responsible for taking attendance, monitoring behavior, assisting the bus driver and helping campers cross the street.
- Counselors and campers will be dismissed no earlier than when the Unit and/or Coast Director gives the signal; no earlier.
- When dismissed, walk your campers to the bus lines, after camp care area or parent/guardian pick up area. If you are unable to walk every camper, pay attention to where your camper goes to be sure that he/she goes to the right area. Because there are up to 11 bus lines, take the extra time to be sure your campers are in the proper line. You will have a list of where your campers need to be at the end of the day on your group list.
- **Bus Lines:** located at the end of the parking lot; Signs indicating each bus will be held up A, B, C, D, S (for Camp Kiwanis on certain sessions), and/or E, CH1, CH2, CH3, CH4, and BK
- **After Camp Care:** located at the grassy area at East Coast Waterfront
- **Pick up Area:** located at the pick-up tents.
- Once you have made sure your campers are where they are supposed to be, you should wait under the designated pick-up tent. At any time during bussing, your assistance may be needed, so please stay put and stay alert.
- The busses are unable to leave until we have accounted for every single camper. This could be up to 650 campers in mid-summer. Every bus must take attendance and get a check as well as after camp care. If a camper is not on a bus or not in after care we need to check to see if that camper was picked up by a parent/guardian (signed out), was absent from camp, on an overnight or is missing. Primarily, the Transportation Director, Unit Directors, Coast Directors, Camp Director, Bus Monitors, Bus Ambassadors, and Counselors assigned to the parent/guardian sign out list, are responsible for the final bussing check.
- No staff member or bus may leave until the Camp Administrator and/or Camp Director gives the okay.
- The Camp Director or someone his/her designee will signal the busses to leave when we have a check; no earlier. A check means that every single camper has been accounted for.

## 7 Ways to Help Expedite the Bussing Process

1. Take an accurate attendance of your campers in the morning.
  2. Ask for and hand in any notes campers have in the morning.
  3. Be sure your campers report to the correct area (i.e. bus lines, After Camp Care, pick up area).
  4. Remain under the designated pick-up tent and remain alert.
  5. Be ready and willing to take on any extra responsibilities at any moment.
  6. Bring any questions, information, or problems to the attention of the Transportation Director or Camp Director immediately.
  7. Be patient and understanding.
- Note: On rainy days everyone will meet under the pavilion. Instructions will be given at that time.

## Release of Campers to Parents or Guardians

All campers being picked up from the YMCA Camp Sloper facility must be signed out. The individual signing out the camper(s), must be on the parent/guardian approved pick up list or a written note must be given to the Camp Office prior to the camper(s) being picked up. The individual signing out the camper must be over eighteen years of age or if they are a sibling may be over sixteen-years of age. All individuals signing out campers must be prepared to show valid photo identification to the camp staff before the camper is released to them.

## Staff Ratios / Supervision

### All Camp:

YMCA Camp Sloper has a camp-to-counselor ratio that may range from 6:1 to 12:1 for the specific age groups outlined below:

Age	# of Staff	#of campers
3-5	1	6
6-8	1	8
9-14	1	10
15+	1	12

In accordance with ACA standards, at least 80% of our staff will be 18 years of age or older. Any staff members under that age of 18 will not supervise campers within two years of their age.

YMCA Camp Sloper uses the "Buddy System". At no time should a camper go anywhere alone. While the counselor is moving around camp, for example, LOGS, specialty areas, lunch, or at swimming, periodic counts should be taken to make sure all campers are accounted for.

If at any point in the day a counselor is missing a camper, they should notify the nearest director immediately.

### Changing Rooms/ Waterfront:

While campers are in the changing rooms, counselors should pick a meeting spot to meet campers after they are changed and ready to head down to waterfront. If at any time a counselor needs to enter the changing rooms, another counselor or director should accompany them. At no time should a staff member enter a changing room by themselves.

While the counselor is at waterfront, every 5-7 minutes a whistle will blow and the counselor will need to take a buddy check. This ensures that all campers are accounted for at waterfront. If at any point a camper is missing while at waterfront, do not wait until the check to tell somebody; notify the nearest lifeguard immediately.

### Overnights:

Counselors are responsible for supervising their campers while on an overnight. Once the Unit Director has indicated the "bed time or lights out", all campers are expected to remain in their sleeping bags at all times. Counselors will have scheduled breaks throughout the overnight while still maintaining camper to counselor ratios and appropriate supervision amongst the groups.

If a camper needs to go to the bathroom, they are to inform a counselor and take a buddy with them. In the event of an emergency, the counselor(s) should seek assistance with the Unit Director or Coast Director located in either the West Coast Office or the Camp Office.

## Emergencies

We devote a lot of time and attention to emergency procedures during our staff training in June. We have specific procedures for a "lost camper at the waterfront" and "lost camper not at waterfront," as well as procedures for fire, severe weather, and medical emergencies. We practice these procedures during staff training and throughout the summer to ensure that campers and staff will be prepared in the event of an emergency. Please review the YMCA Camp Sloper Emergency Procedure appendix in the back of the handbook.

## Behavior Management Policy

At YMCA Camp Sloper, we believe that one of the best ways to deal with behavior issues is to provide a quality camp program. By keeping activities moving and well organized, we believe that many potential problems can be avoided or prevented.

Disrespect toward staff members or property, injuring other children or staff, disruptive behavior, stealing, leaving camp property and profanity will not be tolerated. If such a problem occurs, the following steps will be taken:

1. Verbal discussions with the child.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be removed from the group for a specified time frame or privileges will be taken away.
3. Whenever there is a serious concern about a behavior or discipline problem, the staff will share their concerns with the parents/guardians and will make an attempt to work with the parent/guardian to resolve the problem.
4. If the problem persists, or a serious infraction has been made, the camper will be put on suspension or asked to leave the program.

YMCA Camp Sloper is determined to provide a safe and fun environment for all campers, free from bullying and other possible negative behaviors that disrupt a positive day camp experience. We feel that the best way to prevent any negative behaviors from occurring is to provide a quality day camp program with well trained staff. In the event that a camper exhibits any negative behavior(s), it may result in referral to the camp office, time out of an activity and/or dismissal from the program. See below for details.

The following negative behaviors will be dealt with by the camp counselor. If the offense is repeated or the camper is continuously disrupting the group's activities, the camper will miss time out of an activity and/or be sent to the Unit Director. The Unit Director will evaluate the negative behavior and may notify the parents (depending on severity/frequency), fill out a behavior log and put it in the camper's file and require that the camper miss more time from an activity (depending on severity/frequency).

- Minor hitting, shoving or pushing
- Inappropriate language or subject matter
- Not following directions
- Straying from the group
- Distracting counselor/group
- Throwing of objects

The following negative behaviors will result in camper(s) being sent immediately to the Coast Director. The Coast Director will work with the Unit Director to evaluate the negative behavior. Parent(s) will be notified, behavior log will be filled out and put in the camper's file and camper may be dismissed from camp (temporarily or permanently).

- Aggressive physical contact (hitting, shoving or pushing)
- Verbal threats to campers or staff
- Destruction of camp property or property of others
- Stealing
- Possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol or cigarettes
- Possession of weapons, including knives or other dangerous items
- Emotional harassment of other campers or staff
- Endangerment to self or others
- Inappropriate intimate conduct between campers

## Preventing and Managing Negative Behavior:

- Create group rules/set expectations
- Keeps activities moving --- no down time
- Use positive reinforcement
- Be tolerant to certain behaviors --- being annoying is not negative
- Redirect attention
- Have consequences for unacceptable behavior & benefits of acceptable behavior
- Use "time outs" --- have them take a break
- Use punishment as a last resort
- Never use physical or emotional punishment
- If necessary, seek assistance --- Unit Director, Coast Director, etc

## Risk Management

The camp staff must maintain a safe and healthy environment for the campers to enjoy. Please keep the following in mind to ensure proper safety:

1. **Understand the hazards:** As a camp leader, you must be able to anticipate the possible dangers involved in many of the numerous activities and provide the necessary protection for the participants. For example, special attention should be given at waterfront for the non-swimmers and at other dangerous areas such as archery.
2. **Compensating for hazards:** As a camp leader, you must be observant and realize that some areas in camp are hazardous because of their location. Some examples are branches on the hiking trails and a busy driveway near the sports field.
3. **Removing unnecessary hazards:** As a camp leader, you must eliminate the types of obstacles which cause accidents and injuries, including glass, large stones on playing areas, broken equipment and holes in playing areas.

As a camp leader, you must have mature judgment in organizing and planning the activities and events for your campers. Some examples include:

- consider age, groups and gender (for lap sitting games, touch games, etc.) when participating in certain activities
- eliminate running races or activities near building or other obstacles
- providing proper supervision on trips
- having at least two staff members and a first aid kit on all hikes (inform office of whereabouts; sign-out first aid kit from the nurse).

We know that regardless of the amount of proper supervision, injuries will occur when campers are actively engaged in play—however, we also know that most accidents can be avoided with proper preparation and attention.

## OSHA Precautions

### Blood Borne Pathogens Standards

The following is standard practice for all situations involving exposure to blood, mucus and/or other bodily fluids:

1. Wear protective hand gloves.
2. Dispose of gloves immediately after treatment into Ziploc bags.
3. Clean-up of bodily fluids should be done with a spill-kit, if possible. All cleaning must be done with a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water (or a cleaner such as Fantastic). All clean-up materials must also be disposed of in Ziploc bags.
4. Wash hands and any other potentially exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water.
5. Report each accident or injury on the proper forms.

## Special Needs Children

The YMCA Camp Sloper is proud of its diverse population of campers. Very often, children with various types of special needs are welcomed into our mainstream camp program. We consider ourselves lucky to be enriched with the experience this provides for both children and staff.

For a staff member with little experience or training in this area, having a child with a disability placed into their group can bring mixed feelings. Some are excited to learn this, but may feel overwhelmed by the new responsibilities and challenges a camper with special needs may present. It is important to remember that a Special Needs Coordinator is on staff to help prepare and support you throughout the experience.

There is a broad spectrum of special needs that a child attending camp may have. Many of our campers have an Attention Deficit Disorder or hyperactivity. Some have physical handicaps and need walking devices or wheelchairs. Others may be hearing or seeing impaired. Many come to us with mental retardation or other developmental disorders, such as autism or Asperger's syndrome. Quite a few children attending camp live with severe emotional problems as well.

No matter what the need(s), all children are expected to be treated without discrimination and special needs are expected to be reasonably accommodated whenever possible. Staff members are not required to have specialized training in special education or special needs. Staff members are expected to have the open-mindedness, patience, perseverance and creativity that are often required to support a child with special needs.

Children with special needs are often screened by the camp Special Needs Coordinator and can be fully mainstreamed with few adaptations. Children who require professional intervention attend camp with a paraprofessional or aid. The camp Special Needs Coordinator will review camper information with each Coast Director, Unit Director and Counselor before a child with special needs is placed. Again, the camp Special Needs Coordinator is available to help support you and the camper throughout the experience.

## Interacting with Parents/Guardians

It is important to remember that as a YMCA Camp Sloper staff person, you represent the camp as a whole, in addition to the entire Southington Community YMCA. It is important that you present yourself, with utmost professionalism and pride. We expect that all staff members will be courteous, respectful and helpful to any visitors to camp, especially parents/guardians.

### Here are a few guidelines for interacting with parents/guardians:

- Greet parents/guardians with a handshake, smile and by addressing them as Mr. or Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.
- Know their child's name and think of something positive you can share about their child.
- If you don't know the answer to a question a parent/guardian is asking, don't just make it up to "save face." In this situation it's best to say, "Let me find out for you.", and then do so. They will appreciate your helpfulness.
- Always be prepared and organized - nothing looks worse to a parent/guardian than chaos.
- Follow through with reasonable parent/guardian requests such as making sure a child gets to the nurse for sunscreen or sending a note home to let a parent/guardian know what kind of day the child had. If a request seems unreasonable, consult your Unit or Coast Director.
- If a child is having a problem or behavioral difficulty, always consult the Unit or Coast Director before contacting the parent/guardian.

**Rule of Thumb:** Always conduct yourself as if the person you regard most highly is watching you. You never know... they just might be.

There are times, of course, that you may receive complaints or hear about them indirectly, no matter how well you supervise or interact with your campers. Hopefully, these complaints will not discourage you. We hope you will see them as an opportunity to further develop the necessary techniques to handle complaints.

**Guideline for interacting with parents that has a complaint:**

- Try not to be defensive. There is often an important message behind every complaint. Some parents/guardians just need to vent. It is part of your job to listen politely and to find the "message." Try to put yourself in their place and make them feel heard.
- Do not hesitate to acknowledge that a parent/guardian might be right. Agree to observe/check into/have someone else check into the situation and offer to follow up with the parent/guardian. Then make sure you do so.
- Don't feel obligated to respond right away. Some parents/guardians can be emotionally charged and angry. Take time for the situation to cool down and seek the assistance of a supervisor.
- Do not allow an irate, loud, angry parent/guardian to vent in front of other parents/guardians or children. If at all possible, tell the parent/guardian you'd be happy to address their concerns privately and move away from others.
- Be sure you inform your Unit Director/Coast Director or other supervisor if a parent/guardian is upset or has a complaint.

Use these active listening techniques:

- Listen carefully. Again, often all a parent/guardian needs is the opportunity to vent their feelings.
- Validate. Let the parent/guardian know that their feelings are important by saying: "I can see that you're very upset right now," or "I understand that you're very angry..."
- Paraphrase. Repeat what you've heard the other person say. Try to summarize it in one sentence. For example: "I hear you saying that you think I am unfriendly because I do not always greet Johnny at the bus and you believe this is the reason he doesn't like camp."
- State the changes that you think the parent/guardian would like to have made. For example: "You would like me to greet Johnny immediately when he comes to camp."
- Decide on a reasonable solution together. Ask a supervisor for help if needed.

**Rule of Thumb:** The parent/guardian is paying you to provide a service. When anyone pays for a service they have the right to voice complaints if they're not completely satisfied. Remember, "We guarantee fun."

## **Prevention of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault**

YMCA Camp Sloper makes and active an effective effort to be responsible to prevent child abuse and neglect of children enrolled in our camp programs.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

#### **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect**

*Abused* means that a child:

- has had physical injury inflicted upon him/her other than by accidental means
- has injuries which are at variance with the history given them
- is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment (such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment)

*Neglected* means that a child:

- has been abandoned
- is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally
- is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to his/her well being

#### **Reporting Requirements**

All camp staff at YMCA Camp Sloper are mandated by the State of Connecticut to report suspicions of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault.

#### **Department of Children and Families (DCF)**

The Hotline telephone number to call for reporting abuse or neglect is: 1-800-842-2288

#### **Staff Responsibilities**

Staff should follow these guidelines when you witness or become aware of abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in our program:

1. Talk to your program's supervisor (Unit or Coast Director) confidentially and immediately
2. If your supervisor is not available, speak to the Camp Director or other Director staff.
3. If the Camp Director is not available, speak to the Executive Director or the Director of Operations immediately

Present your concerns, suspicions, or disclosure in a confidential matter. After the information is reported, do not speak to anyone else about the information reported.

#### **Administrative Duties of Reporting Children Abuse**

When an administrator receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect, they must immediately report the matter to DCF using the telephone number listed above.

#### **Have ready:**

- Name and address of child and parent/guardian
- Child's age and gender
- Nature and extent of child's injuries, maltreatment or neglect
- Information concerning previous injuries and neglect to child or siblings
- Circumstances in which injury, maltreatment or neglect came known to the reporter
- Name of person suspected to be responsible for causing injury or neglect
- Any action taken to treat or assist child

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After the oral report is given, it must be followed up with written report. A copy must be mailed to DCF within 48 hours of making the oral report and one copy must be filed in the camp office. The person making the report is then responsible to contact the parent/guardian or guardian regarding the matter when it is appropriate. If you are in doubt, ask the DCF intake person for their advice.

### **Providing Medical Services**

If a child's abuse is so severe that it requires medical attention, two staff members will transport the child to Bradley Hospital in their vehicle. Permission to transport a child should be authorized by the Executive Director, Director of Operations or Camp Director. If the injuries are warranted, an ambulance may be called. Two staff people should accompany the child in all cases.

### **Actions Taken for Allegations of Staff Misconduct**

The YMCA takes many precautions to hire quality staff to care for children in their programs. We strive to create an environment where potential abusers will choose not to pursue employment due to the lack of opportunity for individual contact with children and the likelihood of discovery and negative consequences if such an attempt occurred. We have a screening system to eliminate applicants with various risk factors. The YMCA has a system in place for responding rapidly and effectively to allegations of staff misconduct:

### **Responding to Allegations of Staff Misconduct**

Staff members, parents/guardians, or children who discover, suspect or receive a report of possible misconduct by other staff must report this immediately to the appropriate administrator who, in turn, reports it to the Executive Director. Pursuant to applicable state laws, the suspected abuse is reported to the appropriate state authorities. The program administrator and Executive Director will determine whether or not an internal investigation should also be initiated.

The employee in question may be placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. The YMCA always actively cooperates with the investigation. Withholding information will also be reported to the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families. Staff withholding information may be placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation as well.

A response team is formed which might consist of the Executive Director, Program Director, supervisor of the group in question, family liaison and attorney for the organization. The response team devises a systematic plan of action to:

- Interview children, alleged perpetrator and other team members
- Inform parents/guardians and respond to their questions and concerns
- Provide therapeutic intervention with the children and families involved
- Inform affected staff members of the situation plan of response and need for confidentiality
- Channel media inquiries to the designated team member
- Inform the Board of Directors
- Coordinate communication with investigators as well as licensing or regulatory representative and law enforcement agencies
- Communicate as needed with referral sources and insurance carrier
- The response team confers daily to insure continued, coordinated attention to all salient issues.

If the investigation concludes that abuse may have occurred, the employee is discharged. If the investigation does not uncover a reason to believe abuse may have occurred, the Program Director and Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Directors and attorney, will decide whether to reinstate the employee or to investigate the matter further.

### **Protection of Staff**

The State of Connecticut protects mandated reporters from discrimination and retaliation for reporting abuse or neglect.

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## Staff Training

- At orientation camp staff reviews the YMCA's Prevention of Abuse and Neglect Policy with their supervisor.
- All staff participates in training on child abuse, neglect and sexual abuse.
- Updates and reviews of child abuse are offered to staff at various times.

## Informing Parents/guardians

Parent/guardian handbooks indicate that we are mandated reporters of child abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. Our complete policy is available at parent/guardian's request.

## **Hiring Requirements & Procedures**

1. The Camp Director or his/her designee will interview all applicants meeting minimal qualifications for camp staff.
2. Applicants need to provide three character and/or work references attesting to their ability to work with children. The Camp Director or his designee will call references.
3. Staff is selected on a basis of educational background, experience in working with children and prior camp experience.
4. All staff members will be provided with written confirmation of their employment and a job description.
5. **Prior to the first day of work, each staff member will forward the following completed paperwork to the camp office:**
  - YMCA Camp Sloper Staff Application
  - Job Description and Agreement
  - Staff Code of Conduct
  - Sexual Harassment Form
  - Criminal Background Check Form
  - 3 Reference Forms
  - Tax Forms: W-4, CT-W4, I-9
  - Outside Care Policy
  - Medical Form (dated within 2 years)
  - Receipt of Personnel Policy
  - Understanding Form
  - YMCA Membership Form

### **All staff members will also provide the camp office with a copy of:**

- Valid drivers license (or report card if without a license)
- Social Security Card (or birth certificate)
- Any certification cards (CPR, First Aid, Life guarding)

\*Paychecks will not be given to anyone with an incomplete file.

6. Each staff member is expected to fulfill all obligations described in his/her job description. Supervisors will make periodic evaluations throughout the summer.
7. The YMCA carries Worker's Compensation insurance covering accidents that take place during, or arising from employment.
8. Camp staff are "employed at will", and employment contracts may be terminated at any time should staff not meet job expectations.
9. Staff is expected to attend training week, all meetings/training throughout the summer, overnights and family nights.
10. Camp work hours are Monday – Friday 8:30 AM-3:30 PM.
11. Day camp staff is paid on a salaried basis and will not be compensated for time-off. Maintenance and before and/or after care staff are paid by the hour and must turn in a timesheet on a bi-weekly basis.
12. Salary is paid on a bi-weekly basis for the camp season.

## Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held on Tuesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. Meetings occur on a bi-weekly or an "as-needed" basis. Staff is expected to report to camp promptly at 7:30 AM when meetings are held.

## Staff Evaluation

Staff performance will be reviewed during the second session of camp. Staff will be evaluated on a scale of 1 (excellent) - 4 (unsatisfactory) on the following job-related responsibilities: attendance, adherence to camp philosophy, interaction with campers and staff, leadership, safety and judgment, attitude, initiative and cooperation.

## Staff Appearance

Staff members are expected to be dressed appropriately and 'ready for play' every day. Orange staff shirts must be worn daily and to Family Nights. Staff should also be dressed in a bathing suit daily; females should wear a one-piece bathing suit and males an appropriate-length bathing suit - no cut-offs. Sneakers and/or closed-toed shoes must be worn to camp each day. Also, staff must be prepared for inclement weather - a staff sweatshirt, appropriate footwear and a raincoat.

### **Please also remember:**

1. No clothing with inappropriate language and/or messages
2. Bathing suits must be worn ALL day for staff designated for the LBD

## Absenteeism

Please keep in mind that while you may be absent, your campers still come to camp and expect to see you each and every day. With this in mind, we ask that absences are kept to a minimum and used only for college visitations, family vacations and illness.

### **The following are procedures to use if you will be absent:**

- If you are planning to take a day or several days off in advance, notify the camp director at least two weeks in advance in writing on an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper.
- If you will be absent due to illness, you should call the camp office as soon as possible. If you are absent three days or more, you are required to bring a doctor's note when you return to work.

Please note that excessive absenteeism may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

## Alcohol/Drug and Tobacco Policy

YMCA Camp Sloper is a substance and tobacco-free environment. Any use of alcohol, drugs and/or tobacco on YMCA Camp Sloper property is strictly prohibited. Any staff member suspected of possessing, selling or distributing drugs and/or alcohol will be reported to the proper authorities. Should an employee be in possession of any dangerous controlled substances or involved in any substance abuse on the job or on camp property, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action and/or immediate termination based on the discretion of the Camp Director.

## Staff Discipline Policy

Should an incident with a staff member occur while employed at YMCA Camp Sloper, the following disciplinary steps will take place:

1. **First Incident:** The employee will receive a verbal warning stating the infraction as well as expectations for how the employee should handle the situation in the future. The verbal warning will be documented, dated and placed in the employee's personnel file. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Camp Director reserves the right to terminate employment immediately at his/her discretion.

2. **Second Incident:** The employee will receive a written warning stating the infraction as well as expectations for how the employee should handle the situation in the future. The written warning will be documented, dated and placed in the employee's personnel file. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Camp Director reserves the right to terminate employment immediately at his/her discretion.
3. **Third Incident:** Should the employee's inappropriate behavior continue or the employee has shown no attempt to improve upon the inappropriate behavior, the Camp Director reserves the right to terminate employment immediately at his/her discretion.

## Staff Parking

Camp staff is required to park in the upper overflow parking lot near power lines. This will allow for more convenient parking spots for parents/guardians who are picking up and dropping off children each day. Staff cars are not to be driven or parked anywhere else on camp property unless permission from the Camp Director is granted.

## Biking to Camp

Biking to camp is permitted for staff members only (ages 15 & up). Campers and CITs are not permitted to bike to camp. If you are planning to ride your bike to camp, please lock it in the bike rack in the barn. Do not store bikes in any of the cabins.

## What to Bring to Camp

Staff should come to camp prepared to be fun, have fun and give fun, everyday! The following is a list of items that staff will need on a daily/weekly basis:

- Backpack
- Bathing suit (to be worn to camp) One-piece for women; "shorts" for men
- Towel
- Sneakers - Open-toed shoes are prohibited.
- Clipboard and pen(s)
- Hat - protection from the sun (optional)
- Water bottle - to stay hydrated during those really, really hot days
- Raincoat - to stay dry during those really, really rainy days
- Lunch - you will need to bring a lunch every day- a drink is provided.

**On overnights, you will need the following additional items:**

- An extra staff T-shirt
- Sleeping Bag
- Pillow
- Lawn chair or cot (optional)
- Flashlight
- Sweatshirt
- Long pants
- Bug Repellant (non-aerosol)

## What to Keep at Home

Only the essentials are needed during a typical day at camp. Please leave the following items at home: cell phone, pager, Walkman, cigarettes, makeup, etc. YMCA Camp Sloper is a drug and alcohol free facility. Any staff member found with drugs, alcohol or illegal substances in their possession will be immediately dismissed from camp. Lighters, matches, weapons, drugs, alcohol, illegal substances, and all other items deemed potentially hazardous by the Camp Director found in the possession of a camp staff member will be confiscated immediately and disciplined appropriately. YMCA Camp Sloper may or may not be responsible for lost or stolen personal property being used for camp purposes, depending on the circumstances.

# Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs

## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

1. In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers, and program participants--at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff can see them.
2. Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: Staff will make sure suspicious or unknown individuals do not occupy the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If staff are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open. No child regardless of age should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip. Always send children in pairs, and whenever possible, with staff.
4. Staff should conduct or supervise private activities, when allowed in the program, in pairs--diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff shall not abuse children including:
  - Physical abuse--strike, spank, shake, slap;
  - Verbal abuse--humiliate, degrade, threaten;
  - Sexual abuse--inappropriate touch or verbal exchange;
  - Mental abuse--shaming, withholding attention, cruelty.
  - Neglect--withholding food, water, basic care, etc.
  - Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.
6. Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), is only administered in a prescribed manner and must be documented in writing.
7. Staff will conduct a health check of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.
8. Staff will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, or culture.
9. Staff will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Other than diapering and spotting for gymnastics, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
10. Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents, and staff.
11. Staff must appear clean, neat, and appropriately attired.
12. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited and is a grounds for immediate dismissal
13. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
14. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents or other staff is prohibited.
15. Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
16. Staff may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact, a signed Outside Care Policy form in your HR File and are subject to administrator approval.
17. Staff are not to transport children in their own vehicles except as may be noted in the Transportation Policy.
18. Staff over 18 may not date members or program participants under the age of 18 years of age.
19. Under no circumstances should staff release children to anyone other than the authorized, or recognized, parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (Child Care programs - written parent authorization on file with the YMCA).
20. Staff are required to read and sign acknowledging receipt of all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor and as required their program area.
21. Staff will act in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner at work and in the community. Your actions in the community can reflect positively, or negatively, on the YMCA as well as yourself.

**I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature

# **YMCA Camp Sloper**

Staff Handbook Appendix  
Activity Procedures