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# Camp Cherokee Parent's Manual

## A guide to assist you with your child's camping experience

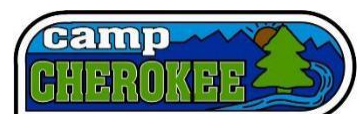
Dear Parents & Guardians,

We would like to welcome you to the Cherokee family! Being a part of YMCA Camp Cherokee should be an exciting and enjoyable experience for your child as well as you, the parent and/or guardian! We realize that you are giving us the opportunity to have your most prized possession with us this summer. We do not take this responsibility lightly. Our purpose at YMCA Camp Cherokee is to provide a positive experience where each individual will feel comfortable and loved. We also hope they will gain a sense of independence and self-confidence. Please let us know if we can assist you in any way or answer any questions you may have that will help you get ready for the YMCA Camp Cherokee experience. We look forward to seeing you this summer! If there is any information you need that is not covered in this manual, please let us know!

Sincerely,

Will Gilmore  
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YMCA Camp Cherokee  
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**YMCA Camp Cherokee Mission: To provide individuals the opportunities to reach their potential by building self-esteem, friendships, and character through participating in activities that are in accordance with the YMCA Mission.**



## **Location/Directions**

YMCA Camp Cherokee is located in Kings Mountain State Park in Blacksburg, South Carolina. Nestled in the 7000-acre State and National Park, YMCA Camp Cherokee has beautiful surrounding woods and a 66-acre private lake. Travelers coming from Atlanta, GA or Greenville, SC should take I-85 North to Exit 8 (Kings Mountain - Hwy 161.) Turn right towards York at the top of the ramp and continue 5 miles to the entrance to Kings Mountain State Park. Turn Right and follow the signs to YMCA Camp Cherokee. Coming from Charlotte, NC travelers should take I-85 South to U.S. 161 Kings Mountain exit. Turn left towards York. The State Park entrance is located 5 miles on right. Follow signs to YMCA Camp Cherokee. Coming from Rock Hill, SC take U.S. 161 to Kings Mountain State Park (entrance on left.) Follow signs to YMCA Camp Cherokee.

## **Financial Concerns**

The balance for registration fees is due by April 15th. We DO NOT plan to take payment at check-in on opening day. The fee includes all special programs and trips, t-shirt, camp photo, and canteen. Campers will not need additional money, unless the parents/guardians prefer they bring some or if they would like to purchase YMCA Camp Cherokee merchandise. YMCA Camp Cherokee is not responsible for money brought by campers.

## **Refund Policy**

A \$100 deposit is required to hold your Camper's spot and is non-refundable. Deposits are non-transferable from camper to camper or toward an outstanding balance. Any cancellations received prior to April 15th will be refunded minus the deposit. After April 15th, no payments will be refunded. Cancellations due to illness or accident will be refunded in full and must be accompanied by a written statement from the child's physician. No refunds will be granted for children who are sent home during their session for misbehavior, homesickness, or other reasons beyond the Camp's control. Since camp sessions cannot be filled mid-week, no prorated fee is available for late arrival or early departure.

## **Medical Forms**

Each camper is required to have a medical examination by a licensed physician 12 months prior to the camper's session. You will need to log into your account to fill out all necessary documents before your child's arrival to camp! Required forms include the Parent/Guardian Authorization form, the Health History form, and the COVID Waiver.

## **Medical Policy**

Minor medical issues are handled by the Health Directors that are present during the sessions. Any camper requiring additional attention will be taken to Piedmont West Urgent Care on Highway 321 in York. If a camper presents a fever of 100.4 or higher or is too ill to participate in camp activities, they will be sent home at the discretion of the medical staff. In order to return, YMCA Camp Cherokee requires a doctor's note stating that they are well enough to participate in camp activities. In case of emergency, campers will be taken to one of the following: Piedmont Medical Center in Rock Hill, SC; Kings Mountain Hospital in Kings Mountain, NC; or Gaston Memorial Hospital in Gaston, NC.

## **Arrival / Departure Times**

YMCA Camp Cherokee utilizes a staggered check-in schedule on the Sunday of opening day. Parents/Guardians will be notified of a check-in time for their camper and will be expected to arrive within 30 minutes of that assigned time. Check-in will begin at 1:30 PM. **YMCA CAMP CHEROKEE CANNOT ALLOW CAMPERS OR PARENTS/GUARDIANS INSIDE THE GATE UNTIL 1:30 PM FOR ANY REASON.** Should you arrive at the gate before 1:30 and need to use the bathroom, please plan on using the bathroom facilities at the Kings Mountain State Park Camping Area. If you arrive at camp prior to your assigned check-in time, we will expect you to remain in or around your vehicle until your assigned time. If you are the parent/guardian of campers with different arrival times, you are welcome to come at whichever time is more convenient for you. Parents/Guardians and campers will be directed to their appropriate check-in tables upon arrival. Medical forms and medication should be checked in at this time with the Health Directors. Pick-up will be split into two 30-minute intervals beginning on the last Saturday of the session between 10-11 AM. Parents/Guardians will be notified whether they should arrive at 10 AM or 10:30 AM prior to pick-up. Campers will not be ready before 10 AM unless prior arrangements are made. Please note that due to staff needs we ask that early dismissals arrive before 8:00 AM. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to check for all of their camper belongings before they leave camp.

## **Check-Out Policy**

In order to better ensure the safety of our campers, the following procedures are in place for camper pickup on Saturday morning.

- 1) Please make sure that you are visiting our sign out tables prior to heading down to your camper's cabin.
- 2) **At these tables we will be requiring an ID Check for all individuals picking up campers.** These IDs will be cross-referenced with a list of individuals who have been given permission by the parents/guardians to pick up each camper.
- 3) Approved individuals for camper pick up are parents/guardians and emergency contacts listed on your camper's CampMinder account.

**\*\*\*If an individual will be picking up your child from camp that is NOT listed on your CampMinder account, written permission via email to our Personnel Director, Callie Harlan ([charlan@ymcaup.org](mailto:charlan@ymcaup.org)), will be required.**

## **Staff**

Staff at YMCA Camp Cherokee is comprised of individuals who have a love for kids and a dedication to our Camp! Approximately 95% of each year's staff are return staff members. Each cabin has one counselor (Head, Double-Senior or Senior) and either one C.I.T. (counselor in training) or Junior Counselor. Head Counselors are rising Sophomores in college. Double-Senior Counselors are rising freshman in College. Senior Counselors are rising seniors in high school. Junior counselors are rising juniors in High School. Upper Staff members (Area Supervisors) are minimum rising juniors in College. All staff participate in an application, interview, and drug test process before being hired. Once hired, all staff members complete an extensive training session prior to the camping season. YMCA Camp Cherokee maintains a staff to camper ratio of 1:4.

## **Behavior/Discipline**

Campers are expected to act in accordance with the YMCA's Mission and in compliance to the four core YMCA values: responsibility, respect, honesty, and caring. Any misbehavior or disrespect to YMCA Camp Cherokee, the staff, the property, or other campers will result in the following actions:

- **1st offense:** Camper behavior handled by a staff member, and conduct report will be filed.
- **2nd offense:** Camper will report to the Camp Director, second conduct report will be filed, and parents/guardians will be called.
- **3rd offense:** Camper will be dismissed without a refund. Parents/Guardians are responsible for picking up their child.

## **Communication Procedures**

If you need to get a message to someone at YMCA Camp Cherokee, the following procedures may be followed: Call YMCA Camp Cherokee (803-222-2850) and leave a message with the front desk or leave a message via voice mail. In case of an emergency, you can call the Resident Camp Director on his cell phone (803-984-1713.) Campers may not receive or make calls while at Camp. It is imperative that no camper bring a cellphone to camp. Please do not allow or encourage your camper to pack their phones. They will be confiscated!

## **Mail/Food Packages**

Campers enjoy getting mail so feel free to write while they are at Camp. Please remember that the kids are away from home for a short period, so we encourage you to limit all packages. Food packages are highly discouraged as they will add to the cabin trash, bug problems, health issues, and cabin jealousy. This includes candy, drinks, and food. Please note that YMCA Camp Cherokee is a peanut free camp due to the increase in peanut allergies in youth. YMCA Camp Cherokee reserves the right to confiscate any products containing nuts, peanuts, or tree nuts. No packages/letters will be delivered to YMCA Camp Cherokee from the Rock Hill area YMCAs. If you choose to send a letter/package, please use US Postal Service or UPS. The Director may confiscate any food packages sent via mail and hold until last day of session. Campers receive plenty of food/drink through three "all you can eat" meals and a candy snack with drink daily. YMCA Camp Cherokee and the Upper Palmetto YMCA are not responsible for any lost or damaged mail, or mail received after your camper's session has completed.

## **Cabin Assignments/Requests**

YMCA Camp Cherokee does not allow campers more than 2 years apart in age to stay in the same cabin. However, if your camper wishes to bunk with a friend, we accommodate 1 bunk request per camper. If you list multiple bunk requests only the first listed request can be guaranteed. These requests **MUST** be submitted 1 week prior to the start of your camper's session at the latest – Otherwise we cannot guarantee your request will be honored. Additionally, YMCA Camp Cherokee honors 1 "DO NOT" bunk request per camper. We will always honor "DO NOT" bunk requests over "bunk with" requests. Cabin assignments are sent out to parents the Monday before your camper's session at camp. After cabin assignments are sent out, we **CANNOT** make any changes to cabin assignments.

## **What to Bring**

The following are items you may want to bring for a one-week session.

- 1 Set of Single Sheets
- 1 Laundry Bag
- 10 Shirts
- 1 Pillow
- 8 Changes of Underwear
- 8 Pairs of Socks
- 1 Blanket or Sleeping Bag
- 6 Pairs of Shorts
- 1 Pair of Long Pants

- 2 Pairs of shoes
- 1 Pair of Pajamas
- 1 Flashlight
- Soap/Soap Dish
- Deodorant
- 1 Pair of Flip-Flops
- 3 Towels
- Insect Repellent
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Sunscreen
- 2 Swimsuits
- 2 Wash Cloths
- Fan w/ Extension Cord
- Comb/Shampoo
- Eno/Hammock

**\*\*Optional items: Devotion Book, Camouflage attire, One outfit for closing banquet (collared shirt/sundress), and Wacky Costumes for activities.**

**DO NOT BRING: alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, firearms, lighters, knives, fireworks, shaving cream, and expensive items such as cell phones, nice clothes, iPods, iPads, CD player/radio, portable gaming systems, A/C units, etc. YMCA Camp Cherokee is an alcohol, drug, and tobacco free environment. Possession of any of these items could be grounds for immediate dismissal. YMCA Camp Cherokee is a "screen-free" camp - PLEASE DO NOT BRING CELL PHONES!**

## **Camp Goals and Outcomes**

**YMCA Camp Cherokee believes setting goals and outcomes for camp expresses our purpose of existence and operation. Parents and campers should feel informed about YMCA Camp Cherokee's goals, and should have some ideas as to the nature of the outcomes that might be observed so they are able to evaluate the effect of their camper's experience.**

### ***Camp Goals:***

- 1. Better understanding of living in harmony with and respecting nature.**
- 2. Learn/Sharpen skills in various program areas such as archery, boating, swimming, crafts, nature study, rock climbing, athletics, etc.**
- 3. Improve personal relationships by learning how to respect one another within a limited living space.**
- 4. Social interaction and making friends.**
- 5. Learn to be yourself.**
- 6. Increased self-confidence.**
- 7. Learn essential life skills such as teamwork, cooperation, communication, listening, friendships, trust, character, right and wrong choices.**

### ***Camp Outcomes:***

- 1. All campers will learn respecting nature through devotions, camp policies, and implementation of activities throughout the session.**
- 2. All campers will develop and sharpen various program skills by practicing in the class activities each day.**
- 3. All campers will improve personal and social interaction through living and participating with each other every day in activities and the cabin in a respectful manner.**
- 4. All campers will learn to be themselves through participating in activities that help them become comfortable around people without outside influences.**
- 5. All campers will gain self-confidence through positive reinforcements given by staff.**
- 6. All campers will develop and learn life skills through devotions, discussions, and conducting themselves in respectful and positive manner.**

## **Activities**

**Campers at YMCA Camp Cherokee participate in many activities throughout their stay at camp. Camp operates on an A/B Day schedule with alternating classes each day. A typical day at camp includes four class periods that last about an hour each with a lunch break in the middle. Additionally, after dinner each day, all of camp gathers together for a large group evening activity prior to bed. Please see the list below for some examples of activities offered at YMCA Camp Cherokee:**

- **Swimming**
- **Boating**
- **Rock Climbing**
- **Ziplining**
- **Archery**
- **Team Sports**
- **Arts & Crafts**
- **Frisbee Golf**
- **Hiking**
- **Themed Dances**
- **Capture the Flag**
- **Team Building Games**
- **And much, much more!**

**Safety is always a top priority at YMCA Camp Cherokee. In addition to thorough staff training, YMCA Camp Cherokee is an accredited member of the American Camp Association (ACA). The ACA is the leading authority for summer camps and youth development. They work to preserve, promote, and improve the camp experience. As part of our membership, YMCA Camp Cherokee must adhere to strict guidelines that include the successful completion of on-site visits and peer-reviewed policy reviews.**