



YMCA OF SOUTHERN MAINE

# CAMP PROGRAMS

## FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026

### Camp Osprey

Freeport

### Camp Heartwood

Biddeford

### Camp Pheonix

Portland

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Program Introduction & Information

Camp at a Glance

Registration & Cancellation

Camp Readiness & Behavior Policies

Attendance, Arrival, and Pick Up

What to Bring to Camp

General Health & Safety Procedures

Emergency Procedures

Rights of Children & Guardians

Code of Conduct

Staff Qualifications

## **WELCOME TO THE YMCA OF SOUTHERN MAINE'S CAMP PROGRAMS**

We are happy to offer quality, full-day camp programs for children ages 5-12 years. Camp Osprey in Freeport is licensed for 211 children, Camp Heartwood Nature Program in Biddeford is licensed for 84 children, and Camp Pheonix in Portland is licensed for 108 children.

### **Program Information:**

#### **Camp Osprey in Freeport**

14 Old South Freeport Road, Freeport, ME 04032

Haley Smith, Director

207-865-9600

[hsmith@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org](mailto:hsmith@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org)

#### **Camp Heartwood Nature Program in Biddeford**

3 Pomerleau Street, Biddeford, ME 04005

Brenda Hamilton, Director

207-283-0100

[bhamilton@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org](mailto:bhamilton@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org)

#### **Camp Pheonix in Portland**

70 Forest Avenue, Portland, ME 04101

Leah Johnson, Director

207-874-1111

[ljohnson@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org](mailto:ljohnson@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org)

We are committed to providing a positive experience for your entire family. Our camps provide a safe place for your children to learn and grow with guidance from our quality staff.

Our programs are licensed through the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services. We would be happy to provide you with a copy of the latest Child Care Facility Licensing Rule upon request. You may also find the rules online at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/child-care-licensing/becoming-a-childcare-provider](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/child-care-licensing/becoming-a-childcare-provider).

Families have the right to view the results of any childcare provider's most recent licensing inspection.

## CAMP AT A GLANCE

School Break Camp programs run February 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> 2026 and April 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 2026.

Summer Camp programs run June 15<sup>th</sup> – August 21<sup>st</sup> 2026. All Camp programs are **closed June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

### Camp Schedule

Each summer camp session runs Monday – Friday, with the exception of June 19<sup>th</sup>, when camp will be closed.

- **Camp Hours:** 9:30am - 3:30pm
- **Extended Care Hours:** 8:00am - 9:30am & 3:30pm - 5:30pm.

### Sample Daily Schedule

*While our schedule will vary from day to day, in general we use the following structure.*

8:00 – 9:30	Before care
9:30 – 9:50	Morning meeting
9:50 – 10:15	Snack
10:15 – 11:00	Activity 1
11:00 – 11:45	Activity 2
11:45 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 1:00	Activity 3
1:00 – 2:45	Activity 4
2:45 – 3:00	Snack
3:00 – 3:30	Bead Ceremony
3:30 – 5:30	After Care

**Activities include:** nature exploration, swimming, sports/games, arts and crafts, team building, theater, journaling, reading, playground, and on-site enrichment programs.

Activities may vary based on camp location, camper ages, and/or weather. Children will be outside daily as weather permits.

## **REGISTRATION**

### **2026 Camp Fees**

Camp Osprey and Camp Pheonix: \$340/week

Camp Heartwood Nature Program: \$335/week

*The State of Maine offers Child Care Subsidy for families through multiple programs. Often a subsidy award is greater than YMCA Financial Assistance. We require families to check if they are eligible before applying for YMCA Financial Assistance. YMCA financial assistance applications are available for those who do not qualify for Maine State Subsidy programs.*

*Please register using our paper application if you are interested in Financial Assistance. Camp registrations with financial assistance or state subsidy are due by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 for summer camp programs.*

### **Required With Registration:**

- A non-refundable \$70 per week deposit (prorated based on financial assistance or subsidy award)
- Completed enrollment forms
- Completed financial assistance forms or subsidy award with supporting documentation if using either
- Immunization records

### **Financial Policies**

- Upon enrollment, parents are required to pay a \$70 per week deposit. *Financial Assistance is available and is applicable to the deposit after the submission of a completed Financial Assistance application .*
- Payments are due two weeks prior to the start of the camp week.
- The YMCA of Southern Maine requires that payments be made using our automatic payment system. You may use a checking, savings or credit card account.
- If a payment is returned or declined, you will be contacted so that we will know how to proceed. The YMCA of Southern Maine reserves the right to ask guardians to withdraw their child when the financial obligations are not met.

## Waitlist

When enrollment is full, we carry a waitlist. As openings occur, they are filled from this list.

## CANCELLATION POLICIES

***Please review our cancellation policy as it has changed since the 2025 session***

There are no refunds for weekly deposits.

<b>If you cancel in writing 15 days or more before the start of the camp week:</b>	Refunded what you have paid, less the weekly non-refundable registration deposit
<b>If you cancel in writing 0-14 days before start of camp week:</b>	No refund, charged in full
<b>If you would like to transfer your registration to a different week of camp:</b>	We can accommodate this request dependent on space and staffing if the request is made in writing 15 days in advance of the first affected week

## Refund Policy:

There will be no refunds given, including but not limited to the following situations:

- Incomplete or missing paperwork, including required medical forms.
- Illness, such as fever, headache, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Failure to attend the session, including late arrivals or no-shows.
- Homesickness that prevents the camper from participating.
- Behavioral concerns, including bullying, harassment, or actions that pose a safety risk to self or others.
- Displays of verbal or physical aggression.
- Inability to follow camp policies and procedures.
- Conflicts with other activities, such as if school extended due to snow days, competitive sports, summer school, vacations, or family commitments.

- Changes in transportation availability that prevent attendance.
- Missed camp days for holidays, storms, or other closures.

**Behavior removal policy:**

In the event of dismissal from camp due to behavioral reasons, no refund will be given for the week of camp the camper is currently attending. For other weeks of camp, the cancellation policy will apply, where there will be no refunds for camp weeks starting within 0-14 days of the behavior removal.

## **CAMP READINESS**

*What does it take for a camper to be successful?*

- Camper can ask for help and communicate what they need. This includes regulating emotions, boundaries, friendships, and handling conflict in an age appropriate way.
- Camper can stay with their group and transition between activities, following directions from camp staff.
- Camper can explore outdoor nature areas that are not enclosed, including nature trails, areas with uneven terrain, and open fields.
- Camper can be responsible for their own personal hygiene without assistance, including: changing in and out of their wet bathing suit, using a port-a-potty, and hand washing.
- Camper can uphold the YMCA of Southern Maine's values by being: respectful, responsible, caring, honest, and inclusive.
  - Respect other campers, counselors, and the camp area. Keeping hands to ourselves, listening to counselor directions
  - Be responsible by cleaning up after themselves, keeping track of their belongings, keeping the camp space clean, and making safe choices
  - Be caring to others by helping campers and counselors, listening to our camp guests
  - Being honest about their actions, asking for help when they need it, and honoring their bodies if they are asking for rest or water



- Being inclusive by making new friends and inviting people to play, talking to a counselor if someone is being mistreated
- Camper can be away from technology for the entirety of the camp day.
- Camper can manage being in a group environment that can be loud and energetic.
- Camper can spend substantial time outside, including rainy weather.

#### **What support can Camp staff typically provide?**

- Camp staff can help campers navigate conflict and emotions.
- Camp staff can support camp transitions with 10-5-3-1 minute reminders and by following a routine.

#### **What support can Camp not safely provide?**

- Behavior and emotional support that requires camp staff to provide consistent one-on-one support of a camper.
- If your child receives one-on-one support at school, they will typically require a one-on-one aide at camp to be successful. Camp does not provide one-on-one support, but we can accommodate a DHHS approved aide if provided by the guardians.

*Please note that guardians are not permitted to be the child's one-on-one support at camp.*

***If you are unsure if your child will be successful at camp after reading our Camper Readiness guidelines, please contact your Program Director.***

#### **INCLUSION PHILOSOPHY & PROCEDURE**

The YMCA of Southern Maine believes that all individuals, regardless of ability, should have access to our programs. However, there may be particular or special needs that our staff is not trained to handle, or that our staff/participant ratio is not adequate to serve.

The Program Director and Branch Executive, in consultation with the parents/guardian or legally appropriate agency, reserve the sole right to determine whether the program is suitable in each instance and will make every effort to provide and assist each family.

# **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

## **Behavior Management Strategies**

The YMCA of Southern Maine feels it is essential to focus on positive behavior. When children make inappropriate choices, staff will redirect them to another choice, area or activity.

- We encourage children to use words with their friends and counselors. Staff will model appropriate language to use.
- Children are encouraged to solve peer problems. Staff will assist and model the use of conflict resolution strategies.
- Staff set logical consequences for behavior.
- Consequences will be directed at the behavior, not the child. The child should learn from the experience.
- We do not withhold physical activity from a child as “discipline” for negative behavior, however if a child is being disruptive or unsafe they may be asked to take a short break from an activity.
- We do not use food as a reward for positive behavior, nor will food be withheld from a child for negative behavior.
- We ask that parents do not discipline children other than their own. This includes verbal rebukes and correction. If you notice a problem or issue at the program when you drop off or pick up your child please speak to a director and let them take care of the situation. Thank you.

## **Behavior Procedures**

We are committed to inclusion of all. As part of this, we expect everyone to behave in a welcoming and inclusive way, consistent with our character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

We do all that we can to promote positive behavior and use positive guidance techniques. To be successful, we ask families to work collaboratively with us to develop and implement a plan to support their child. One-on-one attention is not possible at camp.

**We will follow the steps below to ensure all children feel safe and welcome in our programs. However, if the behavior is severe, steps one and/or two may be skipped at the discretion of YMCA leadership.**

- **First Incident - Warning:** Warning given by Camp staff to camper. Camp staff will talk through the behavior with camper and go through behavior expectations at camp. The Counselor and/or Director will explain what will happen next if the behavior continues (second and third incident consequences).
- **Second Incident - Warning with Parent Communication Form from Leadership**  
**Camp Staff:** Warning given from camp counselor and/or camp leadership to the camper about the behavior and camp expectations. A conversation with camp leadership and the guardian will happen over the phone and/or at pick up, along with a signed parent communication form outlining the behavior and expectations.
- **Third Incident - Suspension from Camp:** An additional parent communication form is filled out and then signed by the guardian at pick up. The Camp Director will call the guardian and have the camper picked up early from camp for the day. The camper may be suspended for an additional length of time to be determined by the Camp Director. Program fees for missed camp days for children who are suspended for behavioral reasons will not be refunded.
- **Fourth Incident – Termination:** An additional parent communication form is filled out and signed by the guardian. The camper will be removed from camp for the rest of the 2026 camp season. A conversation with the guardian and camp director must happen before any registration for future programs.

**Children asked to go home must be picked up within 60 minutes of notification from the YMCA.** Failure to do so may result in the child being removed from the program. Please make sure your contact information and your Emergency Contacts' information are up to date and reachable by phone whenever your child is in care at the Y.

### **Procedures For Communicating & Resolving Issues**

If at any time you have a concern about your child's experience at camp, please contact your Program Director.

## **CAMP ARRIVAL**

Guardians should walk campers to the camp check-in location to be signed in, which will be communicated in the Camp Welcome email. Guardians are required to walk campers to check in each day.

If your child will be absent from camp or if they will be arriving late or picked up early, call or email the Program Director and leave a message for the day that your child will be absent.

## **CAMP PICK UP**

The regular camp day ends at 3:30pm, campers can be picked up at your program's designated pick up area.

After care ends promptly at 5:30pm to support our camp staff. If you are going to be late for pick up, please call us as soon as possible. If you are late on more than three occasions we reserve the right to remove your child from camp.

If your child is not picked up by 5:30 pm a staff member will call you and/or all of your emergency numbers and attempt to leave a message for you. If the staff person is unable to contact you or your emergency contact by 5:45 pm, **we will contact the police.**

## **Closures**

If camp closes, we will alert families of closures using phone and email communication. Guardians may also call the YMCA membership desk for more information. If the YMCA closes, camp programs will also close. In the event of a power, heat or water failure, families will be notified if a closure is necessary.

**Please make sure your emergency phone numbers are up to date.** You MUST have an alternative adult who can pick up your child if you cannot be reached. Families are expected to pick their child(ren) up within one hour of being called.

## WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

### Camper Checklist:

- Backpack – to store sunscreen, swimsuit, towel, lunch, snacks, water, and extra clothes.
- Sunscreen – please pack extra in a bag to reapply throughout the day. Counselors can assist campers with spray sunscreen only.
- Bug spray – pack bug spray for trips to nature.
- Water bottle – every child should have a water bottle each day.
- Swimsuit – please pack a swimsuit every day for pool and sprinkler play.
- Towel – please send a towel every day.
- Swim shoes – pack slides or sandals for the pool, outdoor shoes are not allowed on the pool deck.
- Lunch and snacks – please pack plenty of lunch and snacks for your camper's active day at camp! **Camp does not provide snacks**
- Extra clothes – we'll be outside for most of the day, make sure to pack extra clothes in case of rain. Rain jackets and sweatshirts are also recommended.
- Sneakers and socks – closed to shoes allow campers to safely participate in all activities.

### What to leave at home:

- Money
- Electronics (cell phones, game systems, mp3 players, tablets, etc)
- Game/Trading Cards
- Weapons/Pocket Knives
- Lighters/Matches
- Toys, including stuffed animals, keychain toys, fidgets, and bracelet toys
- Caffeinated beverages
- Anything of Value (monetary or sentimental)

Please be sure to leave valuables at home to avoid loss or damage. The YMCA is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen belongings.

**Each year we collect many lost items.** Remember to label all clothing and belongings with your child's full name. If anything is left at camp, please notify your Director. They will look for the lost item.

## **CLOTHING & OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is a key element of YMCA camp. We go outside in all weather – **including rain!** The YMCA uses the Child Care Weather Watch chart and the air quality index to determine weather suitability.

Children should dress in clothes that can get dirty and are appropriate for the weather. Closed toed shoes like sneakers and socks ensure children can safely participate in all activities.

In addition, we strongly encourage packing an extra set of clothes, a bathing suit, towel, flip flops or sandals, a sweatshirt, and a raincoat.

## **FOOD**

To help your child have a good day at camp, please send them to camp with several snacks and a filling lunch. Campers are not permitted to share food with other campers.

Campers will not have access to a microwave or refrigerator for their food at camp. Please send food items that are ready to eat from their lunch box.

*Please note: The Y is **not** a peanut free facility.*

**Please send a water bottle to camp daily.** Children may drink water at any time.

If your family is facing challenges with access to food, please reach out to your camp director.

## **GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **Hygiene Practices**

All children and staff must receive training in proper hand hygiene. All children and staff must wash hands before and after eating and after using the restroom.

### **Sickness & Emergencies**

In a group setting, illness can spread rapidly. The staff are vigilant about hand washing and will remind and assist children to wash their hands frequently.

If your child shows symptoms of illness while at camp, we will use our best judgment to call you. You are expected to ensure your child will be picked up within one hour of our call.

#### **Children should stay home if they have the following symptoms:**

- Fever at or above 100.4
- Chills
- Cough
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion
- Runny nose (in conjunction with other symptoms)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea\*

\*Diarrhea is defined by the CDC as within a 24-hour period, 3 or more episodes of loose stools or an occurrence of loose stools that is above normal for the person.

## Returning Camp After Illness

Children can return to care when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Their symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
- They haven't had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medications)

Upon returning to camp, added precautions should be taken by families over the next five days, including monitoring of symptoms, supporting children to cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze, and practicing proper handwashing techniques.

## Medication

The State of Maine Department of Health & Human Services administers strict guidelines in the area of dispensing medication to children in a childcare setting.

Whether a medication is prescription or over the counter, an **Authorization to Dispense Medication** form must be completed before we can administer a dose.

Each course of medication requires its own Authorization to Dispense Medication form. Please ask your Program Director for a form when you bring in the medicine. All medication must:

- Be in their original container with the name of the medicine and the dosage on it.
- Be labeled clearly with your child's name. Never bring medicine in a food container.
- Be given directly to the Camp Director or staff. Please do not send your child with medication to give to staff, or to keep in their bag or pocket.

All medication left at a YMCA camp will be kept inaccessible to children. Each camp has a physician consultant that is used to gain insight on best practices when needed.

A written record is kept noting each time a prescription or nonprescription medication is given to a child. Only Program Directors or designated staff may dispense medication.

**When starting a new medication, it is vital that the first dose be given at home.** This is to assure that if a child were to have an allergic reaction to the medication, their guardian will be with them and able to respond.

## Self-Administration of Inhalers, EpiPens, Emergency Medication



A note is required from both you and your child's medical provider authorizing your child to self-administer a specific medication before they can do so at camp. All medications, even those self-administered, must be given to the Director by the parent or guardian for safekeeping during the day to ensure safety for all children.

### **Allergies / Chronic Symptoms**

If your child has a medical condition, please make your Program Director aware of it so that we can work with you to develop a plan to keep your child healthy and safe.

### **Conjunctivitis / Pink Eye**

Children with conjunctivitis or pink eye should not be at camp until they have been using eye drops or ointment for 24 hours.

### **Lice**

Head lice is a common occurrence in school-aged children and is not a reflection of the child or the family. However, to prevent the spread of lice, children with lice should remain home until they have been treated. If your child is found to have lice while at the Y, you will be notified and asked to pick up your child within 60 minutes.

Once your child's lice have been treated, please let your Director know so that your child can be cleared to return to the Y.

### **Ticks**

After spending time outdoors, we will assist children in doing a tick check. If a tick is embedded in your child, we will alert our Program Director who will follow the YMCA physician's standing orders and remove the tick. The tick will be placed in a plastic bag and given to the family at pick up. If you would prefer us to call you to come treat your child, please let us know.

***Please also conduct regular tick checks on your children, as we are unable to do full body tick checks at camp.***

## **Immunizations**

All children must have a current record of immunizations on file at the YMCA that clearly documents their present immunization status based on [Maine DHHS's standards for childcare](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/documents/Daycare-Immunization-standards-revised.pdf) (<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/documents/Daycare-Immunization-standards-revised.pdf>).

These records must be updated annually.

Under Maine law, only an MD, DO, NP or PA may provide an immunization exemption for your child, based on their professional judgment that immunization against one or more diseases may be medically inadvisable. Religious exemptions are no longer allowed under Maine law.

If your child is not vaccinated, during a disease outbreak, defined by CDC reporting standards, your child will be excluded from programming following CDC guidance, or until your child receives the necessary immunization. During this time you will still be charged for your child's spot in our child care programs.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**In case of an accident or emergency at camp, the procedure is as follows:**

- In the case of a minor accident, simple first aid treatment is applied on the spot and you will be notified either at the time or when you pick up your child.
- In the case of a more severe accident (i.e.: a cut that needs stitches), first aid will be rendered, we will call you immediately and may also call your pediatrician and follow his/her instructions. If you cannot be reached right away, we will call your emergency contacts.
- 911 will be called to transport a seriously injured child. A staff member will accompany your child in the ambulance and will call you, or your emergency contacts to meet at the hospital. All serious injuries are reported to Licensing.
- If a child loses consciousness or stops breathing, we will render aid, following CPR/AED/First Aid training.

**Please make sure your emergency phone numbers are up to date.** You MUST have an alternative adult who can pick up your child if you cannot be reached. Families are expected to pick their child(ren) up within one hour of being called.

### **Fire Drills**

We conduct a minimum of one fire drill per month throughout the year. Drills will take place from different areas of the building to ensure that children know how to exit in case of emergency.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

If evacuation or relocation is necessary, the Director and counselors will evacuate all children from the building. Injuries will be addressed using our first aid training, as soon as it is safe to do so. After all children are safe and accounted for, a YMCA representative will contact you.

If the YMCA and surrounding area is deemed unsafe, we will evacuate children and staff to another YMCA branch:

<b>PROGRAM LOCATION</b>	<b>WILL RELOCATE TO</b>	<b>RELOCATION ADDRESS &amp; PHONE #</b>
Camp Osprey in Freeport	Greater Portland Branch	217 High Street, Portland, ME 207-874-1111
Camp Heartwood Nature Program in Biddeford		
Camp Pheonix in Portland	Casco Bay Branch	14 Old South Freeport Rd, Freeport, ME 207-865-9600

## **THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN & GUARDIANS**

### **Rights of Children:**

Children receiving care from any childcare facility have the following rights:

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.
3. Each child has the right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards of this rule.
4. Each child must be provided childcare services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes use of developmentally appropriate practices by the childcare facility.
6. Each child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for the child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the childcare facility.
7. Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to childcare facility policies and practices.

### **Rights of Parents & Legal Guardians of Children Receiving Childcare**

1. A child's parent or legal guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for childcare services.
2. A child's parent or legal guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the Department. The childcare facility must inform children's parents or legal guardians that the licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the premises.

3. Parents or legal guardians must be notified by the childcare facility within two business days of any actions taken against the childcare facility by the department, including but not limited to decisions to issue conditional licenses, refusal to renew a license, or to impose fines or other sanctions.

### **Family Engagement and Guardian Involvement**

There are multiple opportunities for parent and guardian involvement in our childcare programs

- Guardians can visit during program hours. Please reach out to your Camp Director if you are interested in stopping by during the camp day to see any of our programming.
- We welcome suggestions, special visitors, good ideas, suggestions and sources of supplies or services. Our families are rich sources of ideas, and we would love to hear from you.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Maine law provides for the reporting to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) when there is a reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. Our staff are mandated reporters.

Any observation/incident that results in the suspicion of abuse or neglect will be reported immediately to DHHS Licensing Specialist. The YMCA cannot discourage anyone from making a report about suspected abuse or neglect.

As youth development professionals, we are acutely aware of children's vulnerability and of parents' concerns about this. To help alleviate parents' concerns about the safety of the YMCA we:

- Are open to unannounced visits by parents at any time.
- Run background checks via the State Bureau of Investigation on all camp staff and volunteers who are 18 years or older. We also require staff ages 18 and over to be fingerprinted through the Office of Children and Family Services prior to employment at the YMCA.
- Talk often to parents and staff about ways to ensure safety for all of us

- For more information, a copy of the YMCA Child Abuse Policy is available upon request to any interested parent.
- We self-report: If a licensing violation takes place in one of our programs we report the violation to our licensing specialist at DHHS. This includes any serious injuries or deaths.
- We are visited throughout the year by our Licensing Specialist who reviews all licensing rules with us. Rule violations are reported to DHHS Child Care Licensing Division by calling 1-800-452-1999.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY & RECORDS ACCESS**

We maintain a separate file for each child in our care. These records are kept locked in our office and administrators of the program will have access to them.

Guardians must give the YMCA of Southern Maine written permission in order for us to share any information about your child with a third party, with the exception of information required by Licensing or Child Protective Intake. The confidentiality of your child's information is important to us and will be protected.

Records are retained for a minimum of three years. Legal guardians are entitled to access to their child's file and may request a copy of anything in the file, at no cost, by submitting a written request to the Program Director. Legal guardians may also attach comments to their child's file.

Photos may be taken to share our impact with the community. Parents are asked to sign a Photo Release as part of their enrollment. Parents who do not want their child's photo used publicly may indicate this on the release – these photos will not be used.

All Staff members will use discretion when speaking about the children's experiences at the Y, and will not talk to other families about confidential matters.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS & CUSTODY SITUATIONS**

The YMCA of Southern Maine recognizes that situations arise when families are working through difficult issues. With some of these situations the courts may be involved. All court documents regarding parental rights and custody must be given to the Program Director

and will become a part of the child's file. All such documents will be followed by the staff and leadership of the YMCA of Southern Maine.

If either party attempts to violate a court order and refuses to comply with YMCA staff, law enforcement will be called in for support. The YMCA and staff will remain a neutral party in these situations.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING**

Every child is unique, including the pace at which they learn and develop. The YMCA strives to honor each child's unique style of learning. In the event we feel a child could benefit from speech, social, mental health or medical services, we will speak with the family. The YMCA does not employ an intervention specialist. However, our staff is committed to the healthy development of each child.

We will communicate with families on an ongoing basis, including observations and concerns, as well as steps we're taking to support the child. We believe working closely with families is the best way to help their children thrive.

If additional support or evaluation is recommended, we will communicate this to you, and with your permission, will share our observations and concerns with your provider of choice.

- **211 Maine** helps families by referring them to appropriate agencies and community organizations that may be able to help with issues concerning **child development, parenting, behavioral assessment, screenings**, or other things such as **food and nutrition** and **dental health** for children. Contact 211 Maine by calling 211 or 1-866-811-5695
- Your child's **pediatrician, teacher, literacy specialist, school social worker** and **intervention specialist** are also fantastic resources to engage when seeking support for your child.

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **Our Commitment to You**

At the YMCA of Southern Maine, our mission is to build an inclusive, healthy community, regardless of ability to pay. We are guided by our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility in everything we do. This Code of Conduct helps ensure that everyone who participates in our programs can learn, grow, and thrive in a safe, supportive environment.

The YMCA of Southern Maine has zero tolerance for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among program participants. We are committed to providing all participants with a safe environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued. We will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one participant by another participant. Behavior that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

We also will not tolerate any behavior that is classified as bullying. When such actions are disruptive to our community, we will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior and restore a positive environment for all.

## **English Language Learners**

The Y utilizes translation platforms to accommodate English language learners.

## **Staying Connected Safely**

**One-on-one interactions:** Most inappropriate behavior occurs when people are alone together. To protect everyone in our community, private one-on-one interactions between participants and staff/volunteers are prohibited unless approved in advance by program leadership. If you observe such interactions, please report them.

**Electronic communication:** Communication between staff/volunteers and participants must be approved by the YMCA's administration and a participant's parent/guardian and must occur in an open electronic environment. We follow the "Rule of Three" in all electronic communications—there should be at least two staff members included in text messages and emails with participants. Direct, private messaging between participants and staff/volunteers is not allowed.



Participants may not share cell phones with other participants and must follow our policies governing the use of personal mobile devices during programs.

## **How to Report Concerns**

Because we are committed to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse and maintaining a safe environment for everyone, it's important that we all work together to protect each other. If you observe any suspicious, inappropriate, or concerning behaviors by other participants, staff, or volunteers, it is important to report them immediately.

### **Ways to report:**

- Speak with the program director
- Share with your Branch Executive or our CEO
  - Association Office: 207-874-1111
  - Casco Bay Branch: 207-865-9600
  - Greater Portland Branch: 207-874-1111
  - Northern York County Branch: 207-283-0100
- Use our anonymous, online (<https://www.ymcaofsouthernmaine.org/prevention>)

**Remember:** We take all reports seriously and will respond promptly and appropriately to protect everyone in our community. You will not face retaliation for making a good-faith report, and we will work to maintain confidentiality whenever possible.

## **Parent/Guardian Resources**

It is important to empower children to understand their rights when it comes to body safety and boundaries. Having an open conversation with your child about abuse can build trust, making them more comfortable talking to you if something were to happen to them.

There are many fantastic resources online to help you with these important conversations.

To learn more, please visit our (<https://www.ymcaofsouthernmaine.org/prevention>) or ask your program director for assistance.



## **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

Camp counselors must be at least 16 years of age, be CPR and first aid certified, and model the Y's core values and Promise Statement. Counselors 18 years and older must pass a criminal background check, including fingerprinting through the Office of Children and Family Services.

### **Qualifications for Youth Development Director:**

- A Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, or related field preferred. Associate's degree, or a combination of training and experience that meets State Licensing rules required.
- 3-5 years of experience in a leadership role within a youth setting
- Strong communication, interpersonal, leadership and decision-making skills
- Models and teaches the Y's Core values and Promise Statement
- Emotionally mature
- Adult and Pediatric CPR, First Aid, and AED Certification
- A criminal background check, including fingerprinting through the Office of Children and Family Services.

All staff undertake continued education and training. Staff are supervised through program observation by Program Directors and Executives, through regular staff meetings, and one-on-one coaching or mentoring sessions with Directors and Executives, as needed. Each staff member receives yearly evaluations by their immediate supervisor. New staff complete an orientation process during their first weeks of employment.

## **QUESTIONS?**

This handbook is a general reference guide. If there are any concerns that have not been addressed, please feel free to speak with your Director. The information included in this handbook is subject to change from time to time. It is important that you help facilitate active communication with YMCA staff.