

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Tell me about safety at YMCA Camp Seymour.

SAFETY of your child and everyone at camp is top priority. YMCA Camp Seymour is an ACA (American Camping Association) accredited camp. This means we have many standards in place to keep every participant safe while they are here.

Life jackets are mandatory for all boaters. All instructors are trained in either Lifeguarding or American Red Cross Small Craft Safety.

Students are asked to always travel in "truddies" (groups of three or more) when traveling not as a group (to restrooms, to teacher housing, etc.)

Is there a camp nurse on site?

No. When a school chooses to come to camp for their OEE program the school is considered a "user group" which means they are renting out part of camp. It is very similar to staying at a cabin in a state park. Camp provides the lodging, meals, programming, and facilities, but any medical issues or concerns are the teachers' responsibility (or the school nurse if your school brings their own nurse).

My child takes medications. Who distributes those?

Safety is our highest priority at camp. School personnel are responsible for medication oversight and student health care, and all student medication will be kept by the teachers or nurse. Due to our ACA accreditation camp staff are not allowed under any circumstances to administer any medications. Many schools send a nurse to help with medication administration. The camp staff is trained in first aid and CPR in the event of an emergency; quick access to 911 services is available. Staff members carry first aid kits, and first aid kits are also located in key places throughout camp. The camp also maintains AED's, oxygen, and backboards. Each student will need an up-to-date medical form, to be kept on hand with the school personnel.

What are the accommodations?

YMCA Camp Seymour has fifteen heated cabins each with a restroom and shower inside. Each cabin sleeps 12-14 people in bunks with a small adjoining cabin leader room without a door, so cabin leaders can supervise students at all times. We have six rustic yurts with restrooms close by-one is insulated, and the other five are not. We recommend participants staying in yurts pack an extra blanket or sleeping bag to be more comfortable on chilly evenings. Please ask your teachers about your child's accommodations to pack accordingly. There is a shower house with individual stalls in main camp for those cabins that want to be able to shower all at the same time or for use by participants staying in the yurts.

Is the camp wheelchair accessible?

Most of main camp is wheelchair accessible, including our dining hall, shower house, Lodges, and Environmental Center. We have several handicap accessible cabins. Most trails around camp are gravel. Main camp does not have too many hills, but once you get out of main camp there are a lot of hills to get places. Some of the classes teachers choose are in the "outback", which is inaccessible to wheelchairs. Please talk with your child's teacher to find out more information and to discuss necessary accommodations.

What will my child be doing while at camp?

Your child will be learning, playing, exploring, and building a community. Please inform your child that his or her Outdoor and Environmental Education (OEE) program at YMCA Camp Seymour is educational and an extension of school and their classroom. All classes are either outdoor education or environmental education-based and aligned with the current state standards as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The teachers choose which classes the campers take based on the goals the teachers set for their students. Every schedule is tailor made for that particular school, but you can look at the link to find a sample schedule.

Will there be opportunities for recreation?

The program is designed to be both educational and recreational, and to keep students occupied and interacting all the time. During our overnight program every afternoon we offer an open Recreation time where students may move around camp with a buddy to some of the following program areas that may be open: Canoeing, Big Canoe, Archery, Reptiles, Touch Tanks, Ball Courts, and seasonally the pool.

Where is the camp?

YMCA Camp Seymour is just 20 minutes west of Tacoma off Hwy 16. See our website for directions.

My child is going to camp. What should I worry about?

Camp Seymour has been running programs since 1905, and the Outdoor and Environmental Education program has been running since 1988. Our program creates an atmosphere where children are given an opportunity to learn in a natural environment. Students learn more about themselves and their place in the world, about relating to each other and being part of a community. We hope that what they learn from our program will help them become more responsible citizens of our planet.

With these purposes in mind, physical, and emotional safety is critical, and paramount to the success of the program. YMCA staff members are carefully selected, have background checks, and are trained in all areas of camp operation. The program is highly successful, with excellent staff and a carefully developed curriculum. It is designed to be an extension of the classroom experience; so much more than simply a fun field trip.

Who supervises the students?

Each school sends students' teachers, whose role is to oversee the entire program. The school also selects either parents, college students, high school leaders, or teachers themselves to be cabin leaders. The school is responsible for screening and training chaperones as well as supervising students during programs during the day. Cabin leaders are responsible for the students at night in cabins. Camp Seymour recommends that schools have two cabin leaders in each cabin. YMCA staff members teach classes and facilitate the overall program but will not be staying in cabins with students.

What if my child is sick?

Though we want every student to be able to experience camp, please do not send your child to camp if he or she is sick. Students must be fever free (without medication) and free of vomiting for 24 hours prior to coming to camp.

If your child gets sick while at camp, the teachers will be contacting guardians to make arrangements for picking the child up from camp.

What about rain?

We live in WA, and it rains here. There is no such thing as bad weather—just inappropriate clothing, because we run our classes rain or shine. That being said, safety is our first concern, and we want to be completely prepared for any weather. As long as students can be happy and safe outside, the program will include outdoor activities. In the event of extreme wind we will cancel some activities and monitor others keeping the camper's safety in mind at all times. All YMCA staff members are trained to monitor and recognize severe weather.

What are the duties of a cabin leader?

Cabin leaders supervise children during classes, evening activities, break times, and overnight in cabins. Most of the time cabin leaders will not be responsible for leading activities or teaching, their role during programs is to maintain safety and order. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly, keeping in mind student safety and the goals of the program. See the cabin leader manual on our website for more information about being a cabin leader.

Do I have to pay to be a cabin leader?

Camp charges per person for each student, adult, and faculty that comes for the program. Ask your child's teacher about the cost for chaperones.

What should I do to prepare my camper or myself if I am chaperoning?

If your child has never stayed away from home overnight, try it out before coming to camp with a family member or a friend. Staying overnight for the first time with 10 other classmates might be a little more challenging than staying at Grandma's house.

Get outside and walk! Camp Seymour is part of a nation-wide effort to fight childhood obesity; this effort is called, "Activate America." There is a lot of physical activity that happens at Camp, including walking up and down hills multiple times a day. We encourage participants to increase their activity level before coming to camp.

Let your child know that she or he will most likely be sharing camp with not only the child's school group but another school group as well. Learning groups and cabin groups are separated by school, but all campers will share meal times and a recreation time together. This is a great opportunity for children to learn about being part of a larger community, sharing, and hopefully making new friends they might not have had the opportunity to otherwise.