



CAMP  
**GORHAM**  
YMCA OF GREATER ROCHESTER

# CONFIDENT KIDS COMFORTED PARENTS

The YMCA Camp Gorham Parent Handbook





## Why Overnight Camp is More Important Than Ever

Summer Camp is a Year-Round Education!

The YMCA is, and always will be, a place where individuals and families from all walks of life are welcome and where they may learn, grow, and thrive – together. We believe that the community formed during a camp session allows your child to gain experiences that peers at home may not, and these positive experiences give your child the confidence to excel in so many other aspects of their lives. A camp experience will bolster children’s socialization skills, build social-emotional intelligence, provide opportunities for leadership development, and help them achieve their full potential!

YMCA Camp Gorham provides the opportunity for children from all backgrounds to come together, unplug, and connect. Through the camp experience your camper will become more resilient, develop decision-making skills, and challenge their comfort level in a structure, safe environment – emerging with a positive sense of self and confidence in “who” they are. The overnight camp experience at YMCA Camp Gorham is designed to offer opportunities for campers to develop more independence, celebrate their achievements, create deep friendships, and experience a unique sense of belonging within our camp community. Our four pillars: achievement, independence, friendship, and belonging along with the YMCA’s core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and inclusion are the foundation on which our program is structured.

To be successful and engaged members of our community, campers should be able to safely, independently, and cooperatively:

- Live with (i.e. share sleeping space and create a summer home with) similarly aged and gendered campers in a cabin and take part in the social and play time of their village.
- Exhibit suitable behavior without needing more than the usual amount of individual attention.
- Be responsible for person care, hygiene, and individual health and safety.
- Follow a varied individual and group activity schedule, manage free time with minimal supervision and show flexibility and adaptability when schedules change.
- Maneuver rugged and steep terrain and distances between activities what are part of our natural surroundings.
- Enjoy overnight excursions with may require challenging hikes and offer tents and lean-to shelter (two-week campers).
- Willingness to try new things, step outside of their comfort zone, and engage in activities that might feel risky, knowing that they’ll build resilience and confidence along the way.
- Understand and respond to group instruction for most of the activities offered at camp.
- Join in large group activities that build community, such as evening programs, campfires, and eating, singing, and dancing together with the entire camp community in the dining hall.
- Act appropriately in case of an emergency.
- Contribute positively to the overall spirit of the camp community.

If you have questions about your child’s participation in Camp, please call the office at 315-357-6401.

## Camp Gorham Offerings: A Progression for Every Camper

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YMCA Camp Gorham is a co-ed overnight camp located on Dart Lake in the Adirondack Mountains. We have a 1,500-acre property that includes our private lake. Camp is the perfect place for your child to make friendships that will last a lifetime while they learn about themselves and the world around them.

Since YMCA Camp Gorham welcomed our first campers in 1961, we have offered a premiere overnight camping experience meant to create an experience that youth can't find elsewhere.

From their first week as a camper through their final year as a Counselor in Training, Camp Gorham offers age-appropriate development through intentional programming and skill-building progressions to support personal growth and achievement while fostering a sense of community and belonging.

### WHERE SHOULD MY CAMPER START?

- Our youngest campers – rising grades 2-6 – all start in Traditional Overnight Camp. Traditional Overnight Camp might be what comes to mind when you think about “camp.” Campers live in cabins with other campers and counselors and spend their day following a jam-packed schedule of specialty classes, waterfront time, and evening programs. It's common to hear silly shouts and cheers, plus lots of inside jokes!
- Campers who are entering grades 7-10 have the choice between Traditional Overnight Camp and the Adirondack Wilderness Explorers Program.
  - If they choose Traditional overnight camp, they'll move into a new village and become the cool older campers that the younger ones look up to.
  - The AWE program offers a new way to explore Camp Gorham while building outdoor skills like backpacking, hiking, and boating. This is a perfect opportunity for teens to thrive while building resilience as they test their personal boundaries.
- The Counselor in Training (CiT) Program is designed for campers entering grade 11 who are curious about making the jump from camper to summer camp staff. During their three weeks at Camp, CiT's get hands-on experience and learn what it takes to be part of the overnight camp team.

Our staff are happy to talk with your family about the next steps for your camper!



## Camp Gorham Staff

### YEAR-ROUND STAFF

#### Zach Eigenbrodt: Executive Director

Zach joined the YMCA of Greater Rochester from the Frost Valley YMCA, where he spent five years as the Senior Director of Camping Services. He's spent a large part of his career with the YMCA Movement, serving in wilderness adventure and overnight camping roles with the Frost Valley location.

#### Paul Davidson: Camp Director

Paul joined the Gorham team in 2023 as the Summer Camp Director, bringing twenty years of experience in outdoor recreation and summer camp. Paul got his start at Y camps as a sailing and rock-climbing instructor at Camp Chingachgook on Lake George. Most recently, he led YMCA Camp Child in Elliston, Montana. He believes strongly in the transformative power of the overnight camp experience to help campers become confident in who they are.

#### Ryan Lukaszek: Camp Ranger

#### Pete Meneilly: Buildings and Grounds Supervisor

#### Heather Dickerson: Director of Administration

### SEASONAL STAFF

- Our staff join us from all over the United States and the world! Each year we intentionally hire international staff to join us at Camp Gorham to share their culture with our campers.
- Many of our staff, including our leadership and some of our international staff, are returning for their second, third, or fourth years!
- Most of our staff are college students or college bound.
- Many of our staff are former Gorham campers who understand the power of a Camp Gorham summer.

At minimum, our staff are here for a full week of staff training prior to your camper's arrival. Our director and coordinator staff are here for two weeks or more. Staff are trained to provide a safe and encouraging environment where every camper can thrive. By the time your camper arrives, our staff are well prepared to help them have a safe, fun, and memorable summer.

#### Interpersonal Skills

- Our orientation covers our camp philosophy, camper and behavior management, child protection, village life, lesson plans, and so much more.
- Staff learn to identify the social and emotional needs of campers as well as their physical needs.
- Ultimately, staff learn strategies to create spaces for campers to be their authentic selves in an environment that celebrates one another and creates community.

#### Technical Skills

- Staff are full trained in our policies and procedures around camper safety, water safety, and emergency protocols
- Program area specific skills to facilitate high quality instruction and camper safety

## Before Camp



### CAMP GORHAM APPLICATION AND FEES

- Online applications for the next summer typically open in mid-September.
- Session availability is greatest earlier in the season for both camp sessions, waterskiing, and horseback riding.
- Required at the time of enrollment are completion of your camper's cabin preference, your household information form, and a 10% deposit. Your family's payment schedules can be selected at time of enrollment.
- Payment plans and balances due will be automatically charged to the default payment method on file.
- Cancellations and changes to registration must be submitted in writing to [campgorham@rochesterymca.org](mailto:campgorham@rochesterymca.org)

### REFUND POLICY

- Refunds will be made in full upon cancellation prior to May 15, 2025. After May 15, refunds less your deposit will be issued if cancellation is more than 2 weeks prior to your session. Refunds will not be issued if cancellation is within 2 weeks of your session starting.
- Refunds will be issued back to the form of payment used.
- No refunds are given when a camper's behavior warrants dismissal from the program or for instance when the parent voluntarily withdraws the child from camp for any reason.
- Refunds will be given for medical purposes (with a doctor's note) before camp starts. During camp, pro-rated refunds will be granted for medical purposes.

**EXPERIENCE SCHOLARSHIPS:** Camp Gorham believes every child should have the opportunity to experience camp. Donations to Camp Gorham's Annual Campaign are used to offset the cost of overnight camp. Scholarships are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are awarded based on income and family circumstances. Email us at [campgorham@rochesterymca.org](mailto:campgorham@rochesterymca.org) to inquire.

**CAMP STORE ACCOUNT:** Campers do not need cash while at camp – please ensure your campers leave cash at home. The Camp Gorham store sells apparel items, snacks, souvenirs, and more! \$20–30 will cover a T-shirt and a snack. Sweatshirts and hoodies range from \$35 – \$50. We suggest a deposit of \$20–30 dollars per week. Store deposits are non-refundable; any remaining funds will be donated to our annual campaign.

Deposits into a camper's store account are available to the camper for the entirety of the summer and are not split by session. You can top up your camper's store account at any time by logging into your parent account. Any leftover store funds are donated at the end of the summer to Camp Gorham's Annual Campaign which provides our camper scholarships.

The Camp Store will also be open on departure day. The Camp store WILL NOT be open during Camp Corral, except for departure day.

**Extending Your Camper's Stay:** Each summer we have campers who ask if they can stay for another week or more. We are usually able to accommodate those requests! A member of our staff team will contact the camper's parent or guardian to let them know a request to stay has been made. After your family has made the decision, our office will update your family's account and charge the new balance to the payment method on file.



## Belonging at Camp Gorham

Cabins, Villages and Beyond

Communal living is a skill that campers develop during their time at Camp Gorham and has many benefits that extend beyond their camp experience and into their futures. Cabins and Villages give campers a unique sense of belonging and identity as a camper:

Cabin Community ► Village Community ► Camp Gorham Community ► Your community

Cabins house 8–10 campers and 2–3 staff members who ensure that everyone is engaged, respected, and involved in camp life. Your camper’s cabin is like their home base community during their time at camp.

**CAMP GORHAM VILLAGES:** Each cabin is part of a village of 3–5 cabins. Villages are their own unique community within the larger camp – a little bigger than the cabin, but smaller than all camp. There’s a unique sense of belonging and pride within each village, and it’s always something worth celebrating when a camper moves into their next village! In addition to participating in activities with their cabin, campers have time each day to do activities as a village, like learn cheers! Our AWE and CiT programs operate as their own villages.

- Adirondack Village: Girls+, rising grades 2–6 | Village Color: Green
- Frontier Village: Girls+, rising grades 7–10 | Village Color: Yellow
- Big Moose Village: Boys +, rising grades 2–6 | Village Color: Red
- Lumberjack Village: Boys + rising grades 7–10 | Village Color: Blue
- Adirondack Wilderness Explorers: co-ed, rising grades 7–10 | Village Color: Black
- CIT: co-ed, rising grade 11 | Village Color: Tie Dye

**VILLAGE ASSIGNMENT:** At the time of enrollment, your child was placed into their Camp Gorham Village. Village assignments are based on the information parents provide about their child’s rising grade and cabin preference. Cabin assignments are made the week before the start of your child’s camp session. Cabins assignments are made based on gender identity, grade, and cabin mate requests. We also balance new/returner, age, location, and weeks at camp while placing campers.

**Cabin Preference:** Camp Gorham’s cabins are gender specific, which means:

- Girls+ Cabins are a space for girls, trans, and non-binary campers who feel most comfortable living with girls
- Boys+ Cabins are a space for boys, trans, and non-binary campers who feel most comfortable living with boys

Camp Gorham and the YMCA of Greater Rochester upholds that trans\* boys are boys and trans\* girls are girls; they will have access to housing that reflects that. Gender expansive campers and staff will be housed in spaces where they feel most comfortable and safe.

## Belonging at Camp Gorham

Cabins, Villages and Beyond



**CABIN REQUESTS:** We believe that camp is a wonderful place for kids to meet new people and reconnect with old friends. Cabin mate requests are limited to two per camper, and priority is given to first-time campers and/or campers who are enrolled for the same session; it can be very difficult for one- and two-week campers to be housed together. We try our hardest to honor these requests, but we are unable to guarantee a cabin-mate.

You can make a request using the “Cabin mate request” field in your camper information form, found in your parent account. Requests must be for campers of the same grade and must be mutual to be considered. Cabin mate requests must be made two weeks prior to the start of your camper’s session. We don’t track cabin requests from year to year, so we thank you for updating this information!

If you have a special situation or concern, please reach out well in advance of your camper’s session.

**YMCA CAMP GORHAM INCLUSION POLICY:** Equal access, inclusion, engagement, and affirmation based on sex, gender expression, and/or gender identity is essential to the camp experience. The Camp administration will insist that programs and activities are conducted accordingly. This policy provides staff guidance for ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all campers and equal access to all programs and activities.

**CAMPERS WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES:** We are committed to ensuring that every camper, regardless of their abilities, has a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. We understand that each camper may have unique needs, and we are dedicated to making any reasonable accommodation necessary to facilitate their participation and enjoyment of camp activities. Our program operates within ratios set by the New York State Department of Health. Many of our daily activities revolve around group interaction. If your child has special needs, please let us know during enrollment. We want to provide the best environment for everyone and will make reasonable accommodation to fully include every child in activities.



## Forms & Documents

Everything We Need Prior to Your Campers Arrival

**PLEASE NOTE: THESE DIGITAL FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE VIA YOUR PARENT ACCOUNT.**

**HOUSEHOLD FORM:** This mandatory form was completed at the time of enrollment and lists your family's contact information, information for emergency contacts; and authorized pickup people. You can update it at any time from your parent account. Note: your child will only be released to individuals listed on the authorized pickups.

**CAMPER INFORMATION FORM:** Help us learn about your child! Please involve your camper in this process so we can learn more about their goals for the summer and any special needs or requests. This form is where you can request up to two cabin-mate requests for your camper.

**CAMPER PHOTO:** This helps us quickly identify campers and is for internal use only.

**CAMPER HEALTH CARE FORM:** The Camper Health Care Form collects information about your camper's health history, date of last physical exam, medications, allergies, dietary restrictions, and health insurance information. (All campers are required to have an updated physical examination within 12 months of their arrival at camp). This information is crucial for our medical team to be well-informed and prepared to address any specific needs your child may have during their time at camp. This form must be completed annually by a parent or legal guardian. The last page is an authorization, release, and indemnity waiver.

### STEPS FOR COMPLETING THE CAMPER HEALTH CARE FORM:

1. Complete the online Camper Health Care Form (step 1/3). You must complete this step to populate the download in step 2.
2. Download the Camper Health Care Form – this is the only form we will accept. The correct form is 2 pages long and will say "Camp Gorham 2025 Health History Form" at the top.  
Parent/Guardian must sign the first page  
Healthcare provider completes the second page, authorizing prescription and over the counter medication as well as indicating date of physical within 1 year  
Blank forms shown below.
3. Upload completed and signed document into your parent account under the "Camper Health Care Form (Step 3/3)" upload slot. The Camp Gorham office will contact you if we need your camper's healthcare form to be corrected.

**IMMUNIZATION RECORD:** Please upload a complete copy of your child's most recent immunization record.

**ACTIVITY REQUESTS:** Each camper will complete an activity request form for each week they are at camp. This form allows us to collect your camper's preferences as we design the week's morning specialty track classes. We cannot guarantee that your camper will get each of their top three preferences, but we try very hard to schedule campers for the activities they are most interested in! When we open this form, we will email camper parents a list of offered activities and descriptions. Some of our most popular activities include: Archery, Arts & Crafts, Boating, Outdoor cooking, ADK Life, Standup Paddle boarding, High Ropes, Sailing, Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing, Fishing, The Dart (Creative Writing)

**EXPERIENCE SCHOLARSHIP:** We believe that every child deserves a camp experience, regardless of their family's ability to pay. Please complete this form if you would like to apply for an experience scholarship. Camp Corral families do not need to complete this form.

**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN GETTING THESE FORMS SUBMITTED IN A TIMELY MANNER!**



## Preparing for Camp



### How to Pack, What to Bring, and What to Leave at Home

Pack together with your camper! This allows your camper to know where everything is and to develop a sense of responsibility. This is also a good time to talk about the experiences ahead and build the excitement for camp. It's also a great opportunity to talk about personal responsibility, living in a communal setting, and your expectations about their interactions with others. With younger campers it can be helpful to talk about why it's important to change clothes, where to put their dirty clothes, what happens if they have an accident, or something is soiled.

**Pro Tip for Younger Campers: Pack by Day!** Each outfit has its own baggie and at the end of the day, the dirty items go back in the bag and into the duffel. That way it stays organized and out of the way!

Please carefully label all items. While we have a lost and found, Camp Gorham is not responsible for any items that are lost or stolen. Encourage your child to check the lost and found if they misplace something. Unclaimed lost and found items will be donated at the end of the summer.

Laundry service is an option for campers staying three or more weeks. We have the ability to do laundry if an accident requires it, but there is no regular laundry done during the session. Please pack accordingly.

**PACKING GUIDELINES:** We recommend a large duffel and/or plastic drawer or bin. Duffels can be collapsed and slid under beds, and the drawer serves to contain small items and/or snacks. There is only a 9" space under beds where luggage is stored.

#### WHAT TO BRING:

- **General Packing List:** Scale up or down based on the length of your camper's stay
- **Village Wear:** Each village at Camp Gorham has a color. We encourage your camper to bring a t-shirt or two in their village color, as well as spirit items like tutus, beads, etc.
  - Adirondack Village: Girls+, rising grades 2-6 | Village Color: Green
  - Frontier Village: Girls+, rising grades 7-10 | Village Color: Yellow
  - Big Moose Village: Boys +, rising grades 2-6 | Village Color: Red
  - Lumberjack Village: Boys + rising grades 7-10 | Village Color: Blue
  - Adirondack Wilderness Explorers: co-ed, rising grades 7-10 | Village Color: Black
  - CIT: co-ed, rising grade 11 | Village Color: Tie Dye
- **Items for special events:** black t-shirt for Commando; Western-themed wear; a costume for Carnival; tropical items, etc



## Preparing for Camp

How to Pack, What to Bring, and What to Leave at Home

**WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME:** Camp Gorham is an unplugged camp. Please leave your cell phone and other electronics at home. We want our campers to experience living in a natural environment and reconnect with friends and nature. We also believe that not having instant access to a cell phone promotes independence and personal problem solving, as campers are compelled to find solutions on their own or ask one of our fully trained staff for help. Please communicate this policy to your child before their arrival at camp and encourage letter writing as their means of contact.

### WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME:

- Cash
- Jewelry or other valuables
- Electronics (cell phones, smart watches, iPod/music players, eReaders, computers, tablets, handheld game consoles, etc)
- Gum
- Pets
- Fireworks
- Vehicles
- Tobacco or marijuana products, including e-cigarettes, edibles, vaporizers and/or vape products
- Alcohol
- Drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Weapons of any type

If a camper brings any of these items to camp, the item will be confiscated and held until the end of the session. Campers found in possession of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or related paraphernalia may be immediately dismissed from camp. AD 16.1

**PACKING LIST:** This packing list is for a two-week session – please adjust accordingly for a one-week session.

### • CLOTHING

- 10–12 T-shirts
- 1–2 Long Sleeved Shirts
- 6–8 Pairs of Shorts
- 203 Pairs of Long Pants/J Jeans
- 1–2 Sweatshirt/Fleece
- 2–3 Swimsuits
- Swim Shirt/Rash Guard (can be more comfortable to wear under a pfd while boating)
- 2 Pairs of Pajamas
- 12–15 Pairs of Underwear
- 13–15 Pairs of Socks
- Raincoat or Poncho
- 1–2 Pairs of Sneakers: sturdy enough for day hikes and active games
- 1–2 Pairs of Flip Flops, Crocs, or Sandals: used for travelling to the waterfront and showering
- 1–2 Shirts in your camper’s village color
- “Camp Fancy” outfit for the end-of-session Banquet. Some campers choose to wear a sundress or button-down shirt. One week session B campers may choose to pack this as well.

### • BEDDING & TOWELS

- 1 Twin-Sized Fitted and Flat Sheet
- 1 Blanket or Comforter
- 1 Pillow & Pillowcase
- 2 Bath Towels
- 2 Beach Towels
- Laundry Bag

### • GEAR

- Ball Cap
- Sunglasses
- 1–2 Water Bottles
- Sunscreen
- Insect Repellent (non-aerosol)
- Day Pack
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries
- Toiletries: soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothbrush/toothpaste, brush, deodorant, etc
- Shower Caddy

## Preparing for Camp



How to Pack, What to Bring, and What to Leave at Home

### • GEAR FOR OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIPS (TWO-WEEK AND AWE CAMPERS ONLY)

- Sleeping bag\* with stuff sack (stuff sack can be stuffed with clothing to make a great camping pillow)
- Wool or fleece sweater/jacket
- Non-cotton pants (fleece, nylon)
- Wool socks (for sleeping to keep your feet warm)
- Insulate pad or lightweight foam sleeping pad
- Mess kit or plastic bowl, cup, spoon, mug

\*Why a sleeping bag and bedding? Occasionally it may rain on an overnight and sleeping bags can get wet, so it's a good idea to have bedding for the cabin and a sleeping bag for the overnight.

### • OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Books or magazines
- Deck of cards or small game
- Bracelet string
- Stationary/pens/stamps
- Small battery fan to clip to bunk
- Riding boots (or boots with a pronounced heel) if participating in horseback riding

**TIPS & TRICKS TO SET YOUR CAMPER UP FOR SUCCESS AT CAMP:** Sending your child to camp for the first time is a major milestone for most families and can often be marked with excitement, anticipation, and perhaps even some anxiety. To prepare for the adventure of sleepaway camp, the most helpful strategies depend on two main factors: your child's mindset, and yours.

### STRATEGIES:

- Discuss your camper's expectations without projecting your own. Review all the information provided in the handbook and on our website, so they know what to expect.
- Based on what they bring up, target worries with information and planning when possible. For many common worries, information gathering and planning can help a child know better what to expect to help them feel less nervous.
- It's natural to feel nervous about new experiences, and while no amount of preparation can entirely eliminate those feelings, it offers a valuable opportunity to practice an important life lesson: learning how to manage discomfort.
- Practice some skills that will help your camper adjust to camp life, like walking around at night with a flashlight or living out of a duffel bag for a weekend. Practicing what it will be like to set up their living space: make their bed, unpack, etc. This kind of practice has a dual benefit: it helps campers learn valuable skills and gain independence while empowering them to be responsible while they are at camp!
- Hype it up! Focus on the cool and exciting parts of the experience! Talk about the fun and memories they are going to make!
- Send them with a special token of home. Remind them that it's normal to miss home and that they have lots of support from their counselors and friends.
- During the session, write cheerful, positive letters. Ask questions about activities and new friends. Express confidence in your camper's ability to succeed. Avoid topics that could increase their fear of missing out, like how much fun you're having on vacation or how sad their favorite pet is because their buddy is gone.

Talking with your child about these kinds of issues is a fantastic way to support them as they get ready to take this major step on the road to independence!



## Check In Day

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO CAMP GORHAM:** Camp Gorham is located in the Adirondack Park of New York State, between the towns of Old Forge and Inlet. You can use Camp Gorham's mailing address to obtain driving directions to Camp: 265 Darts Lake Road, Eagle Bay New York 13331.

We encourage you to select directions that send you to Camp Gorham via NY-28 with a turn onto Big Moose Road. If you're travelling from the Northwest (Watertown area), the directions that take you via the Stillwater Road are very beautiful and scenic, but twice as long and via a dirt road.

### CHECK IN IS ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON:

- Please have your child eat lunch prior to arrival
- The first activity your child will do with their cabin is a swim test. Please be sure they can access their swimsuit, towel, sunscreen, and sandals easily.
- Please leave your pets at home.

**CHECK IN PROCESS:** Campers will arrive and depart in staggered waves to help facilitate the flow of people and traffic. Your arrival and departure times will be emailed to you the week before camp. We ask early arrivals to wait at the stop sign right before main camp; we will begin welcoming families onto camp promptly at 1:30 pm.

Upon arrival at Camp Gorham, you'll be greeted by staff members who will enthusiastically welcome you to Camp! You'll receive a welcome packet with your camper's cabin assignment. Staff will confirm your camper's authorized pickup information.

From here, you'll head to these locations in the following order:

- 1. CAMP STORE:** Stop here if you got a colored slip indicating you're missing paperwork or final payment. You can also stop here if you need to add funds to your camper's store account.
- 2. CHECK-IN BATHROOMS** at Oak Hall: Stop here if it was a long drive!
- 3. HEALTH CENTER** at Oak Hall: Stop here if your child has ANY medication: prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, supplements, etc). You will give these items to our Camp Nurses and review dosage information.
  - a. Reminder that NO medications may be stored in the cabin and that each medication you are checking in at the Health Center must be listed on the medication authorization form signed by the physician and parent/guardian. Camp Gorham cannot dispense any medication, prescription or otherwise, without this consent.
  - b. All medication must be in the original packaging; the label and dosage must match the medication authorization form.
- 4.YOUR CAMPER'S CABIN:** You'll meet your camper's counselors and Village Coordinator. Your camper's counselors will help you unload luggage onto the porch. Bunks will be chosen after all campers have arrived at the cabin.
  - a. We ask families to stay on the porch of each cabin. Our experience has shown us that this helps with the transition.
  - b. Campers will choose their bunks after everyone has arrived. Our staff will make sure campers make their space cozy and get settled in!
- 5.SAY YOUR GOODBYES:** Experience has shown us that the transition from home to camp is eased by short goodbyes that allow your child to jump right into camp life. Keep your goodbye upbeat and positive; encourage your camper and let them know how excited you are about their new adventure. If you'd like to stay to get more information or speak to a staff member, please feel free to do so, but allow your camper to join their group while you have your conversation.

Please give us a call in the camp office if you are unexpectedly delayed. Director of Administration or designee will call parents/guardians of absent campers beginning at 4 pm on the day of arrival.

## Preparing for Camp



- Make a list of questions you have about camp and have your family send it to the camp email. (Or join us for an open house).
- Help pack and organize your things.
- Make a plan for what to do if you miss home. Maybe take a special stuffy, picture, or blanket.
- Get your envelopes addressed and stamped so you can send out some awesome mail!

**CHECK IN DAY:** Our staff spend lots of time preparing to welcome you to camp and we're so excited you're finally here! This is what you can expect on check-in day:

- **MOVING INTO CABINS:** Your counselors will be at your cabin to greet you when your family drops you off. You'll leave your belongings on the porch and wait for the rest of your cabinmates (between 8 and 12 kids who share your age and gender) to arrive. You'll say goodbye to your family on the porch and then get right in to making new friends and greeting old ones! Counselors will lead some get to know you games and activities while you wait for everyone to arrive. After everyone in your cabin is present, you'll work as a group to choose your bunk, make your bed, and get your space set up! It's a fun time to start making the cabin feel like your home-away-from home.
- **SWIM EVALUATIONS:** Your cabin will get dressed in swimsuits and head to the lake for a swim test! During the swim evaluation you will jump in the water; swim with a front stroke to one side of the dock; swim back to the dock on your back; and tread water for two minutes. You'll then be assigned either a green or red band. You'll wear this band while you're at camp. Our goal is to make this swim evaluation as fun and comfortable as possible, while determining an accurate level of swimming ability. There are places for every swim level to enjoy the water and the swim check is simply meant to help gauge a camper's comfort in the water and keep everyone safe at the waterfront.
- **CAMP TOUR:** Your counselors will take you on a tour of camp to show you the important places you'll want to know for your time at Gorham! Among the places you'll visit are the Health Lodge and Dining Hall.
- **SPECIALTY TRACK ASSIGNMENTS:** You'll get your schedule for the week!
- **ORIENTATION:** You'll meet with the Camp Director and leadership staff to either learn or review some important safety information about Camp Gorham.
- **DINNER:** Get ready for your first delicious meal in the Dining Hall!
- **COLISEUM:** We'll keep this as a surprise, but we hope you enjoy your first Coliseum!
- **EVENING PROGRAM (EP):** Depending on when you arrive, your first Evening Program will be either a high energy opening campfire at Chapel, or a spectacular dance party Carnival at the waterfront.
- **EMBERS:** We end every night at Camp Gorham with time together as a cabin to debrief the day and get to know each other better. This is an opportunity for your cabin to sit and talk about everything from values and goals for camp to favorite hobbies and funny jokes!
- ...get a good night's sleep because tomorrow will be chock-full of fun and activities!



## Camp Schedule

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### A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP GORHAM:

7 am: Reveille: Polar Bear Plunge, Golden Horseshoe and more

7:20 am: Cabin cleaning

7:40 am: Flagpole & Med Call

8 am: Breakfast

9 am: Specialty Track #1

10:15 am: Specialty Track #2

11:30 am: Specialty Track #3

12:30 pm: Gamezone! & Med Call

1 pm: Lunch

1:30 pm: Rest Hour & Camp Store

2:30 pm: Waterfront Activities

4 pm: Cabin Activities

5 pm: Gamezone!

5:20 pm: Flagpole & Med Call

5:30 pm: Dinner

6 pm: Coliseum

7 pm: Evening Program

8:30 pm: Evening Embers

9:30-10 pm: Lights Out

## Camper FAQs



### WHAT IS...

- **POLAR BEAR PLUNGE & GOLDEN HORSESHOE:** Optional early morning clubs! Polar bear plungers jump in the lake. Horseshoe participants bring the horses in and help feed them. Green Thumbs check on the garden!
- **FLAGPOLE:** Meeting place before meals! We raise and lower the flag each day, as well as sing songs, practice cheers, and tell jokes.
- **GAMEZONE:** All camp free-time before lunch and dinner flagpole. Campers enjoy gaga, basketball, and the jumping pillow.
- **COLISEUM:** We can't wait for you to find out!
- **EVENING PROGRAM (EP):** Something different each night! Sometimes it's a game with all camp, sometimes it's just your village. Top favorites include Commando, String on a Rope, and Wells Fargo.

**WHAT IS A SPECIALTY TRACK AND HOW DO I CHOOSE?** If you're entering grades 2-4, you're part of our "Loon Crew" and you'll participate in a whole camp sampler during your time at camp. This means you will get to do a little bit of everything, from arts and crafts to wilderness and everything in between.

If you're entering grades 5 and up, you'll choose your top activity preferences prior to camp and then receive your specialty track schedule on check-in day. You'll have the choice of activities from each of our four program areas: water sports, land sports, outdoor pursuits, and creative arts. You'll participate in these activity areas with campers from other villages around camp!

**Waterskiing & Horseback Riding:** If you're 10+ and registered for one of these add-on activities, that will be scheduled during one of your specialty tracks!

**OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIPS:** Our Two-Week Overnight Campers and Adirondack Wilderness Explorers programs will head out on overnight camping trips on the Camp Gorham property. Two-Week campers travel with their villages to lean-to sites on our property for one night away, while the Adirondack Wilderness Explorers will progress from one night out to several!

**WHERE DO WE EAT? WILL I LIKE THE FOOD?** Campers eat family-style meals in our Dining Hall. We serve a camper-friendly menu that cycles through a two-week rotation. It's nutritionally balanced and designed to appeal to most appetites. Fresh fruit and salad bar are always available, in addition to sun butter and jelly sandwiches. Our kitchen staff are able to accommodate vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, and dairy substitutions in our meals. We are a nut-free facility. If your child has specific needs, please contact us ahead of your camper's arrival at Camp Gorham.

### SAMPLE MEALS:

Breakfast: Scrambled eggs, bacon, mini bagels; french toast sticks and homefries; Breakfast sandwiches with sausage, egg, and cheese

Lunch: Chicken tenders and mac and cheese; chicken quesadillas; meatball subs

Dinner: Pasta with meatballs; Hamburgers and french fries; Fajitas and rice

**THIS IS MY FIRST YEAR, WILL I FIT IN?** Yes! Everyone was a first-year camper once and some of our staff are starting their first year, too. You'll see things with fresh eyes and get excited about new things. Returning campers will help clue you in on fun traditions and what to expect at things like the cheer-off!



## During Camp

### HOW CAN I SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CAMP?

**VIEW PHOTOS ON BUNK1:** Camp Gorham purchases a subscription to Bunk1 each year which allows us to upload photos each day, so you can see the magic going on at Camp! This service is free for your family to use, and you will receive information on how to access it at check-in. Please note that Bunk1 offers other paid services, like photo tagging and printing. These are totally optional and at your family's discretion.

**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:** A selection of photos will also be posted to Camp Gorham's Facebook and Instagram account. Please follow us at YMCA Camp Gorham on Facebook and on Instagram as @campgorham

### HOW CAN I COMMUNICATE WITH MY CAMPER?

**MAIL:** We encourage you to write cheerful, positive letters from home! Consider writing a letter three days ahead of opening day so your child has a letter during the first mail distribution, which is after lunch on Monday. Please do not panic if you don't hear from your camper immediately after arrival, as many campers are too busy having fun at camp to write home. We recommend sending your camper to camp with pre-addressed, stamped envelopes or postcards. Mail should be addressed as follows:

Camper's Name – Cabin  
Camp Gorham YMCA  
265 Darts Lake Road  
Eagle Bay, New York 13331

If you are sending mail ahead of your child's check in day and don't have their cabin name, you can still send the letter without it. We will be sure it gets to your camper!

**ProTip:** To avoid mail delays and shipping costs, feel free to bring all mail and deliveries on check-in day to leave with the Camp Store for delivery on whatever day you designate.

**PACKAGES:** You are welcome to send a care package to your camper. Please be advised that we have campers with severe nut allergies; any food items must be nut free. Suggestions for great care package items include comic books, magazines, cards, games, and string.

**BUNKNOTES (ADDITIONAL COST):** Bunknotes is a third party service that allows family to send notes to campers via email. Please note there is an additional fee to use this service, and it is completely optional. Bunknotes are printed daily at 8 am and delivered to campers with mail delivery. Bunknotes received after 8 am will be delivered the following day.

**BUNKNOTE REPLIES:** Bunk1 offers an option for parents to purchase stationery for their camper to hand-write a reply. Parents have indicated mixed to limited success with this option. Often, campers become too busy with their friends and activities throughout the day to sit down and write a reply. We suggest that you encourage your camper to write you a letter and provide them with pre-addressed and stamped envelopes. Should you choose to purchase email reply stationery, please know that there is, at minimum, a 24-hour turnaround time for messages to be returned to you. Our camp staff do an excellent job encouraging campers to write letters to their parents, but Camp Gorham cannot guarantee that you will receive an email in return.

**DO YOU ALLOW PHONE CALLS:** We understand that it is a difficult transition for parents and campers not to have instant access to each other, but we believe the unplugged opportunities at camp far outweigh the need for a phone. Phone calls often result in camper homesickness rather than being a helpful tool. Parents may call the office to talk with the Camp Leadership team for an update or with any concerns at any time. In some



## During Camp



instances, we can have campers use the office phone if there is a need to talk with parents/guardians for a concern or emergency. Arrangements can be made by calling the main office. Additionally, the office or health center will reach out if there are any issues or concerns.

**CAN I VISIT MY CHILD DURING CAMP?** Parents, relatives, and friends are invited to visit camp only during check-in and check-out times. There are no visiting days during the camp session. Visits can be disruptive as campers are very involved with their activities and new friends. If you are concerned about your child, please call the camp office to speak with our staff. If you have not seen camp and want a family tour before camp begins, please call the office.

### HOW WILL YOU HELP MY CHILD THRIVE?

**CAMPER CARE:** Our counselors are completely focused on ensuring the social and emotional well-being of all of their campers. They take nightly notes to discuss with their Village Coordinators the progress and growth of each camper, as well as their health and overall experience. Our staff will keep you up to date on any issues your camper is experiencing.

Our number one goal at Camp Gorham is to make sure that every camper is having the best experience they can have! We understand that some campers may need a little extra support during their time with us, and our staff is well trained in many common camper scenarios and know how to make sure that each child is participating in camp in a way that is right for them. We believe summer camp is a unique experience for children to improve their mental and physical health and develop in ways not frequently emphasized in a school environment. We request that parents and guardians give us as much information as possible on your camper's information and/or health forms so that we can best serve your child's needs while they are at camp.

### HOW DO YOU HANDLE HOMESICKNESS?

- Homesickness is common when attending camp for the first time. Here are some things to know and do to prepare you and your child before arriving at camp:
  - Our staff are trained in multiple ways to prevent and address homesickness as it comes
  - Talk with your child about what to expect. They will be having so much fun, learning new things, making new friends, and creating memories and experiences for themselves.
  - Let them know that you'll only be apart for a short time and encourage them to jot down their experiences so they can share with you at the end of the week!
  - Mail, bunk notes, and care packages are always beneficial in communication and comfort throughout their stay at camp, so you both can keep current with what's happening!

### EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

**TECHNOLOGY POLICY:** Camp Gorham is an unplugged camp. Please leave your cell phone and other electronics at home. This includes but is not limited to cell phones, smart watches, iPod/music players, eReaders, computers, tablets, handheld game consoles, etc. If a camper brings any of these items to camp, the item will be confiscated and held until the end of the session.

**DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND WEAPONS POLICY:** Campers found in possession of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or related paraphernalia may be immediately dismissed from camp.

**BEHAVIOR POLICY:** If a camper's behavior, mental, or physical state develop into something beyond our scope of care, dismissal may be required.



## During Camp

### BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AT CAMP

Our first step in managing behavior is prevention. We provide clear, reasonable limits for children's behavior and maintain them. We reinforce positive behaviors and redirect negative behaviors. We help children recognize and identify their feelings as valid and acceptable. You will be contacted if we have serious concerns about your child's behavior so we can discuss the best way to help them course-correct. If you have concerns about your child's behavior at camp, we encourage you to put the information on the camper information form and to speak with your child's counselor on check in day to clarify any information. You are also welcome to call camp ahead of time to discuss best practices with the camp director.

Possible discipline or consequences for poor behavior at camp includes but not limited to redirection, discussion of behavior with a staff member, taking a break from activities to reset, restriction from activities or privileges, conference with the Camp Director, and or a conference with the Executive Director and home.

We make every effort to communicate and solve individual behavior challenges; however, if a problem persists, we may need to send a camper home for their behavior. While every child is different and we assess every situation on a case-by-case basis, a few reasons for being sent home from camp include:

- Theft or destruction of property
- Physical harm to self or others
- Bullying, bigotry, or other mental/emotional/social harm to others
- Repeated insubordination, disregard for the rules, and/or disrespect of staff team
- Possession of cell phone, weapons, alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or undocumented medication

Please note that discipline never includes depriving a camper of sleep, food, or restroom privileges; placing a camper alone without supervision; or subjecting a camper to ridicule, shaming, threat, corporal punishment (sticking, biting, kicking, squeezing), washing out the mouth, or physical exercise or restraint.

If a child's behavior is harmful to him/herself or to others, we will intercede. We make every effort to communicate and solve individual behavior challenges; however, if a problem persists, we reserve the right to suspend a child temporarily or permanently.

## Health and Wellness



### SUNSCREEN PROTECTION & HYDRATION

As campers spend the majority of their time outside each day, campers are responsible to bring their own protective clothing (hats, sun shirts, sunglasses), sunscreen, and water bottle. Camp Gorham staff will remind campers to apply sunscreen and carry their water bottle regularly throughout the day. Campers can fill their water bottles in the dining room and at filling stations around camp.

### WHO STAFFS YOUR HEALTH CENTER?

To be a licensed youth camp in the state of New York, we are required to have a registered nurse on site. We have one or two RNs on camp per session in addition to a student nurse intern from SUNY Brockport. The health center is staffed 24 hours a day while campers are on site.

### HOW WILL MY CAMPER TAKE THEIR DAILY MEDICATIONS?

Med Call happens several times a day, including before/after breakfast, at lunch, before dinner, and at bedtime. Your camper is responsible for showing up at the correct time; please help prepare them for this responsibility prior to camp.

Any medications a camper needs while at Camp Gorham must be brought to camp by an adult, are in the original container, and must have a medication authorization that has been signed by both the camper's prescriber and parent/guardian. All medications, other than emergency medications such as Epi-Pens and asthma inhalers, must be kept in the Health Center. **WHETHER IT'S PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION OR AN OVER-THE-COUNTER REMEDY LIKE MELATONIN, WE REQUIRE A DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE ON FILE INDICATING THE APPROPRIATE DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS.**

### WHAT IF MY CHILD IS INJURED OR ILL WHILE AT CAMP?

If your camper requires an unscheduled visit to the health center beyond regular first aid, we will promptly contact you to discuss the situation and keep you informed. Open communication is a priority, and we value your trust in our ability to care for your child!

Campers can see the nurse if something is bothering them after breakfast, after lunch, and before dinner. Our Health Center is stocked with a number of over-the-counter medications which the nurses can administer as per our standing orders. These medications are listed on your camper's health history form.

We also work with on-call telehealth providers through the University of Rochester. Should our RNs determine that your camper would benefit from a telehealth visit, they will coordinate with you to schedule that visit so you can be present.

### WHAT IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY?

In case of emergency, campers are taken to the Well Now Urgent Care or Wynn Hospital Emergency Room in Utica, New York.



## Health and Wellness

### WHAT IF MY CHILD IS TOO ILL TO STAY AT CAMP?

In rare instances, a camper's condition might warrant a Medical Dismissal from Camp. Our guidelines for medical dismissal are outlined below.

- If a camper's illness or injury incapacitates them for 24 hours or more arrangements will be made for the camper to return home or to the home of the emergency contact. Communicable viruses including, but not limited to, strep, pink eye, covid, noroviruses, etc are sent home until cleared. Refunds will not be given for illnesses or injuries that result in a camper going home.
- If a camper's behavior, mental, or physical state develop into a condition requiring an abnormal amount of 1-on-1 care, dismissal may be required.
- One a child is dismissed for any medical reason a doctor's written approval is needed for readmittance to their session.

### HEAD LICE

Prior to arrival we strongly recommend you check your child for head lice and treat as needed. Campers will be checked for head lice upon arrival at Camp Gorham.

### TICKS

Staff will instruct campers on how to perform a tick-check on themselves after outdoor activities.

### MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

Meningococcal Disease is a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis. In July 2003, the New York State Public Health Law was amended to include the requirement that overnight children's camps distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to parents and guardians of all campers who attend camp for seven or more nights.

Meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, meningitis can lead to swelling of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death. Cases of meningitis among teens and young adults 15 to 24 years old have more than doubled since 1991. The disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year and claims about 300 lives. A vaccine is available that protects against four types of the bacteria that cause meningitis in the United States — types A,C,T, and W-135. These types account for nearly two thirds of meningitis cases among this group. To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please contact your child's physician. You can also find information at the NY State Department of Health website and the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

This law requires Camp Gorham to maintain a record of the following for each camper:

- Confirmation that you have read and received this information AND information on the availability and cost of meningococcal meningitis vaccine (Menomune™);

#### AND EITHER

- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization within the past 10 years; OR
- An acknowledgment of meningococcal meningitis disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the camper's parent or guardian.

## Departure Day



Camp Corral ends on Friday. All other sessions end on Saturday. Check out begins at 10 am and ends at 12 noon. To minimize wait times for families and campers, we run a staggered check out for each session. We ask early arrivals to wait at the stop sign right before main camp; we will begin welcoming families onto camp promptly at 10 am.

**EARLY DEPARTURE:** If family plans require pick-up before the end of camp, please contact the office in advance so we can make the necessary arrangements. The best way to contact the camp is via email at [campgorham@rochesterymca.org](mailto:campgorham@rochesterymca.org) or by phone at 315-357-6401.

Prior to departure day, please remember the following:

- Photo ID is required for pickup and will be checked against our authorized pickup list upon entry to camp and again at your camper's cabin. Thank you for understanding that this process is for the safety of your camper. Updates to the authorized pick-up list can be made on your Household Form or by emailing the Camp Office.
- No pets at Camp Gorham. Thank you for leaving them at home.
- Traffic can get backed up in Old Forge, especially on Saturday mornings. We suggest having the Camp phone number handy (315-357-6401) in the event you find yourself delayed; give us a call and we can let your camper know you got stuck in an Adirondack traffic jam!

### ON DEPARTURE DAY:

Staff will meet at the Stop Sign and check photo ID against the camper's authorized pickup list. Then, you'll head to:

- **CHECK-IN BATHROOMS** at Oak Hall are available.
- **YOUR CAMPER'S CABIN:** Your camper's counselor will check your photo ID against the cabin's authorized pickup list.
  - Your camper will be so excited to see you! As you share stories and start learning about their week, please help them remember all of their belongings. Please check shelves, under beds, the outside clothesline, and porch shoe racks to make sure you have everything. Lost belongings are lonely at Camp!
- **THE HEALTH CENTER:** Retrieve any medications you left here on check-in day. Medications left behind will be properly disposed of at the local pharmacy.
- **LOST AND FOUND:** Visit Lost & Found at the Rec Hall to check for any misplaced items. Camp Gorham cannot be held responsible for items left behind. All unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of the summer. If we are able to locate an item that was left behind, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to pick it up. Camp Gorham is unable to ship or deliver forgotten items.
- **THE CAMP STORE:** Open for Last Minute Souvenirs

We invite families to spend a little bit of time exploring Camp Gorham after campers have been checked out from their cabins. You'll be able to roam Lower Camp with your camper.

Visit the horses, take a pontoon boat ride around Dart's Lake, and grab a bite to eat at the Rec Hall, where we will also have registration information for 2026!

We ask that families leave by 12 noon.

Please give us a call in the camp office if you are unexpectedly delayed. Director of Administration or designee will call parents/guardians of absent campers beginning at 12 pm on the day of departure.

Tippling: If you would like to recognize a staff member for the job they have done, a contribution in their name may be made to Camp Gorham's annual campaign. Our staff know that it is against camp policy and the standards of the American camp association for staff members to accept tips.