



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA Camp Wapsie

Summer Camp Family Handbook

Summer Camp

Family Handbook

Table of Contents

WELCOME TO YMCA CAMP WAPSIE	3
GENERAL INFORMATION	4-6
PREPARING FOR CAMP	6-7
PACKING FOR CAMP	7-8
THE PACKING LIST	8
WELLNESS AND SAFETY	9-11
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES	11-13
CAMPER COMMUNICATION	13
CAMP ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE	13-14
CUSTODY, CONTACT, AND COMMUNICATION RIGHTS	14-15
VILLAGE ½ WEEKS	15
DAY CAMP	15-16
ADVENTURE TRIPS	16-17
TYPICAL OVERNIGHT DAILY SCHEDULE	17



WELCOME TO YMCA CAMP WAPSIE

OUR MISSION

Camp Wapsie follows the Y Mission which is "To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all."

OUR VISION

Utilize the natural camp environment to provide fun, safe, unique camping and retreat experiences that promote the YMCA core values of: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

Camp Wapsie is an inclusive community. We work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, cultural background, faith, gender identity, income, origin, race, or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential with dignity. Our diverse camper community reflects our larger community's demographics. Campers and staff can look forward to interacting and living within this diverse and supportive environment.

CAMP OUTCOMES

- Grow in self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Gain and grow in social skills.
- Gain and grow in physical skills and activities.
- Gain exposure to greater knowledge and greater understanding of the natural world.
- Learn and practice the YMCA Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

OUR CORE VALUES

The YMCA is guided by four core values:

CARING: to demonstrate a sincere concern for others, for their needs and well-being.

HONESTY: to tell the truth, to demonstrate reliability and trustworthiness through actions that keep with my stated positions and beliefs.

RESPECT: to treat others as I would want them to treat me, to value the worth of every person, including myself.

RESPONSIBILITY: to do what is right—what I ought to do, to be accountable for my choices of behavior and actions and my promises.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

For Youth Development

At YMCA Camp Wapsie, our goal is to empower youth to reach their full potential by discovering new things about themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world around them.

For Healthy Living

At YMCA Camp Wapsie, our goal is to promote healthy lifestyle choices by providing opportunities for a healthy spirit, mind, and body through programs, interactions, and healthy food choices.

For Social Responsibility

At YMCA Camp Wapsie, everyone is welcome. Campers will have the opportunity to learn how to give back through programs and interactions within our community.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMP DIRECTORS

Welcome to a summer of adventure, growth, learning and fun at Camp Wapsie. We look forward to having campers experience the endless laughter, stories shared, and lifelong friendships that make camp a very special place. We are excited for your child to join us to be a part of that this summer.

As Camp Directors, we work hard to ensure a safe experience with learning and fun. We work hard to ensure that every camper, staff member, and adult who enters Camp Wapsie feels safe and secure. We aim to be an environment where everyone can try new things and be themselves. Secondly, we want everyone to leave camp feeling like they had the time of their lives. It is all about the campers discovering and trying new things, learning, making new friends, and having FUN!

Camp is a unique experience where children make memories and friendships that last a lifetime. Camp will help shape them into the people we need for the future. Camp was and still is a place that has helped shape us into who we are today, and we feel that every child is worthy of this opportunity!

This handbook has been designed to provide detailed information that you will need and answer frequently asked questions that may come up as your family prepares your camper. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

We look forward to helping your camper have the best summer ever!

Yours in Camping,

Hanna "Fidget" O'Toole & Paul Denowski

319.435.2577 camp@crmetroymca.org



GENERAL INFORMATION

CAMP CONTACTS

At Camp Wapsie, we strive to provide our members with the highest level of customer service. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us immediately.

YMCA CAMP WAPSIE

2174 Wapsie Y Road
Coggon, IA 52218
319.435.2577
camp@crmetroymca.org

YMCA CAMP WAPSIE STAFF

We hire a selective group of individuals from the United States and abroad to celebrate worldwide connections. Camp Wapsie staff are carefully chosen and interviewed for their skills, abilities, and belief in the ideals of the YMCA. They love the outdoors, are responsible, and have an interest in helping children grow. Many are college students, as well as former campers and YMCA activity participants. Staff complete intensive training in their position, including first aid, CPR, lifeguarding, camp craft skills, and child development.

ASKING FOR HELP

At YMCA Camp Wapsie, every counselor, staff member, and employee is here to help. Our goal is to provide a safe, memorable, and fun experience for your camper. Remind your camper that while very talented, the counselors can't read minds, and they may need to ask for help, which is okay.

NO BULLYING ZONE

There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at YMCA Camp Wapsie. Our staff is trained to watch for and detect signs of bullying behavior. We know that at times, children may have disagreements; however, direct targeting of an individual will not be allowed. We encourage any camper to share any concern they may have with the way they or any other person is treated while at camp.

DEFACING CAMP PROPERTY

YMCA Camp Wapsie works hard to make sure that we have outstanding facilities for our campers and staff to experience the joys of camp. If a camper chooses to deface camp property, the family will be billed to replace what is damaged. They may be asked to return to camp to sand the bunk clean, or asked not to return in the future.

INCLUSION

Every child should have the chance to go to camp. If your camper requires special accommodations (dietary, physical, behavioral, etc.), please contact the camp to discuss your camper's special needs so any reasonably necessary accommodations may be made prior to your camper's arrival.

Please note that noise levels at camp vary throughout the day—some activities, such as meals, evening programs, and large group games, can be quite loud, while other times, such as rest hours and certain small group activities, are quieter. If your camper is sensitive to noise, consider sending noise-reducing headphones or earplugs, and feel free to discuss any concerns with us in advance so we can help set them up for success.

CARE PACKAGE

Care packages are souvenir backpacks that have a water bottle and about 3 to 4 other fun and useful camp souvenirs included. They are delivered the first few days of camp. This also includes the photo collection link. The link will be emailed to families the week following camp. After being delivered to campers, they are responsible for these items.

PHOTO COLLECTION

The photo collection consists of about 150 photos from that week of camp. The collection is a great way to start a conversation about what your child experienced while at camp. You can order these at registration, or if you forgot, please email camp with your child's name and birthdate, and we can add these for you. The Photo Collection link will be emailed to families the week following camp.

CAMP STORE

Each camper will receive a camp T-shirt as part of their registration.

The camp store is your source for camp souvenirs, gifts, T-shirts, snacks, and other fun camp accessories! Each camper will have multiple opportunities to visit the camp store. The best way to add store money is at registration or prior to arriving at camp. The suggested amount is \$25-\$35 for overnight camp and \$15-\$25 for day camp.

Families will not have the ability to add store money themselves online after registration from their online accounts. To add store money after registration, please call the camp office for assistance at 319.435.2577.

Families can choose to donate any leftover store money to our scholarship fund, or have the remaining money returned at the end of their session. If you choose to receive your remaining store funds, it will be put back on the card used to make the original payment.

The camp store will be open for families to purchase camp merchandise or snacks during check-in and check-out for Overnight Camp. This is a great time to purchase any higher-end purchases that your camper may not have the funds in their store account to purchase.

YMCA Camp Wapsie is not responsible for any items purchased at the camp store that are lost or stolen during your camper's stay.

Camp Wapsie has an online store for a few larger items. This is a great place to order camp shirts and sweatshirts and have them shipped to your home. Visit the store at:

<https://campwapsie.itemorder.com/shop/home/>

CABIN MATE REQUESTS

Camp Wapsie is a great place to meet and make new friends. You can request one cabin mate. They should be within 1-year grade and age and they should also request you. We try to accommodate cabin requests, but we can make no guarantees.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Cancellations and changes must be made in writing or by email.

- Cancellations at any time prior to the session will forfeit the \$100 deposit.
- Cancellations less than 10 days before the session start date will forfeit half the camp fees.
- No-shows will be charged the full fee.
- There is no refund for behavior-related problems or missing home.
- Campers who cancel or leave camp on the advice of medical personnel will receive a prorated refund. A physician's note is required.

DIETARY NEEDS

Wapsie is not an allergen free facility (this includes but is not limited to peanuts, tree nuts, gluten). We will eagerly communicate the ingredients used with parents and campers upon request as information is available from suppliers. It is more helpful to know a list of what is able to be ingested or preferred in parallel to what is not.

Food is served primarily family style where a nutritionally balanced meal is shared by the whole of camp. This encourages campers (and counselors) to explore menu items they may not gravitate to otherwise. It places a significant burden on our kitchen to make completely separate meals for various small groups of people or individuals without the necessary information to develop a special menu that will serve as many as possible.

Camp is obviously a high energy environment requiring substantial calorie intake. It is not an ideal place to begin new diets or limit specific food groups. Please consult a physician or nutritionist prior to arrival to create a clear plan that will meet all your specific needs. Sharing this plan with our office minimally two weeks prior to arrival is key to a positive culinary experience.

CAMPER AND PARENT SURVEYS

Campers may be asked to complete an evaluation during their camp session. Parents and guardians of campers will also have the opportunity to complete an online survey asking for feedback on their camper's experience following the session via e-mail. Your input on the camp experience is important. This information is used to make

improvements to the camper experience. We THANK YOU in advance for completing this survey.

LATE ARRIVAL & EARLY DEPARTURE

Your camper's program activities will begin shortly after check-in. We do not want your camper to miss out on this valuable time to get to know their fellow campers and to settle into camp life. Campers who must arrive late, depart early, or leave during a session are asked to make these arrangements with the Camp Office before the camp session begins or as soon as special circumstances are known so we can make necessary arrangements. Pick-ups and Drop-offs are not allowed between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Early pick-ups on Saturdays will only be permitted between 8:00 and 8:30 am. After 8:30 am, we ask that you wait until following the Parent Program that begins at 9am.

PETS

Pets are not allowed on camp property. Only trained service animals and fulltime staff members pets are allowed on camp property. Campers who want to bring their trained service animal to their program should contact the camp to make arrangements prior to arrival.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

PREPARING YOUR CAMPER

One of the primary goals of camp is to offer progressive experiences that allow children to develop new skills and confidence. Coming to camp and being away from home and family for an extended time provides a great opportunity to grow.

It is important that each camper is able to care for their general well-being. While counselors are there to support them, campers are expected to eat meals, shower, groom, dress, and communicate their needs with camp staff.

Please note that we only have showers available at camp. There are no bathtubs.

Weather permitting, sleeping outside is a tradition at Camp Wapsie and a highlight of the camp experience. Camper groups may sleep under the stars, in lodges, or on other floor spaces depending on the night and their group's

activities. This is a wonderful chance for campers to develop valuable outdoor skills such as setting up a sleeping area, adapting to their surroundings, building confidence and enjoying each other's company.

Help your camper get ready for camp by being excited! Let your camper know you want them to have fun and learn new things. Emphasize that your camper is "going" to camp instead of saying you are "sending" them. If your camper is anxious about the dark, bugs, night noises, or being away from home, please start preparing them for these things now.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

- Have overnights at friends' or relatives' homes.
- Plan outdoor activities as a family to get your camper used to outdoor weather.
- Encourage your camper to pick out their clothes and help with packing.
- Pick out a security item like a teddy bear or blanket to bring.
- Help them learn how to make their bed and set and wipe the table.
- Make sure they are comfortable doing personal care routines like showering, brushing teeth/hair, and dressing on their own.
- Homesickness, or missing home, is normal. Discuss what it may feel like and suggest ways to help your camper overcome it if they experience it.
- Talk to other families and friends who have attended camp, so you know what to expect.
- Write notes/letters for your camper and bring them to camp during drop-off to be delivered to them during the week. These can be left in the camp office.

PREPARING YOURSELF

It's normal for parents and guardians to have mixed feelings when their camper goes away – whether it's their first time away or not. Remember, you have chosen a fun and safe place, and your camper will be well cared for. The staff is trained to deal with any problem, from your child missing home to first aid needs. Try not to let your camper know how much you are going to miss them. Be strong! You don't want them to worry about you while at camp.

PACKING FOR CAMP

By following these easy tips, your camper will be well prepared for their camp adventure.

- Pack your camper's possessions in a duffel bag or plastic tub with a secure lid.
- Encourage your camper to pack everything into one suitable-sized container for their session. This helps ensure things do not get lost.
- Clearly mark all clothing and equipment with the camper's name, including luggage or tubs.
- Pack comfortable, lightweight clothing that is easy to clean. Clothes WILL get dirty at camp.
- Have your camper wear properly fitting, sturdy shoes to camp. Campers must wear sturdy shoes every day due to the natural hazards at camp. Sturdy sandals with a heel strap are acceptable for some camp activities; however, tennis shoes are necessary. Campers may only wear flip-flops in the shower and to the pool.
- Remember to pack extra clothing/shoes in case of rainy weather.
- Zip Lock bags are great for keeping items dry and keeping wet items from leaking on clothes.

CHECK-IN ITEMS

Have the following easily accessible when arriving at camp:

- **Medication**
- **Store Money**

ITEMS TO LEAVE AT HOME

- Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vaping, etc. are not allowed with campers during their session or on Camp Wapsie property.
- Food! It attracts unwanted critters.
- Inappropriate clothing or items that are not functional for camping, such as halter tops, tube tops, or formalwear.
- Items that advertise inappropriate material.
- Pocket knives or other weapons.
- Cell phones, and electronic devices.
- Personal sports equipment that could be considered a weapon.
- Any item that would cause distress if it was lost or damaged.

If these or any other items are found to be disrupting the camp programs, they will be collected by a staff member and returned to the camper upon check-out.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We kindly ask that all electronic devices are left at home. With youth development being one of the focus areas of the YMCA, we would like to encourage participants to be engaged in the programs offered at camp and not risk these items being lost or damaged at camp. If any electronics or cell phones are brought to camp, the staff will collect them. Electronics will be stored securely in the Camp office and returned to the parents/guardians during checkout.

PERSONAL SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Camp Wapsie provides all necessary sports equipment for activities, so bringing personal equipment is not required. Any personal sports equipment brought to camp is the camper's responsibility—camp is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged items. Additionally, any equipment that could be considered a weapon (e.g., archery bows, guns, knives, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the camp staff before arrival.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost items are displayed to be claimed at camp and are laid out during check-out. Unclaimed items will be held at Camp Wapsie until September 1st. Please contact Camp before September 1st to ask about a lost item. Any items left unclaimed by then will be donated to individuals or agencies to serve our community.

THE PACKING LIST

PERSONAL ITEMS

- 6-8 pairs of socks
- 1-2 sweatshirts
- 1 pair of pajamas
- 1 raincoat/poncho
- 1 jacket
- 1-2 pairs of jeans/pants
- 6-8 shirts
- 4-7 pairs of shorts
- 1-2 swim suits
- 7-9 pairs of underwear
- 1-2 pairs of old tennis shoes
- Water bottle with camper's name
- Soap
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Hairbrush and/or comb

- Hair Bands or other hair accessories
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Towels and washcloths
- Deodorant and toiletries
- Feminine hygiene supplies*
- Eye care needs*
- Dental care needs*

EQUIPMENT

- Sleeping bag
- Extra sheets and blankets for chilly nights
- Pillow
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Hat with brim
- Laundry Bag
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Backpack or daypack

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Inexpensive camera
- Bandana
- Sandals or flip-flops for the shower
- Stationary or postcards, addresses, pens or pencils, stamps
- Sunglasses
- Books, magazines, or journal for downtime
- Digital Watch (no smart watches)
- Boots or rain boots
- Extra swimsuit and towel
- Mud Clothes
- Water shoes/aqua socks
- Safety strap for glasses/sunglasses*
- Personal fan for bunk (battery operated or electric, extension cord)
- Noise reducing headphones or ear plugs

EXTRA LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ITEMS

- Swimwear that does not have ties
- Craft and game ideas/books
- Journal and pen
- Digital Watch (no smart watches)



WELLNESS AND SAFETY

HEALTH & WELLNESS TEAM

Camp Wapsie has a Health Services Director, a weekly Volunteer Nurse and a Camper Wellness Coordinator who together support the overall health and wellness of every camper. Counselors serve as the first level of care, handling minor injuries or illnesses (ex: bug bites, scrapes, initial headaches, minor sunburn, etc.) before involving health center staff. The Health Services Director and Volunteer Nurse provide routine medical and emergency care, while the Camper Wellness Coordinator focuses on campers' emotional well-being, including behaviors, peer conflicts and missing home — allowing the health staff to focus on physical health needs.

While not every health center visit will result in a parent or guardian notification, you can expect to hear from us if we have questions or concerns, or in the event of an emergency, major injury, or non-routine illness. Our goal is to keep you informed when it matters most while ensuring your camper receives prompt care.

If you have health-related questions, please contact our camp office.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CONCERNS

We will be following current standards set by the Center for Disease Control(CDC), American Camp Association(ACA), and Iowa Department of Public Health(IDPH).

HEALTH INFORMATION

Health information is required for all campers, regardless of session and program. Health forms are available at www.campwapsie.org under Summer Overnight Camp or Wapsie Day Camp as part of our camper forms. All campers must complete the immunization section. A current tetanus booster (administered within the last ten years) is required for all campers. Please indicate dates of COVID-19 shot/booster if vaccinated.

On your health form, you will need to let camp know what OTC medications can be given.

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen (Motrin)
- Decongestant (Sudafed)

- Antacid (Tums)
- Cough Syrup (cough suppressant, cough drops)

Melatonin is considered an over-the-counter medication that is not provided by camp. If your child takes this medication, please bring it to camp and complete the Medication Form at check-in.

Upon arrival, all campers will complete a brief health screening after check-in. This screening is conducted through a brief conversation between your camper and their counselor rather than a physical examination. During this screening, our health team will collect information such as the following:

- Rashes
- Athlete's foot
- Stitches
- Poison ivy
- Allergies
- Large burns
- Cuts or bruises
- Food restrictions
- Lice check
- Mobility considerations

While we aim to collect most health information through your camper's health form in advance, this screening allows our health team to identify any new or outstanding concerns that may impact your camper's experience in a timely manner. This important step ensures every camper is ready to safely participate in camp activities from the moment they arrive.

The security, confidentiality, and privacy of your camper's personal health information is important. It is only shared with our health center team and staff that needs access to camper health information.



MEDICATIONS

All over-the-counter and prescription medications must be in original containers with the current label and doctor's instructions.

All medication should be checked in when arriving at camp with the Health Staff, who will oversee the proper administration of all medications. Campers may NOT keep medications.

Camp is a different environment from home and school, with new procedures and rules. We want your camper to have a positive experience. If your camper takes prescription medication for any health-related condition, we strongly advise that they continue these medications under the supervision of our Health staff. This will ensure that the transition to camp life is smooth and successful. Please let us know if your child's doctor has advised that your camper not take their medications during camp.

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS

The Health Center has a supply of common over-the-counter (OTC) medication. Unless your camper takes an over-the-counter drug as a part of their regular medication regimen, we recommend you primarily use the camp's supply if needed.

The following medications are available at the Health Center and recommended by camp physicians through our standing orders. They will be administered under the Health Services Director or designee's supervision; dosed as appropriate for the camper's weight and/or age.

HEAD LICE

YMCA Camp Wapsie has a no lice, no-nit policy. The presence of nits, live lice, or dead eggs will require the camper and their belongings to have treatment with the application of a lice-killing product before admittance to camp. Campers will be admitted back to camp ONLY after treatment, and all lice and eggs (nits) have been removed. All belongings, including clothes, pillows, and sleeping bag, must be laundered in hot water and dried in a hot dryer to ensure it is lice-free. There are no refunds for lice-related incidents.

HOMESICKNESS

Though not very often, common, or long-lasting, homesickness, or simply missing home, can occur at camp. We have experienced staff members that are trained to work with campers who miss

home. If it occurs, homesickness usually happens at the beginning of the week and quickly dissipates as the camper gets settled into camp life. The first few hours and days are a normal transition phase for everyone, and it is typical for campers to adjust at different paces.

There are a few things a parent can do to help prevent long-lasting homesickness:

- Avoid using the term homesickness with young campers and instead say "missing home". We have found that young children believe they need to see a doctor and are truly sick when using the term homesickness.
- Explain what missing home is and let them know that it is normal, what it might feel like, and that it will go away.
- Remember that the feeling of missing home comes from a place of feeling loved and safe at home.
- Give them some ideas of things they can do to help alleviate sad feelings, such as:
 - Think about the fun things they are doing at camp.
 - Take a special stuffed animal or book that makes them feel secure.
 - Talk to your counselor or a friend.
- Show confidence in your camper that they will do great.
- Let them know that you want them to have a good time and make new friends.
- Avoid bargaining. Saying something like, "If you're really homesick, I promise I'll come to pick you up right away." sends the message to your camper that you are not confident in their ability to succeed.
- Provide stationary and self-addressed, stamped envelopes to write letters. Consider preparing letters and bringing them to check in to be delivered to your camper throughout the week.
- Do not suggest that they call you if they miss home. Often, calling home makes homesickness worse, and campers do not have access to the camp phone.
- Lastly, should your camper ask, "What if I get homesick?" remind them of the many people at camp who are there to help.

Here are a few things to remember once you have checked your camper in to help prevent homesickness:

- Once you get your camper moved in, try to leave as soon as possible so your camper can start making new friends and get involved with activities.
- Keep upbeat when you say goodbye. Save your tears until you get to the car where your camper won't see you.
- Be aware that your camper's counselors will engage the campers in singing songs and playing games as soon as you leave.
- You can stay connected to your camper by sending them mail and e-mails while they are at camp.

If you believe your camper is prone to homesickness, please share this information when filling out their health information. You can also discuss it with a staff member at check-in (without involving your camper).

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Access to camp property is limited, controlled, and only authorized visitors are allowed on site. To ensure camp safety and security and to limit interruptions to the camp program, unauthorized visitors are not allowed on site. If you need to stop at camp, please call the camp office prior to your arrival.

To ensure the safety and well-being of all campers and staff, Camp Wapsie reserves the **right to search a camper's belongings** if there is **reasonable suspicion** that they may be in possession of illegal substances, weapons, or other items that could pose a risk to themselves or others. Searches will be conducted by camp leadership in a respectful manner and only when deemed necessary for the safety of the camp community.

Additionally, Camp Wapsie has a **no cell phone or personal electronics policy** to support an immersive camp experience. If a camper is suspected of having a prohibited device, camp leadership may check their belongings. Any confiscated electronics will be held securely and returned to the camper's guardian at the end of their session.

SEVERE WEATHER

At camp, we have a communication system to alert all staff and campers of severe weather. Our

staff is trained in emergency procedures and participates in drills to make sure that they are prepared in case of a weather-related emergency. Campers are also aware of what happens during different types of emergencies. Camp has an underground storm shelter for severe weather situations.

In case of a weather-related emergency, updates can be found on the YMCA Camp Wapsie [Facebook Page](#) once campers are checked and in secure locations.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

At YMCA Camp Wapsie, we believe that learning to navigate conflict, big emotions, and disagreements is not a disruption to the camp experience and instead **is part of the experience**. Our approach to behavior management is rooted in our core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility, and reflects our commitment to the whole child: spirit, mind, and body.

CONFLICT AS CURRICULUM

Campers come to Camp Wapsie from many different backgrounds, communities, and life experiences. When those differences bump up against each other, and they will, we see that as an opportunity, not a problem. Our staff are trained to help campers develop real-world skills including:

- **Attunement:** learning to read the feelings and needs of others
- **Active listening:** hearing what someone is really saying, not just waiting for your turn to talk
- **Emotional literacy:** putting words to feelings so they can be worked through, not acted out
- **Accountability:** understanding how our actions affect the people around us

These are skills campers will carry far beyond their time at camp.

Restorative Circles

When conflict or harm occurs between campers, our primary response is a **Restorative Circle:** a

guided conversation that brings those involved together in a structured, safe setting. Rather than focusing on punishment, Restorative Circles ask three key questions:

1. **What happened, and how did it affect everyone involved?**
2. **What do you need to feel okay again?**
3. **What can we do together to make things right?**

Circles are facilitated by trained staff and may include the campers directly involved, affected peers, and a counselor or camp leader. The goal is understanding, repair, and a shared path forward — not shame or blame.

How We Work Through Challenges

We recognize that not every situation looks the same, and our response reflects that. In general, our approach moves through the following stages:

Step 1: In-the-Moment Support A staff member addresses the situation directly with the camper(s) involved. This may look like a quiet conversation, a walk, or a short break to regulate emotions before talking things through.

Step 2: Restorative Conversation or Circle When more than one camper is involved, or when a situation needs more structured repair, staff will facilitate a Restorative Circle. Parents or guardians may be notified depending on the nature of the situation.

Step 3: Leadership Involvement For ongoing behavior concerns or situations that require additional support, our camp leadership team will become involved. We will work collaboratively with the camper and, when appropriate, with families to build a plan that supports everyone's success.

Step 4: Family Contact & Care Planning In cases where a camper's behavior is significantly impacting the wellbeing of themselves or others, we will contact families to partner on next steps. This may include modified programming, additional check-ins, or a phone conversation with leadership.

WHEN A CAMPER GOES HOME

Sending a camper home early is never our first response, and rarely our response at all. We are

committed to working through challenges together whenever it is safe to do so. Physical altercations, disagreements that turn heated, and even a shove or a swing are situations our staff are trained to handle. In most cases, these become opportunities for restorative work rather than reasons to send a camper home.

However, the safety of every member of our camp community is non-negotiable. There are two circumstances in which a camper may be required to leave camp early:

Serious Physical Harm. A camper may be required to leave immediately if their behavior causes serious physical harm to another person; meaning harm that results in injury requiring medical attention, such as bleeding, bruising, or marks left on the body. Situations involving a weapon fall into this category regardless of injury.

Persistent Behavior That Impacts the Community. In some cases, a camper may engage in ongoing behavior — such as bullying, harassment, or repeated aggression — that significantly diminishes the experience or wellbeing of other campers, and that does not improve despite consistent support and restorative work with staff. In these situations, camp leadership will use their judgment to determine whether continued attendance is in the best interest of the full camp community. Families will always be contacted and included in that conversation before a decision is made whenever possible.

In either circumstance, families will be contacted as soon as possible. Campers who are required to leave due to a serious safety incident are not eligible for a refund of session fees. Refund eligibility in other situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A NOTE TO FAMILIES

You know your camper best. If your child has experienced past trauma, carries a diagnosis, or struggles in particular situations, please let us know before camp begins. The more we understand about your camper, the better we can support them. All information shared with us is kept confidential and used only to help your child thrive.

We also ask that you reinforce at home what we practice at camp: that feelings are okay, that conflict can be worked through, and that asking for help is a sign of strength — not weakness.

CAMPER COMMUNICATION

Campers love to hear from home while they are at camp. We offer options for you to communicate with your camper.

POSTAL MAIL

You can mail a letter before your camper leaves for camp or after you drop them off. Please address mail as follows:

Camper Name,
Week # or Theme
Cabin Number
YMCA Camp Wapsie
2174 Wapsie Y Road
Coggon, IA 52218

You can send your camper with stationary, pre-addressed envelopes or an address list, and stamps, and we will help them get the letter in the mail.

EMAIL(MOOSE MAIL)

You can stay connected to your camper by sending them **MOOSE MAIL** while they are at camp. Simply send an e-mail to camp@crmetroymca.org with your camper's name and cabin # as the subject line. The staff will print it out and deliver it to your camper during mail time. The cost per email is \$1 which will be deducted from their store accounts. The \$1 helps support our Annual Support Campaign. This campaign helps kids who cannot afford to come to camp.

E-mails received after 11 am will be delivered the following day. Please do not send pictures or attachments.

WORLD SERVICE

The YMCA is the largest social service organization in the world and operates many programs in Third World countries. Each week, camp runs special World Service activities where campers may donate a small portion of money from their store account to help support international YMCA children's programs.

PHONES AND KEYS

While Wapsie does not allow campers to carry cell phones at camp, if there is an emergency, you can call the camp office at 319-435-2577, and we can get a message to your child. We ask that campers leave cell phones at home. If a camper brings a cell phone, it will be collected by staff, stored securely in the Camp office and returned to parents/guardians during checkout. If a camper drives to camp, keys and phone must be turned into the office to secure until check-out.

TIPS FOR CAMPER COMMUNICATION

Do tell them:

- You know they are having a good time.
- You can't wait to hear all about their new friends, the fun activities they are doing, to see their art projects, or to learn all of the new songs they are singing.
- You hope they are writing down songs, names of new friends, and taking lots of pictures.
- Use positive words like love and proud.

DON'T tell them about:

- Trips or fun things they miss out on.
- How a sibling cried all night because they are not home.
- How much you miss them.
- An ill relative or a hurt animal.

CAMP ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Everyone is excited for the first day of camp. Efforts are taken to make the check-in process as efficient as possible. However, several steps must be taken to ensure that your camper has a healthy and fun camp experience. Come dressed for the weather.

CHECK-IN

As you arrive at camp, there will be staff on hand to help direct you where to go. Ask any staff member in a Camp Wapsie Staff shirt if you need help. The check-in will take place at the camp entrance and runs from 3:00-3:45 pm. Please be patient while waiting if you arrive at camp early. Please see the Health Station to check medications and the Office Station to finalize any last-minute paperwork or payments, if needed.

Your camper will complete a quick health check, which will include a general health screening and lice check by the cabin. By completing lice checks upon arrival, we can avoid and/or reduce the chance of anyone bringing or sharing lice at camp. Braids and ponytails may need to be taken out so you may want to wait until after the health check to braid hair.

You can expedite the check-in process by ensuring your camper has the items listed below, either already completed or out and ready to process at the proper check-in stations.

- Completed camper forms prior to arrival.
- Store money – optional but suggested.
- All medications – All inhalers, medicated creams, prescription and non-prescription drugs need to be checked in with the wellness team upon arrival. ***These must be in original containers with labels and doctor's release.***

Once check-in is complete, families will be directed to their camper's cabin. Families are invited to help their camper move into the cabin, meet the counselors, and ask any last-minute questions. Please try to keep this process quick, as prolonging good-byes can promote homesickness in your camper. Parents are asked to leave camp by 4:00 pm so campers can start their programs.

Camp will reach out to scheduled campers who do not arrive during the scheduled check-in unless we receive advance notice of a late arrival. Please be on time or call ahead.

CHECK-OUT

At 9:00 am on Saturday morning, camp has a parent's program at the Outdoor Chapel. This program lasts about 45 minutes. Once the program is finished, we will release your child, and you can head to the cabin. This is where you will meet the counselor, sign your child out and pick up their items.

On-time pick-up eases your camper's nerves during the anticipation of going home. If something happens and you are running late, please call the camp office so we can let your camper know you are on your way and keep them busy until you arrive.

Please note that prior to pick-up, campers are busy finishing breakfast. Please go to the outdoor

Chapel and await their arrival and the start of the parent's program. We understand that things come up and schedules are busy. If your camper needs to be picked up early, please notify the camp office as soon as possible so we can ensure your camper is prepared. Pick-ups and Drop-offs are not allowed between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Early pick-ups on Saturdays will only be permitted between 8:00 and 8:30 am. After 8:30 am, we ask that you wait until following the Parent Program that begins at 9 am.

If someone other than a parent is picking up your camper, include those individuals' names and phone numbers in your camp registration under Camper Release. If someone needs to be added after registration, notify camp staff during check-in or email camp@crmetroymca.org. The person picking up each camper will be asked to show a photo ID at pick-up. Campers will only be released to authorized persons.

- If your child is leaving early or missing a day of camp, please notify the main office.
- Please do not take your camper home without signing them out with their counselor.
- If an incident at camp affects pick-up times or locations, camp will share updates by email, Facebook, or phone.

CUSTODY, CONTACT, AND COMMUNICATION RIGHTS

Camp Wapsie understands that some families have unique circumstances regarding custody, contact, or communication rights. The following outlines how we handle these situations to ensure the safety and well-being of every camper.

CAMPER RELEASE AND COMMUNICATION

We will not release a camper or share any information about them with anyone who is not listed as an authorized contact on their registration account. If an individual not listed on the account requests access or information, we will contact the registering parent or legal guardian to seek permission before taking any action. Campers are welcome to receive mail and

emails from anyone during their time at camp and we do not restrict correspondence unless a concern has been previously brought to our attention and documented prior to the camper's arrival.

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND DOCUMENTATION

Camp staff cannot make assumptions about the rights of one parent or guardian over another. In order to restrict a parent or guardian's access to their camper, we require valid legal documentation, such as a custody agreement or no-contact order, to be on file with the camp. In the absence of such documentation, we are legally required to treat all legal parents and guardians equally and cannot restrict communication with the camper, deny access to camper information, or prevent pickup by a legal parent or guardian. If legal documentation is provided, the registering parent or guardian will be notified accordingly.

Village ½ Weeks

The Village is typically a full week of camp. However, during select weeks, the Village offers a special ½ week. Camp offers opportunities for youth who want to experience a shorter first trip to camp. They participate in many but not all of the traditional camp activities. The campers during the first half will not experience the theme of the week as they are not here on Thursday!

SUNDAY - WEDNESDAY SESSION

Check-in Sunday 3:00 -3:45 pm

Check-out Wednesday 9:00 am after a short closing parent's program at the Village.

(All Campers must leave at this time)

WEDNESDAY- SATURDAY SESSION

Check-in Wednesday 4:00 pm

Check-out Saturday 9:00 am after the parent's program at the Outdoor Chapel.

DAY CAMP

It will be beneficial for Day Camp families to read this whole handbook. However, here are a few specifics for our Day Camp programs. You will receive an email from camp that contains specific information about a week before your session.

DAY TROOPERS

Day Troopers is designed for 1st through 4th graders. They spend 4 days at Camp Wapsie, with a special Wednesday trip to Pinicon Ridge Park in Central City. While at the park, they will visit the elk pen, playground, tower & nature trails.

DAY TREKKERS

Day Trekkers are for campers entering 5th through 8th grades. The Trekkers, along with their counselors, have more flexibility to create their own schedule, which can include: climbing the tower, swimming, canoeing, and all camp activities or specialized activities.

INFORMATION FOR ALL DAY CAMPERS

Meals: Day Campers are provided lunch daily. On Thursday overnights, they will also be provided dinner and Friday breakfast. They also visit the camp store regularly.

Overnight: On Thursday nights, Day Campers stay overnight at Camp Wapsie, where they experience a taste of staying overnight with a group of friends and the other fun that happens at camp in the evenings.

On Thursday, they enjoy the theme day activities. Day Campers, with their counselors, will have the opportunity to choose between sleeping outdoors under the Wapsie stars in one of our outdoor program spaces or inside with a slumber party on the Taylor Indoor Chapel floor. These sleeping arrangements may be co-ed with separation between genders.

THURSDAY PICK-UP OPTION: Day Campers have the opportunity to stay overnight on Thursday, but if they choose to go home instead, **families must arrange for pick-up at either 4:00 PM or 6:00 PM**—no other pick-up times will be available. This ensures our staff can remain focused on supervising and engaging with campers during all scheduled activities.

If a camper is scheduled to be picked up at 4:00 PM or 6:00 PM and a guardian does not arrive on time, the camper will wait in the office until they

are picked up. If you have any questions or concerns about pickup times, please contact camp staff in advance.

Wapsie does not provide transportation Thursday night and Friday morning. Friday morning, campers should arrive at Camp Wapsie between 8:30-8:45 AM at Mary's Place Gazebo by the main parking lot. If you arrive after 8:45 AM please check in at the camp office.

Packing: Day Campers are asked to pack the following items in a backpack each day:

- A change of clothes
- Bathing suit and towel
- Water bottle
- A light jacket/sweatshirt
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Tennis shoes that can get dirty.

Extra items needed for the overnight:

- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- 1-2 changes of clothing
- Pajamas
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Pull-ups or briefs (if needed)
- 2nd pair of closed-toed shoes

You may pack other items you see fit from the overnight packing list, but please make sure not to pack more than what your camper can carry on their own.

CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT will happen each day by the parking lot of the YMCA you select during registration. The options include the HGN, Marion YMCAs, or at Camp Wapsie. *Please make sure to check your camper out each day with the staff. You will be asked to show a photo ID at pick-up. If your child is leaving early or missing a day of camp, please notify the Day Camp staff or the main office.*



DAY CAMP BUS

Drop-off/Pick-up	Time	Return
HGN YMCA	7:30 am	5:00 pm
Marion YMCA	8:00 am	4:30 pm
Camp Wapsie	8:45 am	4:00 pm

Bus Guidelines

- 1) *Please be on time at all sites.*
- 2) *Counselors will not leave campers unattended without written permission.*
- 3) *HGN YMCA uses the loading zones on 7th Ave SE. Please utilize street parking or use the parking lot to the North of the YMCA.*
- 4) *Marion YMCA will load campers in the parking lot.*
- 5) *To ensure a smooth and safe start to the adventure, campers will be checked in by Camp Wapsie staff before boarding the bus.*
- 6) *Campers must keep all body parts inside the bus and the aisles clear during travel. Campers should remain seated during the ride and may stand to exit only after the bus driver has safely parked the bus and the all-clear is given.*
- 7) *Please follow all bus procedures as directed by the bus driver and camp staff.*

ADVENTURE TRIPS

It will be beneficial for Adventure Trip families to read this whole handbook. However, there are a few specifics for the trip. You will also receive an email from camp a few weeks prior to your camper's visit with additional information. Things to note:

- Some trip campers, depending on the trip, will not have camp store accounts. They will be allowed to bring money to camp for snacks and gift shops on the road. They are responsible for their own money.
- Trip campers will be off-site most of the week and will not participate in all the usual camp activities. Off-site trips, attempt to be back on Friday early enough

to participate in closing activities and programs.

- Trips are a co-ed camping opportunity.
- Campers will divide by gender for tent camping.
- Camp rules included in this handbook still apply while on the trip unless noted otherwise.

TRIP ITINERARY

The itinerary for each trip is flexible for a couple of reasons. The weather may be a factor and we like to allow these older campers to have input with some things they do. You will also receive a trip specific email including a flexible itinerary and any specific packing needs for your particular trip.

TRIP PACKING LIST

- 1 Large Backpack/ Duffle bag- That should fit all the possessions you will need for a 3-5 day multi-night stay in a tent.
- If you do not own a large backpack, another bag will suffice; please avoid bags with wheels or totes if possible.
- Small Daypack/backpack for carrying a water bottle, snacks, bathing suit, etc. Drawstring bags make great day packs!
- Clothing for the week
- Make sure to bring warm clothes, a rain jacket or poncho, swimsuit, and towel

- Good fitting, broken-in hiking shoes/boots
- Closed-toed water shoes for canoe and rafting trips.
- Easy slip-on shoes with a heel strap (no flip flops) for around the campsite.
- Ziploc/Trash bags (Great for keeping things dry)
- Any toiletries you may need
 - Deodorant
 - Toothpaste
 - Shampoo
 - Bug Spray
 - Sun Screen
 - Flashlight / Headlamp / Lantern
 - A large water bottle
 - Sleeping Bag and Pillow
 - Avoid perfume or body spray. It will attract mosquitoes. Deodorant and shampoos with tea tree or no scent are helpful.

Optional Items:

- Sleeping pad
- Sheets
- Camera

WE ARE EXCITED TO SEE YOU THIS SUMMER!

-The YMCA Camp Wapsie Staff

Typical Overnight Daily Schedule

7:30 am	Wake Up & Clean Up
8:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Morning Activities
11:45 am	Pool Time
12:45 pm	Lunch
1:45 pm	Rest Hour
2:45 pm	Afternoon Game/ Activities
4:00 pm	Swim/Recreation Time
5:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 pm	Evening Program
8:45 pm	Night Swim
9:30 pm	Night Activities/ Bedtime
Bedtimes Vary Depending on Age	