

# YMCA CAMP ICAGHOWAN CAMPER FAMILY HANDBOOK SUMMER 2026



*Updated 11/10/2025*



## This Document

This document undergoes annual updates and changes. You can always find the most up-to-date version here: [Family Handbook](#)

## New Camper Orientation

We will update this handbook with the recorded version of our virtual New Camper Orientation and Teen/Trail Camper Orientation in early 2026.

## Open House / Camp Preview Day

Join us for our open house **at camp (899 115<sup>th</sup> St., Amery, WI, 54001)** on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 from 1-4pm. You will have a chance to tour camp, see cabins and program areas, as well as meet some of our incredible staff. We'll kick off the final tours of the afternoon around 3:30pm. See you there!

## Contact Information

**YMCA Customer Service Center:** 612-230-9622; call them about registration, payments, financial assistance, cancellations, etc. Open 7am to 5pm, M-F.

**Fall/Winter/Spring:** 612-822-2267; call here for general information about programs, logistics, transportation, etc.

**Camp Icaghowan Office (Summer):** 612-459-7279; call here for questions, concerns, or needs during the summer months while camp is in session.

**Gretchen Hoff (Senior Program Director):** 612-268-0065 or [gretchen.hoff@ymcamn.org](mailto:gretchen.hoff@ymcamn.org). Call or email if you have questions about programs, concerns about a camper, transportation changes, friend requests, staff qualifications, or changes to your registration.

**Georgia Ellingson (Executive Director):** 612-465-0467 or [georgia.ellingson@ymcamn.org](mailto:georgia.ellingson@ymcamn.org); call or email if you have questions opportunities outside of summer, questions about training and development of staff, or to learn how to support Camp Icaghowan.

## YMCA of the North Mission

The Y's mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy body, mind, and spirit for all.

## Camp Icaghowan Mission

Camp Icaghowan is committed to helping participants achieve their fullest potential in personal development, social growth, and physical wellbeing, with an understanding of their natural environment. Programs and activities at Camp Icaghowan seek to instill the five core values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Equity, Respect, and Responsibility.



## Registration and Forms

### Registration

Registration can be completed online at [www.campicaghowan.org](http://www.campicaghowan.org), by calling the YMCA Customer Service Center, or by downloading a registration form on our website. Camp will send you confirmation within three weeks of receiving your registration and deposit. The balance for your session is due May 1, 2026, unless you have a pre-approved payment plan established with the Customer Service Center.

### Changes and Cancellations

**Program deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable.**

**No refunds are available for cancellations made less than one-month prior to the start of each session.**

Camp session change requests received one month or more prior to the session start date will be made, pending availability, and assessed with a \$25 change fee.

Campers who do not show up to a session **will not** receive a refund.

**No tuition adjustment will be made for late arrival, early departure or dismissal from camp.** No adjustment to registration cost will be made for campers who are tardy, absent from camper days or are restricted due to disciplinary reasons, or inability to manage pre-existing conditions, current illness/injury or dismissal.

For the Y of the North Cancellation policies, please visit: [Cancellations and Changes | YMCA of the North](#)

Y Adventure Programs cannot refund payments when sessions are cut short, adjusted, or canceled due to circumstances beyond our control. These may include, but are not limited to, wilderness area closures, forest fires, flooding, or other climate and environmental hazards that would prevent us from providing a safe and meaningful experience for all participants.

### Camp Store

Camp Store process has updated! You'll receive, in pre-camp emails, a link to complete your camper's camp store form, and more details will come through email notification. We will have opportunity to complete camp store forms at drop-off, as well. Using this process enables us to charge a card you have on file. Learn more, [HERE](#).

Items available in our Icaghowan camp store include clothing/merch, Nalgene style water bottles, stuffed animals, and other "camp swag" between \$2 - \$50 (approximately).

The camp store will be open on Closing Day during pick up. Items can be purchased via your camper's account, cash, check, or card.

We also have a new online shop (some same/some different than apparel at camp), available year-round! Get your camp merch before camp [HERE!](#) Please note, online inventory varies from our in person Camp Store. Items purchased online are not available for refund.

## Health and Safety

Icaghowan campers are well looked after. All of our counselors are trained in First Aid and CPR and at minimum, are supported by an in-camp health professional, and supervised by our consulting physician. We are 15 minutes from the Amery Regional Medical Center for emergency care. We will treat bumps, bruises, and scrapes, and will be *in touch with you* if anything else comes up. We always call home if an injury or illness impedes a camper's enjoyment of camp.

## Medication

All medications **must be turned into Icaghowan Health Services upon arrival** (directly, if dropping camper at camp on arrival day, or to the Bus Stop Staff team if dropping camper at the bus stop on arrival day).

**Medication must be in the *original container*** and include correct dosage, frequency, and camper's name. Please place the original container in a Ziploc bag. Please do not send any over-the-counter medications unless your camper needs something very specific. We have a well-stocked infirmary, and can provide them as needed. All medication **must be entered correctly and up-to-date in CampDoc**.

## Insurance

Please ensure that your camper's medical insurance is included on their **CampDoc profile**. If you have difficulty loading it onto the website, we can make a copy during check-in (or you can email a copy to [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org)). Every camper *must* have proof of medical insurance to participate in programming.

## Health Profile and Health Exam

Our camp utilizes the platform **CampDoc**. Prior to your camper's arrival, you will receive information on how to login and complete your camper's health profile. **A completed Health Exam and completed profile is required each year to attend camp**. This includes the following:

- General Information
- Camper Questionnaire
- Emergency Contact Information
- Allergies
- Medications\*
- Immunizations \*\*
- Health History
- Health Exam – must be completed by Provider
- Health Care Providers
- Proof/copy of insurance
- Signed permission to treat statement/Health Authorization

**\* Please note that the medication listed in CampDoc MUST match the medication brought to camp. Medication MUST come in its original container and can only be administered as prescribed.**

\*\* If you need an exception to immunizations, please contact us for the appropriate forms at [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org)

**If you have trouble getting into your CampDoc account, please contact us at [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org).**

[campicaghowan.org](http://campicaghowan.org)



## Health and Safety, *continued*

### Illness or injury while at camp – When we will contact you.

Despite our best efforts to provide a safe experience for your camper, we are in the outdoors and really active. Sometimes campers get sick or injured while at camp. Here is what to expect from us for communication from us regarding your campers health and wellbeing at camp.

**Tier 1** – No call: Bumps, cuts, slivers, scrapes, upset tummy, headache. You will not likely hear from us. Our first-aid trained staff and/or health care providers on-site will provide care. Campers are able to quickly rejoin activities. We will document the care and monitor for conditions. If conditions worsen, we will contact you.

**Tier 2** – Will likely call: Illness or injury requiring over-the-counter medication: We will reference your camper's CampDoc profile, or contact you to get authorization to administer medication. This may look like tummy aches and headaches that aren't getting better with rest, hydration, or food. This may also include cuts, scrapes, or injury that while they can be managed by our health care team per our standing orders, we would like you to be informed and participate in the care plan for your child.

**Tier 3** – Will call: Illness or injury requiring medical treatment outside of camp: We will contact you immediately if your child is sick or injured to a point that they will need to go into the clinic or hospital. We are located 15-minutes from the Amery Medical Center which is part of the Health Partners network. They are our primary clinic. During the work day, we can schedule appointments and in partnership with you, get your camper to clinic. After hours, the option is the emergency room. Again, we will contact you to determine the care plan for your camper.

**Tier 4** – Will call: Emergency medical condition: We will call 911, then contact you. Should an emergency occur with your camper at camp, we will first call 911, then contact you immediately. These calls may happen synchronously as our staff are available. We will go with your camper to the hospital and stay with them until you arrive.

### **Our Local Hospital:**

Amery Hospital and Clinic (Health Partners)

265 Griffin St. E.

Amery, WI 54001

715-268-8000



## First and Last Day

### Transportation

You will indicate as part of your camper's registration what your desired transportation is. **Please make sure this is accurate before coming to camp.** If you need assistance, please connect with us at [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org).

### Bus

YMCA Camp Icaghowan offers transportation to and from Camp (SUNDAY / THURSDAY). **The bus will arrive and depart from Lakewood Hills Park behind the White Bear Area YMCA (2110 Orchard Ln, White Bear Lake, MN, 55110).**

The bus to camp will depart at 9:30AM on Sunday. It will return to the White Bear Lake Area YMCA from Camp between on Thursday between 5:30PM – 6:00PM.

**You must register for your transportation choice (bus or pick up/drop off directly at camp) at least 7 days ahead of time to ensure adequate space for participants.**

If your camper takes the bus to camp, please arrive at the White Bear Lake Area YMCA between 8:45AM – 9:15AM. Be sure to bring any forms that have not been submitted and medications that your child will need for camp.

**Note** -The Code of Community is in full effect on the bus. See the Code of Community later in this document.

### Drop-Off (Sundays)

On **SUNDAY**, please arrive at camp during the **designated drop-off time**.

**Campers with last names A – L; 10am to 10:30am**

**Campers with last names M – Z; 10:30am to 11am**

We *cannot* accept early arrivals. Please call if you are running late and will be arriving **after** 12 Noon. If you need to adjust anything, need an accommodation regarding your drop off time, or if you have any questions about our drop-off procedures, please contact us at [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org).

## First and Last Day, *continued*

### Pick-Up

On **THURSDAY\*\* please pick up your camper between 4:30pm – 5:30pm** (\*\*for standard sessions ONLY, Samplers and Mini Session info in next section, below)

**Camper can *only* be picked up by someone listed on their Camper Personal History and carrying their photo ID. Remember your ID on pick-up day.**

If there is any reason your camper needs to be dropped off late or picked up early, or there is a change in who can pick your camper up, please contact us.

There is a station at check-in to capture transportation and authorized contacts. If you need to make changes, we are happy to help. We do our best to honor day-of changes but may not be able to depending on timing. Please **verify** before coming to camp that the transportation is correct for pick-up day and let our team know if there are any changes as soon as possible. You can do this by emailing [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org) or [Gretchen.Hoff@ymcamn.org](mailto:Gretchen.Hoff@ymcamn.org).

### \*\*Summer Samplers

Summer Samplers run SUNDAY - TUESDAY. On Tuesday, **Summer Sampler pick-up is from 4:30pm – 5pm**

***There are no return buses offered for Summer Samplers on Tuesdays.***

### \*\*Mini Session (August 16 to 19)

Mini Session runs SUNDAY TO WEDNESDAY, August 16 to 19. **All details listed on the previous page regarding standard Thursday pickup procedures will apply to Wednesday, 8/19 for you Mini Session camper pickup.**

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**Camp Icaghowan Office (Summer):** 612-459-7279; call here for questions, concerns, or needs during the summer months while camp is in session.

**Gretchen Hoff (Senior Program Director):** 612-268-0065, 952-913-6704 or [gretchen.hoff@ymcamn.org](mailto:gretchen.hoff@ymcamn.org). Call or email if you have questions about programs, concerns about a camper, transportation changes, friend requests, staff qualifications, or changes to your registration.

**Georgia Ellingson (Executive Director):** 612-465-0467, 612-810-2935 or [georgia.ellingson@ymcamn.org](mailto:georgia.ellingson@ymcamn.org); call or email if you have questions opportunities outside of summer, questions about training and development of staff, or to learn how to support Camp Icaghowan.



## Life at Camp

### Cabins

Campers spend their session with assigned counselors and a group of other campers in a cabin. Our counselors are well-trained, love their jobs, and can't wait for campers to arrive! Our cabins are split into two units, called the Venture Unit (historically female-identifying campers) and the Wilderness Unit (historically male-identifying campers). Campers are assigned based on age and gender cabin preference. Each cabin has an average of 10 campers and 2 counselors.

### Friend/Buddy Requests

We do our best to honor at least one friend request. Families can **complete a friend request within their registration on the Y Community registration site** to be in a cabin with 1 or 2 friends, within a 2-year age range. ***We cannot guarantee friend requests with more than 2 friends, or outside of the age range.*** This is done to ensure that all campers have a great time at camp and are included in their cabin groups. This includes linked requests of more than 2 friends.

### Food

Icaghowan campers eat very well; our kitchen takes great pride in providing a tasty, well-balanced diet. ***If your camper has dietary restrictions or allergies, please make a note of them in your camper's CampDoc profile and on their registration.*** If needed, we will follow up with additional questions. We have an oatmeal or yogurt bar and cereal bar available with breakfast every day. In addition, we provide a salad bar for each lunch and dinner. We provide many "build-your-own" options during meals to make sure there is something for everyone.

### Homesickness

For many campers, a week away at Icaghowan will be the longest they've ever been away from home. This challenge can be understandably significant for both campers and families. Icaghowan counselors and staff are trained in coaching campers through their camp experiences, and we believe that overcoming the challenge can be an opportunity to build resilience and confidence. **We encourage camper families to share positive encouragement and acknowledgement about the length of time away from home before your camper comes to camp.** It is helpful if your camper has spent more than a night away from home in the past – sleepovers, staying with family, etc., are a great way to build the ability to overcome homesickness. We also recommend sending along some stationery, envelopes, and stamps so your camper can write letters home! Should your camper experience extreme homesickness – our strategies are not working – we will call you to engage in a plan that can help your camper be more at ease.

## Risks at Camp

Camp Icaghowan is a member of the American Camp Association, meaning we are rigorously held accountable to approximately 300 standards regarding health and wellness, transportation safety, aquatic safety, and more. These standards ensure that we have the best practices in place regarding ticks/insects, sun exposure, hygiene, water safety, bullying prevention, staff medical training, and much more. Nonetheless, like all experiences in life, camp is not risk-free. We simply cannot guarantee that no harm will befall a camper. **Please refer to our [WAIVER](#) (agreed to upon registration) to review our indemnification policies.**

Please see our Health and Safety section of this handbook for our communication practices as it relates to the health and wellness of your camper.



## Camp Activities

Campers will experience a variety of activities during their camp session. At the beginning of the week, campers will sign up for activities and progressives that they'll do at camp. Each camper will choose different activities to do during the afternoons, and one activity that they'll do every morning. We call these morning activities "Progressives," because by doing the same one most days, campers get to progress and grow in their skills and knowledge. In addition to the activities campers choose individually, cabin groups do activities together every day, which gives the cabin group more time to bond!

Activities campers may participate in might include: Target Sports, Climbing, A-Field (sports/games), Swimming, Aqua jump, Boating, Arts & Crafts, Nature, Shelter Building, Swamp Stomp, IC Newsletter, Nature Hike, 9-square, Gaga, Talent Show, Campfires, Basketball, Team Building, cabin activities, camping, outdoor cooking, Special Day, All-Camp Games, skits, small group games, and large group games.

Please note, some activities are environmentally dependent. Sometimes there is weather, or lake health conditions that may impact a program's ability to operate. Examples of that are excessive heat, large algae blooms, severe weather, lightning and thunder. When the environment makes different plans, we provide accommodations that seek to accomplish a similar, sometimes modified, objective, to ensure that campers are still getting a robust experience. Please note, there is no refund provided for activities adjusted due to weather.

## Overnights

Every cabin group (except our teen programs and samplers) will head out on an overnight with their cabin during the week to one of the campsites on our property. Campers either canoe or hike to their overnights campsites and get to stay in a platform tent by the lake, in a treehouse, or in a yurt. Campers learn basic camping skills and find fun in the forest, in addition to having an opportunity to do something new and challenging.

*Please note that these experiences are weather-dependent.*

## Waterfront

Each camper's swimming ability will be assessed prior to their first waterfront activity and personal floatation devices are always worn by campers and staff during all boating activities, regardless of experience. Campers who do not pass, or wish to not take the swim assessment, are required to wear a life jacket regardless of the section they are swimming in. All campers in swimming activities will receive a wristband identifying their swim section.

We use a buddy system at our waterfront. All campers will be assigned a buddy for their activity and buddy checks will happen while they are swimming. Campers are provided an orientation to this each time they got to the waterfront

Our waterfront and all aquatic activities are staffed with certified waterfront lifeguards.

**Please send water shoes to wear due to rocks, zebra mussels, and seaweed at our waterfront.**

Please note that waterfront activities are weather and lake-health dependent.

## Stay in the loop!

View photos of your camper while they're at camp!

**SmugMug:** [campicaghowan.smugmug.com](http://campicaghowan.smugmug.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/campicaghowan](https://facebook.com/campicaghowan)

**Instagram:** [instagram.com/campicaghowan](https://instagram.com/campicaghowan)

**Email:** [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org)

## Communication

**Campers may not have cell phones at camp;** the ability to contact home tends to feed feelings of homesickness and inhibits cabin integration. Being without their cell phones also offers campers an opportunity to better engage in the natural environment offered at camp. If you want to stay in touch with your camper, you can send a letter or care package; we do ask that you limit food, as it can attract unwanted furry guests to the cabins! Please also do not send food containing common allergens, such as peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, wheat, shellfish, fish, soybeans, and sesame. Do NOT send energy drinks.

### You can mail letters and packages to:

(Camper Name) and (Session Start Date) c/o YMCA Camp Icaghowan

899A 115<sup>th</sup> St

Amery, WI 54001

You can also bring mail to Camp or to the bus stop when you drop your camper off. We will deliver it to them during the week and you'll save on shipping!

## Diversity and Inclusion

It is the YMCA of the North's vision to serve relentlessly with our community until all can thrive in each stage of life. At Camp Icaghowan we are committed to ensuring that "all" really does mean all; we gladly welcome campers of all backgrounds, walks of life, identities, and genders. We cherish diversity and want to make sure all feel enthusiastically at home at Camp Icaghowan. Please contact us if you have any perspective about your camper that may help us support them while at camp.

## Notices (please read)

### Code of Community

Y of the North Overnight Camps strive to develop young people's respect for self, others, and the environment by providing opportunities to experience nature and community building in a safe and positive space.

We **expect** that all members of the camp community will behave maturely, responsibly, inclusively, and respect the rights and dignity of others. All actions at camp should reflect the YMCA Core Values: Caring, Honesty, Equity, Respect, and Responsibility.

**For everyone to have a positive experience at camp, you/your camper agree that you will NOT engage in the following behavior while at camp:**

- Use of abusive, discriminatory, or vulgar language, name-calling or shouting at others in anger
- Physical contact with another person in an angry or threatening way
- Sexual innuendo or sexual behavior that intimidates or offends others
- Exclusivity towards others
- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language or any other menacing behavior
- Theft or behavior which results in destruction of property or the natural environment
- Carrying or concealing or using devices or objects as weapons
- Using or possessing illegal chemicals, alcohol or tobacco including nicotine gum, vapes and e-cigarettes on YMCA property and throughout the experience
- Engaging in intentionally risky behavior that endangers the wellbeing of self or others

### Behavior Expectations and Accountability

Our staff will work with all campers who demonstrate behavioral challenges while at camp. In the case that we are not able to find a solution, **Y of the North Camps reserve the right to dismiss any camper who does not follow the respectful behavior expectations as outlined above.** In the event that a camper is asked to leave, there will be *no refund* of session fees, and the parent or guardian of the camper will be held responsible for the camper's early transportation home from camp.

### Bullying Policy

At Y of the North Camps, **bullying is inexcusable**, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying. Each camper is expected to treat all other campers with respect and help each other achieve the best possible experience. Failure to meet Y Camp's standards of respectful behavior may result in communication with parents/guardians for assistance and potentially the dismissal of the camper. Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying seriously. We train all camp staff to identify bullying and to promote honest communication between themselves and campers. Our goal is to work together as a team to ensure that campers gain self-confidence, make new friends and go home with fond memories of their camp experience. Campers are strongly encouraged to report bullying to their counselors, unit leaders, or any camp staff, including the camp directors. Our staff are trained to be diligent to mitigate bullying, but we don't see everything. Reporting is key to the prevention and correction of bullying behavior.



## Packing: Traditional Camps

The following is a suggested packing list for a week of traditional camp; decrease for shorter stays and increase for longer ones. Please do not send your camper's best clothing, as camp activities are outside and rugged. Pack items and clothing that can get wet and dirty. **All items should be clearly labeled with your camper's first and last name.** Camp Icaghowan is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

### Bring

- Sleeping bag and a twin sheet
- Pillow
- Set of pajamas
- Tennis shoes that can get dirty
- Sandals with a back strap (similar to Chacos, Texas, etc.)
- Shoes that can get wet/water shoes for swimming/boating
  - Crocs are NOT encouraged as they fall off the feet in water
- 2-4 pairs of shorts
- 1-2 pairs of long pants
- One or two long-sleeved shirts
- 3-5 T-shirts
- Five pairs of underwear
- Five pairs of socks
- A sweatshirt
- Swimming suit
- Rain jacket or poncho
- Two towels
- Hat
- Personal toiletries
- Flashlight (headlamps are great)
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent and sunscreen

#### Horse Camp Only:

Sturdy riding boots with a smooth sole, and durable pants.

#### Consider Bringing:

- A camera (disposable ones are a good idea remember – no phones)
- Personal hand sanitizer
- Journal and pen
- Paper, envelopes, and stamps for letters (pre-addressed post cards work well)
- Books and small games

### Do Not Bring

- Electronics (including cell phones and smart watches)
- Money
- Food/Drinks
- Fireworks
- Knives (including camping/pocketknives)
- Weapons
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Personal sports equipment
- Animals
- Personal Vehicles

## Packing: Adventure Camps

(TX, TA&LC, PIONEER, CHALLENGER, WAYFINDER, ISLANDERS, WLCs, and CITs)

When packing for programs that are longer than a week, adjust the Traditional Camp packing list as needed. In addition to those items, please bring:

- A compact sleeping bag for trail; consider a mummy-style bag.
- A **durable, breathable** rain jacket that you can be comfortably active in.

When packing for trail, we suggest bringing fabrics and fills made with down (which is lightweight), synthetics, and wool (which are warm when wet). When possible, opt for these materials over cotton for clothing and sleeping bags. We also suggest bringing good **long underwear** and **wool hats** to keep warm without being too bulky on trail.

### Kayaking Camps (Islanders, Teen Extreme)

- Gloves (optional, neoprene or waterproof are great)
- Wind shirt (optional)
- Sunglasses with strap
- Hat with strap

### Canoeing Camps (Pioneers/Challengers/Wayfinders, TA&LCs, WLCs, CITs)

- Sturdy portaging boots that can get wet
- Two or three pairs of wool socks
- Sunglasses with strap
- Hat with strap

An additional packing list for specialty programs will be on our website and sent out to campers as is relevant.

Don't feel the need to go buy lots of new things if you already have gear that will do! With very few exceptions, high-end gear doesn't improve your camp experience. In fact, most Icaghowan staff pride themselves on taking care of old gear and using it until it's worn out. Can't find it? Just ask! We have some gear you can borrow!

## Lost and Found

We display our lost and found as we accumulate it for campers to see and parents to peruse on pick-up day. If you return home and realize you have left something, email us and we'll strive to find it and coordinate a return: [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org)

Please ensure that your camper's **belongings are labeled** with their full name. This helps us to be able to locate items when lost.

## Contact Information Summary

### Camp Icaghowan Address and Admin Email:

899 115<sup>th</sup> St, Amery, WI, 54001 // [info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org](mailto:info.icaghowan@ymcamn.org)

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