

# **YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities Family Camp FAQ's**

**We appreciate your patience and understanding as we've updated our camp plans to ensure we can safely offer incredible camp experiences while following guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Camp Association (ACA), and the MN Department of Health.**

## **Are YMCA Family Camps planning to run this summer?**

At this time, we are planning to provide families with what will surely be a much-needed, fun-filled family experience in the north woods. We will be adjusting our programs and procedures in order to continue to prioritize the health of our campers and staff. Thankfully, we have an excellent working relationship with our state's Department of Health and the American Camp Association. Additionally, our leadership team is working with these agencies and many others to ensure that we are fully prepared to continue to offer the same values-based, mission-driven family camp experience that we have been providing for 60 years.

## **How will you be screening campers and staff for COVID-19?**

All campers and staff will be asked to maintain self-observation before coming to camp. If you or a family member have been sick or in contact with someone who's tested positive for COVID-19, we'd ask that you wait 14 days before coming to camp. We can help arrange for a cancellation or change in registration. We will be asking participants about any recent travel both to and through places, their current health, as well as asking about symptoms upon arrival.

**How will you be separating anyone suspected of having COVID-19?** We will continue to adhere to guidance from the CDC, our state department of health and local officials. Any staff that exhibits symptoms will immediately be separated from our camp population and isolated in a safe, dedicated space until we are able to have them leave camp. Families would be asked to depart as soon as possible if a member of their family is exhibiting symptoms of the virus.

**Is staff prepared and trained to handle any outbreak of COVID-19?** Our Risk Management department has developed an action plan and protocol to follow in the case of any outbreak at our facility. We have also planned additional training for our full-time and seasonal staff to orient them to minimize exposure of themselves and others to COVID-19 – or any communicable disease or virus– in our campers and fellow staff members. This training will include, but is not limited to: signs and symptoms, stringent cleaning and disinfection protocols, program changes to minimize risk, and outbreak response plans. These trainings will take place before any campers arrive.

**How are you staying informed and up-to-date?** We are remaining informed by receiving timely updates from the American Camp Association, YUSA, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

Department of Health Services and experts who serve on our community boards, alumni and our YMCA Senior Leadership.

**What is camp doing to prevent anyone from contracting COVID-19 while at camp?** Our leadership team has reviewed and updated necessary camp protocols. These include:

- Health screening of campers and staff upon arrival.
- Extra vigilance around cabin, building and bathroom cleaning. There will be deep cleaning in our high traffic buildings 3-4 times daily, as well as deep cleaning and disinfecting of cabins between sessions. Dishes and cookware will be disinfected by staff between sessions.
- There will be more handwashing and hand sanitizer stations located throughout camp. All staff will be reminded to promote regular handwashing and good hygiene practices.
- Program area and equipment protocols are being put in place to minimize spread.
- Large group gatherings have been adjusted to meet the current requirements of the CDC and MDH.
- Physical Distancing practices are in place for campers and staff.
- Campers will be asked to bring their own linens and personal recreational equipment (ie lifejackets and paddles) if possible.
- Per Governor Walz's orders, all communal areas will remain closed until further notice.
- Camp stores will operate primarily as window service.
- Campers and staff are required to wear masks in any indoor space other than their own living quarters.

**What changes should I expect to see in programming this summer?**

It is necessary that we make some program changes this summer to ensure the safety of your family and those at camp with you. We will continue to have a wonderful program staff team to support your experience with things like art projects, yoga, hikes, paddles, boating, fishing and much more!

[Camp du Nord Sample Schedule](#)

[Camp Northern Lights Sample Schedule](#)

**Session Dates:**

Due to increased cleaning needs, we are planning on adjusting our schedule to allow for a full day in between each camp session. Our weekly sessions will run from Sunday to Saturday at both camp locations this summer. Additionally, our four-day sessions at Camp Northern Lights will change to three-day sessions.

## **Check-in**

Camp du Nord: Campers may arrive any time between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on **Sunday**. Campers will be greeted by staff at Gateway House at the entrance of Pine Pointe Village. Physical Distancing of at least 6 feet will be adhered to and staff will be wearing masks. All Campers will be asked a series of questions related to their health and exposure prior to heading to their cabins/campsites.

Camp Northern Lights: Campers may arrive any time between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on **Sunday for week long sessions and either Sunday or Thursday for 3-night sessions**. Campers will be greeted by staff at the blue check-in tent on the main entrance road into camp. Physical Distancing of at least 6 feet will be adhered to and staff will be wearing masks. All Campers will be asked a series of questions related to their health and exposure prior to heading to their cabins/campsites.

## **Meal Service**

Inside dining options will remain closed at Camp du Nord, however our Food Service Manager is planning a number of delicious and innovative options for take-out meals that will be offered for both lunch and dinner. At Northern Lights, there will be increased days that food trucks will be onsite and we will also be offering snack and grocery options at Anna Marie's snack shack and Sisu Lodge.

## **Age Groups & Leadership Development Program**

To provide the safest experience possible, we've decided not to operate our age group programming this summer. We feel it's our duty to the Family Camp community to provide as much of a worry-free and healthy vacation as possible, and bringing groups of kids together each day could compromise our ability to do so. For similar reasons, we have also decided not to operate our Leadership Development Program this summer. These certainly were difficult decisions to make, knowing that age groups and our teen leaders are some of the best parts of camp. However, your health and safety are our top priority and we feel these are the right decisions to make at this time.

## **Swimming**

Our swim beaches will be open! Physical distancing will be in place on the beach and in the water and we will ask that no more than 25 people be in the swim area at one time.

- Camp du Nord has added an additional swim area in Northland Village and has also increased the size of the swimming area at the du Nord beach.
- Camp Northern Lights will have both the water trampoline and floating platform available for us, but limited to 6 people at a time from the same cabin group.

## **Boating**

We encourage you to get out on the lake! Canoes, kayaks and paddle boards will be available as usual, and will be disinfected in between uses.

- Camp Northern Lights will continue with pontoon and fishing boat rental.
- ***If you have lifejackets, we ask that you bring them along this year.***
- We will have lifejackets and paddles for campers to borrow and will disinfect them in between uses.

## **Saunas**

Unfortunately, our saunas will remain closed at this time due to health guidelines around COVID-19. We appreciate your understanding regarding this policy and hope to give you the opportunity the next time you visit Camp!

## **Tent Sites/Platform Tents and Platform Cabins**

In order to follow best practice standards set forth by the State of MN Campground guidelines, we made a slight adjustment to the tent sites that will be available this summer.

- Camp du Nord: Two of our campsites (Coxey Pond and Ole Lake auto-tent sites) will not be open this summer due to the DNR's spacing requirements for campgrounds. Due to needed changes in cleaning protocols, we are not able to provide dishes and cookware for our tent sites, platform tents and platform cabins. We ask that you bring your own cooking equipment this summer. If this is a hardship, or you do not have all the supplies needed, you can [Request Dishes and Cookware](#).
- Camp Northern Lights: Three of our tent sites will not be able to be open this summer due to the DNR's spacing requirements for campgrounds. Perch, Pumpkinseed and Walleye will be closed this summer. We will be providing camping dishes in our tent sites, as well as separate refrigeration will be available for each site.

## **Bathhouses and Biffies**

We are making every attempt we can to make our campers as comfortable as possible this summer. Our cabins without bathrooms, Tent Sites, and Platform Cabins/Tents/Bungalows will each have a biffy OR port-a-potty assigned for their use only during the week. A few biffies around camp will be available for any camper to use while out and about camp, and will be cleaned regularly. Bathhouses will be open for campers to use, and will be disinfected numerous times each day.

## **Equipment & Supplies**

Pack your fun! We plan to allow campers to use much of camp's equipment and supplies like usual (boats, paddles, art supplies/tools, etc), but we will not always have enough of everything to go around.

- Life Jackets – if you have your own, please consider bringing this along to camp. We will be assigning lifejackets to campers for the entire week and cleaning in between sessions.
- Games and Books – we will not be lending these out, so please bring your own
- Pack-n-plays – Please plan to bring your own
- Strollers – If you have a sturdy jogging type stroller, we highly recommend you bring this along. If you would like to use one of camp’s strollers, we will assign them for the whole week, and disinfect in between sessions.
- Highchairs & Booster Seats - will still be available for you to borrow.

### **du Nord Shuttle**

The du Nord shuttle will not be running this summer to and from Pine Pointe. Families will have the option to drive back and forth using their own vehicles if needed. We will ask that you leave your cars in our designated parking lots to avoid traffic on our in-camp roads and to keep everyone safe.

### **Will camps have international staff this summer?**

In light of the current circumstances, the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities has made the decision to forego the hiring of international camp staff for the summer of 2020. Our international camp staff add so much value to the culture of camp and it is our goal to move forward with these relationships in the future.

**What if camp needs to be shut down?** It is difficult to answer such a hypothetical question, but above all else, the health and safety of our campers and staff is our top priority. Should we receive guidance that camp should end early due to an outbreak, we will adhere and do everything we can to ensure that everybody gets home safely in a well-organized fashion.

**What about Refunds and Cancellations** If for any unanticipated and uncontrollable reason camp should need to cancel sessions, such as by directive from the CDC or other officials, you would have the following options: 1. Carry your registration and fees paid to date forward to future reservations. 2. Donate to Camp. 3. Refund of fees to your original payment method.

In light of a slightly shorter session, we are happy to offer a 10% discount on your camp fees. However, if you are willing and able, we would greatly appreciate your consideration of sticking with the full payment plan, as our expenses are not reduced with these changes. If you choose, your refund may be request by [filling out this form](#).

If you would prefer to cancel your registration at this time for whatever reason, [you can do this online](#), and we’ll look forward to seeing you up north at a future date!

**Is there financial support available to help me pay for camp?** Yes. As always, we never want to turn anyone away because they are unable to pay. Please consider reaching out for financial assistance before choosing to cancel, we want campers to be able to experience camp this summer:

<https://www.ymcamn.org/scholarships>.

**How is the Greater Twin Cities YMCA responding to serve community needs during this crisis?**

We have positioned our Y as a Community Response Hub offering life-saving programs and services, more information can be found here: <https://www.ymcamn.org/impact-summary>

**As a donor, how can I help?**

We are beyond grateful to the members of our community – our volunteers, campers, alumni and staff – who have recognized the challenges crises like this can pose to a human services organization regardless of their own hardships that they may be facing. For those that are able and interested, please [make a gift here](#). THANK YOU for your support of families during these uncertain times.

**All of us here at YGTC Camps wish good health and good spirits to everyone in our camp community and your families.**