

# Parent Information Manual

## Merrimack Valley YMCA Day Camp Otter



### Camp Otter Office

Open During Camp Season  
Monday-Friday • 7:15am-6:00pm

66 Hooker Farm Road  
Salem, NH 03079  
Phone: 603-893-4911

### Camp Registration Office

Open Year Round  
Monday-Friday • 9:00am-5:00pm

360 Merrimack Street, Suite 270  
Entrance K, 2nd Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
Phone: 978-975-1330  
Fax: 978-681-1126  
[campinfo@mvyymca.org](mailto:campinfo@mvyymca.org)



Visit [camp.mvyymca.org](http://camp.mvyymca.org) for camp dates, fees and weekly themes.

# The Camp Otter Experience

## Letter from the Camp Director and Staff

Dear Camper Parents,

Thank you for choosing Camp Otter.

Nestled in the woods by Captain's Pond in Salem, New Hampshire, Camp Otter is the perfect place to spend a warm summer day! Generations of campers and staff have laughed, played, made friends, developed confidence, learned new skills, and created memories that last a lifetime. Our program celebrates the value of each individual and challenges campers and staff to be all that they can be. Our program also helps to prepare youth who may be interested in trying a resident camp program by introducing them to a safe, fun, summer camp experience.

Please read through this entire **Parent Information Manual** as it is full of information that will help to ensure that your child has a fun and safe summer at Camp Otter. Hopefully it will answer many of your questions regarding your child's upcoming summer at camp. We ask that you keep this packet for reference throughout the summer.

Please visit our website (**[camp.mvymca.org](http://camp.mvymca.org)**) to learn more about the upcoming camp season. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at either our Registration office or Camp Otter Office. If you are interested in touring camp prior to the summer, we encourage you to attend one of our open houses. Staff members will provide a tour and overview of a typical camp day. Open house dates and times are posted on the website. We look forward to seeing you this summer, and thank you for choosing Camp Otter.

Sincerely,

Steph Doherty  
Camp Otter Director  
& the Camp Otter Staff Team



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# General Registration Information

## Registration & Fees

You may register for Camp Otter online through a link on our website at [camp.mvymca.org](http://camp.mvymca.org) or by calling the Camp Registration Office at 978-975-1330. Camp Otter dates and rates are available online at [camp.mvymca.org](http://camp.mvymca.org). The required deposit per week/per camper is due at the time of registration. The deposit is applied toward the weekly tuition. All deposits are **NON-REFUNDABLE** and **NON-TRANSFERABLE**.

The tuition balance must be paid at least two weeks prior to each week attending. Payment may be mailed, phoned in with a credit card, paid online, or paid in-person at the Camp Registration Office. Please include camper's name with payment. Checks returned to us by the bank will incur a \$25.00 fee.



**Please note: Tuition checks should NOT be sent to camp.**

## Cancellation Policy

Cancellations or changes in registration must be made in writing via email to the Camp Registration Office **AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR** to your camper's planned start date or you will be charged the full tuition. Cancellations must be made directly with the Camp Registration Office at [campinfo@mvymca.org](mailto:campinfo@mvymca.org). **If your camper does not attend a week that he/she is registered for, but does not cancel with the Camp Registration Office, you will be charged the full tuition.**

Enrolled campers are expected to attend camp for the entire week unless dismissed by the camp staff for misconduct or for a cause considered sufficient by the camp. In the case of voluntary withdrawal or dismissal, there will be no refund of camp tuition. Refunds of tuition or deposits are made only in cases of certifiable illness or death in the immediate family.

## Absences

If you know your child will be absent, please send a note in advance or **call the Camp Otter Office at 603-893-4911** before 9:00am on the morning your child will be out. If you call before 8:00, please leave a message with your child's name and reason for absence. To ensure each child's safety, it is our policy to call the guardian of all absent campers from whom we did not receive notification.

## Late Arrivals & Early Dismissals

If your camper will be arriving late, please **call the Camp Otter Office directly at 603-893-4911**. Upon late arrival, a parent or guardian must sign in the camper(s) at the office. If a camper needs to be dismissed early or will be picked up by another adult, a **written note** must be given to the Camp Otter office. This note must indicate the person who will pick up the child and the time of pick up. Parents must sign out their child at the Camp Otter office. Any other adult picking up a child from camp should be prepared to show a driver's license or photo ID.

## Calling the Camp Otter Office

The Camp Otter office is open from 7:15am to 6:00pm for phone calls. If you call and get our voicemail, please leave a message with your name and phone number, and we will call you back as soon as possible.

## Cabin Mate Requests

One of our camp's goals is to help children meet new people and form new friendships. Cabin requests are noted, but they must come from both sets of parents. We try to honor all requests, but we are unable to guarantee them. A link to make cabin mate requests is on our website under frequently asked questions.

# Camp Otter Forms and Medical Information

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**Forms and medical information must be completed/submitted on your account in Camp Brain at least two weeks prior to your child's first day of camp. Contact the Camp Registration Office if you have any questions or need assistance accessing your account.**

## **Let's Get Acquainted**

An optional form disclosing disabilities and conditions that would be helpful for camp employees to know about in order ensure a positive experience for your child.

## **Statement of Understanding**

Parents must sign off on the Merrimack Valley YMCA's Code of Conduct. This informs parents of policies that are set in place to protect the campers and the staff. These policies and procedures are based on best practices developed through the YMCA of the USA. If you have any questions about this form, please contact the Camp Director.

## **Health History & Physician's Form**

Camp Otter and the State of New Hampshire require that all campers submit a **Health History form along with a medical form completed by a doctor's office**. The medical form must be signed by the child's physician OR a copy of the child's last physical exam with the doctor's signature must be attached to the Camp Otter Health History Form. Physical exams must be dated **within two years** of when the child will attend camp. A copy of the camper's health insurance card must also be included. Medical forms that are received late or are incomplete will incur a \$25 processing fee. **CAMPERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STAY AT CAMP OR PARTICIPATE IN ANY CAMP PROGRAM WITHOUT A COMPLETED MEDICAL FORM ON FILE.**

## **Health/Medical Services at Camp Otter**

Camp Otter has a well-equipped Health Center that is staffed and supervised at all times by the camp nurse. Emergency services are provided by the Town of Salem and are located just minutes away. All camp staff is certified in First Aid, CPR for the Professional Rescuer and AED Administration.

## **Medication at Camp Otter**

If your child is on medication while at camp, please send a week's supply of medicine in its **ORIGINAL CONTAINER** with the **ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION** along with a signed parental note stating that Camp Otter staff have permission to dispense medication to your child. All medications and parental notes should be in a ziploc bag labeled with the camper's name. Parents must hand medication directly to a staff member and/or bus monitor as **MEDICATION SHOULD NOT BE TRANSPORTED BY CAMPERS.**

## **Inhalers and EpiPens**

In 2003, the State of New Hampshire changed its laws about carrying Inhalers and EpiPen Auto Injectors. If a parent wishes a child to carry an EpiPen or an inhaler at all times, **contact us for the proper release form**. The complete form should be enclosed in the bag with the medications. The laws are available online (NH laws: HB0057 and HB0092) or, upon request, we will send you a copy.

## **Health & Wellness**

Camp Otter encourages all campers to practice good hygiene and come to camp illness-free. If your child becomes ill at camp, you will be required to pick him/her up. If your child has been sick or running a fever, your child cannot return to camp until he/she is **symptom-free for 24 hours.**

# Camp Otter Essential Information

## What to Bring to Camp

- Comfortable shorts (or pants, if weather is cooler)
- T-shirt
- Sweatshirt/long-sleeve shirt (it's cooler than at home)
- Swim suit and one or two towels
- Plastic bag for wet clothes
- Sneakers and socks (sandals may only be worn to and from the beach)
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen and other sun protection gear (when possible, please apply before camp)
- Raincoat or jacket on rainy days
- Water bottle
- Lunch and snacks (morning & afternoon)
- Backpack/bag to store items during the day



## What NOT to Bring to Camp

- Cell phones
- iPods, MP3 players or video games
- Jewelry or special toys
- Trading cards
- Any other valuables
- Knives or any other weapons are strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action

### PLEASE LABEL YOUR CAMPER'S POSSESSIONS!

**Camp Otter is not responsible for lost or stolen items. All articles brought to camp are the sole responsibility of the camper.**

## Lunch & Snacks

Children must bring a nutritious lunch, snacks and drinks to camp every day. Refrigerators and microwaves are not available. Please supply your child with all necessary eating utensils. Please avoid sending anything in glass bottles. While we are not a peanut-free camp, we do have a peanut free table for our campers with nut allergies.

## Lost & Found

If you notice that one of your child's items "ran away", please check Camp Otter's lost and found. When clothing is properly marked it simplifies the return process. Parents are welcome to look for missing items that little eyes may miss!

## Inclement Weather

Although we like to believe that the sun always shines at camp, in the event of a rainy day at Camp Otter, special programming is planned in advance to keep the campers engaged and active. The campers rotate through our indoor facilities. In the rare occasion where the weather becomes unsafe or if there are signs of severe storms, we reserve the right to enact our Severe Weather Emergency Procedures. The campers would be transported to the Lawrence YMCA at 40 Lawrence Street, Lawrence, MA, and all parents would be notified.

# A Typical Day at Camp Otter

## A Typical Day at Camp Otter

Camp Otter provides a variety of activities that will help each camper learn new skills and make new friends in an instructional but non-competitive environment. Campers are divided into cabins based on age and gender. There are approximately twenty campers per cabin with at least two cabin counselors plus one Counselor-in-Training (CIT). Campers age 8 and younger will explore activity areas throughout the day and will receive swimming lessons each afternoon. Campers ages 9 and older will be in their cabin settings each morning and will rotate through the program areas including a swim lesson each morning. Each afternoon these campers will participate in block periods where they will be able to pick three afternoon activities to participate in. There is a different theme each week that allows for new all-camp activities and special guests related to that particular theme. These events may slightly alter the schedule below.

## Daily Schedule

### 6-8 Year Old Campers

8:00 -8:30am	Drop Off, Buses Arrive
8:30 - 8:45am	Opening Flag Ceremony
8:45—9:40am	Activity Period 1
9:50 - 10:40pm	Activity Period 2
10:55 - 11:50pm	Activity Period 3
12:00 - 1:00pm	Lunch/Quiet Time
1:00 - 1:50pm	Activity Period 4
2:00 - 2:50pm	Activity Period 5
3:00- 3:50pm	Activity Period 6
3:50 - 4:10pm	Pack Up/ Cabin Clean Up
4:10 - 4:25pm	Closing Flag Ceremony
4:25 - 4:45pm	Load Buses/ Car Pick-Up

### 9-13 Year Old Campers

8:00 - 8:30am	Drop Off, Buses Arrive
8:30 - 8:45am	Opening Flag Ceremony
8:45 - 9:40am	Activity Period 1
9:50 - 10:40am	Activity Period 2
10:55 - 11:50pm	Activity Period 3
12:00 - 1:00pm	Lunch/Quiet Time
1:00 - 1:50pm	Block Choice 1
2:00 - 2:50pm	Block Choice 2
3:00 - 3:50pm	Block Choice 3
3:50 - 4:10pm	Pack Up/ Cabin Clean Up
4:10 - 4:25pm	Closing Flag Ceremony
4:25 - 4:45pm	Load Buses/ Car Pick-Up

# A Typical Day at Camp Otter

## Program Areas

- Adventure*** - Campers learn how to work together by participating in group games and by using the Low and High Ropes Course. Campers 10 years old and older will use the High Ropes elements including: the Catwalk, the Dangling Duo, the Giant's Swing, the Multi-Vine, and the Zip Line.
- Arts & Crafts*** - Campers will bring out their artistic side through painting, drawing, jewelry-making, and other projects.
- Boating*** - Campers will learn the fundamentals of rowing, canoeing, paddleboarding and kayaking taught by trained lifeguards and instructors Certified in small craft safety. Campers must pass a swim test to use the kayaks.
- Sports Court*** - Campers can strengthen their skills in basketball, volleyball, hockey, and much more.
- Sports Field*** - Campers participate in games such as softball/baseball, kickball, soccer, flag football, etc.
- Archery*** - Archery is for all age groups and is a favorite camp tradition. Campers learn to use a bow and arrow, and the fundamentals related to archery under the supervision of a trained instructor.
- Swimming*** - Campers will have instructional and/or free swim every day. All swim lessons follow the guidelines and requirements set by the YMCA of USA.
- Cabin Time*** - Campers will use either their cabins or other available areas of camp to participate in group games, teambuilding activities, relaxing, talking, or whatever else the group decides. The sky is the limit!
- Block Choice*** - Campers will be given a list of 15 activities each Monday morning, and they must choose three to pick for their block choice periods. Activities may include high ropes, low ropes, archery, swimming, fishing, arts & crafts, and much more. During this time campers will not be separated by age and gender, and they will be able to meet more campers through their daily experiences.
- Game Center*** - Campers are able to participate in games such as ping pong, carpet ball, bean bag tosses, and much more.
- Gaga*** - This is a camp favorite! Gaga is a form of dodge ball that combines dodging, running, and jumping out of the way of the ball.

# General Camp Otter Information

## Newsletters & Surveys

Weekly newsletters are emailed out to all campers. Please check with the Camp Registration Office to confirm that we have your most up-to-date email address.

We use third party surveys to gather feedback from parent(s). This helps us make Camp Otter even better for campers. Surveys will be sent to you via email at the end of the camp season. We value parental input and hope that you will set aside a few moments to complete our on-line survey so that we know that we have done well and where we can improve in the future. We appreciate your feedback!



## All-Camp Activities

Each week we have an all-camp event which ties into the week's theme. Whether it's building boats out of recycled materials, working together to search for gold or taking part in the annual Otterthon, each activity focuses on building cabin pride and teamwork among the campers and staff. All-Camp gives campers a break from the daily routine and allows them to interact with campers outside of their cabin group.

## Special Guests

Each week we have special guests that relate to the theme of the week. Some examples include magicians, karate instructors, traveling animal shows, Olympic medalists, folk singers, and local heroes, such as members of the local fire and police departments.

## Camp Otter Store

The camp store is open once per week and families are notified of the date beforehand. We have a variety of merchandise available to purchase at our camp store including sweatpants, t-shirts, hats, water bottles, lanyards, and more. All merchandise is available in a variety of colors and sizes. All proceeds go directly to Camp Otter programming. Camp Otter also offers a variety of snacks and juices with prices ranging from \$0.50-\$3.00.

## Family Nights

Camp Otter hosts two Family Nights each summer. These events provide parents the opportunity to tour camp, meet the counselors, dine with their campers, enjoy a special nighttime activity, and see camp in action. Everyone is invited to attend the Family Nights, regardless of when your camper(s) is/are registered. Visit [camp.mvymca.org](http://camp.mvymca.org) for Family Night dates. Parents interested in seeing camp at another time must make arrangements with the Camp Director.

## Website

Please visit our website at [camp.mvymca.org](http://camp.mvymca.org). It has information about camp activities, transportation, packing list, registration, rates and dates.



# Camp Expectations

## **Character Development**

The goal of Camp Otter is for children to learn and grow in an environment that emphasizes safety and community. Incorporated in all aspects of the program, staff at Camp Otter work to emphasize the four core values of the Merrimack Valley YMCA- caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

## **Camp Otter Staff**

All staff members are caring, fun, energetic, and responsible people with a commitment to working with children. Staff members are carefully selected and participate in comprehensive training prior to the start of camp. This training includes but is not limited to Child Abuse Prevention, Bullying Prevention, Behavior Management, Growth Development, Camper Skill Development, and Safety Precautions. All staff also undergo a criminal background check, a sexual offender background check, and are certified in CPR/AED and First Aid. Staff is not permitted to accept tips.

## **Behavior & Dismissal Policy**

Campers are expected to abide by camp rules at all times to ensure the safety of others, themselves, and the staff. Although we try to work with campers and their families in regards to any behavioral issue, the YMCA reserves the right to remove a camper from the program for violent or inappropriate behavior that causes risk to the safety of oneself, other campers, or the environment. Campers who are sent home for disciplinary reasons may not be allowed back during the current camp season and possibly future camp seasons.

## **Special Accommodations**

It is understood that all campers are treated as individuals with respect shown for different backgrounds, preferences and range of behavior patterns. Camp Otter will do everything within its limits to make the camping experience work for all. However, the YMCA reserves the right to dismiss a child from camp if the camp is unable to meet his/her special accommodations or if the child's conduct is not in the best interest of the camp community. Requests for special accommodations will be processed on a case by case basis.

## **Holidays at Camp Otter**

Should the Juneteenth or 4th of July fall on a weekday (Monday-Friday), Camp Otter will not operate on the holiday.

## **Internet Policy**

In the age of technology, Camp Otter is more concerned than ever about our children's safety on the internet. All staff is prohibited from posting camp information or accepting campers as friends on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other similar sites. We ask for camper and family cooperation in not "friending" any staff member over the internet or sharing information that strays from our Core Values.



# Transportation To/From Camp

## Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is offered to and from Camp Otter for an additional fee per week/per camper. Bus stops are available in Andover, North Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, Salem and Windham. For the current bus schedule and fee, visit [camp.mvymca.org](http://camp.mvymca.org). **Camper's bus and stop must be the same in both the morning and afternoon.** The Camp Otter Director or Assistant Director is available until all campers have been picked up.

## Parents' Rules for Bus Transportation

1. Prior to the first day of camp, please ensure your child knows his/her bus and stop number.
2. Parent(s) and camper(s) should arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes early.
3. All transportation changes must be arranged with the office at least 24 hours in advance.
4. **If a camper misses his/her stop** in the afternoon, he/she will be taken to the last bus stop on his/her route. Parents are responsible for picking up their child there. Because of time restraints buses are unable to turn around to drop off a camper if he/she misses the stop.
5. A child will be dropped off at his/her registered stop **ONLY IF the parent/guardian is present with proper identification.** The bus will wait five minutes and if the parent does not arrive, the child will be transported to the final stop on his/her bus route (please refer to the bus schedule on page 16, the website or the registration form.).

## Campers' Rules for Bus Transportation

*Please review the following with your child:*

1. Check in with the bus monitor before getting on or off the bus.
2. Get off the bus at your stop only.
3. Stay seated at all times.
4. Keep hands, arms and body parts inside the bus.
5. Do not throw anything out the windows.
6. Keep noise to a minimum.
7. Do not eat or drink while on the bus.
8. Do not touch the emergency door.
9. Respect all other campers and staff on the bus.
10. Follow all rules given by the bus monitor or driver.

## Car Transportation

Camper drop-off is from **8:00am to 8:30am** and pick-up is from **4:45pm to 5:00pm.**

**Morning Drop-Off:** Cars and campers will be directed by staff at the top of the road.

**Afternoon Pick-Up:** Cars will enter the pick-up line in the staff parking lot at Plaisted Circle. After buses are loaded, parents will collect their camper(s) at the pick-up site and proceed out the front gate.

## Parents' Rules for Car Transportation

1. Campers are required to check out with Parent Pick-up staff every afternoon. Parents or other designated adults will be responsible to show I.D. upon checkout.
2. **Entrance through the front gate is NOT permitted between 3:30pm and 5:00pm.**
3. If you are dropping off late or picking up early, you must go to the Camp Otter Office and sign your camper in or out. A picture I.D. is required.
4. In the event that you are unable to pick up your camper(s) or if your camper(s) is going home with another adult, please **send a note** in the morning or we cannot authorize the transportation change.
5. All transportation changes must be arranged with the Camp Otter Office at least 24 hours in advance.

**Late Pick-Up Fee** Please plan to pick up your child on time. All car riders must be picked up by 5:00pm at Camp Otter. All bus riders must be picked up at the final stops by 5:30pm. **If you pick up your child after the designated times listed above, you will be charged \$1.00 per minute per child.**

# Camp Otter Goals & Outcomes

## *To maintain a safe and healthy summer program for campers and staff.*

Each staff member must check their cabin or program area for safety hazards daily, reporting any damages to the office. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR/AED. Campers and staff are informed of all camp rules and are required to follow them to ensure the safety of all.

## *To provide children with good role models.*

Staff must always use appropriate language and behavior in the presence of the campers. Staff must always be well groomed and dressed appropriately and must always follow proper procedures when dealing with problems in a cabin or activity area.

## *To help each camper develop self-confidence and a feeling of self-worth through all aspects of the camp program.*

Staff will encourage campers to help each other whenever possible. Staff will use positive reinforcement through personal praise, special awards, and recognition. Campers will learn that every camper has something to offer.

## *To help campers develop a sense of community and responsibility through making new friends and interacting with staff and peers in a caring environment.*

Campers and staff will participate in cabin clean up and all camp activities. Campers will recognize the needs of other campers over their own needs by allowing others to go first, sharing, helping others, etc. Campers and staff will have an active part in developing camp rules and activities through the use of surveys and questionnaires.

## *To help all children reach their potential while learning and strengthening their skills such as creative expression, physical endurance, hand eye coordination, leadership, and swimming.*

The camp program will provide a balance of land and water sports, creative arts opportunities, and active and passive activities. Staff will customize activities so that they offer challenges for beginners and advanced participants, as well as for younger and older campers. Campers are encouraged to find and reach their personal limits.

## *To provide each camper with opportunities to become physically active and to share in the maintaining of good safety standards for the welfare of all.*

Staff will monitor the personal hygiene of their cabin and have discussions with the campers about personal hygiene when it is deemed necessary. Campers are encouraged to try every activity and are expected to follow the camp rules at all times.

## *To promote the growth and awareness of fair play and sportsmanship.*

Campers will participate in a variety of team-building activities including sports and special programs. Campers will be taught the importance of sportsmanship and how it relates to life.

## *To foster in each camper an appreciation for nature and the role that each person plays in promoting a healthy environment for today and future generations.*

Campers are surrounded by nature each day and will learn the importance of recycling. Campers will learn about ways to help improve the environment in and out of camp.



# Letter from the CEO

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Dear Parents,

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of the Merrimack Valley YMCA, I want you to know how much we value the trust you have given us in enrolling your child in our programs. The confidence you have shown in our staff and in our organization will not be taken lightly. While your child's enjoyment and growth is the main focus of our programming, safety and protection from harm is also a priority for us.

For years we have operated under policies and procedures designed to protect children. We believe that it is important that you understand those policies and also that you understand your role in working with us to make sure all children in our community are nurtured and protected.

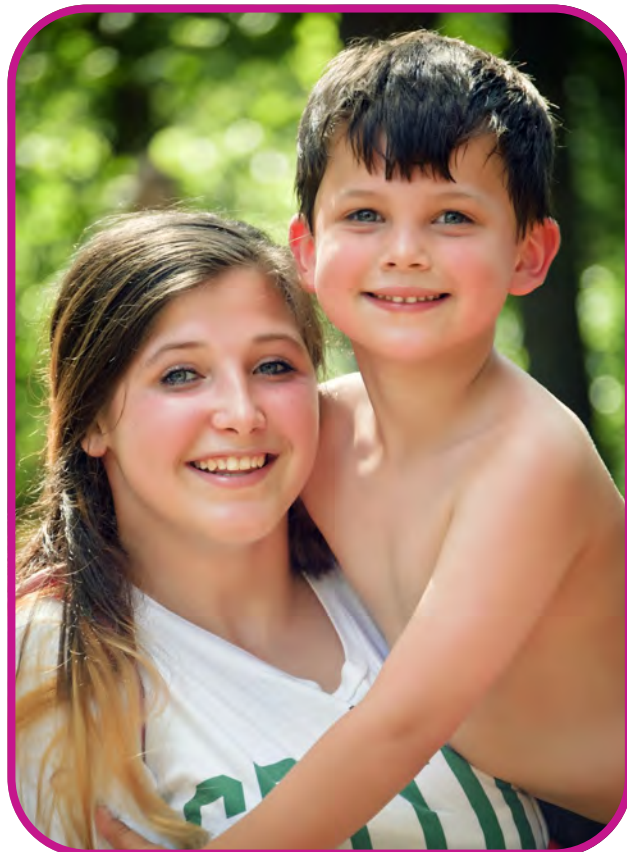
These policies and procedures are based on best practices developed through the YMCA of the USA. We believe that it is our responsibility to create operating procedures that protect our programs from individuals intending to do harm to children.

With your help, I believe we can continue to achieve that objective as we focus on ensuring the attached code of conduct is followed. Please review this code of conduct carefully and sign the attached statement of understanding. Most importantly, please work with us to ensure that every child is protected by the adults in their lives.

Thank you for your partnership in this effort and thank you for choosing the YMCA as the organization to help you in nurturing your child's healthy development.

Sincerely,

Francis J. Kenneally III  
President & CEO



# Merrimack Valley Code of Conduct

## For Staff & Volunteers

The Code of Conduct outlines specific expectations of the staff and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together. Staff and volunteers will always act in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner.

For purposes of this document, the term child, children or youth shall mean any minor person under the age of 18 years or any individual of any age displaying a known or noticeable inability to make normal or reasonable social decisions for themselves.

1. In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should place themselves in a way that other staff can see them.
2. Staff/Volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: Staff/Volunteers will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff/Volunteers will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff/volunteer (not being alone with a child). If staff/volunteer are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open. No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip. Always send children in pairs, and whenever possible, with staff.
4. Staff/Volunteer should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs - diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff/Volunteers will not abuse children in any way including (but not limited) to the following:
  1. *Physical abuse*: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
  2. *Verbal abuse*: degrading, threatening, cursing
  3. *Sexual abuse*: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
  4. *Mental abuse*: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
  5. *Neglect*: withholding food, water, shelter
6. Staff/Volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff/Volunteers will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in predetermined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), is only administered in a prescribed manner and must be documented in writing.
7. Staff/Volunteers will make note of any observed fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.
8. Staff/Volunteers shall treat all children with respect and consideration regardless of race, age, gender, gender-identity, socio-economic status, religion, culture and ability.
9. Staff/Volunteers will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

## Code of Conduct ( Continued)

10. Staff/Volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by our organization. They will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff.

11. While the YMCA does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle, it does require that in the performance of their job they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA and adhere to character values and role model aptitude in all public places.

12. Staff/Volunteers must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.

13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs during work hours is prohibited.

14. Smoking, vaping or use of any tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited. Smoking is not allowed on any Y property.

15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.

16. Staff and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.

17. Staff and volunteers will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.

18. Staff and volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleep overs and inviting children to your home. An exception to this rule would require the parent/guardian of the child to submit a waiver for approval from the CEO/COO of such event which will hold the YMCA harmless for any resulting civil damages.

19. Staff/Volunteers will not use cell phones within any program area or within classrooms except for in an emergency situation.

20. Staff/Volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles. Waivers must be used for any circumstance which may involve off duty group interactions.

21. Staff/Volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth in our programs.

22. Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

a. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

b. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.

# Merrimack Valley Code of Conduct

## For Staff & Volunteers

c. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

d. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:

- Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
- Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youths, staff and volunteers.

23. All staff and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements and should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. Staff and volunteers will:

- a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
- b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youths against abuse.
- c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
- d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

24. Our organization cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any staff or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

25. Staff and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth abuse, indecency with a youth, or injury to a youth.

26. Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers release children enrolled in our licensed Child Care Programs to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA).

27. Staff and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other staff, volunteers, adults, or youths to our organization's supervisor or Praesidium's Anonymous Helpline at 855-347-0751.

## Code of Conduct (Continued)

Any witnessed offenses or known breeches to this code of conduct should be reported to a Branch Executive or one of the following members of the Leadership Team at 978-725-6681:

Frank Kenneally	President & CEO	978-725-6681	fkenneally@mvymca.org
Claudia Soo Hoo	Chief Operating Officer	978-725-6681	csoohoo@mvymca.org
Jane Dinsmore	Chief Human Resources Officer	978-725-6681	jdinsmore@mvymca.org
Anne Whalen	Executive Director of Camping Services	978-725-6681	awhalen@mvymca.org
Cathy Redard	Executive Director of Child Care	978-725-6681	credard@mvymca.org

## Strategies to Help Prevent Child Abuse

1. The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen-out staff not suited for working with children.
2. The YMCA will take any allegation or suspicion of child abuse seriously.
3. Staff understand their legal obligation to report suspected abuse.
4. Policies, procedures and training are required relating to discipline, supervision, staff/participant interaction, staff and volunteer Code of Conduct, etc.
5. Staff understand what practices may be considered abusive and the difference between what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate touch.
6. Defensive strategies have been identified for avoiding unfounded allegations.
7. Staff communicate frequently with parents regarding day-to-day activities and encourage parents to report or question any behavior or event their child may share that appears out of the ordinary.
8. Parents know that they can visit, unannounced, any program their child participate in.
9. Staff try to identify stress parents and offer support and referrals for help.
10. Staff have learned how to discuss sensitive issues with children such as toileting, sleeping and questions about sex.
11. Staff protect themselves and the YMCA by agreeing not to be alone with YMCA youth or program participants outside of YMCA programs or facilities (i.e.: babysitting, take children on trips, have them in their homes when others are not present, etc.)

**Note:** These preventive strategies are designed to protect the children in YMCA programs and to protect YMCA staff and volunteers from being wrongly accused of incidences of child abuse.

# Mission & Vision Statement

## Merrimack Valley YMCA's Mission Statement

To strengthen our communities by putting our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility into action through programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.



## Vision

To be a leading community collaborator in the Merrimack Valley that achieves bold results in the areas of Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.

## Core Values

Our Y upholds the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. These values guide our behaviors as we work to strengthen the foundation of community.

## Our Promise of Inclusion

The Merrimack Valley YMCA intentionally commits to facilitating positive and lasting change with our communities. Our YH focuses on providing an environment that celebrates diversity, advances equity, and reflects inclusion for all, both inside and outside of our walls. Our Y welcomes our community to show up authentically, to speak up courageously, and to create a space for all to be, belong and become.

## Camping Services Branch's Mission Statement

The Camping Services Branch, in support of the Merrimack Valley YMCA's Mission, provides youth and family camping experiences within a safe, supportive and inclusive community in a natural setting. The camps foster the spiritual, emotional, and physical development of campers and staff, teaching the values of caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty while developing leadership, sportsmanship, and creativity. We welcome returning campers, youth and families who reside in the Merrimack Valley YMCA's services area and the communities that host the camps, and others who have an interest in our mission and programs.

## Camp Otter's Mission Statement

YMCA Camp Otter's mission is to provide all campers with a sense of community, creativity and fun within the non-competitive framework of the YMCA, while promoting caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

# Directions

## Directions to Camp Otter

### From Boston:

Take 93 North to Exit 2. Take a right off the ramp-- this puts you on Route 97. Follow straight-- you will go through approximately 7 sets of stop lights and one blinking light. At the 7th light (you will have passed a car dealership) turn left onto Hampstead Street, there will be a sign for American Stonehenge at this turn, CVS will be on your right. Take your 3rd right onto Hooker Farm Road, there will be a sign for Camp Otter on a tree. Camp is about 1/2 mile down the road on the right-hand side.

### From Concord, NH:

Take 93 South to Exit 2. Take a right off the ramp-- this puts you on Route 97. Follow straight-- you will go through approximately 7 sets of stop lights and one blinking light. At the 7th light (you will have passed a car dealership) turn left onto Shannon Road. Take your 3rd right onto Hooker Farm Road, there will be a sign for Camp Otter on a tree. Camp is about 1/2 mile down the road on the right-hand side.

### From New Hampshire:

Take Route 97 towards Salem. Turn right onto Hampstead Street (Mobil Station will be on your left and a strip mall on your right). Note: There is a stop light at Hampstead Street. Take your 3rd right onto Hooker Farm Road, there will be a sign for Camp Otter on a tree. Camp is about 1/2 mile down the road on the right-hand side.





### Camp Otter Office

Open During Camp Season  
Monday-Friday • 7:15am-6:00pm

66 Hooker Farm Road  
Salem, NH 03079  
Phone: 603-893-4911

### Camp Registration Office

Open Year Round  
Monday-Friday • 9:00am-5:00pm

360 Merrimack Street, Suite 270  
Entrance K, 2nd Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
Phone: 978-975-1330  
Fax: 978-681-1126  
[campinfo@mvyymca.org](mailto:campinfo@mvyymca.org)



Visit [camp.mvyymca.org](http://camp.mvyymca.org) for camp dates, fees, newsletters, and weekly themes.