



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parent Survival Guide 2018



Welcome to the Alabaster Family YMCA!

Welcome to the Alabaster YMCA Camp Program. We will serve your children with compassion, patience, skill and respect. It is our desire that staff and parents become partners to better serve your children. In turn, we ask that you, as a parent, help us. Let us know of any concerns, ideas or thoughts that you may have regarding camp. The YMCA is a place for families and we want to do every-thing possible to strengthen and support your family.

The staff at the Alabaster believes that each child is a unique individual with his/her own rate of development. Our goal is to introduce children to as many new experiences as possible and help each child feel confident and secure in a fun, safe camp environment. We are dedicated to molding the lives of our campers and creating friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.

All YMCA camps are designed to meet the following goals. Each camper will:

- Learn to appreciate oneself, gain confidence and self esteem.
- Develop values for living.
- Learn to appreciate the natural environment and work toward its conservation.
- Develop positive relationships.
- Develop skills in leadership and group support.
- Learn responsibility.
- Learn to appreciate diversity.
- Learn new skills.
- Develop a balanced life: physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.
- Have fun and get dirty.

Our Mission:

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that builds a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

Where are we?

**117 Plaza Circle
Alabaster, AL 35007
205.663.7240**

Contact Information:

Briana Williams bwilliams@ymcabham.org

Camp Hours of Operation:

7:00am-6:30pm (children should arrive no later than 8:30am)

An Introduction to the Camp Leadership Team

Briana Williams- Youth Program Director

Kayla Cunningham- kcunningham@ymcabham.org

Registration / Transfer / Payment Information

Do you have a registration fee? \$25/child

What type of deposit do you require? \$10

Does the YMCA offer Scholarships?

The YMCA has raised funds for scholarships to help families in need. To apply, complete an application form, attach required documents and return it to the YMCA. Required documents are a current pay stub, current bank statement and 1040 Federal tax return. APPLICATIONS WILL BE AWARDED BASED UPON AVAILABILITY. If you wish to make a CONTRIBUTION to the YMCA Annual Campaign you may do so by sending your donation to the YMCA.

What is the YMCA's Refund Policy?

If the YMCA cancels a camp, a full refund of the camp price will be given. If you wish to cancel a camp week for your child, you must notify the Childcare Director in writing 2 weeks in advance. Any fees paid for that camp will be refunded minus the deposit. The deposit paid will be applied to a future camp week. If you fail to turn in a 2 week notice for a cancellation you'll be responsible for full payment.

Will I be billed for the remaining balance of a camp?

Not if you cancel within the time period required.

When is the balance due for a camp?

The Wednesday prior to attending on Monday.

Camp Start Date May 29th

Camp Closed July 4th

What if my child is just a few months too young to attend a camp?

All campers MUST be enrolled in Kindergarten by their first day of camp or meet age requirements for individual camps.

The camp I want to register for is already full. Is there a wait list?

We do have a wait list. When a camp fills up, the registration staff begins an interest list. All people on the interest list are called when a space becomes available in the camp. The first person to register gets the space. The first person on the list does not hold registration rights over the second or twenty-second person on the list.

What is the YMCA Transfer Policy?

Transfer requests are accepted two weeks prior to each camp. If space is available, you may transfer from one session to another; your deposit will not be transferred.

I only need to send my camper to camp a few days a week. Will you prorate?

We believe that a true camp experience is a week-long experience. Additionally we pay our vendors and staff by the week. For these reasons, we do not prorate camps.

Pick Up and Drop Off Information

Where do I drop off and pick up my camper?

Please be sure you are dropping off your child at the correct location. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. Drop off for camp is at the bridge in the side parking lot. Pick up will be outside of the gym door. If there is inclement weather pick up and drop off will be under the awning at the front entrance.

Photo ID is required to pick up a camper from camp. We will check ID's the first week as well as the displayed sign. Please have your ID ready when you pull up. If you need someone else to pick up your child they will need to park and provide their ID to the checkout person. If you need someone to pick up your child and they are not on the list then you will need to email Briana Williams at bwilliams@ymcabham.org.

What if my camper is going to be absent?

If your child will be absent from camp, please email (bwilliams@ymcabham.org) or call the office by 8:15 a.m. There will be no credits or refunds for missed days of camp.

What if I am late picking up my camper from camp?

Children not picked up at the end of the camp day will be supervised by YMCA staff. A fee of \$1 per minute will be charged after **635pm**. For example, if a camp ends at 6:30 p.m., and a child is picked up at 6:55 p.m., there will be a charge of \$20. Every attempt will be made to contact parents. If by 7:15 p.m. the parents are not reachable, and the child has not been picked up, DHR and Alabaster Police Department will be contacted.

What if I need to add or delete someone from my authorized pick-up list?

We must have it in writing with any change of pick up information. You can email Camp leadership staff or fill out an authorized pickup list change form at the front desk or during drop off or pick up.

What if I need to pick up my camper early? Or drop off late?

Our staff do their best to accommodate late arrivals and early departures. Please communicate with the camp office or submit a written notice in person during the drop off or pick up time. Please be sure you know where to meet the camp at least a day in advance.

Am I required to sign my camper in and out daily?

The YMCA requires that all children are to be signed, full signature – no initials, in and out daily. This helps ensure the safety of your child. **PLEASE NOTE:** It is our responsibility to see that your child leaves with the appropriate person each day. We will ask for identification daily, until we recognize parents. Please do not be offended. This is done with the child's safety in mind. We do require children to be signed out by an authorized adult (a person 18 years of age or older) even if they are participating in Youth Sports or Aquatics Programs immediately following camp.

Preparing for Camp Information

How can I get a Camp Schedule?

Camp schedules are available online on the camp website, and on our weekly newsletters. The Camp schedule provides you with information on what your child will be doing during his/her time in camp. The schedule also gives you information on what to bring. Please note that these schedules are subject to change. We do our best to provide you with information early so you can plan ahead, but summer camp is full of surprises and we are often forced to make changes.

What should my camper wear to camp?

Campers are required to wear closed-toe shoes and socks daily. **SANDALS, CHACOS, HEELIES OR CROCS ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Please remember your child's safety is our primary concern! We encourage our campers to wear old clothes in which they are ready to play hard and get dirty.

What should my camper bring to camp?

All campers must bring their own lunch and drink (or purchase thru our lunch program) to camp daily (except when noted in the camp schedule). Please send only non-perishable foods because refrigeration is not possible. Campers should also bring their own water bottle to stay hydrated during the day. It is recommended to send your child to camp with a backpack to keep all their belongings together. Campers should bring a swimsuit, towel, bug spray and sunscreen daily. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING YOUR CHILD BRINGS TO CAMP.**

What shouldn't my camper bring to camp?

The YMCA is not responsible for camper possessions that are lost or stolen. The best way to prevent the loss of property is to leave valuables at home. Please leave new jackets/sweatshirts, all video games, personal cd players/stereos, cell phones, iPad iPods and expensive jewelry/watches at home. It seems every summer a new card game is all the rage (Minecraft, Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh . . .). In general, please don't send your child to camp with any toys – we want to provide all entertainment for your camper. In addition, the following items are not allowed to be brought by campers to

Day Camp: alcohol or drugs, personal sports equipment (unless required by camp participating in), vehicles, animals, weapons, video games.

Do I send a lunch?

Alabaster City Schools will provide lunch and an afternoon snack for every child enrolled in summer camp weeks 2-8. Parents must provide lunch and afternoon snack weeks 1, 9-10. On Fridays, **Campers can either pack their own lunch or order pizza.** Order forms are due Wednesday of each week for Pizza. Kona Ice will visit our campers every Friday at 3:30pm. Camper will need to bring their Kona Ice money with them every Friday. This money is not to be turned in to the YMCA.

What should I send for snack?

Campers need to bring a water bottle with a beverage clearly labeled with their name on the outside. **No Glass Bottles!** Please do not send sodas to camp with your child. We do not prepare or cook food. If you have more than one child, you must pack snacks separately.

Can my camper buy lunch?

Each Friday during the summer we purchase pizza. It is the option of the parents for the children to participate and payment must be made, in cash, by Wednesday of each week.

What if my camper forgets his/her lunch?

If your child does not bring a lunch on days that are required, you will be contacted immediately. If you cannot bring your child a lunch to the YMCA, we will make sure that your child receives a lunch. **There will be a \$5.00 fee each time we must provide a lunch.**

Should my camper bring money to camp?

No. Camp fees include all day trip admission fees except where noted. Campers may bring spending money on designated field trips. These trips will be noted on the Camp Schedules.

What if my camper loses something at camp?

We know that sometimes things just get lost. Please label all of your child's belongings. The best way to prevent the loss of property is to leave it at home! Our camp Lost and Found will be available each afternoon at pick up. Please feel free to check for your child's lost and found items. You may check for lost and found items in the afternoon at the designated location in the YMCA. Lost and found items are kept at the YMCA for two full weeks and then donated to charity. The YMCA is not responsible for camper possessions that are lost or stolen.

Supervision of Campers

Who is watching my camper? We feel confident that we have the best staff around! Our staff is as diverse as our campers. The majority of our staff is college students. 100% of our lead staff members are at least 19 years old. Many members of our staff team are enrolled in teaching credential programs or are full time teachers. All camp staff members are background checked and cleared through Child Abuse Registry before they work with children. They are also all certified in CPR and basic first aid. The Aquatic Staff are all certified lifeguards. We make sure your child will be safe in the event of an emergency. Most importantly, our staff is people who love kids. They want to spend their summer playing, teaching and working with children. They are good people with good hearts who are silly enough to sing “The Y Song” at the top of their lungs!

What trainings do the camp staff receive?

All camp staff is required to attend 24 hours of training prior to the first day of Summer Camp. Our trainings cover a great deal. The staff will learn about the policies and procedures of Summer Camp, safety protocols, characteristics of children, leadership, how to teach activities and how to impart the 13 Assets and Character Values the YMCA embraces.

In addition to learning all the policies and procedures of the **Alabaster Community** YMCA Summer Camp program, they learn techniques of how to better interact with children. They learn how to use positive discipline. They learn to detect and report child abuse. They learn songs, games and arts & crafts projects.

At the end of our training, they are ready to use their new skills and knowledge with campers. Selection as a Camp Leader at the **Alabaster Community** YMCA is competitive. You can be sure that we are hiring the “best of the best” to work with your children. We are sure that you’ll agree.

How many staff will be watching my camper?

We operate on the following ratios:

Ages Under 3rd grade years Ratio: 1:10

Ages 4th grade and up years Ratio: 1:12

Can staff baby-sit?

My camper loves his counselor. Can he/she baby-sit for our family? Although Y-Camp staff work well with children, our policy states that our staff are not permitted to baby-sit for families involved in our YMCA programs.

Can staff accept presents?

Although our staff works long, challenging hours, our policy states that employees are not to accept gratuities. If you wish, we would encourage you to make a donation to our Annual Support Campaign to help children who otherwise wouldn't be able to go to camp.

My camper needs to take medication during the camp day. How does this work?

The Camp Directors or Site Director will administer your child's medication as directed. In order to administer the medication, we will need the following to happen:

1. The medication needs to be brought to camp and given to your child's Camp Site Director in a zip lock bag. Please do not pack medication in your child's backpack or lunch.
2. The medication needs to be prescribed by a doctor, and in its original prescription bottle with your child's name printed on the label. No over-the-counter medication will be administered without written dosage directions from a physician.
3. A completed Medication Release Form (available at the front desk, drop off and pick up locations and the website) must be completed **every** Monday morning. A completed YMCA Medical Release Form must be on file in order for our staff to give your child medication.

What if my camper becomes ill or gets injured while at camp?

If your camper becomes ill while at camp, our staff will contact you to pick him/her up. Camp is not designed to handle ill children, so it is important to tend to your child in a timely manner. If your child is injured, the staff will take what-ever steps are necessary to obtain medical care. If we are unable to reach you and your child needs medical attention he/she will be transported to the hospital by an ambulance or by a YMCA vehicle. All expenses for emergency medical care are the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Will sunscreen be applied to my camper throughout the day?

Campers may apply sunscreen as needed and directed by their parent. In accordance to policy pertaining to behavior, inappropriate application or usage will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the camp handbook.

What is camp's bathroom procedure?

Bathroom procedures: No camper is ever alone and no camper is ever alone with a staff member. All campers will take trips to the bathroom with the entire camp and or camp groups and camp staff. Campers will only use bathrooms after they have been inspected for safety by camp staff.

What if I need to speak with my camper while he/she is at camp?

We understand that urgent situations come up. If you should ever need to reach your child while he/she is in camp, please call the appropriate camp director. (List of directors can be found on page 3) The director will be able to reach one of the camp leadership team members by walkie-talkie or cell phone so that one of us will be able to assist you. If your child is on-site at the YMCA, we will call your child's camp by walkie-talkie and have your child call you back. If your child is traveling or at one of our off-site facilities, we will contact the Camp Site Director via cell phone and will have your child call you back.

How do I communicate with the YMCA Camp Staff?

Exchange of information between parents and staff provides insight for both parties. The format may be formal or informal. It is vital that you inform us of changes happening in your family. Changes at home include: moving, hospitalization of a sibling or parent, alterations in the parent's relationship, etc. These influence the way in which your child relates to others. Staff members can better provide for a child's needs if they are aware of the situation. We will treat this information with the utmost confidentiality. The YMCA Camp Leadership staff will email the weekly schedule at the beginning of each week by 7am. We have found that email communication is best for camp staff. Please feel free to email us anytime at the address on page 3. In Case of an Emergency: If you need to get in touch with your child in case of a family emergency, call the appropriate camp director list on page 3.

Program Content

Will there be camp evaluations?

Evaluations will be conducted via email at the end of the summer. We love your feedback! If you have questions or concerns, please call the Camp Director. We will also do camp evaluations with your children using our new automated system. We value the input of the parent and the campers.

How much instruction will my camper receive in his sports camp?

Sports camps will spend 3 hours on the field/courts/gym. Please remember, you are signing up your child to attend a sports camp - not a sports clinic. The YMCA views sports as a way to fulfill our Mission Statement. Our sports camps are designed to teach self-esteem, leadership, teamwork and character values through sports. They will include drills, learn new techniques, play games and practice the sport. Always remember, if your child would like more intensive instruction, encourage him/her to ask the camp staff!

Can my camper and his/her friend be in the same group during the day?

We'll do our best. Many of our camps are divided into groups by age and/or ability. Please send a note to your child's Camp Leader on Monday morning and we will make our best effort at keeping your child with his/her friend. Of course, there are circumstances (age and/or ability) in which the YMCA camp staff will be unable to meet your request. Fortunately, there is a great deal of time in which the entire camp is together. Your child will be able to be with his/her friend during this time. And remember, camp is for making new friends, too!

What are your field trip procedures?

Field trips will be taken weekly in Camp. A complete field trip list can be found on our website. Detailed field trip information will be available in the camp schedules.

When should my camper wear the camp t-shirt?

All campers MUST wear their camp t-shirt on all field trips. Campers will get their camp shirt on their first week of camp. **Campers who forget their t-shirt will be given one and their account will be charged \$8.00.**

Pool Safety**Where do campers change into their swimsuits?**

The campers change in designated same-sex changing areas. These areas are staffed and monitored while campers are in these areas.

What if my camper does not want to swim? Or forgets his/her bathing suit?

If your child doesn't want to swim or forgets their bathing suits he/she simply won't go swimming. Usually 75% of campers want to swim, but the other 25% engage in other camp activities.

What if my camper can't swim?

Please inform your child's Camp Leader if your child cannot swim. All campers will take a swim test at the beginning of each week. The children line up and life-guards watch as one child at a time swim from one end of the pool to the other. If a child is unable to swim from one side to the other without holding on to the side or if a child chooses not to take the swim test, he/she will be required to stay in the shallow end of the pool and they will be required to wear an approved flotation device. Children will also be given a color-coded armband to wear. Children who pass the swim test will be given a green band, and children who choose not to take the swim test or cannot swim to the width of the pool will be given a red band. Children must wear these bands while in the pool.

How often do campers take the swim test?

In order to keep your child safe, campers will be required to take a swim test every Monday. It doesn't take long and it makes sure lifeguards know who the newest swimmers are.

My child is registered for Day Camp Swim Lessons, what times of the day are they held?

Day Camp swim lessons are held from 8am-8:30am Monday thru Thursday. Campers must be at the YMCA by 7:45am in order to get to swim lessons on time. Please send your campers dressed for swim lessons. The Swim Instructors will bring campers to swim lessons and YMCA Camp Staff will pick them up from lessons. Swim lessons will not interfere with any planned camp activities. If your child is registered in other swim lessons, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to get them to and from lessons.

Why is there an extra fee for Day Camp Swim Lessons?

While swim lessons are available during camp hours it is a separate program that is provided by the YMCA.

Transportation Information**I'm nervous about allowing my camper on the bus. Who drives your buses?**

All of our drivers are over the age of 21 and must be approved to drive YMCA vehicles. Each driver has a background check and receives driver safety training. All buses that hold more than 14 passengers are driven by CDL certified drivers.

Where do your buses come from? Are they safe vehicles?

Our vehicles are purchased from various vendors around Birmingham and all 14 passenger buses have seat belts. The larger buses are the same style as school buses and are driven by CDL drivers.

I've heard buses don't have seatbelts. Is that right?

Our 14 passenger buses do have seat belts and all passengers are required to wear their seat belts. Larger buses do not have seat belts. However, according to the National Safety Council in 1996, school buses are 172 times safer than your family automobile.

Do counselors check roll on the buses?

Yes. Counselors check roll when the buses load and also check roll again when they unload.

What are the bus rules?

1. Campers must remain in their seats with their backs and bottoms touching the seats at all times with seat belts fastened (if available).
2. Campers must keep their voices at an appropriate level at all times.
3. Campers may not put anything (including body parts) outside the bus windows.
4. Campers must behave respectfully and use appropriate language.
5. No eating or drinking on the bus (except when permitted by camp staff).
6. All campers must follow the directions of the driver and camp staff at all times.

Please review these bus rules with your campers prior to camp!

What are your emergency standards?

1. All YMCA counselors and staff are certified in Adult and Child CPR and first aid and some are Lifeguard certified.
2. All of our counselors go through a training seminar to expand their knowledge on kids with special needs, discipline problems, and exciting games.
3. If an injury occurs, we will immediately administer first aid.
4. We will contact a parent/ guardian or someone from the emergency contact list to make them aware of the situation.
5. If we cannot contact the parent/guardian, and it is determined that there is a need, the YMCA will do the following:
 - Call an ambulance or paramedic (at the parent's expense) and continue trying to reach to parents.

Please make sure that we have all of your current emergency phone numbers.

Discipline

What happens if my camper has a discipline problem at camp?

Our camp staff are trained and expected to resolve misbehavior problems in a positive manner. Our staff speaks with the child, allow him/her to take time out to think about the problem, discuss the problem/solution with the child, then let the child return to the activity. In more severe cases, child will be kept out of activity and parent will be asked to pick the child up. Together, parents and YMCA staff will work out a custom-designed behavior modification method depending on the severity of the problem. In the event the problems still exist, your child may be suspended or expelled from the program. Our policies do not grant refunds or credits for missed program days due to a behavior problem.

When a camper doesn't follow the behavior guidelines, we may take the following steps:

- Counselor will redirect the child to a more appropriate behavior.
- The child will be reminded of the behavior guidelines and YMCA rules, and a discussion will take place.
- If the behavior persists, a parent will be notified of the problem.
- The staff will document the situation. The written documentation will include what the problematic behavior is, what provoked the problem, and the corrective action taken.
- A leadership team member will schedule a conference with the parent to determine the appropriate action.
- A leadership team member will schedule a progress check or follow-up conference.
- If the problem still persists, a leadership team member will schedule a conference that includes the parent, child, staff, and Childcare Director. The director will have all documentation and the notes from the previous conference for review.
- If a child's behavior at any time threatens the immediate safety of that child, other children, or staff, the parent may be notified and required to pick-up the child immediately.
- If a problem persists and the child continues to be disruptive, the YMCA reserves the right to suspend the child from the program. Expulsions from the program may be considered in extreme situations.

The following behaviors are not acceptable and will result in the immediate suspension of a child for the remainder of the current day and the next day:

- Endangering the health and safety of children and/or staff, members or volunteers
- Stealing or damaging YMCA, school or personal property
- Leaving the program without permission
- Continuing to disrupt the program
- Refusing to follow the behavior guidelines or Y rules
- Using profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity frequently
- Acting in a lewd manner
- Fighting

If any of these behaviors persist, staff may suspend the camper a second time before expulsions.

Immediate expulsions may occur if a camper is in possession of and/or using tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, firecrackers, firearms, or explosives and other behaviors not identified in this list.