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# YMCA Kanawana Parent Handbook 2007

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# WELCOME TO CAMP YMCA KANAWANA!

*Non Nobis Solum (Not for Ourselves Alone)*

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with important information concerning our program at Camp YMCA Kanawana and to prepare your child for their experience at camp. We encourage you to read it carefully and keep it as a handy reference.

## OUR MISSION

The YMCA of Greater Montreal is a charitable organization dedicated to the development of people in spirit, mind, and body, and to the empowerment of individuals, families, and communities.

## YMCA CAMPING PRINCIPLES

The YMCA Kanawana experience is built upon our commitment to the following principles:

- **An educational experience in democratic group living**  
YMCA Kanawana focuses on small group experiences that enhance growth by providing opportunities for social development, group inter-dependence, problem solving, and sharing.
- **A concern for the individual**  
The staff at Kanawana ensures that each camper has the opportunity to develop social skills, outdoor skills, and life skills.
- **Leadership & Cooperation**  
Campers learn to make decisions that serve both themselves and the group. They learn to make choices, build friendships and co-operate with others.
- **Growing in spirit, mind and body**  
Develop increased strength, endurance, and experience fun and adventure in a supervised and safe outdoor program.
- **A sense of responsibility toward the natural environment and each other**  
Focusing on a holistic approach to environmental education & stewardship, campers learn about the importance of a healthy environment while learning about their connection to the natural world. By living harmoniously with campers and staff of various cultures and ethnicities, campers gain an understanding and respect for the lifestyles and expectations of others.
- **For further details, please consult our [Mission & Values](#) page on the YMCA Kanawana website.**

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**We look forward to welcoming your child to camp and thank you for placing your trust in us.**

As always, if there are questions you may have that are not addressed here, please do not hesitate to contact us at the Camp Office in Montreal – (514) 849-5331 ext. 224 or during the summer at camp – (450) 227-2414.

Sincerely,

Sean Day  
Camp Director

Tracy Brenie  
Assistant Camp Director

Rock Boucicaut  
Administrative Coordinator

## PREPARING FOR CAMP

### I. EMOTIONS

It is very common for children of all ages, particularly first-time campers, to experience excitement, anticipation, fear and nervousness prior to their departure to summer camp. **All of these emotions are normal!**

In order to best prepare your child for their experience away from home, here are a few tips from the [American Camping Association](#).

- Tell children that homesickness is normal, but that they can use strategies like writing letters home, sharing their feelings with other people, and thinking about all the good things that camp or school is giving them, to help ease their worry.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves.
- Acknowledge, in a positive way, that you will miss your child. For example, you can say "I am going to miss you, but I know that you will have a good time at camp."
- **Don't bribe.** Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's new found confidence and independence.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal.
- Come to our open house on **Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007** (10am-3pm) to introduce your child to counselors or other campers and the environment they will be living in.
- Click [here](#) for additional tips & information to best prepare your child for camp.

It has often been our experience that parents have a harder time at departures than children do. However, when children see you emotional or worried they pick up the message that maybe they have something to worry about here.

Just being positive, reassuring and confident in our ability to provide a good experience (we have been doing this for over 110 years!) will help reassure your child and set the tone for their stay.

### II. HELP US SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

It is very important that you share with us any special needs that your child may have i.e. ADD, ADHD, a mental or physical disability, fears (i.e. thunderstorms, the dark), bedwetting, behavioral or social difficulties. Please ensure to thoroughly complete the Medical portion of the registration form, and if necessary, we recommend you send a letter or speak with the Director prior to camp so we can prepare the best support for your child's needs. All information shared with us is held in the strictest of confidence and will only be shared with staff as deemed appropriate by the Director.

### III. PACKING

It is important to send your child to camp with enough clothing to last throughout their stay.

Please consult our **Packing List 2007** for full details (sent in your May confirmation package and available on our website). **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING WITH FIRST & LAST NAMES!!** The best way to mark clothing is to use an indelible ink pen (Sharpie) or labels. Write your child's name on the collar, shoes, sleeping bags, hats, toothbrushes, towels etc.

### Additional Tips & Ideas:

- ✓ Pack items in a suitcase or duffle bag – storage space is limited.
- ✓ Campers are required to provide their own **sleeping bag and pillow**. A three season bag is recommended, as nights do get cold especially in August. (Please note: if bedwetting is a concern, please ensure your child’s sleeping bag is machine washable).
- ✓ Pack toiletries and often used items (bug spray, sunscreen) in labeled Ziploc bags.
- ✓ Send your child with a packing list in order to help them with re-packing.
- ✓ Campers who wear contact lenses will need their glasses for overnights/canoe trips.
- ✓ Shampoos, conditioners and soaps should be **biodegradable** (glycerin based & phosphate free) and **unscented** (perfumed products attract black flies, mosquitoes, etc.).

### What NOT to bring:

- × **Brand new clothes**. Children will be outdoors, playing hard and getting dirty!
- × **Bikinis and similarly revealing clothing**. A one piece or “tank-ini” is a more appropriate choice for swim time. Campers will be asked to wear a T- shirt should their swimwear or clothing be inappropriate.
- × **Hairdryers, walkmans, Gameboys, mp3 players, cell phones, laptops, and/or all digital devices**. These items will be confiscated, labeled and locked in a safe until the last day of the camper’s session.
- × **Jewelry, dangling earrings and stylish watches**. They can cause injury and are easily lost.
- × **Cash**. All campers have a tuck account (included in fees) and they may only purchase items by using this account. Additional money can be added to tuck accounts if needed.
- × **Food or snacks**. Snacks are available to campers in the Dining Hall all day, every day ~ Kanawana does mean “peaceful and plenty to eat” after all! Raccoons, skunks, ants, squirrels and other critters will go into tents/cabins looking for food if they smell it.
- × **Knives or duct tape**. The camp can supply these items if/where deemed necessary.
- × **CIGARETTES or TOBACCO** will be confiscated and a call will be made to parents. A second incident will result in the **camper being sent home**.
- × **ALCOHOL/DRUGS**. We have a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy for campers using, or being in possession of alcohol or drugs. Campers who are found with any of these items will be **sent home immediately**.

**PLEASE NOTE: YMCA Kanawana is not responsible for stolen or lost equipment, jewelry, watches, cash, or other personal items.**

## DURING YOUR CHILD’S STAY

### I. LAUNDRY

Campers registered for only one six-day or twelve-day session **do not** receive laundry services. Campers who are registered for more than one 12-day session and stay for the changeover weekend, will have their clothing laundered free of charge during the changeover period.

## II.LOST & FOUND

We make a concerted effort to return lost clothing to campers, but it is difficult to do so when the clothing is not labeled. At the end of the summer, **ONLY LABELLED LOST & FOUND ITEMS** will be brought back to our office at the Downtown Montreal YMCA. Parents can come to our office at designated times to look through these labeled articles. All items that are still unclaimed as of September 31, 2007 are donated to charity.

## III.LANGUAGE & BEHAVIOUR

YMCA Kanawana is NOT a place for using inappropriate language, violence/bullying, being disruptive or disrespectful to staff and other campers, etc. Such incidents will be discussed with parents as a first step with an immediate change expected. If there is no significant change, the Summer Camp Director reserves the right to have a child sent home. In this case, parents will always be contacted and transportation arrangements made. **There will be NO REFUNDS granted for fees paid for campers being sent home for behavioral reasons.**

## IV.TUCK SHOP

Campers are permitted to buy one fair-trade snack from the Tuck Shop once per week. As always, fresh fruit and water will be available to campers throughout every day. Other purchases from the Tuck Shop can be made by your child using an order form made available by their counselor each day (see below for list of Tuck Shop items). The designated tuck amounts for your child have automatically been added to your invoice. In the event that your child runs low on his or her account, the camp office will inform you, and you will be able to make an additional payment at our Montreal office (optional). If your child does not use all of the tuck money available, it will be donated to our campership fund. Alternatively, a refund will be issued only upon written request received by September 30, 2007.

## V.CAMPER MAIL

Mail is distributed daily during the afternoon. We encourage parents to send letters, postcards or packages by mail, email ([kanawana.mail@ymcamontreal.qc.ca](mailto:kanawana.mail@ymcamontreal.qc.ca)) or by courier. UPS and Purolator deliver directly to the site. Your child's **FULL NAME, GENDER & SECTION MUST** appear clearly on all envelopes, e-mails, & packages (**please do not include snacks**).

## VI.TELEPHONE CALLS

Campers are not permitted to use the telephone without the permission of their Section Director. We discourage requests to use the telephone, particularly during the first few days of the session. If your child is having difficulty adjusting to camp, the Section Director will call you. Parents of all **first-time campers** will automatically receive a phone call from the Section Director within the first four days of the session. **Remember – as a rule, no news is good news!**

## VII.VISITORS

We are responsible for ensuring the safety of 200+ children each session, and as a result, we enforce a strict visitor policy. Visitors will be escorted to the Business Office as they arrive on site.

There is no designated visiting day at Camp ~ however you are welcome to arrange a visit during the session **if you feel it is necessary. It is important to note that a visit during the session can be disruptive to your child's camp experience or his or her group, and may actually increase homesickness.** If you intend to visit camp, we ask you to contact the Kanawana Business Office **at least 24 hours in advance** to coordinate your visit.

Parents are asked **not to take their child off site during visits.** It is disruptive to both their experience as well as that of other children. If you feel that it is absolutely necessary to take your child off site please speak to the Director before signing out.

If your child is staying at camp for **two consecutive sessions** there is a visiting day on the Sunday between sessions, from 1:00 to 4:00pm.

**VERY IMPORTANT: If a parent or any other relative is legally denied access to your child, you must inform us in writing prior to the start of your child's camp session.**

## LIFE AT YMCA KANAWANA

### I. SUPERVISION

Your child's safety and well-being is our first priority. **All campers receive 24-hour supervision.**

When junior cabin groups and campers participate in camp activities and programs, they do so under the supervision of two or more counseling and program staff. One or more counseling and program staff supervise senior camper activities. (Please see Health & Well-being and Safety sections).

### II. CABIN/TENT GROUPS

Section Directors make an earnest attempt to put children of the same age in a group. There are occasions, however, when there are not enough campers of the same age to make up a whole group. In addition, language profiles, familial associations and cabin mate requests have to be taken into consideration. As a result, on rare occasions the age spread in a tent group may range from one to three years.

### III. PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES

Your child will participate in many camp activities, most frequently with their cabin or tent group but also with their section and sometimes the whole camp. Interest Groups are specific activities that occur during the morning. Afternoon activities are varied and are planned by the Counselors, Section Directors and Program Staff. All campers participate in: *all-section activities, all-camp activities and overnight camping trips (excluding campers registered in a one-week session only)*. In addition, exposure to *canoeing, climbing, arts and crafts, and nature* are encouraged.

### IV. INTEREST GROUPS

Your child will have the opportunity to select 2 to 4 Interest Group activities during their session. We emphasize the importance of participation, having fun, cooperation, and skill development. Children who do not pass the swim test are highly encouraged to take swim lessons. Interest groups may include: archery, arts and crafts, canoeing, music, low ropes course, nature, outdoor skills, rock climbing, swimming and snorkelling. Please consult our [Campers Activities page](#) (in the Summer Camp section) on our website for further details.

If you need to speak to your child's Section Director or the Director, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Camp maintains a six-bed infirmary, which is supervised by the Health Director and an assistant. **All health forms, medications and Medicare cards are kept in the Infirmary during your child's camp session.** The Infirmary staff relay pertinent health related information to Counselors and Section Directors.

If your child has to continue previously **prescribed medication** while at camp, please give the bottles, ointments etc. to the Section Director or Nurse at the bus pick up or on-site check-in. Please ensure that your child has enough medication to last the whole session and that it is clearly marked. At the end of the session, medication will be returned at either the Kanawana Business Office (if you are picking up your child at camp) or will be included in the camper's personalized envelopes available at the bus arrival.

**All medication, prescribed or otherwise, is kept at the Infirmary in a locked cabinet at all times.** Only under special circumstances (e.g. inhalers and EPI-pens) are campers permitted to keep their medication with them.

The nursing staff or Director will call you first in the following circumstances:

- your child requires a visit to the clinic in St-Sauveur or the hospital
- your child requires an overnight stay in the Infirmary.
- your child contracts a contagious illness

**A stay at camp is NOT a good time to eliminate or reduce prescription medication.**

## SAFETY

**The safety, security and well being of your child are our first priorities.** Camp YMCA Kanawana is equipped with an integrated telephone system, emergency sirens, and radio communication. All main camp buildings and program areas are equipped with First Aid kits. In addition, emergency oxygen tanks are permanently placed at the swimming waterfront, boating waterfront and Infirmary. All staff possesses a combination of either First Aid and CPR training and/or lifesaving qualifications. Additionally, several staff possess advanced Wilderness First Responder certifications. All staff participate in a 9-day training session prior to the camp season as well as a background check. Pre-camp staff training addresses Kanawana's safety regulations and emergency procedures as well as extensive training according to standards set by YMCA Child Development programs and the Quebec Camping Association of which our camp is a long standing accredited member.

During their first day orientation, campers are given a swim test and taught what to do if they hear an emergency siren. Children who do not pass the swim test are highly encouraged to take swim lessons and are restricted from participating in certain boating activities. Use of Kanawana's boating equipment (barge, canoes, kayaks, and row boats) requires a personal flotation device at all times. Boating games and activities may also require that campers wear protective headgear.

Groups participating in activities away from the main camp facilities (overnights, canoe trips) are required to take with them: a first aid kit and radio (walkie-talkie). The Office Manager carries a radio at all times, day and night.

Campers participating in canoe trips leave their route plan (including emergency exits) with both the Program Director and park authorities. In addition, trip leaders carry satellite telephone with them.

## TRANSPORTATION

We strongly encourage campers to travel to and from camp on the buses as the camp experience often starts during the ride to camp. If you have to change your child's transportation arrangements before or during the session, please inform the Kanawana Business Office, (450) 227-2414, as soon as possible so we can notify your child and make the necessary arrangements. **You will be charged 25\$ for each transport change made after June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.**

Bus Departure & Arrival Location:           PIERRE LAPORTE HIGHSCHOOL  
[1101 Rockland](#) (in the Town of Mount Royal)

DEPARTURE:   8:30am – buses LEAVE for Kanawana (all sessions).  
Please be at Pierre Laporte by 8:00am as all campers/parents will be required to go through a check-in process. If your child has medication of any kind or we require clarification of any healthcare information, you will also be required to check-in with our Health Care personnel.

ARRIVAL: Buses return from Kanawana. Sessions 1–4 – **5:00 pm**  
Session 5 (Eco–Games) – **11:30 am**

Please see Bus Departure/Arrival map for more details.

**Driving your child directly to camp:** Check-in at the camp gate **10:00am–11:00am**  
**Please note: The camp gate will not be open before 9:30am.**

**Picking your child up at camp:** Check-out at the camp gate  
Session 1–4 **2:00pm – 3:00pm**  
Session 5 (Eco–Games) **10:00am – 11:00am**

Please see Driving Directions to YMCA Kanawana for more details.

## FORMS & FEES

### I. Payments and Refund Policy

Your deposit is non-refundable after June 1, 2007 without a medical certificate. Prior to that date, you will be refunded your full deposit minus a \$50 administrative fee. All fees must be paid in full one month prior to the start of the session. A partial refund may be offered at the discretion of the Summer Camp Director if a child leaves camp before the end of a session. **A refund will not be granted if a child is asked to leave camp due to a behavior related cause or if parent/guardian withdraws camper from the session.**

### II. Pre-Camp Paperwork

It is very important that you fully complete all of the necessary forms and return them to the Montreal office. Incomplete paperwork will delay your registration process. The sooner we have these forms, the easier it is for us to inform the infirmary and/or kitchen of any special needs. In addition, the counselors will be better prepared to meet the needs of your child.

### III. Medical Form

Completion of the medical section(s) of the registration form is compulsory and must be submitted with the rest of the forms. It is important that the form be completed fully (especially tetanus booster information) and signed by a parent/guardian. The second page indicating instructions related to medication must also be completed if applicable. **These instructions will be confirmed with you at the bus departure or prior to camp. All medications are to be handed in to the nurse at the bus or on site.**

### IV. Medicare cards

**All Medicare cards (including those of older campers, CITs and Voyageurs) must be given to the Section Directors at the bus departure or be given to an office staff member at on-site check-in.** The cards remain in the infirmary at all times during the session. Your child **will not be permitted to board the bus** without their Medicare card or equivalent medical insurance proof.

At the end of a session, cards will be placed in envelopes and given to campers at the bus arrivals. If you are picking your child up directly from camp, envelopes can be picked up at the Kanawana on-site check-in.

## IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE...

We hope that the information in this handbook has helped you and your child to prepare for a summer of adventure and discovery at YMCA Kanawana. If, however, after reading this handbook you still have questions, feel free to contact us at the Kanawana office – we are always happy to hear from you!

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For more information on the YMCA of Greater Montreal's centers, programs and facilities,  
please visit our Website: [www.ymcamontreal.qc.ca](http://www.ymcamontreal.qc.ca)