



YMCA Camp Lowe 2026 Parent Handbook

132 Fort Pond Inn Rd
Lancaster, MA, 01420
ymcaofcm.org/camp-lowe



YMCA OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Welcome!

On behalf of the Montachusett Community Branch YMCA and the staff of the Joseph A. Lowe YMCA Outdoor Center, I am pleased to have you join us this summer.

Our staff at Camp Lowe works hard to instill in children the values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. Our camp staff is experienced in working with children and providing a safe environment for all. Each counselor is carefully chosen from area colleges and high schools. Our senior staff is comprised of teachers and YMCA professionals.

We hope that throughout the camp season you will support your child in our program by coming to Family Nights and showing an active interest in your child's camp activities. Through your support and interest we can combine our efforts to make Camp Lowe a fun and rewarding experience for children.

Please read all of the enclosed materials so that you will be completely prepared for your stay at Camp Lowe.

We look forward to serving you and your family this camp season. If you have any questions or concerns please call

YMCA # (978) 343-4847 ext. 4216 Camp Lowe # (978) 537-8477.

Sincerely,

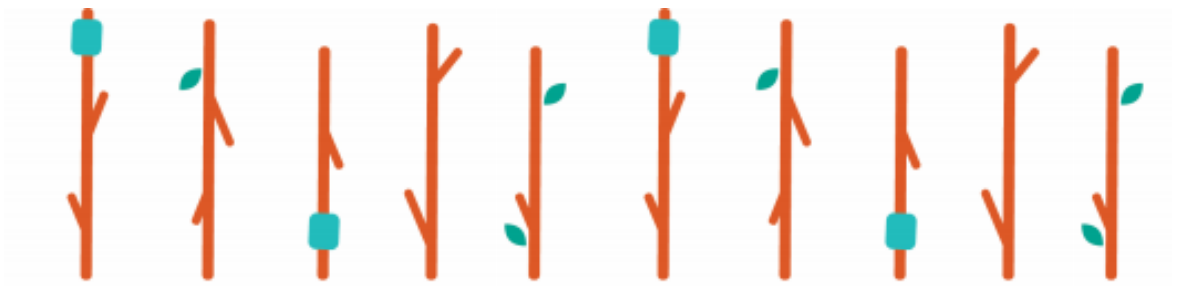
Chelsea deBettencourt

Camp Director

Cdebettencourt@ymcaofcm.org

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OPERATIONS AND ADMISSION

SUMMER DAY CAMP OPERATIONS

Dates are based on the Fitchburg Public Schools Schedule. For questions on date change follow the Fitchburg Public Schools calendar, check our Facebook, or contact Chelsea deBettencourt.

Date
June 29 - July 3
July 6 - July 10
July 13- July 17
July 20- July 24
July 27- July 31
August 3- August 7
August 10 - August 14
August 17- August 21
August 24- August 28

Financial Assistance Available

Vouchers Accepted

Typically, only the first week of camp can or is affected, however, there have been years where the first week was unaffected or the first two weeks were affected.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Campers must be entering grade one in order to attend Camp Lowe and may be no older than entering grade eight to be campers at Camp Lowe. In order to attend, campers must have a completed registration packet prior to the Tuesday before their start date. It is required that all campers have a current copy of their immunization records and physical that accompany the camp registration paperwork.

ENROLLMENT

Registration forms are to be filled out entirely each summer and must be updated as soon as any information changes. This includes proper medical records being submitted and updated as needed. Forms turned in without all needed documentation and not updated as needed will not reserve your camper's spot and can result in termination of your registration.

PAYMENT

Payment of initial deposit is expected at the time of registration unless a payment plan is set up prior to the start of camp. Remaining balances must be paid before camp begins. There will be no refunds for absences for any reason, including suspension or termination.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The YMCA of Central Massachusetts does offer financial assistance and for those who are eligible, can give up to 20% off per week for camp. In order to qualify for financial assistance, all necessary documentation must be submitted for review and must be accurate. All applications received without all required documents will not be reviewed or processed and will be invalid.

CHILD CARE VOUCHERS

Full Time Child Care vouchers are accepted and after receiving all needed documentation, including physical and immunizations, a confirmation of provider can be signed and sent to Child Care Resources. Any missing paperwork will result in Camp Lowe being unable to sign and send this form. Please submit your confirmation of provider at least one week before your appointment.

OPERATIONS AND ADMISSION

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

PROCEDURES

All campers must be signed in and out daily. Any person picking up a camper must **present an ID and be listed on the child's registration**. If all of these criteria are not met, campers will not be released to any person. No child will be permitted to leave the care of the YMCA without a parent, guardian, or other authorized individual.

If at any point during the summer you find that there needs to be an addition or removal to your pickup list, it is your responsibility to do so in writing. Forms can be found at the Montachusett Branch YMCA, Camp Lowe Main Office, or Camp sign-in or out. All changes must be completed in writing, including date in which you would like the person to be added or removed, their legal name and your signature and date. Any forms that are not completed in their

entirety will not be accepted as a notice of removal or addition. If for some reason you are needing to take a custodial parent off of your camper's pickup list, it is required that we also receive legal documentation to verify that this is part of the new terms of your custody agreement as we can not withhold a child from their custodial guardian.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is available from the YMCA in Fitchburg. Buses are rented through First Student and in addition to the bus driver will also have staff on the bus. The bus company ensures all bus drivers are properly licensed and trained. To use the bus an additional \$90 per week for AM & PM is applied to your weekly fee. If you have any concerns about transportation please report them to the Camp Director as soon as possible .

BUS SCHEDULE AND STOPS

Location	Pick Up	Drop Off
Longsjo Middle School	7:45	4:25

Buses will not leave until the end mark at each pickup or drop off time. If you are there before this time and the bus is not yet at your pickup location by the end time, please give a couple of minutes, as there have been times, when due to traffic, buses are a couple of minutes late. If you are late for a drop off time, the bus will not be able to wait, and at the cut off (or pull away time) the bus will depart and you will have to pick up your camper from the YMCA at 55 Wallace Ave in Fitchburg.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

During drop off times staff will be located in the parking lot to greet children and parents with the sign in sheet. If you arrive after 8:50 please park and walk your child to the main office to be signed in. Parent pick up will occur in the back of the parking lot near the volleyball pavilion. Please line up and wait with your ID ready for a staff to approach your vehicle. If you are picking up your child from Camp Extended please park and walk over to get your child from camp's main area.



OPERATIONS

BUS EXPECTATIONS

While on the bus, all campers are expected to remain in their seats and refrain from any unsafe or unruly behavior. The YMCA reserves the right to revoke and deny transportation for any camper due to behavioral concerns. There will be no refund given for loss of transportation services due to behavior. Expectations are below and staff will go over them daily:

1. Stay seated at all times
2. Keep hands, arms, and all body part inside the bus
3. No tossing any objects out of the window
4. Refrain from opening emergency doors or windows outside of an emergency
5. No eating or drinking on the bus
6. Backpacks are kept under the seat or on your lap.

LATE ARRIVALS AT CAMP LOWE

Camp Lowe asks that all campers arrive to camp by 9AM. If your camper will be joining us after this time we ask that Camp Lowe be notified as soon as possible. When you arrive at camp please park your vehicle in the parking lot and escort your child to the camp office to be signed in and brought to their group.

LATE PICK UP

Any person picking up a camper after their designated pickup time, will result in a late fee. Late fees are at a rate of \$1.00 per minute per child after this time. If late pickups become excessive, childcare maybe terminated. For any child not picked up within one hour of closing we will call parents/guardians and/or call authorized pick ups. If we are unable to reach anyone within one hour of the designated pickup time, the staff will call authorities and report an abandoned child at the program.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent from camp please call Camp Lowe(978-537-8477) or email cdebettencourt@ymcaofcm.org. We do not reduce cost based on your child's attendance.

AM EXTENDED CARE

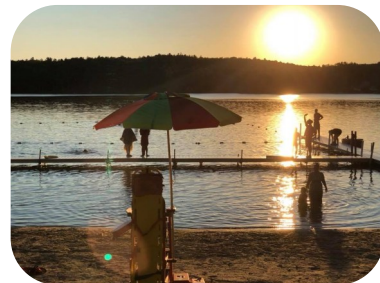
AM Extended is offered at Camp Lowe and at the YMCA in Fitchburg. Before Camp Care begins at 7:00 and will allow campers to either relax and prepare to start the day or participate in light activity to start their morning. To attend the AM Extended it is an additional charge of \$30 per week.

PM EXTENDED CARE

PM Extended is offered at Camp Lowe until 5:30pm. Campers are given a snack and extra activity time until they are picked up by their parent/guardian. To attend PM Extended the price is an additional \$30 per week.

FAMILY NIGHTS

Family nights are offered throughout the summer as a way for you to enjoy camp as your camper does. We invite you to come, even if it is not a week for which your camper is signed up. We open up camp, have activities(including swimming) and sell items for you to eat with your family.



STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENTS

STAFF TRAININGS

Staff go through an extensive orientation program that addresses policies and procedures of the YMCA child care policies to include: YMCA Code of Conduct, Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness, and YMCA HR policies. Staff will also receive CPR/AED, First Aid, and Blood Borne Pathogens Trainings.

All staff will be screened and trained through the following processes:

1. Selected candidates are interviewed by the Camp Director/Assistant Director
2. Candidates are selected based on their child-care experience, attitude, references, and display of YMCA core values
3. 3 positive reference checks
4. A CORI/SORI background check
5. Participate in multiple trainings prior to the start of camp both in person and online including the trainings listed above and below:
 - YMCA Values
 - Group Management
 - Behavior Management
 - Bullying
 - Water Safety
 - Games, Skits, Songs
 - Emergency procedures
6. Concussion Training



CONTACT WITH STAFF OUTSIDE OF THE YMCA

Through the course of the summer your camper will begin to bond with staff at camp which can have a lasting impact, however, under no circumstance, are staff allowed to have intentional contact with campers outside the program unless there is a previous relationship before attending camp. In this case, a form must be completed and signed by the staff member and the family. Forms can be obtained from the YMCA in Fitchburg, the Main Office at Camp Lowe or through emailing the camp director. Contact outside of the program include get together, babysitting, etc.



MEALS AND FOOD

Camp Lowe partners with the Fitchburg Public Schools to serve free lunch to campers, with menus available online or in the Main Office of Camp Lowe. Campers are welcomed to bring their own lunches if they please. We encourage campers to bring a refillable water bottle. Water is always plentiful and available to campers throughout the day. You may wish to send in extra snacks as kids are constantly active throughout the day.

DISCIPLINE AND SERVICE TERMINATION

DISTRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

All campers are entitled to a pleasant environment. For this reason, Camp Lowe cannot serve campers who display chronic disruptive behaviors. Such behavior is described as verbal or physical activity that may involve, but is not limited to bullying behavior or behavior that requires constant attention from staff, inflicts physical or emotional harm to other children, abuses staff, or disobeys the rules for behavior.

If a child cannot adjust to the settings at Camp Lowe and behave appropriately, the child may be terminated. Reasonable efforts will be made to help campers adjust to the setting. Camp Lowe reserves the right to suspend or terminate any camper for behaviors that cause mental or physical harm to themselves or others. Parents have the right to review the discipline policy at the time of application.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE

Camp Lowe services can be terminated for:

- Consistent late pickups
- Request accommodations which camp cannot meet
- Failure to pay fees in a timely manner
- Failure to comply with camp policies concerning ill children
- Being unreachable and out of touch by phone
- Failure to provide documentation requested by camp staff and/or DPH regulations
- Failure to keep records current
- Failure to provide emergency contact updates
- Extreme behavior that prevents them from participating safely with peers

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Parents may be notified in person, over the phone, or in writing of any special discipline problems with your camper. If there are any life-threatening emergencies, parents/guardians will be notified after emergency care has been called and provided. Parents will also be notified as soon as possible for any discipline problems or concerns.

SUMMER CAMP DISCIPLINE



Praise and positive reinforcement are used to guide camper behavior. Staff will practice the following behavior management policy:

1. Clear warning, including discussion with camper
2. Reminder and additional clear warning
3. Age appropriate consequence– reflection time, break. `reset`, etc.
4. Incident report
5. Two incident reports with repeated behavior will require parent meeting.
6. Three incident reports, persistent problems, and/or circumstance that endangers campers will result in suspension or termination.
7. Physical violence can result in immediate termination without refund.



MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Immunization records and Physicals (within 12 months) are required for all campers before they are able to register for Camp Lowe.

ILLNESS AND EXCLUSIONS

If a child cannot go outside or participate in the program due to illness the child needs to remain at home. Children may not attend camp if they are not feeling well. **If a child is sent home with a fever they must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to camp.** If a child vomits for any reason, the child must be picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized individual within 60 minutes. **No child may attend summer camp if they have ringworm, pink eye, flu, or any other communicable disease.** A doctor must treat any contagious infection or virus, and the child can return after a doctor's note has been issued. Parents have the right to review the health care policy at the time of application.

MEDICATION PROCEDURE

Camp Lowe will not administer any medication unless a Medication Consent Form, orders from a doctor, and the medication is in its ORIGINAL container are all received. The container must include camper name, type of prescription, and dosage information. If it is an over the counter medication prescribed by the doctor, a doctor's note must accompany it.

TOPICAL OINTMENTS

Campers are not to bring any topical ointment in their bags or pockets. Staff will keep these items in the office for campers to use when needed.



PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If campers become injured or ill (vomiting or a fever 100 degrees or higher) while in YMCA care, staff will do the following:

1. In extreme emergencies call 911 and first aid and/or CPR will be administered
2. Contact parent or guardian
3. Contact YMCA Director/ Coordinator
4. If necessary, have child transported to the nearest medical facility
5. Fill out necessary paperwork for YMCA per Department of Public Health and YMCA policy.

PROCEDURES FOR MILDLY ILL CAMPERS

If campers becomes ill while in YMCA care, staff will do the following:

1. In extreme emergencies call 911 and first aid and/or CPR will be administered
2. Contact parent or guardian
3. If necessary, have child picked up
4. Fill out necessary paperwork for YMCA .

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills will be completed regularly to ensure all staff and campers are prepared in the event of an emergency. The expectation during these drills is that all campers and staff act appropriately. During these times we will tell campers to remain quiet and follow the direction of the staff. During emergencies of drills children may not be signed into or out of the program. If it is drop off time or pickup, parents or guardians are to wait until the drill is over and can sign campers in or out.

For any questions regarding the drill you may contact the camp director or leadership team for a discussion.

WHAT TO PACK FOR CAMP LOWE

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All campers are expected to be responsible for their own belongings. Camp Lowe is not responsible for any items that are lost, broken, or misplaced. **We don't allow campers from bringing their own toys, electronics, valuables etc.** Please label anything that is brought with your campers name.

WHAT TO WEAR

Campers should dress for a fun and active day.

T-shirt, shorts, socks, and sneakers are preferred. **Sandals and flip flops are not appropriate for camp and only allowed on the beach.** We ask that you dress your camper for the weather, noting that perhaps sweatshirts and/or pants maybe needed in the morning when it's cool.

PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILDS BELONGINGS

CAMP ESSENTIALS

- A backpack with your camper's name on it
- A refillable water bottle
- Sunscreen & a hat for extra sun protection
- Swimsuit and towel
- Sneakers
- Extra snacks
- Change of clothes (just in case)



****Please label all items****



CAMPER EXPECTATIONS

1. Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself
2. Speak to others with respect at all times
3. Respect yourself and others
4. Se safe, be honest, and be kind

ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- Basketball
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Softball
- Flag Football
- Capture the Flag
- Kickball
- Recreational Swim
- Swim Lessons
- Canoeing (staff and weather permitted)
- Arts and Crafts
- STEM Activities
- Volleyball
- Street Hockey
- Archery
- AND MUCH MORE!



SWIM TEST POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LIFEGUARDS

Certified lifeguards will be present at all times during swim blocks. At no time will campers be permitted to enter the water without a certified lifeguard on duty. The waterfront will be run under the discretion of the Waterfront director who will supervise the lifeguards and ensure the safety of all participants, including fitting the lifejackets, making decisions for canoeing and swimming lessons, etc.

SWIM TESTING

Camp Lowe swim tests all participants once a week, with no exceptions. This is done to ensure each week camper's are swimming in the safest manner each week. Your child will then take part in instructional swim and recreational swim based on his or her abilities within marked boundaries for each level. Camp Lowe operates a "buddy system" as an additional safety precaution on the waterfront. In addition, the lifeguards clear the water every fifteen minutes for counselors to double-check swim buddies.



FLOATATION DEVICES

All floatation devices are U.S. Coast Guard approved floatation devices. All floatation devices will be fit by staff to ensure that they are fastened and the appropriate size. Campers are able to bring their own personal floatation devices as long as the floatation device is the appropriate size, free of rips or tears, and U.S. Coast Guard approved/certified (as marked on the floatation device tag). If floatation devices are not seen as suitable for use based on Christian's Law (105CMR 432.000), campers will not be allowed to use it and will be offered one that is.

CHARACTER CODE

YMCA OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS MISSION

The YMCA of Central Massachusetts is an association united in a common goal to strengthen our communities and to develop the spirit, mind, and body of all persons, regardless of means, through activities guided by and based upon our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

FOCUS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

We believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. That's why, through the Y, millions of youth today are cultivating the values, skills, and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, better health, and educational achievement.

FOCUS ON HEALTHY LIVING

Whether developing skills or emotional well-being through education and training, welcoming and connecting diverse demographic populations through global services, or preventing chronic disease and building healthier communities through collaborations with policymakers, the Y fosters the care and respect all people need and deserve.

FOCUS ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Whether developing skills or emotional well-being through education and training, welcoming and connecting diverse the demographic populations through global services, or preventing chronic disease and building healthier communities through collaborations with policymakers, the Y fosters the care and respect all people need and deserve.



CAMP LOWE CHARACTER CODE

With our mission and belief of the YMCA in mind, Camp Lowe has a character code which outlines the expectations of camper behavior which will be reinforced at camp. We do ask that you review this with your camper before they attend Camp Lowe and would recommend viewing it through out the summer.

1. Treat myself, others, and camp with Respect.
2. Be responsible for my things and take responsibility for my actions
3. Be honest at all times , even when its tough
4. Show others that I care and take care of myself
5. Be safe

Staff will refer to the character code through out the day to ensure that all campers have access to a fun and safe camp experience. Campers that are not following the character code will be pulled aside to talk about better decisions and next steps. Campers continuously acting outside the character code can be terminated.



CHILD PROTECTION

YMCA of the USA Code of Conduct for YMCA Staff and Volunteers

To protect YMCA program participants, staff, and volunteers, the YMCA of the USA prohibits employees and volunteers to be alone with a single child where he or she cannot be readily observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should position themselves in such a way that other staff can see them.

Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised. Staff shall not abuse children in any way, including:

- Physical Abuse - Striking, spanking, shaking, slapping...
- Verbal Abuse - Humiliating, degrading, threatening...
- Sexual Abuse - Touching, or speaking inappropriately
- Mental Abuse - Shaming, withholding kindness, being cruel...

Neglect - Withholding food, water, or basic care.

No type of abuse will be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal if substantiated.

Staff must use positive techniques of guidance including redirection, positive reinforcement & encouragement rather than competition, comparison, criticism. Staff will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline.

Staff are not to be alone with children the meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in vehicles and inviting children to their homes. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to the approval of the YMCA administration.

Staff will act as positive role models for youth by maintaining an attitude of loyalty, patience courtesy, tact and maturity. Staff will act in a caring honest and respectful manner consistent with the mission of the YMCA.

Under no circumstances shall staff release children to anyone other than the authorized parent or guardian or authorized adult as granted by the parent.



CHILD PROTECTION

CHILD'S PERSONAL RIGHTS

Each person receiving services from a YMCA camp program shall have rights, which include but are not limited to the following:

- To be treated with dignity in his or her personal relationship with staff and other persons
- To be accorded safety, healthful and comfortable accommodations furnishing and equipment to meet his or her needs
- To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threats, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature including but not limited to interference with the daily living functions, such as eating, sleeping, toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, food or medication.

STAFF/VOLUNTEER BABYSITTING POLICY

The YMCA of Central Massachusetts takes child abuse prevention very seriously. The following policy applies to all YMCA staff and volunteers: YMCA staff and volunteers are not allowed to be alone outside of the YMCA with children they meet in YMCA programs. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children into their homes. Any exceptions require written explanation and administrator approval before the fact.

Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian approach another child other than their own.

While on YMCA property parents are expected to act appropriately by speaking in an appropriate tone using appropriate language at all times. Any parent who behaves in this manner will be asked to leave the facility and their child's space in camp can be forfeited without a refund of fees paid.

UNRECOGNIZED PERSONS ON CAMP GROUND

Our Camp is located on its own land and therefore we prohibit persons outside our staff and camper community from entering camp during camp hours. In the event an unknown or unwelcome visitor is present, counselors will address the unrecognized person while alerting the camp director. Counselors will immediately ask the person why they are present and relay this to the camp director upon their arrival. The person will be directed to check in at the office and if they are not able to be on the premises will be required to leave.

CUSTODY ISSUES

It is the YMCA's intent to meet the needs of children especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as a divorce, separation, or remarriage. However, the YMCA cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless the Camp has been furnished with current legal documents. Copies of these court documents must be kept in the child's file.

PARENT FEEDBACK

We always welcome parent feedback to help improve our program and meet the needs of all campers. To give feedback please call or email the camp director or assistant camp director. Contact information can be found at the end of the booklet.

PARENT/GUARDIAN VISITS

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit our program during our hours of operation. We do ask for notice and ask that when you arrive to camp that you go immediately to the office to check in and get a visitor pass. Parents/Guardians may request copies of background checks, health care policy, discipline policy, and grievance procedures.

CHILD PROTECTION

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR BULLYING

Every person at YMCA Summer Camp deserves to feel respected, safe, and valued. Bullying is behavior that undermines this right. To protect this right for all campers and leaders at our camp, we do not tolerate the intimidation, persecution, or intentional exclusion of any participant by any person.

We have taken a proactive approach to preventing and addressing the problem of bullying:



We work to instill the YMCA character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility in all participants and staff. We expect these values to be demonstrated in all interactions between campers, volunteers, parents, and staff.

We encourage children to tell an adult if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable as a result of another participant's words or actions.

We handle incidents of bullying as a serious threat to the health, safety, and well-being of others. Enrollment will be terminated for participants with repeated incidences of bullying.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to inform the Camp Director immediately if they feel their child is being bullied at camp.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE POLICY

All staff shall immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

- (1) The report shall be made either to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families or its successor, or to the camp director.
- (2) The camp director shall immediately report suspected abuse or neglect to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, or its successor.
- (3) The camp director shall notify in writing the Department and the Board of Health if a report is filed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, I 51A alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the recreational camp for children or during a program-related activity. The report filed pursuant to itself shall not be forwarded to the Department or Board of Health.
- (4) The operator shall cooperate in all official investigations of abuse or neglect, including identifying parents of campers currently or previously enrolled in the camp who may have been in contact with the subject of the investigation.
- (5) The operator shall ensure an allegedly abusive or neglectful staff person shall not have any unsupervised contact with campers until the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families investigation is completed.

If a YMCA staff member is suspected of child abuse or neglect, the following steps will be taken:

1. The staff member will be put on paid administrative leave until investigations by the YMCA and the DCF are completed;
2. If the staff member is found to be at fault, he/she will be terminated immediately.

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can infect the tissue (the "meninges") that surrounds the brain and spinal cord and cause meningitis, or they may infect the blood or other organs of the body. Symptoms of meningococcal disease can include fever, severe and constant headache, stiff neck or neck pain, nausea and vomiting, and rash. In the US, about 350-550 people get meningococcal disease each year and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 10-20% may lose limbs, become hard of hearing or deaf, have problems with their nervous system, including long term neurologic problems, or have seizures or strokes.

How is meningococcal disease spread?

These bacteria are passed from person-to-person through saliva (spit). You must be in close contact with an infected person's saliva in order for the bacteria to spread. Close contact includes activities such as kissing, sharing water bottles, sharing eating/drinking utensils or sharing cigarettes with someone who is infected; or being within 3-6 feet of someone who is infected and is coughing and sneezing.

Who is most at risk for getting meningococcal disease?

People who travel to certain parts of the world where the disease is very common, microbiologists, people with HIV infection and those exposed to meningococcal disease during an outbreak are at risk for meningococcal disease. Children and adults with damaged or removed spleens or persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder) are at risk. Adolescents, and people who live in certain settings such as college freshmen living in dormitories and military recruits are at greater risk of disease from some of the serotypes.

Are camp attendees at increased risk for meningococcal disease?

Children attending day or residential camps are **not** considered to be at an increased risk for meningococcal disease because of their participation.

Is there a vaccine against meningococcal disease?

Yes, there are 2 different meningococcal vaccines. Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra and Menveo) protects against 4 serotypes (A, C, W and Y) of meningococcal disease. Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) protects against serogroup B meningococcal disease, for age 10 and older.

Should my child or adolescent receive meningococcal vaccine?

That depends. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra and Menveo) is routinely recommended at age 11-12 years with a booster at age 16. In addition, this vaccine may be recommended for children with certain high-risk health conditions, such as those described above. Otherwise, meningococcal vaccine is **not** recommended for attendance at camps.

Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) is recommended for people with certain relatively rare high-risk health conditions (examples: persons with a damaged spleen or whose spleen has been removed, those with persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited disorder), and people who may have been exposed during an outbreak). Adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) who do not have high risk conditions **may** be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16 through 18 years of age, to provide short term protection for most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. Parents of adolescents and children who are at higher risk of infection, because of certain medical conditions or other circumstances, should discuss vaccination with their child's healthcare provider.

How can I protect my child or adolescent from getting meningococcal disease?

The best protection against meningococcal disease and many other infectious diseases is thorough and frequent handwashing, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Individuals should:

- wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food (hands should be washed with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel or rub may be used if hands are not visibly dirty);

- cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard the tissue in a trash can; or if they don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve.

- not share food, drinks or eating utensils with other people, especially if they are ill.

- contact their healthcare provider immediately if they have symptoms of meningitis.

If your child is exposed to someone with meningococcal disease, antibiotics may be recommended to keep your child from getting sick.

You can obtain more information about meningococcal disease or vaccination from your healthcare provider, your local Board of Health (listed in the phone book under government), or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

YMCA Camp Lowe, 132 Fort Pond Inn Rd, Lancaster

From Route 2 East:

Lancaster/Lunenburg Exit #103- Right on Rt. 70, over bridge, next right onto Fort Pond Road. Turn left onto Fort Pond Inn Rd.

From Route 2 West:

Lancaster/Lunenburg Exit #103- Right off exit, next right onto Fort Pond Road. Turn left onto Fort Pond Inn Rd.

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