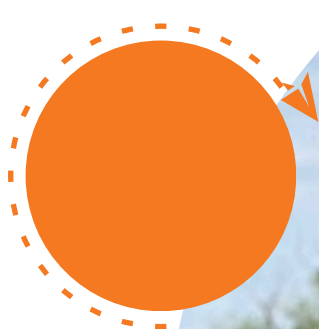




OUTDOOR EDUCATION YMCA CAMP CARTER

**Teacher's Planning
Guidebook**

817-738-9241

campcarter.org

camper@ymcafw.org

DISCOVER OUTDOOR EDUCATION

DEAR TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND ADMINISTRATORS,



Welcome to the YMCA Camp Carter Outdoor Education Program! You and your students are about to embark on an experience that will provide learning opportunities and memories to last a lifetime.

This handbook has been created to assist you in planning a successful and enjoyable outdoor experience at Camp Carter. Whether you are a new or returning school, we encourage you to read the guide thoroughly, as it contains helpful information for the planning process and will ensure the best possible experience for your group. Our staff and curriculum are here to support you in building a program that meets the specific needs of your students.



Outdoor Education at Camp Carter allows students, teachers, and chaperons to step outside the classroom and explore the natural environment. Through hands-on activities and team based learning, students will not only gain a deeper appreciation for the natural world, but also strengthen their group relationships, communication skills, and self-confidence. These lessons extend far beyond their time at camp fostering respect for others, the environment, and themselves.

If you have questions that are not answered in this guide, or if you'd like to schedule an information session for parents or teachers, please do not hesitate to reach out. Our team is here to help make your planning process smooth and your students' experience unforgettable.

We look forward to working with you and your students!



GROUP LEADER CHECKLIST

This guide highlights our recommended planning timeline, but you don't need to wait a year to book our team is always happy to accommodate earlier trips and will make the process easy, fun, and meaningful for your group.

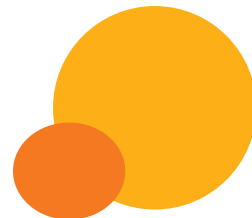
12 to 4 months prior

- Call or Email Outdoor Education Department.
- Request date(s) for your group's trip to YMCA Camp Carter.
- Communicate with Director a rough estimate of participant numbers.
- Arrange for payment of deposit when contract arrives.



4 to 2 months prior

- Read, sign, and return the program contract and deposit to the Camp Office Manager.
- Chaperons are being contacted and oriented to the trip.
- A virtual parent meeting can be hosted by request from the school group leader.
- Copies of the packing list are provided to the group.
- Arrange for transportation to YMCA Camp Carter.
- Begin selecting potential classes for programming



4 weeks prior

- Ensure that the program contract and deposit has been sent.
- Contact Outdoor Education Department to discuss schedule and classes.
- Review and approve the schedule and cabin assignments sent from the YMCA.
- Finalize numbers of students and adults that will be coming to camp.
- Begin to gather food allergies and dietary restrictions.

2 weeks prior

- Inform YMCA of any last minute changes or concerns.
- Send a guaranteed number to the Outdoor Education Department.
- Send final information on food allergies or special dietary needs.
- Create groups for classes and cabins.
- Ensure electronic waivers are completed for all attendees which is linked in your contract.



The day of

- Call the Camp Office if you will be arriving late.
- Upon arrival you will be greeted by Camp Staff and directed to orientation.
- Review expectations with Camp Host.
- Complete payment with the Camp Office Manager.
- Discuss possible dates for next year.



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

We are here to help you create a trip that supports your learning objectives and meets your group's needs. Our programs range from half-day experiences to multi-night stays. Pricing is per student, while teachers and chaperons only pay for meals.

To ensure a successful trip, preparing students, caregivers, and adults ahead of time is essential. To make this easier, we provide parent handouts, suggested packing lists, and liability forms for you to share with school families. These materials will be sent once your booking is confirmed.



HALF DAY TRIPS: Half day trips include three activity selections and last approximately three hours. Groups may bring a sack lunch to enjoy on-site, or choose meal service for an additional cost per participant.

FULL DAY TRIPS: Full day trips include up to five activities, a camp-provided lunch, and typically last six hours. Visiting groups may also choose to include self-guided activities in their schedule.

EXTENDED DAY TRIPS: Extended day trips last six to eight hours and include six activity selections plus one evening activity. One meal is also provided.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS: Overnight trips can be customized to fit your schedule, with options for one or multiple nights. All meals are included, and activity schedules are tailored to your group's goals and needs.

Teachers and chaperons can lead any free time or non-programmed time during stay. We have several free activities for campers to participate in if teachers/chaperons choose.

Arrival and departure times can be catered to your transportation needs for extended day and overnight trips.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

1/2 Day Trip

9:45	Arrive at Camp
10:00	1st Activity
11:00	2nd Activity
12:00	Lunch/Rest Time
1:00	3rd Activity
2:00	Leave Camp

Full Day Trip

9:45	Arrive at Camp
10:00	1st Activity
11:00	2nd Activity
12:00	Lunch/Rest Time
1:00	3rd Activity
2:00	4th Activity
3:00	5th Activity
4:00	Leave Camp

Extended Day Trip

9:45	Arrive at Camp
10:00	1st Activity
11:00	2nd Activity
12:00	Lunch/Rest Time
1:00	3rd Activity
2:00	4th Activity
3:00	5th Activity
4:00	6th Activity
5:00	Evening Activity
6:00	Leave Camp

Overnight Trip

First Day

10:00	Arrive/Orientation
11:00	Move-In/Cabin Time
12:00	Lunch/Rest Time
1:30	1st Activity
2:30	2nd Activity
3:30	3rd Activity
4:30	4th Activity
5:30	Cabin Time
6:00	Dinner
7:00	Evening Activity
8:00	Cabin Time
10:00	Lights Out

Second Day

8:00	Breakfast
9:00	Pack Up Cabin
10:00	Leave Camp



OUTDOOR LEARNING, TEKS-Aligned

Camp Carter's Outdoor Education Curriculum offers Wilderness Skills: archery, canoeing, hiking, outdoor life skills, and Wilderness Science focused on Texas ecosystems and natural history. Programs also emphasize human connection through team-building and group challenges. Many activities support TEKS requirements and Reoccurring Themes and Concepts, helping teachers meet learning goals.

To maximize learning, Individual Learning Groups (ILGs) are kept to 20 students or fewer. Our staff will assist with group divisions once your trip is confirmed. Most activities are accessible to students of all abilities. Please let us know if any students need accommodations so we can plan an inclusive experience.

Wilderness Skills

Wilderness Navigation: Explore in one of our hiking trails, practicing navigation with maps and compasses, identify native and invasive plants, and learn how to hike responsibly using Leave No Trace principles.

Archery: Step into the world of archery to practice focus, patience, and skill while also uncovering the physics behind it how potential and kinetic energy, force, motion, all while learning the history of arrows.

Outdoor Survival: Students will learn essential outdoor survival skills by exploring how to build a simple shelter using natural materials and understanding how shelters provide protection from the elements. They will also learn the basics of fire safety and the science behind fire while observing responsible fire-starting techniques under instructor demonstration.

Canoeing: Learn paddling techniques and canoe safety, then head out on the water to test your balance and teamwork. While gliding across the lake, uncover the science of motion, buoyancy, and density that keeps both boats and people afloat.



Wilderness Science



Fossils of the Wild: Step into the past at our fossil hill, where fossiliferous limestone holds the remains of ancient sea life. Students will investigate layers of the Earth, explore natural gases and rock formations, and identify fossils to uncover stories that are millions of years old.

Life in Freshwater: Dive into the ecosystems of lakes, ponds, and ephemeral pools to discover the plants and animals that call them home. Students will study aquatic life cycles, test water quality, and observe how small organisms in aquariums reveal the health of entire freshwater systems.

Reptiles, Mammals, and other Wild Neighbors: Students will discover the fascinating world of reptiles and mammals while learning how these animals survive, adapt, and interact with their environment. Through hands-on exploration, students will investigate where animals fit within the food chain and how energy moves from plants to predators. Students will build their understanding of ecosystems while developing observation skills and a greater appreciation for the wildlife around them.



WEATHER

Camp Carter programs run rain or shine. In cases of severe weather (torrential rain, thunder, lightning, or snow), activities may be moved indoors or substituted with similar alternatives. Please review the forecast before arrival and prepare participants for outdoor time in light to moderate rain. If needed, field trips may be **rescheduled** based on calendar availability.

Refunds are not issued for weather-related cancellations.

CURRICULUM

Our outdoor education activities are aligned with Texas TEKS, with a focus on 5th-grade science standards. Activities can be adapted to meet the needs of other grade levels. For specific activities or TEKS requests, please contact us at camper@ymcafw.org or at 817-738-9241. We're happy to help design a program that meets your learning goals.



TEACHER AND CHAPERON ROLES

We want your experience to be enjoyable! Our Outdoor Education Instructors will lead all activities, while teachers and chaperons support in the following ways:

- Maintain at least a 1:10 adult-to-student ratio (no more than 3 adults per learning group recommended).
- Provide behavior management, discipline, and first aid for your students.
- Support our staff in upholding camp rules and ensuring a safe, positive experience

EVENT AGREEMENT:

Once a date and participant count are confirmed, Camp Carter will provide an Event Agreement. Two weeks before your visit, please provide us with a guaranteed number of participants. You'll be billed for this guaranteed number or the actual attendance if it is higher. If fewer attend, billing will remain at the contracted minimum. A 25% deposit is required when the Event Agreement is signed.

CANCELLATION POLICY

- 90 days before results in 75% refund.
- Less than 30 days will result in a 50% refund.
- 14 days or less will result in a 0% refund.



EVENING ACTIVITIES

As the day winds down at Camp Carter, we gather as a large group for activities that build bonds and strengthen friendships.

NIGHT HIKE: Explore your senses after dark!

Depending on the season, students will experience nature at dusk or nighttime while discovering their own “night vision” and learning how animals rely on their senses in the wild.

CAMPFIRE, SONGS & SKITS: Sing, laugh, and enjoy entertainment led by our Outdoor Education Instructors. Students are welcome to join the fun—just let an instructor know ahead of time so we can set aside time for performances. S’mores may be brought by your group or added for an additional fee.

GROUP GAMES/CREW CHALLENGE: Students are split into teams for fun, interactive, and sometimes silly competitions. For added excitement, the Crew Challenge includes flags, face paint, and friendly battles between classes and even teachers!

SCIENCE FAIR: Dive into the scientific method with a variety of engaging experiments. Students will hypothesize, test, and discover together in this hands-on, high-energy activity.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR EVENINGS AT CAMP

CAMP STORE: If you choose, your students can have the opportunity to visit our Camp Store for drinks, snacks, t-shirts, and souvenirs (items range from \$1.50–\$25). **Please let us know during the booking process if you’d like to stop by our camp store, and we’ll be sure to add it to your schedule.**

FIRST AID: School groups are responsible for bringing their own first-aid supplies and providing emergency care as needed. Camp Carter does not have medical staff on site. Camp Carter is less than 20 minutes away from local EMS and hospitals. In the event of a serious emergency, please contact EMS first, then notify a member of the Camp Carter staff for additional support.



LEADERSHIP & CHALLENGE COURSE

For educators looking to add adventure to their programs, we offer a full challenge course ranging from ground-level activities to sky high experiences. Each high element has an additional cost of \$10 per student, per element. We can also bundle obstacles together to create a day focused on high adventure and/or leadership development.



Low Ropes Element

These ground level activities encourage collaboration, problem solving, trust, and communication as participants work together to complete exciting group challenges. Through fun games and engaging challenges, students will strengthen teamwork, leadership skills, decision making, and conflict resolution while building lasting bonds.

High Ropes Elements

- **Giant Swing**– A crowd favorite! Students climb a ladder, clip into the swing, and are pulled to their chosen height by classmates. With a release of the rope, they soar through the air in an unforgettable swing experience.
- **Alpine Tower**– Conquer fears and celebrate successes as your group climbs our 50 foot tower, featuring handholds, cargo nets, and climbing ropes.
- **Zip Line**– Students climb 30 feet to a platform where a trained staff member prepares them for the ride. Our dual zip line allows two participants to launch side-by-side for an exhilarating glide through the air.
- **Pamper Pole**– Students climb a tall pole while teammates provide a team belay. At the top, participants leap toward a trapeze bar before being safely lowered back to the ground.

Safety

Safety is our top priority. All high rope participants are fitted with harnesses and helmets, and all activities are facilitated by trained and certified staff. Each element can accommodate up to 15 students per hour. A completed waiver is required for all participants; minors must have a waiver signed by a parent or legal guardian.

Challenge Course Safety

Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes are required (no Crocs, sandals, or slip-ons).

Avoid baggy clothing and short shorts.

All participants will receive a safety briefing and must follow instructions at all times. Unsafe behavior will result in removal from activities.

Adults may participate if included in group pricing and if a liability waiver has been completed.



817-738-9241

camper@ymcafw.org

DINING HALL & FOOD SERVICE

For groups enjoying a contracted meal at camp, our spacious dining hall overlooks Cottonwood Lake.

Enjoy meals prepared by our food service staff, at affordable prices. We are a nut-free facility.

We hope that dining at Camp Carter is a memorable experience.



MEAL TIME PROCEDURES

There are a lot of fun mealtime traditions here at camp. We would love for your school to join with us in these routines for mealtimes. These are not only fun for the students, but a good way to create order during what can be a very chaotic process at camp.

CLEAN UP CREW

At Camp Carter, we believe a little bit of responsibility is a good learning experience for our campers. That is why we all pitch in at meal time. Your camp host will walk you through meal time procedures upon your arrival.

MENU

Our cooks prepare child friendly and nutritious food. Standard meals are served with water. A salad bar and/or drink station with tea and lemonade can be added for an additional fee.

ALLERGIES AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Camp Carter is a peanut and tree-nut free facility, and we can have many dietary options available at your request. Please email camper@ymcafw.org for any food or allergy concerns and dietary requests you might have.

YMCA EQUESTRIAN CENTER

A connection with any animal is special, but learning to trust and work with a horse as a partnership is extra special. The Y's equestrian programs allow riders the opportunity to advance horseback riding skills, expand knowledge, and enjoy riding with friends.

Our equestrian center offers lead arena rides and horsemanship classes. Additional costs apply for all equestrian activities.



STAFF LEAD ARENA RIDE

In this guided adventure, riders sit comfortably in the saddle, while a skilled handler on the ground takes the reins—literally! By holding a lead rope, they gently guide the horse's every step, allowing the rider to relax and enjoy the motion of the ride without worrying about steering or control. This immersive experience is ideal for building confidence and offering a peaceful introduction to horseback riding.

HORSEMANSHIP CLASS

This beginning horsemanship class introduces new riders to basic skills like grooming, tacking, and riding, with the rider being led by an instructor. It focuses on building confidence, understanding horse behavior, and developing a safe partnership with the horse. Perfect for those new to riding.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Camp Carter's Equestrian Center is located a 15 minute hike away from main camp. When booking equestrian activities, your schedule will include buffer time before and after to accommodate for this hike. Transportation by bus is available for an additional fee.

Participants in equestrian activities should wear close toe and heel shoes. Crocs, sandals and slip-on shoes are not allowed.

Participants are encouraged to wear jeans or pants to ensure comfort, but shorts are allowed.



TRIP PRICING

We strive to be an affordable option for all schools in North Central Texas to experience the outdoors in a fun and engaging environment. **Title I schools may be eligible for discounted pricing.** Please contact us at camper@ymcafw.org for any questions.

HALF-DAY

- \$15 per student
- 3 class selections, includes a lunch break
- Lunch available at additional cost

FULL DAY

- \$30 per student
- 5 class selections
- Lunch provided

EXTENDED DAY

- \$45 per student
- 5 class selections
- One meal provided
- One evening activity

OVERNIGHT

- Starting at \$75 per student*
- Classes, meals, overnight lodging and 1 evening activity each night.

***Contact camp to discuss multi-night pricing and programming.**

For questions or more information, please
contact us at camper@ymcafw.org by email
or **817-738-9241** by phone.

To submit a booking request, please complete this form.

