

# CAMP WETHONKITHA

Provided By:

Cole Center Family YMCA

Kendallville Park & Recreation Department



SUMMER DAY CAMP 2025  
Parent's Information Packet

# WELCOME!

Camp Wethonkitha is a summer daycamp based on the beliefs of both the Cole Center Family YMCA and the Kendallville Park and Recreation Department. Both organizations focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We put our missions into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Our impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, when a mentor inspires a child, and when a community comes together for the common good.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The Camp Wethonkitha team strives to improve the quality of life and promote our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility across the community. This means that camp is about more than activities – it's about building relationships through skill building that emphasizes character growth and development.

## CONDUCT

Camp Wethonkitha is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all of our campers and guests. To ensure safety and comfort for all, we ask everyone to act appropriately while they are in and at our facility and/or participating in a program. We expect individuals at camp to behave in a mature and responsible way and to respect the rights and dignity of others.

**Our code of conduct does not permit language or action that can hurt or frighten another person or that falls below a generally accepted standard of conduct. Specifically, this includes:**

- Angry or vulgar language including swearing, name calling, and shouting;
- Physical contact with another person in an angry or threatening way;
- Any demonstration of sexual activity or sexual contact with another person;
- Harassment or intimidation with words, gestures, body language, or other menacing behavior;
- Behavior which intends to or results in the theft or destruction of property;
- Carrying or concealing any weapons or devices that may be used as weapons.

Staff are trained and expected to respond to any reported violation of our code of conduct. Our daycamp policy invites staff to provide campers with meaningful redirection when needed, followed up with reflection time and/or a parent phone call. In extreme cases of misbehavior, parent meetings resulting in formal behavior reports may occur and could ultimately result in program termination without a refund.

## GOALS OF DAYCAMP

Our camp programs reflect our YMCA and Park Department values and mission. Each program is designed to help our campers grow socially, emotionally, academically, and spiritually within a fun and meaningful camp environment. We provide a safe and secure environment that meets the needs of each child while they explore and discover in the natural world.

Well trained, professional role models lead campers in new and challenging activities that act as a catalyst of growth for your child.

The goals and principals of the camp program are firmly based on the specific program objectives from which our program operates. These principals are related to interactions with others, our environment, and self. The specific principles of the daycamp program are:

- To develop a positive attitude and self-esteem in each child.
- To encourage each child to use his/her abilities to their fullest potential.
- To help each child understand his/her feelings and to help them express themselves in a positive manner.
- To encourage and praise each child.
- To help each child learn and make positive decisions.
- To teach respect for each other's rights and differences that make us an individual.
- The achievement of personal growth in body, mind, and spirit.
- The formation and practice of socially constructive habits and attitudes.
- The acquisition of knowledge about and the development of skills and interest in the outdoors.
- The development of an appreciation of nature and a love of the outdoor environment.
- The strengthening of family relationships through parent participation in the day camp program.

## **NOTE TO PARENTS**

As a provider of programs for youth, the YMCA and the Park Department strives to effectively screen and train all staff and volunteers. Camp Wethonkitha child development and camping programs are currently engaging in national best practices outlined by the American Camping Association (ACA). We have received renewal of our national accreditation and strive to maintain our accreditation annually. Our quality programs enrich the lives of thousands of children each year and the safety of every child is a top priority for our summer daycamp staff.

To make sure your child remains safe outside of the camp environment and to protect our staff and volunteers, the YMCA and Park Department encourages cooperation in the following areas:

- It is a violation of Camp Wethonkitha policy for camp employees to baby-sit, host sleepovers, or spend time one-on-one with your child outside of camp programs.
- Please do not leave your child at the camp facility or outdoor camp site unless a Camp Wethonkitha daycamp staff member is there to receive and supervise your child via our formal sign-in and sign-out process.
- Talk to your child about the importance of telling you if someone does or says something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Emphasize that adults should not ask them to keep secrets from you.
- Instruct your child to always remain part of the group. Stress safety in numbers.
- Report any actions by Camp staff, volunteers, or campers that you deem to be inappropriate to the Assistant Camp Directors (Carissa Prater) or Camp Director (Dawn L McGahen).

## **STAFF**

The summer daycamp staff is comprised primarily of college students, recent graduates, school teachers, and professional staff. Camp Wethonkitha staff members are innovative and creative individuals who love working with children. They have attended extensive training, hold certifications in First Aid and CPR, and participate in continual development opportunities to ensure that they are fully prepared for the summer daycamp season.

## REGISTRATION & HEALTH FORMS

The Cole Center Family YMCA Day Camp has received and is renewing an American Camp Association (ACA) accreditation. Within a few years, Camp Wethonkitha will also undergo the accreditation process. Unexpected visits and audits occur regularly. For this reason, we must have all summer camp registration and health forms completed and on file prior to camper participation. **A child may not attend camp until these forms are received and processed.**

1. Parents must provide an updated health/immunization record every calendar year. A physician visit is not required; a school nurse's signature is acceptable for immunizations.
2. When assigning Emergency Contacts, please rank the phone numbers in priority order. A person we can reach is the goal.

## FEES

### YMCA Registered Children:

You may pay in full for the entire summer by May 23, 2025 or you may sign up for Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). Session fees will be scheduled to draft from your checking account, savings account, or credit card on the Friday prior to camper participation. Refunds for schedule changes will not be given after the scheduled draft date. Please plan your camper days accordingly. If fees have been paid and cancellation is made two weeks before the start of a camp session, the balance will be returned less a \$25 deposit. If fees have been paid but cancellation is made less than two weeks before the start of the camp session, NO FEE will be returned. If you are eligible for a refund please allow 4 weeks for processing.

### Park Registered Children:

Payment may be paid in full or divided into three payments. These payments will be scheduled to draft from your checking account, savings account, or credit card. No fees will be reimbursed and full payment is expected even if camper does not attend the entire camp session. Payment questions can be directed to Carissa Prater 761-3060.

**TAX INFORMATION:** Child Care Tax Statements will be mailed by January 31 of the following year. If you would like a tax statement, please contact Carissa Prater at [cprater@eastnoble.net](mailto:cprater@eastnoble.net).

## PHONE CALLS TO CAMP

Please do not call to speak to your child. If your child is experiencing problems, we will call you immediately. You may call the Camp Director with your questions or concerns at any time. Contact her thru the park office at 347-1064.

## COMMUNICATION

Weekly newsletters will offer additional schedule details, camp donation needs, and special information. Please read all information carefully and save it for future reference. Photos and status updates will be provided via the Kendallville's Camp Wethonkitha Facebook page. We also encourage you to sign up for Remind text alerts.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents and community members are an important part of our camp program. We encourage you to share your talents, hobbies, and/or profession with your child's group. Please contact the Assistant Director or Camp Director if you are willing to share your talents and stories with the campers.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

In order for Camp Wethonkitha to provide the best day camp experience for your child, we ask that prior to registration you consult the Camp Director (347-1064) regarding any special needs of your child. There are some medical treatments and procedures that the camp staff are legally neither trained nor qualified to perform. We will make our best effort to accommodate children with special emotional and/or behavioral needs, however we must take the best interest of all children into consideration at all times. Camp staff cannot provide one-on-one care for children at any time. Children will be enrolled on an individual basis. We will make every attempt to serve all children.

## **CAMP EVALUATIONS**

To ensure our programs meet the expectations of campers and families, surveys will be distributed throughout our program. Parental assessment of the camp's strengths and weaknesses will aid in the improvement of camp programs and in the facilitation of new ideas. Parents are invited to give regular assessments of the camp program to the Camp Director at any time.

Written surveys will be available for parents and campers. Please confirm your email address if you are not receiving session surveys.

## **MONEY**

Please do not allow your child to bring money to camp. Children will not be permitted to make purchases at camp or on field trips. Camp staff are not responsible in the event of loss or theft.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Those items left at camp will be placed in the lost and found box at the end of each camp day. Unclaimed items will be donated to a local shelter at the end of every two-week period.

# **DAILY SCHEDULES & PROCEDURES**

**CAMP DAY:** Schedule subject to change due to special activities

9:00	Opening Ceremony/Camp Day Begins!
9:30-11:30	Age-group Morning activities
11:30/12:00	Lunch
12:30-3:30	Camper Selected Skill Rotations
3:30-4:00	Closing Ceremonies/Camp Day Ends

## **ARRIVAL**

Camp begins promptly at 9am, Monday-Friday. Parents/Guardians are required to sign their child in and out of camp each day. Leaders In Training (LIT's) may sign themselves in and out of camp at the beginning and end of each day with a written note of permission from parents.

## **DEPARTURE**

Camp concludes at 4pm, Monday-Friday. Parents/Guardians are required to sign out their child upon pick-up. Please be prepared to show identification to camp staff if they aren't familiar with the pickup person. Campers will not be released to individuals who are not listed on the camper registration form. If you plan to pick up your child early you will

need to check with camp staff to confirm the schedule for that day. We frequently leave camp grounds for activities and cannot guarantee that your child will be at camp before 4pm.

Children that ride a bike or walk to camp will not be signed in or out by a parent/guardian. Camp counselors will sign them in and out each day and they will be dismissed between 3:45 and 4:00pm.

**Park Registered Children:** Children are to be picked up no later than 4:00pm, no exceptions. Because we have to pay our counselors to stay over, a late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes, rounded up will be assessed. This charge has to be paid by Friday of the week of occurrence in order for your child to attend camp the following week.

### **EXTENDED DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP (For YMCA Registered Children)**

Our extended day program offers quality care for your child before and after the camp day. This service is available free of charge to all camp participants. Campers may not be dropped off at the Y earlier than 6am and must be picked up before 6pm. While our staff is here to serve your family, it is important that we respect their schedules each day.

### **ABSENCES**

If your child is not going to attend camp for the day, please report his/her absence before 9am by emailing this information to [dmcgahen@kendallvillein.gov](mailto:dmcgahen@kendallvillein.gov)

### **CLOTHING**

Children should wear clothing suitable for an active outdoor day at camp. Appropriate items include shorts, t-shirts, light jackets (for chilly mornings), and athletic shoes. **Sandals, Crocs, and flip flops are NOT permitted except at swim time. Please label all items sent to camp with your camper's first and last name.** Please send a bathing suit and towel with your camper daily. Staff cannot be held responsible for your child's personal belongings. Please do not send new or expensive clothing to camp. While every effort will be made to locate lost items, Camp Wethonkitha is not responsible for replacing them. We encourage outside play therefore your children and their clothes will get dirty.

### **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Personal items such as toys, cell phones, and electronic games are prohibited during camp hours unless special exception is given by the Camp Director. We believe that your child should be involved in camp activities and we are not responsible for items lost, stolen or damaged.

### **MEALS & SNACKS**

Breakfast and Lunch will be provided in accordance with the national Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). While SFSP meals meet state standards, many campers prefer supplemental lunch items from home to help meet their caloric intake needs (we burn lots of calories at camp!) Many campers need to bring extra food items from home to ensure they have enough to eat. There might be a time when we are unable to provide lunch and campers will have to pack. We will notify parents if this occurs.

Camp Wethonkitha abides by national standards for healthy living and physical activity. **Cookies, soda, sugary drinks, candy, will not be permitted for consumption during the camp day.** Please keep healthy items such as fruits, vegetables, 100% fruit juice, pretzels, and cheese sticks on hand at home so your camper can pack his or her own healthy mealtime snacks.

We will not allow children to consume soda pop or energy drinks for lunch or snack. This decision is based on two things:

1. The behavior problems associated with too much caffeine and sugar.
2. We want to encourage healthy choices.

Items from home will not be refrigerated; therefore, we ask that you send lunches that do not contain mayonnaise or other food items that will spoil if not kept cold. Freezing lunches and juice the day before and/or inserting a cold pack in the lunch container will help preserve the food. Please mark all food items with camper's first and last name.

Please do not provide your camper with food that will need heating. Camp staff is not responsible for food preparation or pre-heating meals.

Campers are NOT permitted to use vending machines or purchase concessions during trips. All supplemental food and drinks should come from home. Please do not send money to camp with your child.

## **RULES & SAFETY**

Safety is our top priority each and every day. Camp rules will be established at the beginning of each session and reviewed regularly to ensure safety. Please review the following list of rules with your child along with our Camp Wethonkitha day camp contract.

### **General Rules:**

- Campers must stay with their activity group and camp counselor at all times.
- Cross the streets at the assigned cross walk only, with a counselor. Look both ways.
- Always walk, unless playing a staff-lead game that involves running.
- Follow school bus rules whenever we take a field trip.
- Be sure to use kind words and language at all times.
- We keep our hands to ourselves at all times.
- Listen to and respect the rules/boundaries of all games played at camp.
- Participate willingly in all camp activities.

### **Camp Wethonkitha Day Camp Contract:**

When I am at camp I will ...

1. Treat myself and others with respect.
2. Listen carefully to directions.
3. Make responsible choices.
4. Care for materials and activity spaces.
5. Have Fun!

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

If your child has received assistance in behavior management during the school year, it is imperative that this information be shared with daycamp staff. This will enable us to work more effectively with your child.

Positive behavior choices will be supported with kind and positive reinforcement by daycamp staff while negative choices will be redirected with meaningful consequences that relate directly to the choice made. (i.e. if a child fails to abide by swimming rules they may sit out during a portion of swim time.)

All children will be given understandable guidelines for their behavior so they may develop internal control of their actions. The staff will work cooperatively with parents, keeping them informed of behavior compliments, concerns, and strategies implemented to guide the child towards socially acceptable behavior. Behavior problems that cannot be resolved may result in dismissal from camp without a refund. Certain abusive behaviors will result in immediate dismissal.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline is viewed as guidance, not punishment. Positive reinforcement, active listening, problem solving, redirection and discussion with the child(ren) involved, as to what is acceptable and unacceptable is the established practice. The counselor who witnessed or was approached by a child will be responsible for his/her discipline if it is minor in nature and only warrants a verbal warning or time-out of the activity and a Time Out Reflection form. The counselor will make sure the Camp Director is aware of all situations involving discipline. If the situation is severe in nature, the counselor will contact the Camp Director who will handle the situation. Disciplinary Forms, Time Out Reflection Form, Phone Call Home Reflection and Behavior Report will be filled out depending on the incident.

The techniques used for discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten the child. There will be no cruel, harsh or unusual punishment, such as, but not restricted to punching, pinching, shaking, or biting. Counselors will speak in a gentle but firm voice and will not use profanity, threats; derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family, other verbal abuse, or physical abuse. The counselor may remove the child from the group, if necessary, to sit the child down to think about his/her actions for a short period of time. This rule applies to all children signed in for the day and participating in Camp Wethonkitha.

## **DISCHARGE AND REMOVAL POLICY**

Chronically disruptive behavior is defined as: verbal or physical activity which may include, but is not limited to, behavior that requires constant attention from the staff, inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children or the staff, and ongoing disregard for day camp rules. If a child cannot abide by daycamp rules, he or she will be discharged from the program with no refund.

Bullying will not be tolerated on any level. Once an action of bullying is addressed and the action continues, immediate dismissal could result. Examples of bullying are, but not limited to calling someone names making things up to get others in trouble, hitting, pushing, kicking, etc., someone taking things away from someone, damaging someone else's belongings, stealing money from someone, spreading rumors about someone, and threatening someone.

What you as parents need to know: Encourage your child to report incidents of bullying to a counselor, also, tell a counselor if he or she sees another child being bullied. Reassure your child that it's okay to be a "tattle tale", especially if it means keeping another child from being bullied. Go over the examples of bullying with your child so he or she understands what makes someone a bully.



Listed below are a few examples of when there could be immediate dismissal of a child from camp:

1. Running off from the group or camp.
2. Stealing.
3. The inability to work with and/or control a child.
4. Threatening to harm (“kill”) another camper or staff person.

All incidents will be discussed with the pick-up person on the day of the incident or a phone call will be made for those children that ride a bike or walk to camp. If a child is dismissed from camp, re-enrollment will be at the discretion of the Camp Director.

## **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

### **SWIMMING**

Traditional daycampers have the opportunity to swim daily during the summer. Please send your child with a swim suit, towel, goggles, and plastic bag every day.

Children will participate in swim testing and will be grouped as swimmers accordingly. Certified life guards will supervise all swim times and daycamp staff will swim with campers. Swim time is designed for recreational purposes only.

All campers and staff are required to follow rules posted in swimming areas.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Please check with your child’s counselor, weekly newsletters, Facebook page (Kendallville’s Camp Wethonkitha), and the camp schedule for trip announcements. In case of rain, a field trip may be changed or cancelled. The majority of “bussed” field trips will take place on Wednesdays, with walking field trips scheduled throughout the week. All students will walk to the Kendallville Public Library for summer reading and activities. Bus Transportation is provided by East Noble School Corporation

### **WEATHER**

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily camp schedule. The majority of the camp activities will take place outside. Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for the weather conditions. A light sweater or jacket may be needed some days.

During periods of extreme heat, the camp staff will take precautions with the children. An water station is accessible for all campers and frequent water breaks are enjoyed throughout the camp day. All precautions will be taken to prevent heat related injuries during these times. Children are required to have a refillable water bottle each day, making sure their name is on the bottle.

While we will enjoy the outdoors on cool and/or mild rainy days, camp for the park registered children may be cancelled if there are chances of severe weather or an all-day rain.

# HEALTH INFORMATION

## ILLNESS

If your child is sick, please keep him/her at home. If your child is sent to camp with an illness, we will notify you to pick up your child. If your child is sent to camp they will be expected to participate in all outdoor and walking field trip activities that day. Children will be sent home from camp for the following reasons: fever, diarrhea, unexplained rash, lice, upset stomach, headache, vomiting.

A child, who has vomited, had a fever or diarrhea must be kept home for a minimum of 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. Children with lice must be nit free before returning to camp. When a child is sent home with a communicable disease, he/she cannot return to camp without a note from a doctor. Remember, the health of all campers and staff is taken into consideration by our daycamp team.

## MEDICINE

A camp counselor will administer prescription and over-the-counter medications to children ONLY when the parent, legal guardian, or physician has completed a written medication form (available through the Assistant Camp Directors or Camp Director). A doctor's signature will be required for prescription medications. All medication must be in the original container with the child's name on the label. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS. The medicine will be placed in a specific location that the counselors can access.

Parents are required to provide sunscreen for your child(ren). Please make sure you label your sunscreen bottle and pack it with your child each day. Sunscreen will be applied periodically throughout the day. We do not allow spray sunscreen. Our experience with spray is that it doesn't get applied properly and there is too much waste.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All precautions will be taken to prevent serious health risk to all campers. In the event that a minor injury occurs, a staff person will administer first aid at the campsite and an Incident Report Form will be completed along with a Parent FYI Form.

Camp staff is trained in First Aid/CPR. It is imperative that parents indicate their health insurance information on their Camper Registration Form prior to the start of camp. When assigning emergency contacts, we ask that parents consider individuals who can be easily reached if the need arises. The Cole Center Family YMCA and/or The Kendallville Park and Recreation Department will not pay for treatment due to injury at camp. Health cost/treatment is the sole responsibility of the parent.

In the event of a major injury or health problem, the following procedures will be followed:

- 911 will be called
- Camp staff will administer immediate first aid until professional services arrive.
- Parents will be contacted. If we cannot reach parental parties, emergency contacts will be notified.
- Camp staff will accompany the camper to the hospital. Staff will remain with the child until the parent or emergency contact person arrives.
- Incident will be recorded and filed listing all procedures administered.

In the event of minor injury, the following procedures will be followed:

- First aid will be provided and the incident will be recorded in the health log and communicated to parents via Parent FYI Form.

Camper will be observed through the remainder of the camp day and made as comfortable as possible.

# Day Camp Packing List

- **Closed-toe shoes and socks** comfortable for walking and running.  
Sandals, jelly shoes and crocs are only permitted at swim time.
- **Swim Suit and Towel**
- **Back-Pack** to carry personal belongings.
- **Bottle of SPF 45 or greater lotion Sunscreen (lotion, not spray)**  
One per camper
- **Change of Clothes**
- **Water Bottle**

What NOT to bring to camp:

- Personal electronics of any kind, including cell phones
- Weapons including knives, guns, and ammunition
- Toys or games from home
- Drugs, alcohol, paraphernalia
- Pets of any kind

Please label your campers belongings with permanent marker. Camp Wethonkitha is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

## CAMP RULES

1. No pushing, hitting, pinching, kicking, scratching, biting, spitting, name calling, and/or throwing things at others.
2. All campers will help watch over, pick up, and clean the areas that we use during camp.
3. When all campers are asked to stop what they are doing, they are expected to stop immediately, do not talk and listen to directions.
4. Campers are expected to follow directions, unless given an exception by the staff.
5. Campers must ask permission before leaving an activity or activity area such as the playground, library, beach, etc. The staff are required to know where the children are at all times. No child will be allowed to wander alone.
6. All campers will respect camp property, whether it is supplies, equipment, or activities.
7. All campers will respect other camper and staff property.
8. No climbing in the trees, or breaking off limbs, branches or leaves.
9. When walking to and from fieldtrips, all campers will be paired and assigned to a counselor or volunteer of whom they will walk with. Failure to stay with assigned staff person could result in immediate dismissal from camp.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

This is to certify that I have read and understand The Parent Handbook. Furthermore, I understand that by enrolling my child in Camp Wethonkitha, I agree to abide by the policies and procedures as outlined in the handbook and/or as subsequently established during summer camp session.

Child(ren) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

We ask that parents take a few minutes and go over the code of conduct and camp contract with their child(ren). It is our intention to get campers to invest in our camp program and enjoy the camp experience.

Angry or bad language including swearing, name calling, shouting or yelling. Use kind words and language.

- Keep your hands to yourself at all times.
- Harassment with words, gestures, body language, or other bad behavior.
- Behavior which intends to or results in the theft or destruction of property.
- Campers must stay with their activity group and camp counselor at all times.
- Follow school bus rules whenever we are on a field trip.
- Listen to and respect the rules/boundaries of all games played at camp.
- Participate willingly in camp activities.
- Cross the streets at the assigned cross walk only, with a counselor. Look both ways.

## Camp Wethonkitha Daycamp Contract

When I am at camp I will:

- Treat myself and others with respect.
- Listen carefully to directions.
- Make responsible choices.
- Care for materials and activity spaces.
- Have Fun!

Campers Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Camper Signature (All campers should print/sign their own name): \_\_\_\_\_

  

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