



Welcome to YMCA Camp Cullen ... and the Piney Woods of East Texas.

We are excited that you have chosen YMCA Camp Cullen for your child's overnight camping experience. We know that your children are the most important thing in the world to you and we want you to know that our number one job is to provide a safe and fun camping experience for your child. The YMCA has been serving children through camping programs since 1885. In 1974, YMCA Camp Cullen hosted its first set of campers. Since that day, campers and families have had the opportunity to experience the magic of Camp Cullen and their lives have been changed because of the experience and the people that they have met over the years.

In this "Parent Handbook" we have tried to answer the questions that are often asked of our camp staff. Please use it as a reference guide in preparing for your child to attend YMCA Camp Cullen this summer. By familiarizing yourself with the various topics, it will make the transition easier, not only for your child but also for yourself. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call the camp offices at 936-594-2274. Or if you prefer, contact us by email at Campcullen@ymcahouston.org.

Happy Camping,

Len Masengale
Executive Director

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YMCA MISSION STATEMENT

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

YMCA CORE VALUES AND CAMP CULLEN'S GOALS:

FAITH- Campers will participate in daily chapel services and nightly devotionals with their counselor in the cabins.

HONESTY- We hope that every camper will demonstrate honesty while at camp. We also ask that campers help us out by **not bringing** electronic devices or valuables to camp. This includes cell phones, IPOD's, CD Players and all gaming devices. If camp staff sees these items, they will be taken up until the end of the session.

CARING- It is crucial in a camp environment to care for your fellow campers. We will encourage each other daily through activities and challenges that we encounter. We will take care of our cabin mates and make sure that they are involved in the cabin activity and will be there to help each other as a family throughout the camp session.

RESPECT-We will respect the camp property at all times by making sure that we do not leave trash on the ground and if we see trash on the ground, we will help the environment by picking it up. We will also be respectful of others and we will not call people names, use foul language or exclude anyone from the group. We will also respect the camp staff at all times so that they can provide all campers a safe and fun camp.

RESPONSIBILITY-Campers will learn to be independent and responsible in many ways. They will learn to keep track of their belongings and to keep their area clean in the cabins. Campers will be responsible as a group for doing some basic cleaning in the cabin and in the dining hall after meals.

PAPERWORK AND DEADLINES

Camp Fees Must Be Paid:

Your entire deposit has been applied to your child's camp session. Failure to make payment will cancel the registration and advance another camper from the waiting list. Payment in full may be made earlier by check, money order or credit card. Please allow five (5) business days for mailing in payment and keep a copy of all forms for your records. *The balance of the camp fee is due at least three weeks prior to your child coming to camp.*

Forms Must Be Completed:

The following forms must be completed and sent to the camp office three weeks prior to your camper's session.

A. Health History and Examination Form.

1. Please send a NEW health form each year so that camp staff is aware of any changes that have occurred over the year. The health exam (physical) must be within 24 months prior to camp **and include a physician's signature** in order for campers to attend camp. The YMCA does not retain a record of your child's medical history, current documentation is required.

B. Registration, Camper Profile, and Horse Waiver must also be turned in three weeks prior to your camper's session. If forms are lost, all forms can be found and downloaded at www.ymcacampcullen.org.

First Time Campers

Going off to Camp Cullen is a very exciting time for campers and parents. It's very natural for both to be a bit anxious about the camper leaving the comforts of home, adopting new routines of daily activities and meeting many new friends. We want to familiarize you and your camper with our procedures to minimize any first time camper anxieties. YMCA Camp Cullen has well-trained staff to make campers feel welcome and at home. We want to take time to explain how we work and to share this information with campers and parents.

Suggestions from “*experienced*” parents:

- Send pre-addressed stamped envelopes with campers, addressed to family and friends.
- Send old clothes they recognize as their own, not lots of new ones they will not remember. Do not send valuable clothing. Pack with your campers and make a list of what they bring so that they know what they should be bringing home.
- Label **everything** and pack light!
- Mail payments and paperwork in 21 days before session date to avoid any problems on check-in day.

CHECK-IN

PARENTS AND CAMPERS:

The focus of opening day is to meet the staff and immediately get campers involved with their cabin groups and the fun of summer camp; through songs, skits and games. The camp health professional will also be there to take all medications and answer any last minute questions that you may have. We do check all campers for fever and lice prior to accepting them into camp.

Check-in is from 3:00-4:00 p.m. on SUNDAY

CHECK-OUT

FOR PARENTS PICKING UP THEIR CAMPERS FROM CAMP:

If you need to pick your child up from camp early, please notify the camp office so we can have them ready upon your arrival to avoid any delay.

We will begin a slide show of the campers activities throughout the week at 9:15a.m. Parents are encouraged to attend. Pictures are online as well at www.ymcacampcullen.org. Check out will be from 9 a.m. -10 a.m. All parents must check out with the registrar and show proper identification before their campers will be released. If someone other than the parent is picking up the camper, please notify the camp office in writing, so we can be aware of the changes and to avoid any delays in departure. Please make sure you pick up your child's medication from the camp nurse and get your child's entire luggage (including laundry bags that may have not made it back into the suitcase).

Stay-Overs:

Campers staying multiple sessions are allowed to remain at camp between sessions for an additional fee of \$150.00, if arranged on the application or with the office in advance. Please send two weeks of clothing. Contact the camp with any questions.

**CHECK-OUT TIME is from 9-10 a.m. on SATURDAY morning for all one week sessions
and from 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. on FRIDAY for the two week session.**

CABIN ASSIGNMENTS

Campers are assigned to cabins strictly according to age before each camp session begins. Every cabin is air-conditioned/heated and centrally located to the bathhouses. Over 30 years of experience tells us it is crucial (for all campers in the cabin) that younger campers are not assigned to cabins with older campers. We strive to

keep the age span within a cabin to two years or less. There will be plenty of opportunities for friends/siblings to see each other throughout the day, if they are assigned to different cabins.

SWIM TEST

All campers must take a swimming test during opening day to demonstrate their level of swimming ability. This helps to establish the safest areas in which the camper may swim or boat. We reserve the right to change a camper's program if they are unable to pass the required test. This is done for safety and protection. *Parents will be notified of any program adjustments.*

PHOTOS and EMAILS

Photos: Parents are encouraged to keep up with camp's activities online. We will post pictures of activities to keep parents posted. Please understand that we have a lot of campers and our number one focus is that they are safe and having fun, soJ we will limit the number of photos posted. These are updated every few days. Please understand we do our best to get photos of every camper online, but we are not always successful.

WEBSITE: www.ymcacampcullen.org

Emails: Camp Cullen is no longer utilizing the services of Bunk1.com. We have a new and improved, easier to read website which we believe allows for easier navigation and a more pleasurable surfing experience. Our new website does not allow bunk notes to be sent to your camper. If you would like your camper to receive mail while he is here, you are more than welcome to bring mail with you and we will deliver it to them on whichever day you specify on his/her envelope(s). You may also send regular mail. The only request we have is that you include camper name, and the day you would like it delivered. We'll take it from there!

WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP

Camp is a natural setting to retreat from the amenities of electronic technology and to get more in touch with people and nature. Items that DO NOT fit in this setting are: IPODS, electronic games, **cellular phones**, beepers, walkmans, gum, firearms, matches, lighters, knives, tobacco products, valuable items, illegal drugs, money, fireworks, electric fans and aerosol cans. Canned insect repellent is not allowed at camp. Insect repellent must be in the form of lotion or wipes. *Please note that any cellular devices found on a camper will be collected and returned to the camper at the week's end.*

CAMP FOOD

The goal of Camp Cullen is to provide tasty and nutritious meals for our guests. If your child has any special dietary needs, please let us know and we will do all that we can to accommodate them. Fruit and Cereal are always available with breakfast and there is always a salad option or peanut butter and jelly sandwich bar with dinner. All campers must drink 2 cups of water at lunch and dinner before having any other beverages. Please inform the camp in writing and by phone of any special needs at least **three weeks prior** to arrival.

MEDICATIONS

All prescription medication brought into camp must be accompanied by written orders and signed by a physician; which includes camper's name, dosage and medication times. All medications, including over-the-counter (vitamins, creams, lotions, etc.), must be turned in and dispensed by the camp health professional. **Medications must remain in the original bottle to be dispensed by our health care staff.** Camp Cullen stocks most over-the-counter medications needed at camp, so it is not necessary that you bring these items. You may call us anytime if you would like to know if we stock a particular item. If there are any over-the-counter medications that you do not want your child to take, please specify these on the Health Form. Once at camp, please give medications directly to the health care station. Please make sure camper's name is on all items. It is recommended that all campers stay on regular daily medication during their time at camp. It is our policy for the infirmary to keep camper's inhaler during camp unless instructed differently by the parent or doctor. The infirmary is always open, so inhalers can be obtained at a moment's notice.

HOMESICKNESS

Temporary homesickness is a normal reaction, particularly to new campers and parents of new campers. Our staff makes a concerted effort to help campers overcome homesickness by helping them learn to accept the natural feeling of missing family and friends. We welcome this opportunity to help youngsters grow in this area and we train our staff to handle homesickness in constructive and loving ways. With proper handling by the staff, campers and parents homesickness can be overcome and the camper can make a big stride growing up. If there continues to be a problem with a camper being homesick, the parents will be contacted by a leadership staff member. We do not encourage parents to talk to their campers at that time because it generally makes the situation worse. The leadership staff and parents will work together as a team to come up with the best solution for the camper. **Homesickness is not a condition for refunds.**

ILLNESS

It has always been the policy of Camp Cullen not to keep sick campers more than 12 hours in our camp infirmary. Therefore, we ask those parents of campers who are ill to care for their child at home and to see the family doctor. Transportation is not provided for campers returning home due to illness. If your child is scheduled to come to camp and becomes ill, please do not bring them to camp. Call the camp office as soon as possible so that we can schedule another session for you. It is also our policy to refund pro-rated camp fees to any child who becomes sick and returns home for care.

BED WETTING

Our staff is trained to deal with bed wetting discreetly, working with your child one-on-one. Please include this on the "Confidential Form" and notify your camper's counselor at check-in if your camper may wet the bed. Campers should be instructed to ask their counselors for help and every effort will be made to prevent accidents. Camp Cullen does not have laundry facilities so please send a plastic sheet with your camper if this may be a problem.

SPECIAL EMOTIONAL/PHYSICAL NEEDS

Campers with special emotional or physical needs should be called to the attention of the Camp before registering for camp. Please call Camp Cullen if you have questions regarding children with special needs. Camp Cullen has a policy not to accept campers beyond our staff's training and capabilities.

EMERGENCIES

Emergency calls to campers should be done through the Camp Cullen office at **713.758.9275 or 936.594.2274**. Our medical staff will treat routine scrapes, cuts and minor illnesses. In the case of serious illness or accident involving your child, the medical staff will contact you directly. In the event you cannot be reached, your signed authorization on the Health Form allows us to secure prompt treatment.

INSURANCE

Parents or guardians must include their personal Health Insurance information in the space provided on the Health Form and also include a copy of the insurance card or Medicaid form. This information will only be used to facilitate outside medical treatment if required. In the event of serious illness or accident, the parents will be notified at once. Parents or guardians are responsible for prescriptions and charges incurred for outside medical treatment of their child, should service be required while in attendance at camp. Services rendered by the camp medical staff are at no additional charge.

CHANGING/CANCELING SESSIONS

Should it be necessary for you to change or cancel your child's session, you must contact Camp Cullen at least three weeks prior to the beginning of the session. **There is a \$15.00 charge for any session changes.** The \$100.00 registration deposit fee is non-refundable for cancellations.

REFUNDS

The Registration Deposit fee is not refundable under any circumstances. Cancellations less than 3 weeks before the session is to begin will receive no refund. Fees for programs will be refunded only when campers are unable to complete that program due to medical problems. Refunds after a camper has already arrived at camp will be made on a pro-rated basis for the un-expired portions of the session, minus any transportation costs. If the camper has received a scholarship or discount, this will apply to the last days of the camp session. Homesickness or children sent home for disruptive behavior are not conditions for refunds.

RETURNED CHECK FEE

There will be a \$30.00 charge for any check returned to Camp Cullen.

DISCOUNTS

Scholarships:

Financial assistance is available. Inquire at your local YMCA for details, or contact/email Tracey Janitz at 713-353-5240 / traceyj@ymcahouston.org. *Those who wish to contribute to our scholarship fund may do so by contacting Camp Cullen directly or Tracey Janitz for more details.*

Multiple Session Discount:

A \$100.00 multiple session discount will be applied against the balance due for each child that registers for more than one session in the same summer season. Please contact the camp office for more information.

YMCA Member Discount:

A \$150.00 discount will be applied against the balance due if your family is a 'Full Facility' member of a Houston Area YMCA. A copy of the YMCA membership card *must* be included in order to receive the discount.

Only one discount may be used per camper per session. Discounts cannot be combined.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Camp Cullen provides a nurturing environment where children can feel free to express themselves. Our underlying mission that "every child matters" is displayed through counselors and staff that genuinely care for campers on an individual basis. Our staff is well trained and will do everything they can to make it a positive experience for all. If a child's behavior is affecting the overall camp environment, a camper may be asked to leave camp immediately. Parents please encourage your child to follow the instructions of counselors and other Camp Cullen staff. Camp Cullen has established two levels of behavior classifications, Type I and Type II with consequences for each. *It is not our intention to alarm parents, but rather to make everyone aware of our policies.* If a camper is suspected of non-compliance in regard to possible contraband, we reserve the right to search and seize contraband. This will be done only by Leadership Staff.

TYPE I behavior includes but is not limited to: serious infractions such as damage or theft of property, assault, hitting / kicking / biting other campers or staff, possessing weapons, bullying other campers, tobacco or tobacco products, alcohol, narcotics or illegal drugs, gang-related activity, sexual misconduct, repeated Type II violations, and any conduct that may be detrimental to the best interests of the other members of the camp. Type I behavior can result in immediate dismissal from camp. *Parents will be responsible for any transportation costs incurred to return the camper home. No refunds will be issued.*

TYPE II behavior is less serious but disruptive and therefore unacceptable. This includes but is not limited to: profanity, verbal abuse, tardiness and uncooperative behavior. Campers who engage in Type II behavior will be told of their unacceptable behavior and asked to correct it. Further problems will result in parents being called and viable alternatives for behavior will be discussed. Continuing problems may result in a meeting with the Senior Camp Staff. Continued Type II behavior can result in dismissal from camp. *Parents will be responsible for any transportation costs incurred to return the camper home. No refunds will be issued.*

PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT DAMAGE

Parents are financially responsible for damage to equipment and facilities caused by their camper.

MAIL

It is a great idea to bring some mail with you when you drop your campers off to avoid any delays with the post office. Please write the camper's name, Cabin Number and the date that you would like the mail delivered to your camper. If not, please allow five business days for mail to reach camp. Campers love to receive mail! Please write to your child at least once before camp begins to make sure it arrives for the first day. This will guarantee that your camper will receive at least one letter from home while they are at camp. Please address mail this way:

Camper's Name
Session #
YMCA Camp Cullen
460 Cullen Loop, Suite A
Trinity, TX 75862

CAMPERS LOVE HEARING FROM HOME

Whether it is your child's first or tenth summer at camp, mail-call is an important part of every camper's day. Here are some hints to make corresponding with your child more enjoyable.

DO

- Leave letters for your camper to receive throughout the week. We will collect these on opening day at check in.
- Send photos of family, friends, or pets.
- Have a grandparent write a letter or have pets send messages (paw prints)
- Send favorite comic strips, stickers, jokes, etc...
- Care packages – Parents please do not send food care-packages to avoid any health issues. Non- food items like magazines and letters are encouraged.

LOST AND FOUND

We will make every effort to return lost and found items while your camper is in camp, but your camper can do more than anyone to insure that nothing is lost. Please mark all items with a permanent marker or laundry label for easy identification. A lost and found fashion show will occur at the close of the session for kids to see all of the items of the week. Please check it before you leave to make sure your camper has not left anything behind. Items found after your child's camp session is over will be placed in our lost and found center and may be claimed by description. Please be especially thorough on check-out day to make sure that bags are not left. If you discover something is missing upon your return home, please call as soon as possible. Please be patient as counselors attempt to locate the missing item. Parents will be responsible for any cost to send these items to your home. Arrangements can be made to pick up the item at Camp Cullen. After August 15th, all remaining items will be donated to a welfare agency.

Camp Cullen is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged articles.

PARENTS' EVALUATION

We appreciate your immediate comments and feedback about our staff and program. Staff is evaluated several times throughout the summer and your comments mean a lot to them. If you felt a staff person did an exceptional job, please let us know so that they are recognized for a job well done. If you see or hear of a problem with any part of our program or staff, please contact the Camp Cullen office immediately so corrections can be made.

We are available at any time to answer your questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to call or stop by the camp office. At the end of the camp session, campers will receive an evaluation for their week. Parents will have the opportunity to do an online evaluation and we appreciate any feedback you have so that we can continue working towards the best camping program possible.

CONTRIBUTIONS

No tipping of individual staff members is permitted, but your appreciation may be shown by selecting a project or fund to receive your tax-deductible support:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Partners of Youth Fund | - | provides the means for a less fortunate boy or girl to attend camp. |
| Building/Capital Fund | - | provides new facilities and building for all to use. |
| Endowments | - | provide permanent sources of funds for programs, facilities and leadership while honoring someone. |
| Program Equipment | - | new or used items, helps us to expand our programs. |

SUMMER STAFF

Camp Cullen employs over 60 staff for the Summer Camp Program. Through a rigorous selection process we offer our campers the best role models from around the nation and around the world. While about fifty percent of our counselors return each year or advance through our leadership programs, others have to take summer school or graduate from college and take full time jobs. We spend our winters recruiting the remaining fifty percent of the staff at over 10 colleges in Texas, as well as through the International Camp Counselor Program. We select a number of international staff from all over the world who share our mission and show exemplary English skills.

Once the many applications are in, the selection process begins by studying applications, giving interviews and performing state and national screening processes. Criminal Background Checks and Pre-Employment Drug tests are administered before any staff member can work at Camp Cullen. All staff will attend a two week staff training where they will be trained in topics such as:

- CPR, First Aid and Emergency Procedures
- Special Activity Certifications
- Positive Discipline, Child Abuse Prevention
- Safety and Supervision Policies
- Dealing with Homesickness
- Age Appropriate Activities
- Rainy Day Activities
- Transitional Activities
- Diversity

WHAT TO BRING

Please send appropriate clothing with your child, taking into consideration the weather forecast and the camp activities. We encourage you to send old clothing to camp, as your camper will be doing rugged sports, climbing and hiking through the woods and horseback riding. Please review the list of things that you are sending to camp with your camper so they know what clothing and personal items are theirs. Luggage should be compact and easy to carry.

Note: There are no laundry services at Camp Cullen.



CAMPER CHECK LIST

Girls must wear modest ONE-PIECE swimsuits or tankinis only. Bikini swimsuits are not allowed. Clothing that is loose fitting, low-cut, too revealing or advertising unacceptable logos are not allowed. Shorts and T-shirts fit our activities best.

CLOTHING:

- 2 pairs of Shoes (such as sneakers or athletic shoes which are *required*)
- 1 pair of Jeans (*required* for horseback riding)
- 2 Swimsuits (**Girls-one piece or Tankini ONLY**)
- 7-8 pairs of Underwear
- 7-8 T-shirts or Blouses
- 7-8 pairs of Shorts
- 7-8 pairs of Socks
- Raincoat or Poncho
- Water Shoes (for the showers and waterfront activities)

BEDDING:

- 1 Sleeping Bag or 2 single Sheets & 1 light Blanket
- 1 Pillow
- Laundry Bag (an old pillow case will work)
- 1 Vinyl Mattress Cover for Twin Bed (optional)

TOILETRIES:

- Soap & Soap Dish
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Brush or Comb
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- 4-5 Washcloths
- 3-4 Bath Towels
- 1 Flashlight with batteries (**A MUST**)

OPTIONAL:

- Insect Repellent (non-aerosol)
- Paper, Pen, Envelope & Stamps
- Camera & Film
- Sunscreen or Sun Block
- 1 Water Bottle or Canteen
- 1-2 Beach Towels

Label any item possible with a name!!!



CAMP CULLEN DIRECTIONS

From Hwy 59

Take Hwy 59 to Livingston. Exit at Livingston/Huntsville. At the traffic light make a left onto Hwy 190 west. Take 190 west to Onalaska, approximately 13 miles. Go to second traffic light and make a right onto FM 356. Camp Cullen is 15 miles on the right. Pass under the entrance and follow signs.

From I-45

Take I-45 north to exit 113 (Huntsville/Crockett). This exit will turn into Hwy 19 north. Follow Hwy 19 for approximately 22 miles to Trinity. Go to the second traffic light and make a right onto Hwy 94 east. Go over the railroad tracks and turn right at the flashing yellow caution light onto FM 356. Camp Cullen is 5 miles on the left. Pass under the entrance and follow signs.

YMCA Camp Cullen

460 Cullen Loop Suite A • Trinity, TX 75862

713.758.9275 • 936.594.2274

Fax 713.758.9278

www.ymcacampcullen.org

SUMMER CAMP 2010

SESSION DATES

Session 1	June 6 – 12 th
Session 2	June 13 – 19 th
Session 3	June 20 – 26 th
Session 4	June 27 – July 3 rd
Session 5	July 4 – 10 th
Session 6	July 11 – 23 rd * (2 wk Session)
Session 7	July 25 – 31 st
Session 8	August 1 – 7 th
Session 9	August 8 – 14 th

<i>June 13 – 26th</i>	<i>Counselor in Training</i>
<i>July 4 – 17th</i>	<i>Counselor in Training</i>
<i>July 11 – 23rd</i>	<i>Counselor in Training</i>

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