



# YMCA CAMP CULLEN

## Outdoor Education Program

**Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Administrators,**

Welcome to the YMCA Camp Cullen Outdoor Education Program! You are about to embark on an experience designed to give you and your students the opportunity of a lifetime.

This school handbook has been created to assist you in planning a successful and enjoyable outdoor experience at Camp Cullen. Whether you are a new or returning school, we ask you read the guide thoroughly as it contains helpful information for the planning process and helps create your best experience.

We encourage you to utilize our staff and curriculum to assist in building a memorable program to meet the specific needs of your students. Outdoor Education at Camp Cullen provides students, as well as teachers and chaperones, the opportunity to explore the natural environment. After their experience, students will not only have a better appreciation for the natural world, but enhanced group relationship skills and stronger personal ties with classmates and teachers, which in turn will strengthen their respect for others as well as for themselves.

Any questions not answered after reading through this information or those that arise as a result of doing so, can be answered by calling the camp office. We will be more than happy to attend your school or hold an information meeting here for parents and teachers if so desired.

Enjoy looking through our information packet and if I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at (336) 409-7938 or email me at [luke.dooley@ymcahouston.org](mailto:luke.dooley@ymcahouston.org). We look forward to working with both you and your students!

Sincerely,

**Luke Dooley**

**Executive Director**

**YMCA Camp Cullen**

**936-594-2274**

**YMCA CAMP CULLEN** | 460 Cullen Loop, Suite A, Trinity, TX 75862 | 936-594-2274 | [YMCACampCullen.org](http://YMCACampCullen.org)



YMCA Mission: To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Everyone is welcome.

# Outdoor Education Program

Our programs are led by trained instructors who facilitate the learning experience through hands-on lessons, group work and fun activities designed to lead to open discussions. Our lake front camp provide the perfect setting for students to gain skills, knowledge and inspiration.

## Program Mission:

- Provide a hands-on, safe and fun educational experience in a unique environment.
- Strengthen the relationship between students and between teachers and students.
- Teach lessons that enhance the Texas curriculum.
- Promote within students a greater sense of independence and respect.
- Enable and encourage students to understand and experience the relationships between themselves and the natural environment.



**“Healing the broken bond between our young and nature is in everyone’s self-interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demand it, but also because our mental, physical and spiritual health depend upon it.”**

**Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature- Deficit Disorder**

## 2022/23 Outdoor Education Rates \*School staff attend at no cost

One night/two days of programming	\$75 for student   \$38 for parent
Two nights/three days of programming	\$110 for student   \$55 for parent
Three nights/ four days of programming	\$148 for student   \$74 for parents
Four nights/ five days of programming	\$180 for student   \$90 for parents
Day trip with hot lunch	\$28 per student   \$13 for parents
Day trip bag lunch brought by school	\$20 per student   \$10 per parents
Trip to school by Camp Cullen staff	Dependent on program size and length



## Meals and Food Service

Our Dining Hall has wonderful meals. We serve our meals family style to each table. We also have coffee and tea available all day to adults.

For breakfast, we offer cold cereal, a bagel bar and a fruit and yogurt bar. At lunch/dinner we have a full salad bar, cold cut sandwich station, fruit and soy nut butter and jelly.

### An example of daily meal schedule would be:

- Breakfast: bacon, eggs, biscuits and grits with fruit choice and water.
- Lunch: chicken tenders with macaroni and cheese with lemonade and water.
- Dinner: baked spaghetti, corn and garlic bread with tea and water.



At YMCA Camp Cullen we work hard to meet our guest needs. Food allergies need to be shared a week before the trip to help our staff prepare. We are a PEANUT FREE FACILITY. We can do some vegetarian, gluten free and dairy free allergy meals. Please call camp to discuss your needs.

## Cabins and Facilities

We have 24 cabins available at camp. All of the cabins have bathroom facilities attached with showers, restrooms and sinks. Each cabin sleeps 17 and has central heating and air.

All cabins are located in areas with fire pits perfect for late night campfires.

We have a large pool, conference room, airnasium, indoor small meeting space and several outdoor covered meeting spaces and so we can make adjustments if needed by weather.



# Sample Schedules

## Three Day Schedule

### Day One

11 am: Arrive, Move  
11:30 am: Orientation  
12 pm: Lunch  
1 pm: 1st Activity  
2:15 pm: 2nd Activity  
3:30 pm: 3rd Activity  
4:45 pm: 4th Activity  
6 pm: Supper  
7:30 pm: Evening Activities  
8:45 pm: Head to Cabins  
9 pm: Quiet Hour  
10 pm: Lights Out

### Day Two

8 am: Breakfast  
9 am: 5th Activity  
10:15 am: 6th Activity  
11:30 am: Recreation Time  
12 pm: Lunch  
1 pm: 7th Activity  
2:15 pm: 8th Activity  
3:30 pm: 9th Activity  
4:45 pm: 10th Activity  
6 pm: Supper  
7:30 pm: Evening Activities  
8:45 pm: Head to Cabins  
9 pm: Quiet Hour  
10 pm: Lights Out

### Day Three

8 am: Breakfast  
9 am: 11th Activity  
10:15 am: 12th Activity  
11:30 am: Recreation Time  
12 pm: Lunch  
1 pm: Depart

## Two Day Schedule

### Day One

11 am: Arrive, Move  
11:30 am: Orientation  
12 pm: Lunch  
1 pm: 1st Activity  
2:15 pm: 2nd Activity  
3:30 pm: 3rd Activity  
4:45 pm: 4th Activity  
6 pm: Supper  
7:30 pm: Evening Activities  
8:45 pm: Head to Cabins  
9 pm: Quiet Hour  
10 pm: Lights Out

### Day Two

8 am: Breakfast  
9 am: 11th Activity  
10:15 am: 12th Activity  
11:30 am: Recreation Time  
12 pm: Lunch  
1 pm: Depart

## Day Trip Schedule\*

### Day Two

9 am: Arrival  
9:15 am: 1st Activity  
10:20 am: 2nd Activity  
11:30 am: Lunch  
12:30 pm: 3rd Activity  
1:30 pm: 4th Activity  
2:45 pm: Departure

**\*\*All schedules can be adjusted with school travel times in mind. Some activities require more than one activity period and are not a good match for day programs.**



# Outdoor Education Class/Evening Activity Options



## Science Options

### Water Ecology+

#### Goals:

- Develop an awareness of the importance of water to all life
- Use a key to identify organisms that live in a lake or a stream
- Learn how pollution levels can be determined by the species found in the lake

#### Potential Activities:

- Participate in games and activities that teach about the importance of water
- Use a bug box, dip net and hand lens to search for and collect aquatic life
- Use a field guide to identify species

### Life in the Woods+

#### Goals:

- Explore a food chain
- Define predator, prey, carrying capacity
- Observe population changes through graphing
- Discuss basic needs of survival

#### Potential Activities:

- Participate in a large group game that role plays the various parts of a food chain.
- Graph the population changes in an ecosystem
- Discuss Carrying Capacity and what affects species population

**+Denotes a Camp Cullen Outdoor Education Favorite**

### Animal Interdependence+

#### Goals:

- Use observation skills to explain new species at camp
- Infer the relationships in the ecosystem and what conclusions you can make about our new ecosystem.
- Discuss different relationships in an ecosystem.

#### Potential Activities:

- Participation in games and discovery activities
- Play a game in order to learn about camouflage

### Forest Ecology+

#### Goals:

- Develop an appreciation for the forest as an important community
- Investigate the natural environment
- Explore different habitats
- Understand the delicate balance of nature
- Sharpen attention to detail
- Learn about seasonal differences

#### Potential Activities:

- Hike on the nature trail around the lake
- Identify a variety of trees
- Participate in games and ecology activities

## Water Cycle +

### Goals:

- Explore the various stages of the water cycle
- Identify the states of water as it moves through the cycle
- Recognize the affect that water has on land forms
- Discover the best ways to manage erosion

### Potential Activities:

- Participate in an activity that simulates the movement of water through the cycle
- Role-play affects the movement of water over land surfaces and the affects of vegetation
- Create an active water cycle
- Discussion and observation time

## Soil Study

### Goals:

- Learn about the different layers and types of soil
- Learn how soil is formed
- Learn about the effects of erosion on the environment
- Understand the importance of soil

### Potential Activities:

- Use a shovel to find and collect soil samples
- Use a sieve to look at particle size
- Use an auger to see soil layers

## Magnificent Minerals

### Goals:

- Learn the properties of a mineral
- Learn how to identify a mineral
- Discuss the common uses of minerals are in our lives
- Learn the value of minerals as a natural resource

### Potential Activities:

- Identify a mineral through a variety of test
- Look for minerals we use in our daily surroundings
- Identify minerals that are used in our food products
- Learn why minerals are a non-renewable resource

## Threat Quarry (3 hours) +

### Goals:

- Understand the definition of Geology
- Learn the difference between a rock and a mineral
- Learn about sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rock formation
- Learn about the minerals that make up quartz

### Potential Activities:

- Search for and collect a small sample of quartz crystals

# Adventure and Teamwork Classes



Teambuilding (2 hour to 5 hours – based upon needs) +

## Goals:

- Develop interpersonal skills; communication and trust
- Introduce group dynamic skills; leader vs. follower
- Encourage group planning and decision-making
- Build group cohesiveness, cooperation and teamwork

## Potential Activities:

- Group games and challenges
- Experience physical and mental obstacles
- Discussion and debriefing

Teams Course (1 hour- 3hours- based upon needs) +

## Goals:

- Develop interpersonal skills; communication and trust
- Introduce group dynamic skills; leader vs. follower
- Encourage group planning and decision-making
- Build group cohesiveness, cooperation and teamwork

## Potential Activities:

- Use elements on the low-ropes course
- Experience physical and mental obstacles
- Similar to teambuilding but on our built elements around camp
- Discussion and debriefing

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Large Group Games

## Goals:

- Encourage laughter and fun with play
- Involve all aspects of a community to encourage play and teamwork together
- While teambuilding is more of student to student relationships group games is student to teacher relationship based.

## Potential Activities:

- Games that involve teachers and students
- Groups can strategize but may also develop individual plans
- Mix of high energy games and low energy games to allow inclusion of all participants

The Beast (Can be as an evening program) +

## Goals:

- Teambuilding and communication.
- Develop skills to work through frustration
- Focus on team goals rather than individual

## Potential Activities:

- Participate in a communication challenge with the goal being to build a beast
- Work with the team in their chosen role to meet the goal
- The activity is brought to a close with a group discussion on communication
- Discussion and debriefing



## Survival (1 to 3 hours based upon needs) +

### Goals:

- Understand basic survival needs and skills
- Build communication, teamwork, cooperation and problem solving skills
- Learn safety skills

### Potential Activities:

- Use teamwork skills while building a shelter and fire
- Learn and perform basic first aid
- Create rescue signals

## Orienteering

### Goals:

- Learn the parts and use of a compass
- Improve self-esteem
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Improve teamwork, cooperation and communication skills

### Potential Activities:

- Use their compass to follow a course
- Participate in group games and activities
- Work as a team in a game using compass and coordinates

## Archery +

### Goals:

- Learn or improve archery skills
- Learn safety skills
- Improve self-esteem
- Develop a new skill or hobby
- Learn the parts of a bow and arrow

### Potential Activities:

- Group discussion and learning
- Learn commands and safety
- Use a simple bow to shoot arrows at a target on the archery range

## Canoeing +

### Goals:

- Learn or improve canoeing skills
- Learn water safety skills
- Improve communication and cooperation skills
- Learn the parts of a canoe and a paddle

### Potential Activities:

- Learn how to paddle through hands-on instruction
- Learn how to put on a life jacket
- Paddle in groups of two or three in a canoe around the lake

# High Ropes Activities



## Zip Line/ High Ropes Course (3 hours) +

### Goals:

- Encourage students to develop greater self-confidence
- Learn to support and encourage teammates
- Encourage students to go beyond their "comfort zone"
- Learn about the proper use and care of the climbing equipment
- Learn basic climbing and safety techniques

### Potential Activities:

- Harness and equipment training
- Climb across a series of wood, cable and rope elements suspended 25-30 feet in the air while wearing a harness and on a belay system
- Experience physical and mental challenges
- Debrief and discussion time

## V-Swing (1 to 3 hours based upon needs)

### Goals:

- Develop self confidence
- Control how high or far you would like to go with the activity
- Learn to support and encourage yourself and others
- Work together as a team to pull teammate to swing level

### Potential Activities:

- Training of safety and equipment
- Learning commands and following directions
- Swing up to 25 feet in the air, or wherever participant feels comfortable
- Discussion and debriefing

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## Alpine Tower +

(1 to 3 hours based upon need)

### Goals:

- Learn basic climbing and safety techniques
- Develop greater self-confidence
- Overcome personal fears and obstacles
- Learn to support and encourage teammates

### Potential Activities:

- Training on safety, climbing skills and equipment
- Climb on a 35-foot tower while wearing a harness and on a belay system
- Discussion and debriefing time

## Power Pole (1 to 3 hours based upon needs)

### Goals:

- Develop self confidence
- Control how high or far you would like to go with the activity
- Learn to support and encourage yourself and others

### Potential Activities:

- Training of safety and equipment
- Learning commands and following directions
- Discussion and debriefing

## Evening Activities/All Camp Activities

\*Some availability is based upon weather, day light.



### Astronomy +

#### Goals:

- Use the Camp Cullen telescopes to identify and learn about different constellations.
- Allow students the chance to study the night sky in a natural environment

#### Potential Activities:

- Each team will be challenged to name different constellations through each telescope.

### Camp Cullen Bingo

#### Goals:

- Fun (with prizes!)
- Review vocabulary words used in classes.

#### Potential Activities:

- Classic "bingo" with vocabulary words as the letters and numbers.

### Action Auction +

#### Goals:

- Fun.
- Creativity.
- Cabin or activity group team building.

#### Potential Activities:

- Students will bring a few items from their cabin to play this crazy game. When our professional judges call out an object, the teams will use the items to create it. Teams gain points for the best time and creativity.

### Night Hike

#### Goals:

- Raise the students' comfort level of the dark.
- Learn about how our senses work and how light affects them.

#### Potential Activities:

- While walking on a short hike students will participate in a variety of activities. These activities will help them learn about the parts of the eye, and how senses are affected by their surroundings.

### Campfire +

#### Goals:

- Fun

#### Potential Activities:

- Enjoy the evening as camp staff leads skits and songs.

### Rocks

#### Goals:

- Fun

#### Potential Activities

- This active game is a Camp Cullen favorite. This version of capture the flag will get your students running and having an exciting time.

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## Smugglers and Spies

### Goals:

- Fun

### Potential Activities:

- This game is a fun version of tag. Students try to earn points by running across the playing area with hidden paper. The other team tries to tag and figure out where the paper is hidden. Then we switch the roles around. If you want your students to be active, this is a great choice.

## Zingers +

### Goals:

- Fun.
- Cabin or activity group team building.
- Short games to keep students interested and wind down for the evening.

### Potential Activities:

- Each team will be challenged as they rotate through a series of group-activity stations.

## The Beast

See under Adventure and Teamwork Courses