



# Camp Pine Crest

## Camper Information Guide

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Welcome to YMCA Camp Pine Crest!

This guide is for campers and parents to help prepare for camp this summer. Whether it's your very first time away at camp or you're a returning camper, this guide will answer your questions.

Being at camp is very different than being at home. We sleep in cabins of 8-10 people, eat in large dining halls with close to 300 people, and we are outside most of each day with the bugs! This type of lifestyle means that we work together to ensure that everyone's camp experience is positive. We expect all campers and staff to treat each other with respect and help others enjoy their time away from home. We hope campers return home with greater confidence, new friendships and excitement so they return to camp year after year!

If you're feeling nervous about going away for the first time, please visit us at our Family Information Day at YMCA Cedar Glen in May or our Open House at Pine Crest in June. Stay in touch with us on Facebook or by email to get the details for these events closer to the date. This is a great time to meet some staff, learn what to expect and play a little too. You can also see pictures on our website at [www.camppinecrest.ca](http://www.camppinecrest.ca) and on Facebook. Or take a walk around our site on our Google Tour.

Please give us a call anytime with questions. Take care and we can't wait to see you soon!

The Pine Crest Team

705-762-3377 / 1-877-878-9622

[camp.pinecrest@ymcagta.org](mailto:camp.pinecrest@ymcagta.org)

## Information Sessions

We find that even after reading all the information the camp provides, children often have very specific questions that can be answered during our Family Information Day. Come out and see a slide show about camp life, meet some of the staff and have your questions answered. We will also be playing a few camp games and having a chance to connect campers and staff in preparation for the summer.

Leadership and Adventure Leadership Information Day will provide specific program and travel information by the staff that will be working with your child. This session is a mandatory part of the preparation for leadership programs. If individuals cannot attend, a staff member will arrange a phone call with each family to ensure all information has been shared prior to the summer.

**Camper Family Information Day:** Held mid-May at Cedar Glen Outdoor Center in Schomberg.

**Leadership Information Day:** Held at the end of May at the Toronto Central Grosvenor St. YMCA Centre in downtown Toronto.

**Annual Pine Crest Triathlon and Open House:** Held in mid-June at YMCA Camp Pine Crest, in Torrance. The Open House will be preceded by our annual triathlon. We will have a 9 a.m. race start. This annual race is comprised of a swim, run and paddle all over our property. There will be categories for individuals, teams and children – all ages are welcome. All fundraising goes towards our Pine Crest Annual Giving Campaign to help children go to camp! Call today to register at 1-877-878-9622.

## Our Guiding Principles

**YMCA mission statement:** The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth, community involvement and leadership. Our success is built on our commitment to the mission of the YMCA. In pursuit of this, and to distinguish camp from other experiences offered by our YMCA and the community, our camping and outdoor centre services are based on the following guiding principles.

### **Small-group experience**

- Most of the camper's time occurs in a group size of approximately 8-10.
- We provide opportunities for social development, group interdependence, interpersonal problem solving and leadership development.

### **Natural focus**

- The camp program primarily features activities specific to our semi-wilderness setting and are not as readily available to children in their home or school environment.
- We take a holistic approach to environmental education and environmental stewardship, creating exciting experiences in the outdoors.

### **Democratic living**

- While living in a group in a small cabin or on a canoe trip, campers learn to make decisions that serve both the individual and the group.
- The cabin groups work together to determine the cabin program activities that they choose at the beginning of each session.

### **Enjoyable programs**

- We want to make sure that every child has fun at camp.
- We encourage a sense of camp spirit, positive attitudes and camaraderie.
- Our programs add to the camper's overall development by providing situations in which positive attitudes and fun approaches to problems lead to success.

### **Inclusive community**

- Our camp brings campers and staff of various abilities and cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds together in one community.
- We offer financial assistance through a variety of channels in order to assure equal access to our programs at Pine Crest.

### **Healthy lifestyle**

- We promote active outdoor activities rain or shine.
- Our staff encourage children to get enough rest, drink lots of water and apply sunscreen regularly to stay healthy.
- Our Wellness Centre staff check in with campers numerous times during their session to ensure they are healthy and feel comfortable.

## Expectations at Camp

### **Respect for Yourself**

At YMCA Camp Pine Crest, we live by basic principles of respect. Every person at camp has the responsibility to know their own limits and take care of themselves by eating and sleeping enough, drinking enough water and putting on sunscreen. Camp is often a very busy place, much different than being at home or school. We support campers to know when they need to rest and when they need to take some time for themselves. Counsellors make sure that all campers take time for personal hygiene, are given the opportunity for quiet time in our busy environment, and have the opportunity to talk about how they are feeling each day.

### **Respect for Others**

We also expect that each person at camp has respect for all others living at camp. Our YMCA believes that every participant has the right to a safe environment and equal treatment by all without discrimination. A camp experience is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the incredible things a group can accomplish together while welcoming the differences in individuals. Living at camp can sometimes be a stressful situation for some campers, and we ask that everyone respects the physical and emotional boundaries of others while living together. We work hard to support all campers and ensure that everyone's experience provides opportunity for fun and learning.

While working in a group, challenges may arise and we work through them together in a safe and productive way. In the situation where a camper is unsafe and harming themselves or others, they may be removed from the program. See the Code of Conduct below for more regarding our expectations of campers.

### **Respect for the Environment**

At camp we are careful that excess garbage is not left around for those critters that also live on Clear Lake. Respect for the camp environment also includes keeping all of our buildings, trails and equipment in good repair. On canoe trips we are guests in the environment and live by a philosophy that we leave each place better than when we arrived. This includes taking only pictures, low impact camping and being proactive about our impact on the earth. Campers and staff are expected to take initiative in sustaining the beauty of our camp for future guests to our site and to provide a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

## Code of Conduct

At YMCA Camp Pine Crest our staff are trained and experienced in providing high quality care for our campers, ensuring the needs of each individual are met. We expect that all staff, volunteers, campers and parents are focused on supporting Pine Crest to be a safe environment for everyone, both emotionally and physically.

If a situation arises where a camper threatens the safety or security of another camper, staff member, or themselves, we will make every appropriate effort to inform the parents involved, address the behaviour and provide a positive camp experience for everyone. However, should disruptive behaviour continue, the child may be dismissed from camp at the discretion of the Camp Director or the designate. The camp will not be held responsible for any costs or provide a refund associated with a camper's dismissal on the grounds of disruptive behaviour.

**Note:** In extreme circumstances, a camper may be removed from the camp environment without warning if their behaviour jeopardizes the safety of campers or staff, or where the camper is engaged in illegal activities (including possession of non-prescription drugs, alcohol and/or tobacco products).

## Packing and Preparations — A Guide for Parents

### Going away for the first time:

Coming to YMCA Camp Pine Crest is very exciting for both campers and parents! It's very natural, however, for both to feel a bit anxious. Campers will be leaving the comforts of home, adopting new routines and meeting new friends. We want to minimize first-day anxiety so your child will feel at home at Pine Crest. Our staff are well prepared and understand how to help campers feel comfortable. There are a number of things you can do ahead of time to prepare for the transition and minimize anxiety so children feel in control over their own experience.

- Plan the camper's journey together as a family. Reviewing this booklet and all other camp information together will provide the opportunity to discuss the camp experience ahead of time.
- For first time campers that are a bit nervous- sometimes discussing camp without knowing what to expect can be very nerve racking. Introduce the idea of camp but try not to highlight it too far in advance. Re-visit the idea again closer to the summer and after reading this guide.
- When discussing camp with your child, we recommend that you openly talk about the possibility of them feeling uneasy in the new environment. It's quite natural to feel strange in a new place without their family, but that they can look forward to sharing stories about the wonderful time they had at camp.
- Have your child write out a list of questions that they may be wondering about to ask before they attend.

- Come to our Family Information Days to see pictures of camp, meet some staff and have those questions answered.
- Come to our Open House to explore camp to see where they will be spending their time away.
- Talk about the types of things that will happen each day at camp as well as the overall program. Make sure they know, for example, that they will be going on a canoe trip, that they have the option to swim daily, and that they can choose activities with their group.
- Make sure your child has a hand in packing for camp. Please send old, recognizable clothes. This will go a long way to make your child feel more at home. Often brand new clothes are not recognizable and become lost.
- Write a letter to your child before they leave so that they receive it at camp. We are happy to organize letters that you can leave with us on Arrival Day as long as you clearly label them. This often is the most reassuring message that they are not missing anything at home and can be free to enjoy themselves in their new adventure.
- Provide your camper with a journal or letter writing materials so that they can share their camp experiences with you while they are at camp.
- Providing photographs to take with them for the cabin or comforts from their home routines including blankets, stuffed animals or books ensure they feel comfortable at night.
- Reassure them that you will miss them too but you are proud of them and confident in their ability to be independent and ready to hear all about their amazing adventures when they return.
- Practice staying away from home before coming to camp. Have your child attend a sleepover with family or friends to help them understand what it will feel like to be away from home for a night or two. This will also help build up confidence your child as they anticipate camp.

### Coping With Homesickness

All YMCA Camp Pine Crest staff make a special effort to help campers overcome homesickness by helping them accept the natural feelings of missing family or friends. Our counsellors talk to campers about their feelings while assuring them that homesickness is a normal part of being in a new place. We keep our campers busy and try to interest them in new and exciting activities.

We do our best to avoid removing a camper from camp due to homesickness. Taking him or her away too soon may make it difficult for your child to overcome homesickness in the future. In the cases of persistent homesickness we will contact the home to provide an update and work on a plan that best suits the needs of the camper, family and the camp.

Please do not tell your child that they can call or get picked up if they need to- we find that children need time to adjust and build confidence on their own and these calls often disrupt the process of working on independence and escalates homesickness. It's completely normal for parents to be nervous and miss your child as well. Please do not hesitate to call camp during your child's session to receive an update on how they are doing and speak to one of our senior team or their counsellor to put your mind at ease. You can also check out general updates on our Facebook page to stay connected to some programs that your child will be participating in at camp.

## What to Bring to Camp

Packing for camp can be fun for kids! Get your child involved so they can easily recognize their belongings. Since they'll be away for at least one or two weeks, it's very important that they come equipped with all the items needed at camp. It is also helpful to write your child's name on all of their belongings in case anything gets misplaced.

Below is a suggested list of what to bring to assist with packing. Canoe trip needs are taken into consideration in the design of this list.

**Bedding:** Campers bring their own sleeping bags and pillows. If bedwetting is a concern, please note that our staff are trained to deal with this discreetly, working with children one-on-one. Campers are encouraged to ask their counsellors for help, day or night, and every effort is made to prevent accidents. Campers who may wet the bed are asked to bring extra bedding or sleeping bag liners to camp. The camp laundry service is available to quickly launder any bedding. Please make sure this has been noted on the Personal Information Section of the registration form.

**Eyeglasses/contacts:** For children who require eyeglasses or contacts, we recommend that parents consider sending along an extra pair to be kept in the Wellness Centre in case they are needed.

**Shoes, sandals and flip-flops:** Because of our natural rocky setting, we encourage campers to bring suitable footwear. We consider flip-flops to be a safety risk and we ask that all campers and staff wear footwear with backstraps.

**Out-trip Footwear Campers:** are required to bring two pairs of closed toed shoes for their outtrip. One pair will be worn during the day and will get wet. The second pair will be kept dry for the evenings. We ask for a sturdy pair of shoes to be worn during the day as campers may encounter rugged terrain while portaging or swimming. To ensure your camper's safety we recommend an older pair of running sturdy shoes over thin water shoes. Keen type sandals are fine as long as they have adequate toe coverage.

**Medications:** All medications are to be sent to camp in their original packages, clearly labelled with the person's full name and date of birth. All staff and camper medications are locked in a secure space within the Wellness Centre. We ask that you give the medications to the bus monitor, if travelling by bus, and that you give them directly to our Wellness Director on the first day if you're dropping off your child. If your child wears a medic alert bracelet, we strongly encourage that he/she wears this bracelet while at camp, and that this information is clearly noted on the Health Form.

### Packing List Based on a Two-Week Session:

- 1 rain coat with hood (waterproof)
- 1 pair rain pants
- 1 sun hat
- 1 tube sunscreen (minimum SPF 60)
- 1 sleeping bag
- 1 blanket
- 1 pillow
- 6-8 pairs of socks
- 6-8 pairs of underwear
- 6-8 T-shirts
- 3 pairs of long pants
- 4-6 pairs of shorts
- 4 long-sleeve T-shirts
- 1 sweater (fleece, wool)
- 2 pairs of running shoes (one for wearing on trip)
- 1 pair of sandals (with ankle strap – no flip-flops will be allowed)
- 2 swim suits (no string/clasp bikinis please!)
- 2 towels
- 2 pairs of pajamas
- 1 toothbrush/toothpaste
- 1 brush or comb
- 1 insect repellent (lotion, not spray, ideally eco friendly please)
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- 1 flashlight/extra batteries
- 1 water bottle (camp also sells Pine Crest water bottles)
- 1 camera
- Soap and shampoo for showers at camp (Biodegradeable please to be easy on our septic system!)



## Optional items

- Writing paper and envelopes, pen
- Stamps
- Journal
- Small backpack
- Musical instrument
- Books
- Rubber boots
- Paddle, PFD or any personal canoe trip gear
- Fitted sheet for a single bed

## What Not To Bring To Camp

At YMCA Camp Pine Crest, we believe that a camp experience should be a return to the basics, where campers can develop a sense of harmony with nature, themselves and others. If any of these items are brought to camp they will be collected by camp staff and returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the camp session. Please ensure the items listed below are not brought to camp:

- Pocket knives
- Matches
- Cell phones
- Electronic toys or devices (e.g. Nintendo DS)
- Personal media players (e.g. iPod, iPad)
- Radios, stereos, CDs (Nut-Free site)
- Toy guns or water pistols
- Curling irons or hair dryers
- Any other valuables

## Harm Reduction

YMCA Camp Pine Crest has a harm reduction practice for possession of weapons and possession and/or consumption of alcohol, tobacco and nonprescription drugs. Any participant found in possession of these items or found to have consumed these items while at camp or involved in a camp program will work with the Camp Director and may be dismissed from the program without refund. Parents will be notified immediately where possible and involved in the process.

## Our Programs

At Pine Crest we offer a variety of programs especially suited to campers of different ages, levels of interest and experience. In all of our programs campers will be provided with opportunities to choose activities, meet new people and take part in both small and large group programs.

**Two-Week Camp:** Our two-week program is the traditional Pine Crest experience for campers aged 7-14. In this program we focus on skill mastery and relationship building. Over the course of this program there are plenty of opportunities to learn and develop skills in daily lessons. Furthermore, campers will develop incredible bonds with their cabin mates and counsellors by spending time with them each day in programs, at meals and on a canoe trip. Every two week cabin group will go on a canoe trip that ranges from one to four nights in length. The length of your camper's trip is based on their age.

**One-Week Camp:** One week camp is perfect for campers who are nervous about trying camp for the first time or are not quite ready to leave home for an extended period of time. For campers aged 7 to 11, this experience will provide each camper with a taste of all things Pine Crest in their short time with us. They will stay busy trying out as many programs as possible from high ropes to swimming and even an overnight canoe trip on the Pine Crest property. During the morning skills blocks, these campers will try a variety of skills each day to discover a wide range of program areas, rather than specializing in one or two. One week campers have their own special area of camp so their experience is not affected by what seems like a rowdy dining hall or noisy nighttime programs for older campers. We limit this program to a smaller age range to ensure that our programs are developmentally appropriate and we best meet the needs of our campers.

**Pine Cones:** A highlight of our summer is providing an introduction to the overnight camping experience for 5-7 year-olds! This 3 day, 2 night session at Camp Pine Crest offers an age appropriate introduction to the overnight camp experience. Campers will spend their days participating in the wide variety of programs that we have to offer. They will also be introduced to out tripping by hiking to a nearby campsite and eating lunch prepared over a fire. All staff are trained to deliver age appropriate programming and to ensure proper care of our youngest overnight campers.

**Little Critters Day Camp:** We also offer a day camp for families who live or cottage locally. Every week has a unique theme and every day is full of fun! For 4-8 year olds, this is the best place in Muskoka to spend summer days! We will provide families with specific Day Camp information in the spring.

**Campers with special needs and Reach for the Rainbow:** At the YMCA, we believe that the camp experience can benefit all children. That is why we work to assist families in integrating

children with special needs into our camp programs. Additional staff support is given to camper groups, along with one-on-one staff support to individuals with special needs. Campers with special needs are integrated into the cabin group entirely and will attend all programs with their cabin group.

We are proud to work with Reach for the Rainbow, a partner agency, in providing the opportunity for all campers to experience the pleasures and friendships of integrated programming. Please contact Reach for the Rainbow to find out more about registering your child in camp through their program. [www.reachfortherainbow.ca](http://www.reachfortherainbow.ca)

We are also very proud that after attending as campers with us, many of our special needs campers become leadership participants, volunteers and staff. This is a unique part of our Pine Crest culture and community and all participants and staff grow from the experience.

## Orientation Day Activities

At the beginning of each session, cabin groups participate in an Orientation Day to familiarize themselves with the Pine Crest community and the programs available by visiting all our program areas. Orientation Day occurs on arrival day for One Week Campers and Adventure Leadership Participants. Two Week Campers and all other Leadership Participants follow the Orientation Day schedule on their first full day at camp.

During Orientation Day, groups visit with the wellness staff and campers have a quick one-on-one check in with the Wellness Director to ensure each child's needs are addressed. This includes a full lice check of each camper.

This is also a time where all cabins will have their cabin photo taken to be sent home with each camper. These photos are also used in our promotional and alumni material in future years.

**Swim test:** A major part of orientation day is for each camper to complete their swim test at the swim docks. This is a mandatory evaluation of swim levels to ensure that staff are prepared to support campers at all levels. Cabin groups learn about the expectations on the waterfront from the waterfront area heads and then complete as much of the swim test as they can. While campers are sometimes nervous about the swim test, help us in reminding them that there is no pressure to complete it, only an expectation that everyone will try. This helps us to understand each camper's swimming ability so that we can best support them.

Campers are assigned a level based on their ability demonstrated in the swimming test. Based on the level they achieve campers may be able to swim in some areas without a lifejacket. Campers may try to achieve the next level at any time during the session under the supervision of their counsellors.

**Dunk Test:** Just like the swim test, on orientation day, campers complete what we call a “dunk test” to see how comfortable they are in canoes and kayaks. This test prepares campers for the possibility of “dunking” and keeps them calm and collected if they happen to tip in a boat. Staff will be in the water with children to explain the process to them and make it fun as well. Every camper and staff wears a PFD while in boats, on sail boards and, for younger children, while snorkeling. This is a camp-wide rule for both safety and positive role modelling.

### Typical Day at Pine Crest

Time	Activity
7:15 to 7:55 am	Wake Up and Radical Risers
8:05 am	Morning thought/ Flag Raising
8:15 am	Breakfast and Daily Skits (announcements)
9:00 am	Cabin Clean Up
9:45 am	Skill Block 1
11:00 am	Skill Block 2
12:10 pm	All Camp Announcements
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm	Rest Hour
2:30 pm	Cabin activities
3:30 pm	Cabin activities
4:30 pm	General Swim and Clubs
5:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 pm	General Boating and Clubs
7:30 pm	Evening Program and Special Events
8:30 to 10:00 pm	Snack and Bedtime (depending on age)
10:00 pm	Night patrol begins!

## Daily Program Descriptions

**Radical Risers and Captain Cleanup:** Each morning, cabins are encouraged to participate in the Radical Risers program. This activity could be a morning dip, a hike, morning paddle or anything else the cabin decides to do together. Following breakfast each day, campers and staff return to their cabin to participate in cabin cleanup and try to get a perfect score for the entire session from Captain Cleanup. This is a great time for cabin mates to contribute to the cabin and will be assigned roles within the group to achieve high scores. Repeated low scores for cabins will mean that the group may miss program to clean their cabin. Cabin groups are challenged to compete against others to get the highest scores for these programs, and have an opportunity to win a prize at the end of the session!

**Skill Development:** We believe that camp is an ideal environment to challenge ourselves and to discover new skills. As such, skill development is a central part of the camper experience. In their limited time with us, one week campers focus on skill discovery, visiting a variety of program areas each day to experience as many skills as possible. Our two week program offers opportunities for skill development, where each camper chooses two skills to specialize in.

During skills, our two week campers work to complete skills levels. Campers are awarded their skill cards on the last day of camp at our awards ceremony. The levels are a series of progressive skills that campers can work towards mastery in that particular area. Campers are awarded their skill cards on the last day of camp at our awards ceremony and recognized for their hard work and achievements. While Two Week Campers are working towards skill levels our One Week Campers spend their time visiting each different skill area throughout their weeklong stay. They will get an introduction to each of our skill areas, building curiosity and foundational skills for future years.

Campers are led in small groups by qualified staff members to earn levels in one of these ten skill development areas:

- **Canoeing:** Campers learn the basics of paddling and have the opportunity to earn Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association (ORCKA) Basic Canoeing levels with qualified ORCKA instructors.
- **Swimming:** Lifesaving Society and YMCA certified swim instructors teach basic and advanced swimming lessons. Please note for cabins that are with us for shorter stays or will be on longer canoe trips swim levels may not be achieved in their time at camp.
- **Archery:** A chance to practice your aim with a bow and arrow at our archery ranges. There will be plenty of opportunities to build your own targets and challenge your friends.
- **Kayaking:** Qualified staff provide instruction at the flat-water level, concentrating on basic strokes and kayaking fundamentals.

- **Performance Arts:** Join in fun drama games, learn basic guitar chords and play a beat on our djembe drums! You'll even have the chance to perform in an original Camp Pine Crest Production at our closing campfire!
- **Natural Arts:** Get creative at our Natural Arts Centre with wood, clay, wax, paper, leather, beads or try photography and develop photos in our dark room.
- **Woodcraft:** Build shelters, learn navigation, cook a gourmet meal over the fire, practice for out-trip and much more. Come explore nature with telescopes, microscopes, bugs, gardening, animal tracking, bird watching and exploring the site.
- **Snorkeling:** Learn the art and science of this popular diving sport. See what treasures you can find on the bottom of our crystal clear lake.
- **Land Sports:** Get active on land as you learn and play various team sports, lawn games, and field games. You might even have a chance to invent a game or two!
- **Climbing:** For Senior and Pioneer Campers. Learn about rock climbing techniques and safety, and experience what both our low and high ropes courses have to offer. (Note that while this skill is limited to Senior and Pioneer campers, all campers are welcome to experience climbing with their cabin groups).

**Small Group Activity:** For the afternoon and evening, activity choices are made democratically by the cabin group at the beginning of the session, and modified on any given day to meet the changing needs of the cabin. Groups choose from an exciting variety of activities that may include: canoeing games, stand up paddle boards, cooking pizzas in the pizza oven, playing an exciting game of survivor, story time, stargazing, low and high ropes adventure programs, picnic lunches, disc golf, hula hooping, and much, much more!

**Clubs:** Clubs are held each day before and after dinnertime. Weather permitting, there is always a free swim before and an evening paddle after dinner during club time. The other clubs offered each day are pre-determined by the staff members leading clubs that particular day. Past clubs have included letter writing, hip-hop dancing, raft building, sports on the adventure field, and many other specialty activities that our dynamic staff have to offer. Each camper must choose one club to attend, and with clubs of varying energy levels there is always something for everyone!

## Sessional Program Descriptions

**Section Time:** Each cabin is part of one of the four camper sections:

- Bantams, aged 7-9,
- Juniors, aged 9-11
- Seniors aged 11-13
- Pioneers, aged 13-15

Each section participates in special programming together during the session. Some of our most creative special games and events happen during Section Times. Get excited!

**All-Camp Days and Campfires:** Each session, we have four all-camp campfires at one of our picturesque outdoor campfire locations. This is a time where cabins or individuals may perform for the entire camp doing songs, skits, stories and poems. All-Camp Days are special program times when the camp comes together for some serious fun. Past themes have included Pirates Day, Harry Potter, Toy Story, Survivor, and Mission Impossible.

**Out-tripping:** As an integral part of the Camp Pine Crest experience, all campers go on an out-trip with their cabin group. We have found from years of experience that canoe trips provide unique opportunities for group development, personal growth and challenge. We don't guarantee that all our canoe trips will be bug free and sunny but we do ensure that they will be a solid bonding experience for all groups. Campers with little to no background in canoeing and canoe tripping will be given instruction at camp prior to departure as well as on the trip under the guidance of our experienced staff.

One of the easiest ways to ensure a child will have a positive experience on a canoe trip is to ensure they have the appropriate clothing and sleeping gear. Please refer to the packing list or contact our office if you have any questions. In addition, we have found that campers have more success if they are emotionally prepared for their adventure. We encourage parents to discuss the canoe trip with their campers before arriving at camp.

**Trip length and locations:** The length of your camper's canoe trip will be determined by the section they are in.

- Bantams – 2 days and 1 night
- Juniors – 3 days and 2 nights
- Seniors – 4 days and 3 nights
- Pioneers – 5 days and 4 nights

Bantam and Junior groups stay on our "back lakes" campsites and go for one or two nights. As they get older, campers gain more canoeing and camping experience and venture off site with

their equipment for a longer experience. Here campers develop outdoor living skills and work cooperatively as they learn to appreciate the natural world. Our groups are driven by 15-passenger van or bus to their location. Groups stay locally (Muskoka, Haliburton, Georgian Bay) for shorter trips and venture to areas such as Algonquin Park, French River, Mattawa River or Temagami on longer trips.

This is not an optional part of our programming at Pine Crest. If a child is unable to participate in the canoe trip portion of their program due to medical reasons, parents will be asked to pick up their child while the group is away on trip as we do not have additional supervision for campers without groups.

**Hygiene on Trip:** First time campers have a lot to get used to adjusting to camp life- and then we go on a canoe trip! It is important to discuss with your camper that they will be using the washroom in the woods and bathing with lakewater while on canoe trips. Our staff are great resources to ensure campers feel comfortable however a discussion and a little practice doesn't hurt prior to camp! To reduce the waste on trip, groups ration their toilet paper for the group rather than for the individual. Women and girls will be advised of safe and environmentally sensitive ways to dispose of their feminine waste on trip.

**Contact Lenses:** Please ensure if your child wears contact lenses that they bring their glasses for trip, with a neck strap if possible. It is much safer and easier to manage than trying to manage an eye infection later.

**Canoeing and Hiking:** Rain or shine the primary means of travel for trips is effort by each individual. It is important that campers understand that they will be contributing each day by paddling to get to their destination for the night. In the case of leadership programs, they also do hiking trips which require participants to divide up the group gear and carry it each day. This is a necessary part of group travel and deeply rewarding for the individual to build their strength and contribute to the team.



## Leadership and Adventure Leadership Programs

Leadership and Adventure Leadership participants are a special group of people. These individuals are motivated to be positive camp role models, contribute to the growth of YMCA Camp Pine Crest and develop themselves through specialized skill-based programs and unique opportunities while at camp. Participants are ages 13 to 16. Each year there is a leadership lottery for registration that is done in October. Please ensure you have your application in by the October deadline in order to be considered for a Pine Crest Leadership program. The Leadership and Adventure Leadership Information Guides are available now on our website, [camppinecrest.ca](http://camppinecrest.ca).

### Transportation

We can help you make the travel plans that are right for you and offer a variety of options to meet the needs of our families. To avoid confusion, we request that any changes to your travel plans be made no later than 48 hours before your scheduled departure.

**Travelling by car:** Arrival day for all sessions is Sunday. Camp will be open between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on the first day of the session. Parents and families are invited to our Family Day, where they can meet the counsellors, tour the camp and settle their children into their new homes. The waterfront will be open for canoeing and swimming, and a buffet lunch will be available starting at 11:30 a.m. Please note the camp will not open its doors until 11 a.m. We ask that you respect this time as we are preparing for your arrival until then.

Departure day for each session is on a Friday. The last day at camp is an important time to say goodbye to new friends, celebrate the accomplishments of the session, and take one last chance to play! As such, we have a full day scheduled with packing up and programming. We ask that parents pick up their campers from 2:30-4:00pm. Please contact the camp office if you plan to pick up your camper earlier, as they will be in programming until that time.

**Travelling by camp bus:** All program fees include bus transportation to and from camp. We have made this change to encourage families to send their campers on the bus. With four pick up locations in the Greater Toronto Area, it is convenient, avoids the extra driving for parents and helps to reduce carbon emissions. If you are not interested in the bus to camp please consider the ride home as Friday traffic to Muskoka can be quite lengthy.

In the event that bus registration is low, a 15-passenger camp van driven by a properly licensed driver will be substituted for the regular hired bus. For campers returning home from camp on the bus, a bagged meal will be provided. A camp staff member who acts as bus monitor supervises all transportation.

We ask that you arrive to the departure location at least 30 minutes prior to the departure time listed below. If the buses are running behind schedule upon return, we will leave a message with the front desk of the local YMCA and post updates on our Facebook page.

Bus Stop	Departure Time on Sunday	Arrival Time on Friday
Toronto Scarborough Town Center Crt. YMCA	11:30 am	6:00 – 6:30 pm
Toronto Central Grosvenor Street YMCA	10:30 am	6:30 – 7:00 pm
North York – Hollywood Public School	11:30 am	6:00 – 6:30 pm
Mississauga Burnhamthorpe Rd YMCA	10:30 am	6:30 – 7:00 pm

For campers returning home on Fridays, please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to the bus’ scheduled arrival time. Updates regarding traffic or delays will be posted on our Facebook page and through the Contact Centre.

**Pine Cones** Due to the unique schedule of our Pine Cones program, our youngest overnight campers have different arrival and departure details.

For our Monday-Wednesday sessions (Pine Cones 1 & 3), arrival and departure are from 11am-12pm. On the Wednesday-Friday sessions (Pine Cones 2 & 4), arrival and departure are at 3-4pm.

As this is often a camper’s first time away from home, it is important for families to drop off their children at camp and help them settle in. As such, we do not have scheduled busing for Pine Cones. However, if you are not able to drive your Pine Cone to camp, please contact the camp office and we will arrange transportation.

## Health and Safety at Camp

An enjoyable experience begins with a healthy participant. Your child's good health — physical, social and emotional — is very important to us. Our programs emphasize careful planning to ensure high safety standards are in place. We are a member of the Ontario Camping Association and many of our YMCA Practices exceed the OCA standard. Staff are trained to reduce the risk of and respond to emergencies. All staff hold current CPR and First Aid certifications while most staff possess additional qualifications depending on their role at camp. All counsellors and waterfront staff are certified lifeguards (NLS).

**24 Hour Supervision:** YMCA Camp Pine Crest provides what we call “24/7” supervision of all our campers. Pairs of counsellors ensure a high level of supervision throughout the session. Counsellors divide duties during the session to attend staff meetings, deliver skill instruction and take time off while ensuring that the cabin group is supervised with a consistent leader. All counsellors sleep in the cabin with the camper group and are available day and night for emergency situations.

**Wellness Centre:** Our Wellness Centre serves the health needs of everyone at camp. The wellness staff are in charge of the day-to-day routine of camper health checks before and after canoe trips, delivering medications and handling incidents and accidents on site.

Our Wellness Director is an experienced healthcare professional who has additional wilderness first aid certifications and is joined by a full wellness team each session to provide appropriate medical attention for our camp population.

All participants visit with the wellness staff upon arrival to camp, before and after out-trips and again before going home. We advise families to have their children examined by a physician annually; however, a physician's signature is not required on the Health History Form.

The Wellness Centre staff will keep you informed about your child's health, especially in the case of a change in health, a trip to the doctor or an emergency. If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's health while they are at camp, our Wellness Staff will call you back directly to discuss your concerns. In order for us to provide the best care possible for your child, please make sure to be as specific as possible on your child's health forms.

**Illness While At Camp:** Camp is a very challenging environment to handle contagious illnesses. For this reason we work hard to ensure that we know the health of our campers and staff and do everything we can to minimize the potential for spread of illness. It's our camp practice to treat injury, illness and infectious diseases as per recommendation of the local health unit.

We cannot list everything that may occur with children however for common illnesses or viruses including impetigo or chicken pox children will be taken to a local clinic for assessment, prescription for medication will be given and campers will be asked to return home until they

are no longer contagious. Unfortunately, we do not have the space or the additional staff supervision to support individual campers for lengthy medical stays in our Wellness Centre and feel that they will be much better supported at home to make a speedy recovery and return to camp. In addition, having campers with any type of contagious illness recover at home helps us to reduce the potential for spreading illness in our community. Families will be responsible for any costs associated with prescriptions and will not be reimbursed for the time at home.

**Lice:** We try to ensure that at Camp Pine Crest we are a nit-free environment however individuals may come to camp with lice. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child is in good health when they arrive at camp and this includes ensuring they are lice free. Within the first 24 hours of their arrival at camp, cabins visit the Wellness Centre where lice checks are done by our staff. If lice or nits are found the child is immediately given a shampoo treatment at camp, their parents will be contacted and the rest of the cabin is checked as well. By health standards we also inform all other parents of children in that cabin that their child has been exposed to lice.

As per the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, campers should have one shampoo treatment, wait 7 days as recommended on the box and then have a re-treatment to ensure the lice is gone. Picking nits is also a thorough and necessary process to ensure they are nit-free. In order to check an entire cabin it takes our wellness staff hours to complete and this is time away from the hundreds of other campers and staff that may require medical support.

If you are contacted about your child having lice at camp upon arrival (within 24 hour check) you will be asked to pick them up from camp and after a second shampoo treatment and a medical note saying the lice is gone, they will be able to return to camp.

If lice is found during a session, treatment will be done on site, followed by additional nit-picking and follow up to ensure they have not spread or worsened.

**Meals and Dietary Concerns:** Most meals at camp are eaten together in our main dining halls: either Kekindewin or Winter Lodge. Each cabin eats together, family style, with plenty of food. Some cabins like to plan a lunch excursion during the session where the kitchen provides healthy meals to-go for the group. Our kitchen staff prepare nutritious, tasty meals and snacks that follow the Canada Food Guide.

Individuals who have special dietary needs will enjoy a supplemental menu modified to suit her/his needs. These special requests are to be noted on the Camper Information Form prior to arrival at camp. Both the Wellness Director and the Food Services Directors will be on hand during Arrival Day and throughout the session if you have any particular concerns about food allergies or dietary questions. As part of our commitment to supporting campers with food allergies and intolerances, our Food Services Directors and Camp Director also have formal training in managing and supporting food allergies provided by Anaphylaxis Canada.

## Allergies and Anaphalaxis

**Nuts:** While we cannot guarantee a completely nut-free site, we do take every action possible to ensure that children and staff with nut allergies are protected. All meals are prepared without any kind of nut products and we make sure that all campers are aware of products that may have been manufactured in the same factory as other nut products.

To help us maintain an environment that is safe for campers with various allergies, we request that parcels sent to campers do not contain any food. If a camper receives food in a package, the office staff will store this food in a safe location and return it to the family when they leave camp. However, if the food may or does contain nuts, it will be disposed of.

**Allergy Plans:** We work very closely with families that are affected by anaphylactic allergies. Please contact the camp directly to work on a personal response plan, proactive measures and any considerations for your child to ensure they have the most comfortable time at camp.

**Active Lifestyle:** Camp is a very active place. We make sure that all of our campers and staff stay healthy by promoting the regular application of sunscreen and bug spray, adapting our outdoor activities in the case of extreme weather, providing regular water breaks and ensuring that healthy snacks are available throughout the day.

**Sun Safety:** Pine Crest is proud to be an official Sun Aware Certified Camp by the Melanoma Network of Canada. This certification recognizes our practices in both teaching and reinforcing sun safe behaviours. Included in this certification is our commitment to training our staff based on the principles of applying broad spectrum sunscreen, wearing light weight clothing and wide brimmed hats, wearing UV protective sunglasses, and seeking shade in the heat of the day.

**Supervision of Waterfront Activities:** YMCA Camp Pine Crest has a very large waterfront, and boating is one of our major camp activities on and off site. For this reason, we require that all staff and campers wear a Ministry of Transportation approved personal floatation device (PFD) while boating. All PFDs are provided at camp. If you choose to send your child with their own PFD, please ensure that it is clearly labeled.

**Lost and Found:** Our counsellors do their best to help campers keep their belongings together but occasionally, items get misplaced. Throughout the camp session, lost and found items are displayed for campers to identify and claim as well as a “Lost and Found Parade” after the last lunch.

We will make every effort to return unclaimed items to their respective owners. However, the camp is not responsible for the loss or theft of these items. The best way to avoid disappointment is to leave all valuable items at home and clearly label each piece of clothing and personal equipment with your child’s first and last name. Parents can view lost and found

items on the last day at camp, prior to departure. Unclaimed personal items are donated to a local charity in the fall.

**Laundry Service:** Our camp packing list suggests sufficient clothing for a two-week session at camp. We do provide a laundry service for our two week or longer participants. Each cabin has a laundry bag that they can drop off on laundry days as a group. Laundry is washed and folded and returned the same day. A special service will be available to accommodate laundry for those campers on canoe trips, campers experiencing bedwetting, and other special circumstances.

## Contact with Camp

We understand the feelings that families experience throughout the process of planning and participating in the camp experience, especially if it's for the first time. We also know that it is important that parents are comfortable with how to communicate with us at the YMCA.

### **Summer Camp Office**

YMCA Camp Pine Crest

1090 Gullwing Lake Rd.

Torrance, ON

POC 1M0

Phone: 705-762-3377 • 1-877-878-9622

Fax: 705-762-5961

[Camp.pinecrest@ymcagta.org](mailto:Camp.pinecrest@ymcagta.org)

### **Summer Camp Program Registration Office**

2200 Yonge Street Suite 300

Toronto, ON

M4S 2C6

Phone: 1-647-439-6611 • 1-877-303-2267

Fax: 416-928-2030

[camp@ymcagta.org](mailto:camp@ymcagta.org)

Phone During the spring, fall and winter our office hours are between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. During the summer our office staff will be on hand to assist you between 7:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. If you call after hours, we will do our best to return your call as soon as possible. Please note that during meal times, the phone will be unattended but we will return calls immediately after meals. The Program Registration Office is a great place to ask general questions and register for camp. This office will be open Sunday-Friday throughout the summer and they can also forward your call to camp if need be.

## One- Way Camper Email- Bunk1

We are excited to tell you about our partnership with Bunk1.com! Bunk1's secure, easy to use, summer website services let you stay in touch with your camper all summer!

Returning parents: You must make a new account this year, even if you had one last year. Because this is a new system your old login will no longer be active!

### Getting Started

To set up a new account and visit our Online Community:

1. Go to our website at [www.camppinecrest.ca](http://www.camppinecrest.ca)
2. Click the red "Stay in touch, email your camper" button \*
3. Click "Register Here"
4. Enter your Invitation Code: PINE17B1
5. Fill out all the required information
6. Purchase Additional Bunk Note credits (you will need a credit card)
7. Send an email to your camper! \* For your camper's safety, please do not share the Invitation code above.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I send a Bunk Note (one-way email) to my camper?

Follow the instructions above except, after registering, simply sign in and click on the Bunk Notes button. Enter your camper's name, select the correct cabin, type your message, and hit the "Send" button.

### Why do I have to pay to send Bunk Notes (one-way email)?

Each morning, the Bunk Notes system bundles and sorts the messages for us to print out and distribute to campers. It also protects us from computer viruses and allows us to easily manage these emails. Your payment helps us cover the cost of the system, paper, ink, and labor and, more importantly, frees us to do what we do best – be with your kids! Bunk Note credits cost \$1 each and are purchased in packs of various sizes. Your account comes with 2 email credits for one week campers and 4 email credits for 2 week campers.

A portion of the email fee is donated back to the camp to our YMCA Strong Kids Fund each year and helps to send more children to camp who are willing but unable to pay the full fee. We appreciate your support!

**Why do you use this system?**

There are two main reasons we use this system - the first is security. With Bunk1's services, we can better track who has access and who sends messages to campers. The second reason is so that we can focus our staff resources on providing an enriching experience for your campers, and not sorting hundreds of e-mails. In recent years the volume of e-mails has steadily increased, using up more and more staff time and camp resources to handle. While we encourage the communication between you and your camper, we thought it best to move to a system that would make it easier for us to manage the incoming e-mail. We appreciate your assistance in helping to support this system.

**Can other relatives use these services?**

Certainly. Once you have set up your account, you will be able to invite other people to access these services.

**What do I do if I lost my username and password?**

Your username is now your email address. In case you have forgotten your password, you can go online to [www.bunk1rollcall.com](http://www.bunk1rollcall.com) and click the "Sign In" tab. A screen will appear, and you can select "Forgot Your Password?" You will then be able to reset your password. Camper mail and care packages.

All campers enjoy receiving mail, and we encourage parents and family members to write often. Cheerful letters from home raise the spirits of campers and bring about pleasant thoughts of home and loved ones. Campers are encouraged to write home daily during the afternoon rest hour and during special letter-writing clubs. To assist campers, please include self-addressed, stamped envelopes, writing paper and pens in your child's luggage.

If you choose to send a care package we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- No candy, nuts or food of any kind.
- Consider including fun and small gifts for the entire cabin if sending gifts.
- Photographs of family members and pets are often appreciated.

**Send mail to your camper at:**

"Camper Name" – "camper Cabin"

YMCA Camp Pine Crest

1090 Gullwing Lake Road

Torrance, ON,

POC 1M0 29



**Visiting Camp:** Open house is a great way to help your child feel comfortable for their upcoming camp experience! Families are welcome to come to camp for the day to take a site tour, enjoy a buffet lunch, and explore our program areas including the waterfront. Family Open House will be held in mid-June. Keep your eyes out for our emails for more details.

The first day of each session is Family Day! This special day is a chance for families to meet the camp counsellors, enjoy the facilities and have a buffet lunch. The Family Day program begins at 11 a.m., with lunch available beginning at 11:30. We ask families to depart by 2 p.m. so that we can begin programming.

Parents and visitors are reminded that YMCA Camp Pine Crest is smoke free. This policy affects all buildings, grounds, and programs conducted off-site.

We also ask that families who bring their dogs to camp on Family Day keep them on a leash and out of our camp buildings.

We strongly discourage visits to camp during your child's session. From experience we find it is harder for children to adjust to camp when they see their parents and also have a much harder time adjusting after they have left. We also find that other children in the cabin have a hard time understanding why all parents are not allowed to attend once there has been a visitor. For the safety of all children, we do not allow parents to integrate into the camp session. Only under special circumstances will parents be allowed to visit during the session and only with prior consent from the Camp Director. Please come to camp on Family Day or join us for Family Camp if you'd like to participate with your child.

**Family Camp:** In addition to our camper programs, we also offer a week of Family Camp every summer. This program is exclusively for families and includes traditional camp activities for all ages. Family Camp is held in the middle of each summer, between Session B and Session C. Please refer to our brochure and website for more information regarding these programs or contact [camp.pinecrest@ymcagta.org](mailto:camp.pinecrest@ymcagta.org) for more information.

If you are busy throughout the summer but are still interested in Family Camp, join us for one of our Family Camp Programs over New Years, Family Day Weekend, the May Long weekend and our new Thanksgiving Family Canoe Trip!

## The Camp Store

Our store is open for business on arrival day, departure day and each day of the session. We accept cash, cheque, debit and credit cards at camp. If we do not have an item, we may be able to order it for you. You can also pre-order all merchandise on our registration forms or through our online registration at [www.camppinecrest.ca](http://www.camppinecrest.ca).

This summer we will offer items like:

- Pine Crest 1L water bottle
- Winter toques
- T-shirts
- Hats
- Sweatshirts
- Sunglasses
- Postcards
- Pine Crest stickers
- Alumni gear
- YMCA Camp Pine Crest History Books
- Branded Wool Socks

Keep your eyes out for the specialty items we offer each year! We invite families, campers and Alumni to contribute to our merchandise by participating in our annual T-shirt design contest. The contest takes place during the winter and anyone is welcome to submit a t-shirt design. We will pick some of our favourites and put them online for you to vote on the design you want to see in our store this summer!

## Directions to Camp

### **From Toronto and the south:**

Take Highway 400 north to Barrie, then Highway 11 north to Gravenhurst. At Gravenhurst take Highway 169 about 21km northwest to Torrance. Turn left onto Southwood Road and immediately left again onto Clear Lake Road. Camp is about 3.3km down the road.

**From North Bay and the north:** Follow Highway 11 south to Highway 169 at Gravenhurst. Take Highway 169 about 21km northwest to Torrance. Turn left onto Southwood Road and immediately left again onto Clear Lake Road. Camp is about 3.3km down the road.

**From Sudbury and the west:** Follow Highway 69 south through Parry Sound to Highway 169 at Foot's Bay. Take Highway 169 southeast about 25km through Bala to Torrance. Turn right onto Southwood Road and immediately left again onto Clear Lake Road. Camp is about 3.3km down the road.

**From Ottawa and the east:** Take Highway 60 west through Algonquin Park to Highway 11 at Huntsville. Take Highway 11 south about 52km to Highway 169 at Gravenhurst. Take Highway 169 about 21km northeast to Torrance. Turn left onto Southwood Road and immediately left again onto Clear Lake Road. Camp is about 3.3km down the road.