

PARENT & CAMPER HANDBOOK



www.bigelkcreekcamp.com

Welcome!

We are very excited that you have chosen to come to Big Elk Creek Camp! Our goal this season is to make every child's camping experience as wondrous and worthwhile as possible; while helping parents, shortening the amount of paperwork needed and trying to keep them informed at all times. The following packet is designed to acquaint you with the basic information needed to prepare for camp. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact us at bigelkcreekcamp@gmail.com

Sincerely,

JONATHAN YOUNG

Camp Director



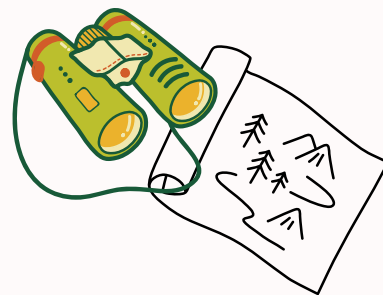


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Camper Check-in

There are two options for check-in:

1. You can drop off your camper at the Idaho Falls YMCA (155 N Corner Ave, Idaho Falls, ID 83402) on Monday morning. Campers should start arriving at 8:00 a.m. so the bus can leave by 9:00 a.m. A camp staff member will greet you when you arrive, and there will be staff located throughout the YMCA to aid in the check-in process. Our camp staff is excited to meet you and your camper! Please allow at least 30-45 minutes for check-in. Parents should plan to accompany their child to the YMCA so that they can meet the counselors and ask any questions at that time. The fee for bus transport to camp is \$10. Parents are responsible for arranging transportation to and from The YMCA.
2. You can drive your camper and meet us at camp ([198 Big Elk Creek Rd, Irwin, ID 83428](#)). Campers should arrive between 10:30am-11:00am. A camp staff member will greet you when you arrive and aid in the check-in process. Campers will then be accompanied to their assigned counselor.

During check-in parents can also buy a camp T-shirt, hat, etc for their camper.



Camper Check-out

There are two options for check-out:

1. You can pick up your camper on Friday at camp ([198 Big Elk Creek Rd, Irwin, ID 83428](#)). Please arrive between 11:00am-11:30am. During check-out you can join your camper for lunch and have them give you a tour of camp. Campers will not be permitted to depart camp with anyone other than their parent, legal guardian, or someone listed on the camper pick-up release form. Photo ID is required during check-out.
2. Your camper can ride the bus back to the Idaho Falls YMCA. The fee for bus transport back to Idaho Falls is \$10. Campers will not be released to anyone other than their parent, legal guardian, or someone listed on the camper pick-up release form. Photo ID is required during check-out. Parents are responsible for arranging transportation to and from The YMCA.



Accommodations

Big Elk Creek includes six cabins with bunks. Bunks already have mattresses, so campers do not need to bring those or any foam pads. Cabins generally hold 8-12 campers. There is no plumbing in the cabins, but there is a nearby bathhouse that has showers, toilets, and sinks. There are also two restrooms in the main lodge. Cabins are divided by biological gender, and then further divided by age groups. We do accept cabin-mate requests (please email bigelkcreekcamp@gmail.com), but we cannot guarantee that those requests will be fulfilled.



Visitation During Camp

We believe that camp provides campers with an opportunity to acquire independence and confidence through their achievement in a new environment. We ask that parents, guardians, and/or relatives refrain from visiting campers during their stay. Visits to camp can also be a cause of homesickness for your child or other campers viewing the visit. While we strongly discourage visits to camp during the camp session, our site is open to parents at any time. We do understand a parent's concern for their child but would like for you to be self-assured that your child will be in good hands once they arrive at camp. See the above section titled "Camper Check-Out" for opportunities to have a tour of the camp.



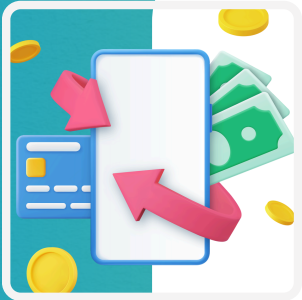
Payment Policy

The balance must be paid in full at the time of registration. The camp will not hold spaces for campers not paid in full. All registration information and payments received are kept completely confidential and secure. Spaces listed are a true and accurate listing of spaces still available for each camp session shown. If you have any questions about our payment policy at any time, please do not hesitate to contact us at bigelkcreekcamp@gmail.com.



Financial Aid

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to attend camp, and financial challenges should never stand in the way of that experience. If you are facing special circumstances or wish to apply for financial aid, please visit the Idaho Falls YMCA website (www.idahofallsymca.org) or reach out to their team directly at 208-523-0600.



Cancellation/Refund Policy (Please read carefully!)

Due to the number of children on the waiting list every year and the amount of last minute cancellations in previous years all camp fees are due at the time of registration. In order to receive a refund, **less the non-refundable \$50.00 administration fee**, notice must be given at least 30 days prior to the week the child is scheduled for camp. If a cancellation is due to illness and less than 30 days prior to the child's camp date, then a refund will be issued with a Doctor's notice. Verification of a major life event (i.e. death in the family) will also receive exception to the refund policy. Campers who must leave camp for medical reasons, will be mailed a prorated refund. **NO refunds will be given to campers choosing to attend late, depart early, or those sent home for behavioral problems.**



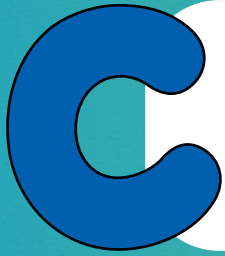
Camp Store

During their stay campers may purchase snacks, drinks, batteries, and other miscellaneous items. We recommend **\$20-\$30 dollars** per week be deposited in your camper's account when you check in opening day. Items that camper(s) purchase will be deducted from their account and the remaining balance will be refunded when the camper(s) are picked up at check-out. Campers may choose to donate any remaining balances to the camp scholarship fund to help children who could not afford to come to camp otherwise. **While we appreciate a parent's desire to send special treats with or to their children at camp, we ask that you either send enough for all children in your child's cabin group or wait until they return home.**



Lost & Found

AdventureFit LLC and the Idaho Falls YMCA cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen belongings. To help prevent items from going missing, please clearly label all of your camper's belongings with their full name. Items that are found during camp will be displayed daily for campers to claim. While we will make every reasonable effort to return labeled items after check-out, please note that storage is limited and any unclaimed items will be donated following the camp season. If your camper has misplaced something, contact our staff right away at bigelkcreekcamp@gmail.com.



The “C” in YMCA

Christian principles guide decision-making and provide leadership training and philosophy behind Big Elk Creek of the Idaho Falls Family YMCA. Outward signs include non-denominational, value-based devotionals and grace before every meal. People of all faiths and religions are welcome at Big Elk Creek.

Unplug to Connect



At Big Elk Creek Camp, we believe in the power of *real* experiences. That is why we do not allow electronic devices up at camp. Studies have shown multiple benefits for children when they take a break from electronics including healthier minds & bodies, improved social skills, better focus & confidence, more creativity, and stronger friendships.

We understand that parents want to be able to reach their children in emergencies, so you will be given the direct number to the camp director at check-in. If a camper is struggling and wants to call home, we will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) first before allowing the camper to call home.

We also have our own camp photographers to capture a large number of photos each week that will be digitally shared at the end of camp. With this in mind, disposable cameras are allowed at camp if your camper would like to take their own photos.



Stay in the loop

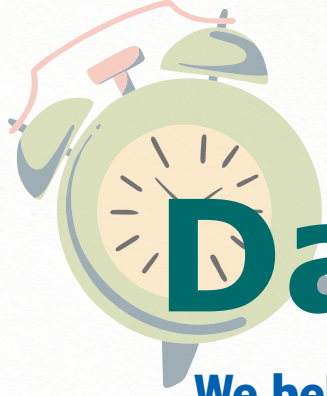
We will post updates, photos, and information on our Facebook page (@bigelkcreek) and Instagram page (@bigelkcreekcamp). If there is a camp-wide emergency, we will use our social media platforms and email to communicate to parents immediately. Phone calls will be made as soon as possible if needed.

Camper Readiness



Adjusting to camp can be challenging, and we understand that some campers may need extra support. Our staff is trained to keep campers engaged, especially during the first day when feelings of homesickness are most common. If we notice signs of distress, we will reach out to you for input. While we won't stop a camper from contacting home, we've found that phone calls often intensify homesickness. Our approach is to first help campers adjust with support on-site before turning to a phone call home.

It is vital that parent(s)/guardian(s) ensure their child is ready for sleep-away camp. Visit <https://www.ymca.org/ystories/youth-teen-development/getting-your-child-ready-their-first-overnight-camp> for tips to prepare your child for camp.



Daily Schedule

We believe in balancing adventure, creativity, learning, and rest. Here's what a typical day at camp looks like:

Morning

- 7:00 AM – Early Risers: polar bear swim, run, or bike ride (optional morning)
- 7:30 AM – Rise & Shine: wake-up call and get ready for the day. Flag raising
- 8:00 AM – Breakfast
- 9:00 AM – Devotional: short, uplifting story/message to start the day
- 9:30 AM – Magic Trash: campers help keep their space tidy
- 10:00 AM – Morning Activity Blocks (camper pick)

Midday

- 12:30 PM – Lunch
- 1:15 PM – Toes Up Time: quiet rest time in cabins to recharge

Afternoon

- 2:00 PM – All-Camp Game or Special Activity or Waterfront
- 3:00–5:30 PM – Afternoon Activity Blocks (camper pick)

Evening

- 6:00 PM – Dinner
- 7:00 PM – Evening Games: capture the flag, large-group games, or scavenger hunts
- 8:30 PM – Campfire: songs, stories, skits, and s'mores

Night

- 10:00 PM – Lights Out: A good night's sleep to get ready for more adventure!

Please note that the schedule during Extreme Camp is different on Tues–Thur



Big Elk Creek Camp Staff

Big Elk Creek Camp staff is the heart of our camp. We recruit staff that can serve as exceptional role models for our campers. All program staff members have a lot of expertise to share with campers. Big Elk Creek Camp staff are safety conscious, enthusiastic, service minded, knowledgeable, and respectful of the environment. Each staff member has strong leadership skills that reflect the principles upheld by the YMCA. These principles are caring, responsibility, respect, and honesty. Our cabin counselors supervise one cabin group throughout the session. A minimum of two staff members accompany all off-site or overnight trips. The counselors reside in the cabins, participate in all activities along with the campers, and lead them on the trail experience.



At Big Elk Creek Camp every staff member is trained, regardless of position. Proficient in camping, childcare, and outdoor recreation, our staff training also includes Child Safety, Professional Rescuer CPR, Red Cross Lifeguard Certification, Child CPR, Standard First Aid, and Wilderness First Aid. We would be happy to discuss our staff training schedule and requirements if you are interested.

Camper Healthcare and Safety



Safety First & Emergency Procedures

Big Elk Creek Camp Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. **A Medical Staff associate is on call 24 hours a day.** There is a designated emergency vehicle on site at all times. We encourage you to ask questions at any time. Your camper's safety is always our deepest concern. In the case of a serious illness or injury the Camp Director will contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) immediately. If the camper is ill and stays ill for longer than twenty-four (24) hours, arrangements will be made to send the camper home. Camp fees may be prorated in this case dependent upon the length of the stay.



Medications

All over-the-counter and prescription medications must be sent in their original container with original pharmacy label. Exact written directions for administering the medicine along with the time that it should be taken should be detailed to the Camp Director in the Health History Form. All medications, both prescription and over the counter, must be turned into the staff person on duty (at check-in) by the parent or guardian. Please note that Idaho State law requires that we have written permission from the child's parent/guardian to dispense over the counter as well as prescription medications. Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet. Medications not picked up at check-out will be disposed of. **We strongly discourage parents whose children are on medication throughout the year from putting them on a medical holiday while at camp. It is not always in the child's best interest to take a week off from medication.**



Camper Behavior

On occasion, campers have serious behavioral problems at camp. It is our policy to consult with parents on strategies for dealing with such situations. When the welfare of the camper, other campers, camp property, or camp equipment is jeopardized, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified to pick up the camper from camp at their expense. All camp fees will be forfeited.

Health History, Authorizations, and Pre-Camp forms

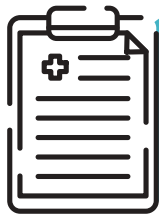


Insurance



AdventureFit LLC carries secondary accident/liability insurance coverage for campers while attending camp. The camper's family policy is the camper's primary insurance coverage during his/her stay. In the event emergency care is needed for the camper, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be listed as the responsible party. Any medications or physicians fees will become the parent's/guardian's responsibility. Every effort will be made to contact parents or guardians in such situations.

Health History Form



During registration the Health History form must be filled out completely for your child. We do need all information filled out completely on the form for camp attendance. The State requires the camp to have information on file while your child is at camp.

Authorization Form



During registration the Authorization Form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent or legal guardian releasing the child for emergency medical treatment, trips out of camp (hiking, etc.), photo authorization, and pick up. This form must be completely filled out for camp attendance.

Pack List

There are no laundry facilities provided at camp. Your camper should pack for 5 days (Mini Camp should pack for 3 days)

Campers Should Bring

- Tee shirts or tops
- 1-2 Pairs of long pants
- 1-2 Pairs of shorts
- 1 swimsuit
- 3-5 Pairs of socks
- 1 sleeping bag
- 3-5 changes of underwear
- Pajamas
- 1 Pair of old athletic shoes and/or hiking boots
- 1 Pair of wet shoes/water shoes
- 1-2 Sweatshirts or sweaters
- 1 Jacket or fleece pullover
- 1 Rain jacket or poncho
- Towel
- Comb/brush
- Soap
- Toothbrush & paste
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Lip balm (SPF 15 or higher)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- Ball cap (sun protective hat)
- Water bottle or canteen
- Feminine hygiene products (if applicable)
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Sleeping bag
- Small pack for day hikes

Campers will have an opportunity to spend one night (if they choose) to sleep under the stars with their group and should pack a set of extra warm clothes for this occasion.

Optional

- Toiletry bag is helpful
- Blanket
- 9 ft of cord
- Pillow & case
- Super-soaker (or water gun)
- Sunglasses
- Reading material
- Letter writing material (with home addressed stamped envelopes)
- Insect repellent
- Swim goggles
- Warm hat
- Nail clippers
- Laundry or large garbage bag for dirty clothes
- Travel games, journals, books for toes-up

Campers attending Extreme Camp may want to bring a sleeping pad for nights spent at Lagoon campground.

Do Not Bring

- Cell Phones/Electronics
- MP3 Players/Video Games
- Jewelry/Valuable items
- Knives/Fireworks
- Firearms
- Tobacco Products
- Illegal drugs

Campers caught with alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products will be sent home.