



Y M C A

# CAMP POTAWOTAMI

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION TEACHER'S PLANNING GUIDE



Revised and Updated July 2017

Teachers, Parents, and School Administrators:

Thank you for choosing YMCA Camp Potawotami Outdoor Education experience!

This guide has been created to assist you in planning a successful and enjoyable outdoor experience at Camp Potawotami. YMCA Camp Potawotami asks that you read through this guide whether you are a new or returning school as some of the information has been updated including schedule layouts and class choices. **Please pay special attention to the Teacher/Chaperone ratio and cost information on page 3.**

Our curriculum combines natural science, team building, and outdoor recreation skill classes. We will work with you in order to design a program specifically to fit your goals for your students.

YMCA Camp Potawotami has been helping school students to learn and grow in an outdoor setting since 1966. Staff and teachers have been first-hand witnesses to the difference that a visit to YMCA Camp Potawotami can make. After their Outdoor Education experience at YMCA Camp Potawotami, students will have a better appreciation for the natural world, new outdoor skills, enhanced group relationships and stronger personal ties with classmates and teachers.

In addition to this guide, enclosed is information for teachers, students, and parents. Please feel free to use and/or duplicate any of the forms found within.

Enjoy looking through our planning guide and if we may be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at (260)351-2525. We look forward to working with both you and your students.

Sincerely,

Katie Taylor  
Executive Director  
YMCA Camp Potawotami  
Office: (260)351-2525 ext 303  
katie\_taylor@fwymca.org

## **BUSINESS POLICIES**

**Camp Dates:** Because of the demand, it is our policy to retain the same dates for each school from year to year. Any school that would like to change the dates of their experience will be handled to the best of our ability to fit them into the Camp calendar.

**Billing:** Our billing is based on the confirmation number on the contract. Any change of numbers must be provided **two weeks** before your group arrives at Camp Potawotami. You are required to pay for the minimum number of students listed on your contract or the actual number of students attending, whichever is greater. Please check your contract for your expected minimum number. A non-refundable deposit is required when reserving a camp date. The balance will be invoiced to the school two days after the program has ended and is due 15 days after your experience.

**Teachers/Chaperones Ratio and Cost:** To help ensure an adequate adult to student ratio, YMCA Camp Potawotami allows 1 adult for 10 students to come to camp for free. The ratio of 1:10 applies to teachers and school staff. All other adult chaperones would need to pay for the trip. Chaperones play an important role in the Outdoor Education program, but sometimes having too many distracts from the students experience. We recommend 2 to 3 chaperones for each flag color group.

**Financial Assistance:** In an effort to assist students who may not otherwise be able to attend, Camp Potawotami has a fund set aside to be used for individual scholarships. Any teacher or principal may request assistance for specific students. **To request assistance for a student, please contact the Camp office at least three weeks prior to your arrival.**

**Quiet Hours:** Quiet hours at camp are from 10pm -7am. To help ensure these hours are being kept all evening programs will end by 9:45pm.

**Students With Disabilities:** YMCA Camp Potawotami welcomes all students to camp. All of our buildings are wheelchair accessible. Many of our activity programs can be adaptable for all our guests including those with disabilities. Please contact the Camp office to discuss individual student needs.

## **CAMP FACILITIES**

YMCA Camp Potawotami is a fully modernized resident camp that meets or exceeds standards set by the American Camping Association and the State of Indiana. It is maintained and cleaned by full-time maintenance personnel and inspected biannually to pass strict safety and health guidelines.

**Sharples Center:** This large dormitory is the main housing for our Outdoor Education groups and includes two wings that sleep up to forty people each, and is fully winterized. A large meeting room, can be used for many activities. Restroom facilities are located in both wings. A comfortable chaperone room with four beds and a private bathroom is adjacent to each student area in each wing. Sharples Center is also equipped with a small kitchen.

**Voyager Lodge:** It has six rooms, each sleeping six with their own private restroom and shower area. The building has a commons area with a fireplace, tables, and chairs. Sleeps up to 36 people

**Jorgensen Lodge:** This newly built lodge has the capacity to sleep 28 people. It has two rooms that sleep 14 people each. There are restroom facilities for each room. The building also has a common area with two tables and benches.

**Arrowhead Lodge:** Our completely winterized dining hall can feed up to 180 people. Arrowhead's large floor area and stone fireplace make it multi-functional space for games and activities. Restrooms and complimentary coffee for adults are located within.

**Lincoln Lodge:** Lincoln Lodge is a small environmental education classroom.

**Recreation:** Activities include soccer, kickball, gaga pit, 9-Square in the Air and the mole hole slide. Basketball courts, sand volleyball court, and the baseball diamond are always popular sites for action.

**Food Service:** Our food service staff takes pride in preparing great meals that keep you going throughout your visit. All meals are served in the dining hall family-style. YMCA Camp Potawatami tries hard to accommodate as many food allergies and special dietary needs as possible. Please contact camp for further questions about dietary needs.

## **MEDICAL**

**First Aid And CPR:** Schools are responsible for first aid, medical care, and emergency transportation. YMCA Camp Potawatami does have CPR/AED and First Aid certified staff, but strongly recommends groups have an adult on duty that is qualified in First Aid and age appropriate CPR/AED. In case of an emergency, Parkview Noble Hospital of Kendallville is only ten minutes away. All prescription medications are to be kept and distributed by the school staff.

**Participant Release Form:** A Release Form is REQUIRED for each student AND chaperone who attends the program. The forms will be kept in the camp office. We recommend that groups keep the following information on hand in case of emergencies: Names, addresses, and ages of all participants, emergency contact names and phone numbers, a listing of any person with known allergies or health conditions requiring treatment, restriction, or other accommodation while at camp, and signed permission to seek emergency treatment or a signed religious waiver.

**First Aid Kits:** First Aid supplies are available in the kitchen of every building. Schools may store their own first aid supplies, equipment, and medication in their cabin or camp office.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Parking:** All cars must remain in the appropriate parking lot at all times after unloading. Cars are to remain off the grass.

**Non-Emergency And Emergency Transportation:** A school vehicle for transportation of non-emergency medical issues is highly recommended. EMS is available in LaGrange County by calling 9-1-1. The closest emergency medical facility is Parkview Noble Hospital in Kendallville, Indiana.

## **EMERGENCIES**

**Missing Person/Emergency:** A safety orientation will be provided upon arrival at camp as soon as all members of the group are present. A YMCA Camp Potawatami staff member should be notified immediately in the event of an emergency. The group should reassemble at the flag poles. In the event of a missing person, YMCA staff will conduct a search of the premises. YMCA Camp Potawatami staff will give further instructions as needed.

**Severe Weather:** YMCA Camp Potawatami staff are trained in severe weather response and will review procedures with your group during the safety orientation. In the event that severe weather requires your group to take shelter, a staff member will escort your group to the nearest shelter area. For main camp, the shelter area is in the Kanga Room located beneath Arrowhead Lodge. In Sharples Center, the shelter area is in the building's bathrooms. In Voyager Lodge, the shelter area is in the kitchen area. In Jorgensen Lodge, the shelter area is in the building's bathrooms.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Group Sizes:** YMCA Camp Potawotami can accommodate a variety of group sizes from 20 to 120 students. Students are divided into working groups called "flag color groups" for class time. The number of flag color groups will be based on a ratio of 1 group for every 15 students.

**Schedule:** Programs for schools will vary depending on the length of a stay. YMCA Camp Potawotami will organize and run one evening program for each night the group is at camp. **Students bring a sack lunch for the first day of their stay.** Camp will provide the remainder of the meals. If a group is here for a half day program, their only meal at Camp is provided by Camp.

**Chaperones:** It is the responsibility of the school to obtain chaperones to spend nights in the cabins with the students. These chaperones may be parents, school staff, or teachers. YMCA Camp Potawotami strongly recommends screening all chaperones. Minimum screening should include a check of the National Sex Offender Registry but may include other screening procedures such as interviews, references, and background checks.

**Property and Equipment:** The camp provides basketballs, volleyballs, and soccer balls for the use of groups while at camp. No weapons are to be brought on to the Camp Potawotami property. Animals may not be brought to camp without permission from the Senior Program Director. YMCA Camp Potawotami is not responsible for damages to or injuries from personal sports equipment or animals at camp. During scheduled recreation periods, YMCA Camp Potawotami will provide staff for a limited number of activities that will be identified on the group schedule prior to arrival. Groups are responsible for providing adult supervision for all other recreational opportunities.

**High Risk Areas:** High Ropes, Challenge Elements, Teambuilding facilities, the waterfront, the ranch, the archery range, and the rifle range require a trained YMCA Camp Potawotami staff member to supervise the activities. These facilities are off limits without a staff member.

**Alcohol and Smoking:** Alcohol and smoking are not permitted anywhere on camp property.

**Rule of Three:** YMCA Camp Potawotami requests that whenever a student needs to go anywhere that three people go. This could mean the student and two chaperones go or the student, a second student and a chaperone. This rule is to help ensure everyone's safety while at camp.

## **OUTDOOR EDUCATION CLASS LIST**

### **Living History**

#### ***Pioneer Living***

Students will spend the first part of the class learning the history of pioneers. After an understanding of what makes someone a pioneer, students will then take part in a life size Oregon Trail, which will teach students the history and life style of pioneers. Activity will include; role-playing, buying materials, and traveling on the Oregon Trail.

#### ***Native American Living***

Students will have the opportunity to learn about Native American tribes specific to Indiana, experience Native American games and storytelling and understand how they relate to the culture and lifestyle of these early peoples.

### **Environmental Education**

#### ***Lake Study***

Many unknowns will be discovered in this class as students collect a variety of aquatic invertebrates from our lake. Using collecting nets, students will sort through lake vegetation, which offers food and shelter for the tiny aquatic animals. Students will identify the lake life they have collected using keys.

#### ***Wetlands***

Camp Potawatami is fortunate to have over 20 acres of wetlands to study and explore. In this class students will learn the importance of these areas, as well as the problems that threaten their survival. Through a discovery hike and additional activities, ecosystems, food chains, and plant and animal species will be introduced and identified.

#### ***Tree Study***

Students will discover what it takes for a tree to survive with hands-on exploration of concepts such as habitats and ecosystems. They will learn about trees themselves - identify trees using their bark and leaves, discuss what resources trees need in order to survive as well as the vital role they play in our ecosystems.

### **Animal Study**

#### ***Owls***

In this class, students will use an exploratory approach to learn about owl adaptations and characteristics. They will have the opportunity to dissect owl pellets, then sort and classify the bones found inside to discover what owls eat here in Indiana. Students will leave the class with an understanding of what makes owls such incredible predators.

#### ***Predator/Prey***

Students will discuss the role of food webs within an ecosystem. They will play a game, taking on the roles of predators and prey to understand their relationship with one another and the environment in which they live.

### **Outdoor Living Skills**

#### ***Wilderness Survival***

What would you do if you were stranded in the forest? Students will discuss the "Rule of 3" for human survival, learn what to pack, using the "10 Essentials" as well as how to build an effective survival shelter.

#### ***Compass Challenge***

Students will learn how to navigate using a compass. After some practice, students will take their compass to our compass course and demonstrate their newly acquired skills.

## **Recreation**

### ***Archery***

Students learn the basic techniques of using a bow and arrow and put it into practice in a safe environment supervised by trained staff.

### ***Climbing Tower***

Camp Potawotami's 50 ft. climbing tower requires participants to step outside of their comfort zone. Expanding a student's comfort zone will not only improve self-esteem, but will also promote independence and can help to conquer fears or insecurities. But our climbing wall is also a teambuilding exercise because we emphasize support and encouragement from everyone. All participants will wear safety equipment and be given careful instructions from a trained facilitator.

### ***Canoeing***

A lesson in working together; canoeing combines fun and adventure. Blackman Lake is perfect for beginners, yet still holds challenges for those with experience. On land, students will learn the basics of stroking, steering, and safety, including properly fitting a lifejacket. In the water, students will put these techniques into action. **Because bad or windy weather can easily cancel this class, please choose an alternative class we can use if needed.** For students younger than 4<sup>th</sup> grade there will need to be additional chaperones with each group.

## **Group Building**

### ***Teambuilding 1***

Trail groups are put into challenging situations that involve a series of ground level elements, props, and their own bodies to promote group understanding and teamwork skills. Students must focus on creative problem solving and group goal achievement as they overcome the challenges before them.

### ***Teambuilding 2***

Trail groups continue to be challenged by more dynamic situations that involve a series of ground level elements, props, and their own bodies to expand group understanding and teamwork skills. This class requires a prior teambuilding session. It focuses on creative problem solving and group goal achievements as the students overcome more difficult challenges before them.

### ***Low Ropes***

Camp Potawotami's low ropes course consist of various, off ground, elements to challenge groups to work together to accomplish a task.

## **Outdoor Education Evening Programs**

### ***The Potawotami Trail***

Step back in time to experience a different way of life. Participants learn about pioneer living by participating in hands-on activities such as butter making, pioneer games, trading post station and candle-making. Indiana State Standards: Language Arts 4.5.3 Science 5.1.7 Social Studies 5.4.7 & 5.5.1 & 5.5.2  
***At least 8 chaperones are required to run this program.***

### ***Night Sky***

Since ancient times, people have been fascinated by the night sky. Different cultures assigned various names and images to the stars and stories were told to explain the awe-inspiring sights. This program gets the students involved in astronomy lessons, stargazing, and stories.

### ***Night Walk***

During a walk through the night-time forest, without the aid of flashlights, participants learn to rely on senses other than sight. Students will discuss topics such as night-vision, sensory awareness and nocturnal animal adaptations during this program.

### ***Campfire***

Songs and stories around the campfire bring the camp experience to life. The Camp Staff will lead students in skits and songs and incorporate a little bit of star gazing. The evening will also include smores.

### ***YMCA Camp Potawotami BINGO!***

We have a winner! Spend your evening at camp playing Camp Potawotami Bingo where the letters and numbers are represented by the Outdoor Education Classes your school has taken and key vocabulary words from the classes. Prizes will be awarded to the winners and the evening will conclude with smores.

### ***YMCA Camp Potawotami Olympics***

Groups are divided into teams. Teams create a name, mascot, and flag for their group, and then represent those colors in a series of team challenges! A fun and engaging way focus on teamwork and communication.

## **CAMP TERMS**

**Birthdays:** We want to celebrate with your students' on their birthdays, so please let us know of any birthdays that will occur during your trip by including that information on the action plan.

**Flag Color Groups:** Before arriving, teachers are to divide their students into groups. You will be notified before your trip about the number of groups the school will be split into. These groups will be together for all activities while at camp. We recommend that teachers not assign parent chaperones to their children's groups.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Flags:** Each day we do a flag raising ceremony 15 minutes before breakfast. At this ceremony we raise the American Flag and the YMCA core value flags (Honesty, Respect, Caring, and Responsibility). In the evening the flags are lowered. The core values are discussed during each flag ceremony.

**Grace:** We offer the opportunity for students to participate in singing graces before each meal. If grace is not desirable, we can offer a moment of silence before meals.

**Camp Store:** The camp store is available for your students to purchase souvenirs and/or snacks. Prices range from \$1.00 to \$35.00.

**YMCA Camp Potawotami Outdoor Education Action Plan**  
***Please make a copy to complete and return to YMCA Camp Potawotami.***

School name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of female students: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of female adults (teachers and chaperones): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of male students: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of male adults (teachers and chaperones): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Trail Groups: ( 1 group for every 15 students): \_\_\_\_\_

Goals of trip? \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs (i.e. diet, behavioral, physical, and learning) \_\_\_\_\_

**Class choices:** (3 for Day Trip) (4 for Extended Day Trip) (5 for 2-Day Trip) (8 for 3-Day Trip)

*Please circle the classes you would like your students to participate in:*

Predator/Prey	Low Ropes	Teambuilding I	Teambuilding II	Pioneer Living
Archery	Climbing	Wilderness Survival	Lake Study	Wetlands
Canoeing**	Owls	Native American Study	Tree Study	Compass Challenge

**\*\*If you chose canoeing, please pick an alternate class in case of bad weather\*\***

**Evening Program:**

Please circle evening class(s) (1 for Extended Day) (1 for 2-day trip) (2 for 3-day trip)

**The start and end times will depend on the program and whether it is an extended day or an overnight trip.**

The Potawotami Trail                      Night Sky                      Night Walk                      Campfire

YMCA Camp Potawotami Bingo                      Camp Potawotami Olympics

**Grace:** Would you like our staff to lead a singing grace at mealtimes? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, would you like a moment of silence? \_\_\_\_\_

**Flags:** Would you like our staff to lead a flag ceremony? \_\_\_\_\_

**Store:** Would you like your students to have the opportunity to visit our camp store? \_\_\_\_\_

**Birthdays:** Will any students be celebrating a Birthday while at camp? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please share any additional information about your school or group that would be helpful for the YMCA Camp Potawotami staff to know**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **YMCA Camp Potawatami Outdoor Education Suggested Clothing and Equipment List**

Hello Parents and Guardians,

YMCA Camp Potawatami is excited to be hosting your child's school for an outdoor education trip. After their Outdoor Education experience at YMCA Camp Potawatami, your child will have a better appreciation for the natural world, new outdoor skills, enhanced group relationship skills and stronger personal ties with classmates and teachers. This is a guide for packing. It is not necessary to go out and purchase every item on the list – use your own judgment and make substitutions. Please remember your child will be very active and camp is rough on clothes. For this reason, we recommend that campers do not bring expensive clothing to camp. All clothes are subject to water, sand, mud, spills, grass stains, and paint.

Please note that camp weather can range from very hot to very cold, and sunny to rainy. All of our classes are designed to be held outdoors. Please pack clothing that will keep your child comfortable for the various potential weather conditions.

**BEDDING:** Sleeping bag or 2-3 blankets and a sheet and pillow and pillowcase. Be prepared for cool nights.

**CLOTHING:** We suggest students bring casual clothing that is suitable for a camp setting. Bringing new clothes is discouraged, as getting dirty is hard to avoid at camp. Clothing should be marked with each student's name.

### **SPRING/FALL LIST**

- One pair of pajamas
- Sneakers (sandals not recommended)
- Daily change of socks and underwear (plus a few extra)
- Heavy and light shirts
- Warm jacket and sweater
- Raincoat
- Boots
- Two or three pair of jeans or pants (no dresses)
- Bug spray
- Water bottle

### **COOLER WEATHER**

- Additional socks-wool preferred
- Gloves, hat, mittens
- Winter coat with hood and/or scarf

### **TOILETRY ITEMS**

- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Soap and shampoo
- Bath towel and washcloth
- Brush or comb

### **OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT**

- Disposable Camera
- Pencils and notebook
- Flashlight

\*If your school is using the camp store, money may be brought, but should be kept by the teachers.

Leave these things at home: electronics, knife, food, or gum.

**Outdoor Education & Adventure Education Center-**  
*Participation Agreement & Health Form*

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION—PLEASE PRINT AND FILL IN EACH BLANK**

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:  MALE  FEMALE Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age At Camp \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

1. Custodial Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name & Address \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

2. If NOT AVAILABLE IN AN EMERGENCY, Notify \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE LIST ANY ALLERGIES YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICATIONS WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY, PERMISSION TO TREAT & PHOTO RELEASE—PLEASE READ BEFORE SIGNING**

I certify that the participant is in normal health and able to participate in YMCA CAMP POTAWOTAMI activities and programs as determined by the school named above. I understand that there is some inherent risk in activities at camp and accidents sometimes occur.

**Initial\*** \_\_\_\_\_

I release YMCA CAMP POTAWOTAMI and the YMCA OF GREATER FORT WAYNE, its employees, members, trustees, board of managers, independent contractors from all liability, damages, costs and expenses arising out of or relating to bodily or physical injury, loss of life or personal property that may occur as a result of participating in YMCA programs. I also waive and release my photograph or likeness for any reason or purpose.

**Initial\*** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give my permission to the medical personnel selected by the SCHOOL NAMED ABOVE and/or YMCA CAMP POTAWOTAMI to order x-rays, routine tests, and treatments; to release any records necessary for insurance purposes; and to provide or arrange necessary related transportation for the participant named above. In the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the medical personnel selected by the SCHOOL NAMED ABOVE and/or YMCA CAMP POTAWOTAMI to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for and to order injection and/or anesthesia and/or surgery for the participant named above.

**Initial\*** \_\_\_\_\_

*I acknowledge that I have read and understand all of the above.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT/CHAPERONE SIGNATURE                      DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\* PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE                      DATE

*\*Required if participant/chaperone is less than 18 years of age*

