



YMCA Camp Olson

LGBTQ+ & Gender Inclusion Policy



The purpose of the following policy is to inform all persons associated with YMCA Camp Olson of the expectations that support a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for all.

YMCA Camp Olson (referred to herein as the "Camp Olson") welcomes all participants. Camp Olson is committed to ensuring access, inclusion, engagement, and affirmation for all. We strive to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender expression, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race, or sexual Orientation, feels welcomed, affirmed, supported, and has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity and respect.

All participants are expected to respect other people, including campers, family members, guests, and Camp Olson employees. Participants must be responsible for themselves and their actions. It is not acceptable in our community to mock, bully, harass, intimidate, or attempt to exclude people. Participants and guests are expected to practice respect, cooperation, and compromise within camp. For the protection of every participant, we reserve the right to deny or cancel the enrollment of, or immediately dismiss any participant, without refund, as a result of any behavior which affects another participant's or guest's ability to enjoy the community of camp, or seriously disrupts our program. Parents, legal guardians, or group leaders will be notified of our decision to terminate a minor's participation at camp.

Inclusion for All

Everyone who walks through our doors has unique needs, and we are a more powerful force for good when we take the time to find out what those needs are, to build empathy and understanding, and to respond to individuals appropriately. We know that the Y has the greatest impact and is most sustainable when we ensure that everyone who comes to the Y:

- feels welcome and safe;
- is treated fairly and with respect;
- has equal access to programs and services; and
- is treated with empathy

Code of Conduct

The YMCA teaches the core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility. To promote safety and comfort, all individuals are asked to act appropriately at all times when in our facility or participating in our programs. The four major tenets of our Code of Conduct are as follows (our detailed Code of Conduct can be found in your camper/staff forms).

1. I will respect others.
2. I will respect myself.
3. I will respect the environment and camp facilities.
4. I will respect everyone's health and safety.

LGBTQ+ Inclusion

A. Key Terms:

LGBTQ+: LGBTQ is an acronym used to represent a diverse range of sexualities and gender-identities, referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer, questioning, or another identity.

Sex Assigned at Birth (Sex): Determined by the anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones which make up a person's body.

Gender Identity: A person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender. This awareness may be the same as the biological sex, as it is for cisgender people, or it may be different, as it is for transgender people, somewhere in between, or falling completely outside these categories.

Cisgender (Cis): An umbrella term to describe those whose gender identity or expression situates them the same as the biological sex designated at birth.

Transgender (Trans*): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-Binary: An umbrella term for gender identities used by people whose gender is not exclusively male or female.

Sexual Orientation: The emotional, romantic, physical, sexual, or spiritual attraction a person feels toward another person.

Gender Expression: How an individual demonstrates their gender through the ways they act, dress, behave, and interact

Gender-Expansive: An umbrella term used for an individual (or idea) that broadens their own culture's commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender-Expansive individuals include those with transgender and non-binary identities and those whose gender in some way is seen to be stretching society's notions of gender. *The terms gender fluid, gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, and genderqueer have similar meanings.*

Pronouns: The pronoun or set of pronouns that a person identifies with and would like to be called when their proper name is not being used. Examples include "she/her/hers," "he/him/his," "ze/hir/hirs," and "they/them/theirs." Some people prefer no pronouns at all.

Ally: Someone who advocates for and supports members of a community beyond their own - reaching across differences to achieve mutual goals.

B. Registration

When you complete camp registration for your child, we ask that you confirm all information with your camper, especially name, pronouns, gender, and cabin preference. In the case that a camper arrives with a gender identity that does not match their registration and requests being assigned a cabin that matches their gender identity, staff will do everything possible to make the camper comfortable, and assess the need for guardian notification and permission on a case-by-case basis.

C. Facilities

Access to gendered spaces (e.g. restrooms, overnight accommodations) should be based on gender identity. Sex assigned at birth, physical characteristics, or presentation should not dictate the use of gendered space. Trans* individuals may select either restroom. Requiring someone to use a bathroom or other gendered space of the gender they do not identify can be detrimental to an individual's well-being and safety and puts Camp Olson at risk for discrimination complaints.

If a camper is not comfortable using the gender-labeled restrooms, staff will seek ways to find an option that makes the individual feel comfortable. All available options should be presented in an unbiased way, and staff should work with each individual to identify their desired way forward.

Whenever possible, campers who have a need or desire for increased privacy for any reason should be provided access to an alternative restroom or area to shower or change in privacy. This allows people who may feel uncomfortable sharing restrooms with trans* campers the option to make use of a separate area. No one should be required to use an alternative restroom because they are trans*.

D. Cabin Assignments

Our current registration software limits demographic information to the binary notion of sex and gender. However, you will see that we have added additional questions to gather information on your camper's gender identity and preferences. Cabin assignments will be made based on gender identity, with requests taken into account for comfort and safety. All campers will be asked to select a cabin gender where they will feel most comfortable for that session upon registration. When possible, we aim to provide an opt-in "gender-expansive" cabin but are restricted based on availability and interest per session.

If there is a discrepancy in the cabin preference selected at registration and the child's disclosed preference upon arrival to camp, the parents/guardians of the camper will be notified to discuss options. If parents/guardians disagree with cabin placement based on the expression of the camper, the parent can choose to cancel their enrollment.

Just like all other cabins at Camp Olson, they will be fully supervised and have staff present and organizing activities at all times. All expectations about respect, modesty, civility, and good boundaries apply, no matter what cabin or bathroom a camper uses. All expectations about romantic and physical contact apply, no matter what cabin a camper is assigned to (any behavior intended to arouse is not appropriate at camp, no matter who is involved). Every cabin is equipped with a private changing space. Each cabin is assigned at least two staff, and Camp Olson strives to keep an appropriate adult ratio in each cabin that corresponds to the gender identities of the residing campers. At least one of those staff's gender will correspond to the gender identities of the campers who will stay there.

E. Communication

Names and Pronouns

Campers have the right to be addressed by their preferred names and pronouns. We encourage all staff and campers to introduce themselves with their pronouns. Inadvertent slips or unintentional honest mistakes in the use of preferred names or pronouns might occur. Camp Olson does not condone the intentional and persistent refusal to respect a person's gender identity. Staff and volunteers will assume that a camper's gender identity and sexual orientation is confidential, and campers may choose to share information about themselves at their own discretion.

Communication to Campers/Participants

Other campers or participants in the cabin or group will not be explicitly made aware before or during programs of any child or staff's gender identity (or transition) or sexual orientation unless directed by the person themselves. If the conversation topic arises, staff may engage campers in a compassionate and respectful discourse on the topic. Remember, the only person who is to be dictating this conversation is the camper who the conversation is about. It is crucial to note that an individual should not be outed without their permission, whether intentionally or accidentally. Camp Olson Senior Leadership is always available to support these conversations or debrief them with the staff or campers involved.

Communication to Families

Camp Olson believes that diversity of our population is one of its strengths. Camper/participant families will not be notified of a camper or staff member's gender identity (or transition) or sexual Orientation. If an individual comes out and/or chooses to be their authentic self at Camp Olson, this means they feel safe and brave enough to share a personal part of themselves that others may not see, understand or accept. It is crucial to note that an individual should not be outed without their permission, whether intentionally or accidentally, to other participants, staff, or their own family. Camp Olson Senior Leadership is always available to support conversations and concerns that parents may have.

Communication to Staff

In collaboration with a camper's family, staff may be made aware of information about a child's gender identity and specific support. Camp Olson recognizes that those in transition or who have transitioned may not want this information shared with the Camp Olson staff. We respect all community members' right to privacy and work to strike an appropriate balance.

Staff members who are transitioning, have transitioned, or are two spirits, etc. DO NOT need to identify so to other staff members or campers. If our staff members would like to share this information, they are welcome to. If approached by a camper or staff member about the topic, we encourage our staff to communicate honestly and positively about the topic if they feel comfortable. Camp Olson Senior Leadership is always available to support these conversations or debrief them with the staff or campers involved.

All staff will be trained in gender-inclusive, trauma-informed principles, practices, and language.

F. Harassment/Discrimination/Intimidation-Free Environment

Camp Olson prohibits harassment, discrimination, and/or intimidation on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, race, color, ancestry, national origin, disability, marital status, socio-economic status, religion, veteran status, unfavorable discharge from the military or other protected status. Please refer to our Safe Place for All Policy for more information on our commitment against sexual harassment and sexual assault.

G. Conflict Resolution, Code of Conduct, Discipline

Whenever discussing a situation such as behavior or discipline with an LGBTQ+ camper or their family, we will focus on the conduct of that situation and not on any assumptions regarding the individual's gender identity.

H. Records

To the extent that Camp Olson is not legally required to use an individual's legal name and gender marker on camp documents, the name and gender by which the individual identifies will be used. In situations where it is required by law or third-party funders to report an individual's legal name or gender marker (e.g., criminal background checks, sex offenders' check, medical information), this information should be collected, and effort should be taken to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information. Registration forms will be designed to accurately and sensitively document gender/sex and preferred names. When a preferred name is provided, it will be used at all times during the camp experience.

I. Resources

While all of our staff are trained to listen to and assist campers, if you have special requests, considerations, or questions about our policy and procedures, our Camp Director, Demi Kapler, is available to help ensure all participants are comfortable and safe above all else.