



YMCA CAMP MINIKANI MINICAMP HANDBOOK



Updated 2/25/2025

Dear Families,

We look forward to working with you to ensure a fun and enriching experience for your child this summer. This guide will help prepare your child for MiniCamp at YMCA Camp Minikani. Please read and save this guide, as it will be a useful resource in the coming months.

Your reason for sending your child to Minikani may change summer-to-summer. Perhaps, your hope is that they will enjoy a week or two of boating and swimming; building friendships; or trying archery and exploring the arts. For children like yours, Camp Minikani becomes more than a beautiful place with fun activities.

The heart of Camp Minikani is a strong sense of community—dedicated to helping your child realize that their best self already exists. Your child will have an incredible amount of fun. Those fun experiences—like meeting a new friend or scaling the climbing wall—will expand their comfort zone. However, they will come out of the experience with a sense of accomplishment that builds their confidence and resilience for years to come.

All of this is possible because of the intentionality of Minikani’s program. Every element, from the daily schedule to the dynamic of your child’s group, is thoughtfully designed to produce social and emotional growth. Staff members are selected for their maturity, character and leadership capabilities, as well as their desire to be positive a role model for your child. The majority of staff, all but a handful of seasoned international counselors, were once campers at Minikani and have been trained through our extensive three-year Leadership Training program.

We are excited to share these aspects of Minikani with your family this summer. If you have any questions that are unanswered in this guide, please feel free to call or email the office at 262-251-9080 or minikani@ymcamke.org.

In the Spirit of Minikani,

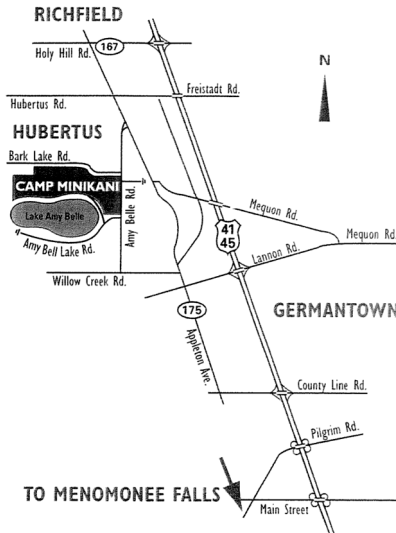
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YMCA Camp Minikani
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DIRECTIONS

YMCA Camp Minikani is located about 30 minutes from downtown Milwaukee at 875 Amy Belle Road in Hubertus, Wisconsin. Please note that many GPS units and online maps may direct you to our Equestrian Center located at 860 Amy Belle Lane, which is on the opposite side of the grounds from the main entrance. Here are detailed directions to Minikani's main entrance:

From Milwaukee

- Take US-41/45 north from Milwaukee and exit on Lannon / Mequon Road.
- Go LEFT on Lannon Road to the roundabout, which is Hwy 175 (Appleton Avenue).
- Turn RIGHT on Hwy 175 and proceed one block to Willow Creek Road.
- Turn LEFT on Willow Creek Road and drive west for about one mile to Amy Belle Road.
- Turn RIGHT on Amy Belle Road and go one mile to the camp entrance, which will be on your left (there is a large camp sign just after the driveway).

From the North

- Take US-41/45 south and exit on Lannon / Mequon Road.
- Go RIGHT on Lannon Road to the roundabout, which is Hwy 175 (Appleton Avenue).
- Turn RIGHT on Hwy 175 and proceed one block to Willow Creek Road.
- Turn LEFT on Willow Creek Road and drive west for about one mile to Amy Belle Road.
- Turn RIGHT on Amy Belle Road and go one mile to the camp entrance, which will be on your left (there is a large camp sign just after the driveway).

CAMP POLICIES AND INFORMATION



Camp Minikani is accredited by American Camp Association by meeting more than 300 individual health, safety, and program quality standards. These standards establish criteria for program, personnel, transportation, administrative procedures, health care, food service, program activities and emergency procedures. Accreditation assures parents and campers that Minikani has been measured against national standards in the camping industry. We are proud to be among the 25 percent of accredited camps in the United States.

Licensing Rulebook

A copy of DCF 252 Licensing Rules is available for parent review upon request. Our license is posted in the MiniCamp room along with any non-compliance information.

Behavior Expectations

In order to promote a positive experience for everyone, campers are expected to behave appropriately while at Minikani. YMCA Camp Minikani has a strict policy against bullying and harmful behavior in order to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all campers. If behavioral issues arise, a director will work on a resolution with the camper and their parents or guardians. If bullying or behavioral issues persist, parents may be asked to pick up their camper early. Please note that refunds are unavailable in such cases.

Character Asset Development & Program Objectives

1. Helping campers grow personally. They are given the chance to experience new things and interact with their peers with the support of caring, concerned adults.
2. Fostering lifelong values. From the simplest of values and attitudes like sharing, sportsmanship and respecting others and ourselves, we begin to build the foundation of values that will stay with your children as they mature.
3. Appreciating diversity in one another. We live in a culturally-rich world, and we try to reflect this in our camp. Campers learn that each person is unique, and they can all have fun together regardless of race, religion, gender or social status.
4. Learning new skills. Whether it's playing a new game, further developing an existing skill, or focusing in on social skills, campers leave having learned something they can remember for a lifetime.
5. **HAVING FUN!** Children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. In our curriculum, counselors use fun experiences to convey the importance of character building and positive values. Games, swimming, crafts and much more are all done with the camper as our primary focus.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Deposits & Payments

A minimum deposit of \$50 is due at registration

- MiniCamp Deposit: \$50 per week/per child
- Payment Plans can be set up at time of online registration or by calling the office.
- Deposits are refundable until January 15. You may choose to pay camp fees in full or set up a payment plan for the remaining balance. Full payment and paperwork are due by April 1.
- **If, by April 1, fees are not paid in full or have an automatic credit card payment plan set up, your camper(s) will be unenrolled, and all monies put towards registrations will be forfeited.**

There will be a \$30 charge for all returned (NSF) checks

Cancellations & Refunds

All monies are refundable until January 15. After January 15, all monies less the above deposits are refundable until April 1. After April 1, all monies are forfeited due to cancellation. If there is sickness or injury, a medical note from a physician is required for a full refund. All monies are non-refundable if your camper leaves early due to homesickness or disruptive behavior, as determined by the camp director.

Financial Assistance

YMCA Camp Minikani is committed to making camp available to as many children as possible. Through the generosity of many donors, the YMCA Camp Minikani Annual Campaign provides funds to families that would otherwise not be able to send their child to camp. For financial assistance information, please contact our office at 262-251-9080. You may also contact us regarding donating to the Annual Campaign.

Admission Policy

YMCA Camp Minikani will admit any child between the ages of 5 and 7* years into our Minicamp based on availability determined by licensing rules. Camp Minikani will not discriminate based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, creed or special needs.

*For campers who enter the program at age 6 and will turn 7 during the summer.

Payment Plans

You may set scheduled payments before your balance is due by April 1. If you are interested in a payment plan, please contact the office at 262-251-9080.

Session Changes

We understand that schedules can change throughout the year. If you need to switch sessions, you may do so, if there is availability, until January 15. After January 15, priority will be given to campers who are on waitlists that are not registered for any session.

Waitlists

If a spot becomes available, your child is automatically enrolled, and you are notified via email. You have 48 business hours to confirm the spot and pay the deposit. If the office does not hear from you, a phone call will be made, and another email sent. If the office does not hear from you within three (3) days and no deposit has been made, your child is cancelled from the session and removed from the waitlist.

Buddy Requests

Campers may request ONE (1) friend for their cabin or group. This request must be reciprocated by both families. Groups and cabins are based on age and program. As such campers may only request a friend who is within a year of age, and registered in the same program and session.

Please email requests to: minikani@ymcamke.org by the Monday before your child's session.

Camp Store

The Minikani Camp Store is fully stocked with tons of great apparel and souvenirs for our campers. The store is open for MiniCamp on Friday check-out in so that parents and campers can make decisions together about what items to purchase. We also have an online store with a variety of different products. Check out our website for more information!



MINICAMP BUS

Bus transportation to and from camp is available at an additional \$70 per week fee. You must choose a stop upon registering for camp and your camper's morning and evening bus stops must be the same.

Bus Route	Location	Pick-Up	Drop-Off
A	Northside YMCA, North Ave, Milwaukee	7:25 am	5:35 pm
A	Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, North Ave, Wauwatosa	7:45 am	5:15 pm
B	Bayshore Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hampton Road, Whitefish Bay	7:35 am	5:25 am

The pick-up times for the bus are departure times. Please arrive 10-15 minutes early before stated pick-up time, so you don't miss the bus.

Parents are responsible for meeting campers at the designated stop. Please arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time. When dropping off your camper at the bus, please show your photo ID to the two Minikani counselors that are your camper's designated bus captains. Campers are expected to follow Minikani's behavior expectations outlined in this handbook, as well as in the Behavior Agreement form that is signed, as if they are at camp when riding the bus. Campers should also follow any rules posted in the bus or directives given by the bus driver or bus captains at all times.

Missing bus pick-ups:

If you miss the bus, it is your responsibility for transporting your child to camp. If a parent or designee is not at the evening bus pick-up, the child will remain on the bus and return to camp with the bus captains. The parent is then responsible for picking up their child from camp. If the camper is being picked up from camp instead of riding the afternoon bus, you must call the camp office by 3 p.m. to inform the staff. If we do not receive a call by 3 p.m., your camper may be put on the bus. There will be no refunds for bus fees.

Bus Alerts:

Camp Minikani utilizes a texting service to notify families of delays to bus arrival times due to traffic and/or weather. If your camper will be taking the bus at all this summer, please make sure your cell phone number is listed and correct in your CampMinder family account, and that you have opted in for text notifications.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE INFORMATION

We are looking forward to welcoming your family to camp this summer—a process that begins even before you arrive! By Sunday evening before camp, families will receive a call from the child’s counselor or unit director to introduce themselves to you and your camper. We encourage you to ask questions or share any concerns you have – we are here to help!

Attendance for all Day Campers is taken on a daily basis. For liability and safety reasons, it is extremely important we know when your child is not at camp. If you know your camper will be absent, please email the office at minikani@ymcamke.org. If you need to pick your child up early, we ask that you inform the office before **12 p.m.** that day via email as well. Enrollment forms, medical forms, emergency card, and payment must be completed before the child can begin camp.

Sign-in & Sign-out

Minicamp drop-off is from 7:30–8:15 a.m. each day. Pick-up begins at 4:15 p.m. and ends no later than 4:45 p.m.

Please make sure to read everything below so that check-in goes smoothly for you and your camper.

- Check-in is between 7:30–8:15 a.m. and check-out is between 4:15–4:45 p.m.
- Parking is only available in the Upper Parking Lot for the safety of our pedestrians.
- Check-in and out will be taking place in front of Halquist Lodge.

Early Pickups

We understand your camper may need to be picked up early due to activities outside of camp. To minimize disruptions to your camper and the rest of their group, please let us know in advance of any early pickup, and plan on picking up your camper during the lunch hour (12:30–1 pm). This ensures that your camper will be in a central location and can be picked up quickly and with minimal disruption to camp activities.

Only authorized parents/guardians or an individual you authorized in writing can pick up your child. Any adult authorized to pick up a camper must present a valid photo ID prior to departure. Please note that pets are not permitted on the grounds. If your child will be absent, please email or leave a message for us **NO LATER** than 11:30 am. Our voicemail system is always available at 262–251–9080. If you leave a message with the office staff, please be sure to mention that they are enrolled in MINICAMP. If we have not heard from you and your child has not arrived by 12:30, we will attempt to contact you per State Licensing Regulations.

PACKING FOR MINICAMP

Consider a few non-material things to give your child before they attend Minikani. Prior to their arrival, discuss the positive aspects of camp with your child. Share your enthusiasm for the new friends that they will meet or the new activities they will try.

Since the majority of camp play time is outdoors, please do not pack clothing that is too valuable to be dirty or stained. Please mark all clothing and equipment with the camper's name. Here is a list of daily items (weather dependent):

- Lightweight Jacket or Sweatshirt
- Shorts
- Swimsuit & Towel
- Water Bottle
- Sneakers
- Sandals (optional, but NO flip-flops, must have a heel strap)
- Hat with cap or brim
- Bag lunch and drink
- Raingear/Poncho (depending on weather forecast)
- Insect Repellant
- Sunscreen & Lip Balm (SPF 30 or higher)
- Goggles (optional)
- Backpack*

Campers do not return to the lodge between activities, so they need a bag or backpack to carry their swimsuit, water bottle, etc.

Bag Lunches

All MiniCampers are required to bring their own healthy lunch. Pack enough food, as the campers are active throughout the day and burn a lot of energy! Refrigeration is provided for storing lunch. For the safety of campers with allergies, foods containing nuts are not allowed in packed lunches.

Lost and Found

The camp experience is an opportunity for a child to learn responsibility for their personal items. As a family, please discuss the importance of caring for and keeping track of gear as Camp Minikani is not responsible for lost or missing items. If an item is lost, please check the Lost & Found during check out. Every effort is made to return clearly marked items; however, due to the large volume of items we accumulate, long-term storage is not possible. Unclaimed items are held for two weeks before they are donated to local charities.

Absolutely NO cell phones, video cameras, personal music or video game devices, laptops or other electronics, pets, fireworks, alcohol, tobacco products, illegal substances or weapons of any kind, including pocketknives, should be brought to camp. They will be confiscated immediately.

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m.	Drop Off/Group Time	12:05 p.m.	Rest Period
8:30 a.m.	Announcements/Clean-up	12:35 p.m.	Clean-up/Sunscreen
9 a.m.	Director Led Activity	1 p.m.	Pool/Sprinklers
9:45 a.m.	Morning Snack	2:15 p.m.	Group Activities
10:15 a.m.	Skills	4:00 p.m.	PM Snack
11:30 a.m.	Lunch	4:15 p.m.	Pick Up

Camp Activities

Some typical MiniCamp activities include:

- **Swimming:** Each group participates in a daily free swim, weather permitting. Please supply a swimsuit and towel daily!
- **Experiencing Nature:** campers are taught about the environment, for example, becoming aware of nature and respecting all forms of life.
- **Singing:** Transition songs, action songs, and traditional camp songs may also be taught to the campers.
- **Playing Games:** Team-building games are a wonderful way for campers to develop friendships with others in their group.
- **Crafts:** Campers will learn how to make different crafts each week!
- **Discussing Values:** Our programming and staff promote YMCA values, including respect, responsibility, honesty, and kindness.

Swimming

All campers can participate in recreational swimming and need to bring a towel and suit with them every day. During scheduled swim times, campers who choose not to participate must sit on the pool deck. All MiniCampers are non-swimmers and will be restricted to the shallow end of the pool (3 ft. depth). Parents are welcome to send in life jackets or bubble belts to aid their child while in the water. There is always a lifeguard on deck when children are swimming in addition to multiple counselors in the pool. As an additional safety measure, the counselors will check in and check out every child in the pool.

Staffing

Our staff is selected based on responsibility, certifications, ability to relate to children, sensitivity to the children's individual needs, and their recreational skills. Our staff meets or exceeds day program requirements set by the YMCA of the U.S.A, American Camping Association, and the State of Wisconsin. Counselors work with small groups of children to build a positive rapport and develop mutual trust and respect.

Camp Counselors

All counselors are trained in CPR, First Aid, child abuse prevention, emergency procedures, water safety, and how to conduct camp activities including songs and games that incorporate values and education. All MiniCamp Staff are over 18 years of age and have had previous experience working with young children. (Six campers to one staff member, with LT's assisting)

We also have many volunteers who work with our Leadership Training (LT) programs at camp. LTs, which are junior counselors between ages 15 to 17 years old, are selected into the program based on their ability to be responsible leaders. LTs will only work with MiniCampers when fully supervised by adult counseling staff.

Child Guidance Policy

Our intent is that your child has a very positive experience at our camp. We keep the children very active and engaged. Typically, if an issue arises, the counselors will deal with the issue and notify you at pick-up time. In extreme cases where behavior becomes a problem, we have established the following policy. With your support, we will be able to ensure the most positive experience for all campers.

Progressive Discipline:

1. Counselor's warning
2. Documented behaviors communicated to parents
3. Phone consolation with MiniCamp Director
4. Child's suspension from camp

Our regular methods of discipline include positive guidance (telling children what they can do instead of what they can't), redirection (refocusing them on another task), and clear-cut limits. Our goal is ultimately to encourage them to understand to self-regulate their own behavior, develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others.

HEALTHCARE INFORMATION

We have a well-equipped Health Center with a nurse onsite 24 hours per day. Counseling staff are also trained in emergency First Aid and CPR. Parents and guardians are contacted if the camper has any physical injury that is apparent or at all severe, such as scrapes or bruises. In case of sickness, we may make arrangements to send sick campers home. If campers are ill; have been exposed to a contagious disease such as chicken pox, COVID, strep throat or whooping cough in the last 24 hours; have a temperature, persistent cough, or recurring vomiting or diarrhea we ask that they not be sent to camp.

In case of injury, health care staff will take necessary steps to ensure proper emergency care, which may include treatment by staff for minor injuries, phoning the parent for instructions, calling local EMS providers or transporting to a doctor or emergency care facility. Parents must provide complete emergency contact information and health history on their online family account, located at <https://minikani.campintouch.com/v2/login/login.aspx>. If parents will be travelling while their campers are at camp, please list an itinerary and phone numbers where they may be reached. In the event of an injury requiring medical attention, we will make every attempt to contact the parents prior to treatment. In the event that parents are unable to be reached, we will have the health form on file, with parents' written authorization to treat the injury. Health forms are completed through the online family portal.

Insurance

Parents or guardians are responsible for all medical costs incurred because of injury or illness while children are at camp. Please upload a copy of your most recent insurance card to your online account.

Health Forms

All campers **MUST** have a completed health form completed online. We cannot accept campers without this form. The State of Wisconsin and our ACA Accreditation require it.

CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Card

All campers are highly recommended to be fully vaccinated by the start of their camp session. If you do choose to have your child vaccinated, you can upload your child's CDC Vaccination Card to your family portal online.

Medications

If your child takes medication, please do not pack them in your camper's backpack. All medications should be packed in a zipper baggie in their original packaging and handed to either a Day Camp Director if dropping off at camp, or, a bus captain if your child takes the bus. All medications **MUST** be listed with usage directions in the Health History Form you fill out per

the parent portal. <https://minikani.campintouch.com/v2/login/login.aspx> Unused medications will be returned with the camper at the end of their session. Please note, unless taken daily, over-the-counter medications should not be brought to camp. The health care staff keeps a supply of common non-prescription medications on hand and will administer as necessary.

Lice Policy

Camp Minikani maintains a strict lice-and nit-free policy for our campers and staff. All campers are checked for lice and nits within 4 hours of their arrival at Minikani. If lice or nits are found, staff will contact the parent or guardian and ask that they pick up their camper to be treated. Campers may return to camp 24 hours after being treated, if they are 100 percent lice and nit free. Camp Minikani recommends treatment by a lice specialist or through your family physician. We do not recommend over-the-counter lice treatment products as they are not always effective. Upon their return, the camp nurse will clear the camper before they may return to their group.

For a more detailed description of our policy or if you have any questions call the main office at 262-251-9080.

Tick Policy

In the woods of Wisconsin, ticks are plentiful at the beginning of the summer. Wisconsin is home to both wood and deer ticks—the latter being more of a health concern. Deer ticks are the primary carriers of Lyme disease, which is a bacterial infection that affects the entire body. Should a tick be found embedded, the camper will be transported to a local hospital for removal. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns regarding tick procedures. Please also consider reading about tick prevention together by visiting www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/.

Animal Interactions

Camp Minikani has a mix of barn animals on site which may include horses, donkeys, ponies, sheep, goats, and chickens. Minicamp campers may get to interact and pet these large animals, and may get the opportunity to pick up and hold the chickens during their week at Minikani.

In the event of an injury caused by one of the barn animals, the camp nurse will evaluate and provide the proper care, as well as notify the parent of the injury.

All Minicampers will wash their hands using a hand washing station at the barn once done interacting with the animals.

COMMUNICATIONS

TEXT ALERTS

Minikani will be utilizing a texting service to provide camp updates on bus times, weather events, registration openings, and other pertinent information to your camper's stay. To stay in the know, be sure that your phone number is entered correctly in your CampMinder account.

We will contact you via e-mail as well as phone prior to, during and after your child's stay. The e-mails come from minikani@ymcamke.org and phone calls come from 262-251-9080. Please make sure this address is not blocked as spam and set our phone number up as a contact in your phone. Contact our office immediately if your e-mail address or phone numbers change. You can also stay in touch with what is happening through our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) page, and we will upload a selection of photos each day of camp, which can be accessed [online](#). While we do our best to make sure that we take photos of all campers during the week, we only upload a limited number to show what happened at camp that day.

We hope that this information helps you and your camper prepare for Minikani. Please feel free to call or e-mail the office if you have any further questions.



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