

## DEAR CHAPERONES,

Thank you for being part of our Environmental Education experience. We welcome you to our team and hope you will find your role as a chaperone enjoyable and rewarding. Please read this letter carefully before your trip. If you have questions feel free to call YMCA Camp Thunderbird or speak to the lead teacher from your school.

The Environmental Education Center is an exciting place to learn. We strive to provide students with a unique environment where they gain skills in cooperation and critical thinking and develop a sense of appreciation for the natural world. It is a place for students to get to know each other, build strong relationships, and have positive interactions with adults. The skills and wisdom you bring to YMCA Camp Thunderbird as a chaperone are essential in making this experience fun, safe, and educational for the attending students.

As a chaperone at Camp Thunderbird, you will help supervise the students during activities, meals, free time, and in the cabins. Here is what you can expect as a chaperone in each of these facets of camp:

## ACTIVITIES FACILITATED BY YMCA CAMP THUNDERBIRD STAFF

YMCA Camp Thunderbird staff will facilitate various ecology, team building, history, and evening programs for the students, depending on the activities chosen by your school's teachers and the length of your school's stay. During these activities:

- Adhere to and help enforce any rules, guidelines, or safety measures provided by the instructor.
- Ask questions, be enthusiastic, and have fun! Students will follow your example.
- Participate while allowing the students to develop their own leadership and make their own conclusions. These activities are meant to supplement what the students are learning at school – they need every opportunity to connect the activities they participate in at camp with what they study in their classroom.
- Please refrain from using cell phones during class times.

## MEALS

Cooperation, responsibility, courtesy, food appreciation, and resource recovery are all valuable topics we emphasize in our dining hall. Your supervision is essential to this learning experience. During meals:

- Adhere to and help enforce any rules, guidelines, or safety measures provided by Camp Thunderbird staff.
- Make sure students stay seated unless they need to use the restroom, refill their water, or have been dismissed to get food from our food line.
- Make sure all students stay in the dining hall until everyone finishes eating, tables are clean, and announcements are made.

## FREE TIME

Chaperones are responsible for supervising students during free time. Camp Thunderbird staff will not be available to assist with free time supervision. Keeping a watchful eye on students during free time is important because most accidents happen during unstructured play. During free time:

- Communicate with other chaperones if you need to remove yourself for supervising responsibilities to ensure the students are supervised in your absence.
- Organize and participate in games with the students.
- Use this time to assist students in water or restroom breaks.

## CABINS

Chaperones are responsible for supervising students in the cabins. Students may not go into their cabins without a chaperone present. In the cabins:

- Make sure there is at least one adult in your cabin whenever students will be there. Please observe the Rule of 3 (minimum one adult with two children, or two adults with one child).
- Adhere to and enforce the cabin rules and guidelines set forth by YMCA Camp Thunderbird staff.
- Do things together as a group: play a game, make a collage, write poems or stories about your experiences, or organize a formal sharing time each night.
- Facilitate shower time for the students.

Thank you for your help in making this trip safe, fun, and educational for the students. We could not do it without you!

Sincerely,

Audrey Sykes, Director of Environmental Education | [CampThunderbirdEEC@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:CampThunderbirdEEC@ymcacharlotte.org) | 704 716 4147

**YMCA Camp Thunderbird | Environmental Education Center**

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.