CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO®
SECURING A FUTURE FOR WILDLIFE

Winter Break Camp Parent & Guardian Guide



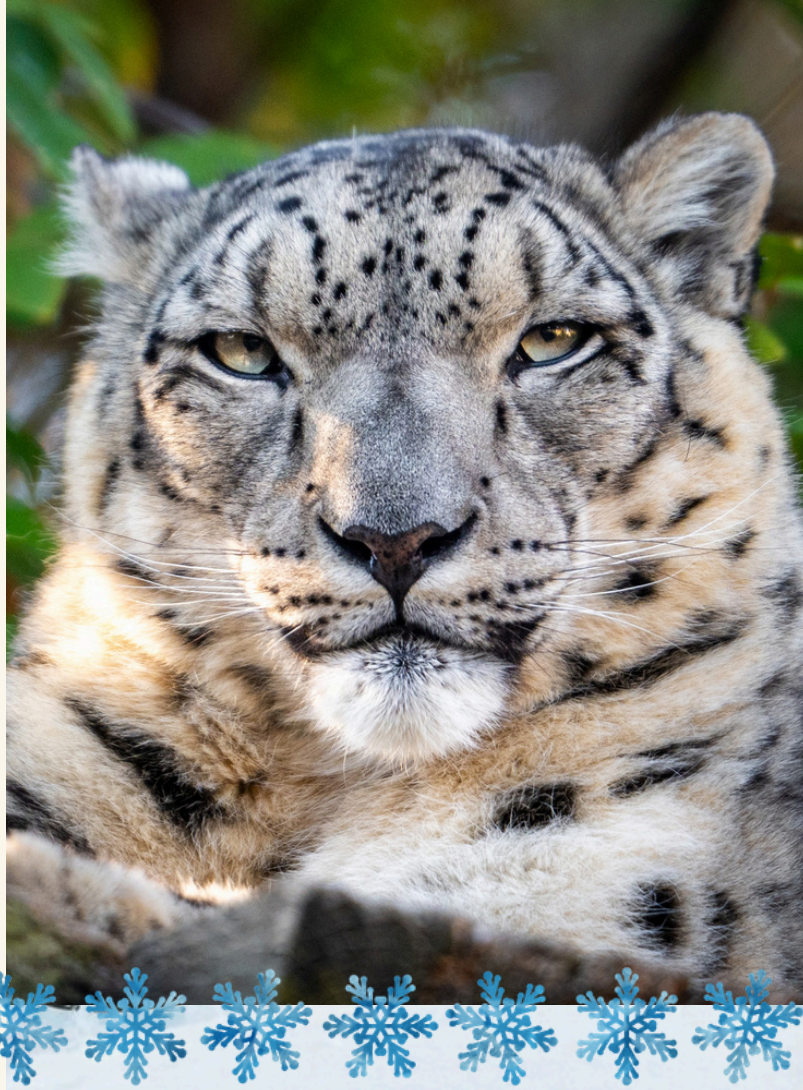
December 28–31, 2026
There is no camp on Friday, January 1st due to the holiday.

Ages 5–10

Contact Information:
Zoo Program Registration
216.635.3391
programregistration@clevelandmetroparks.com

Welcome

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo will be offering one week of Winter Break Camp for children ages 5-10. Programs are fun, interactive, and educational. This camp will explore the entire Zoo, focusing on the fascinating adaptations animals use to meet the challenges of winter weather and seasonal change. Winter Break Camp includes tours of Zoo exhibits, Get-Close encounters with small animals, arts and crafts, and conservation-themed games and stories.



Goals & Objectives

We want your child to have a great time while learning about animals!

Camps at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo are designed to create compelling experiences that connect people with wildlife and inspire personal responsibility for conserving the natural world.

All education programs are designed to help foster respect for, connections with, and appreciation of wildlife and coexisting human cultures.

Activities

Winter Break Camp is designed to provide campers with a variety of wildlife and conservation-themed activities in a safe, nurturing, and fun atmosphere. A camper's day is a balance of active and quiet activities suitable to the age and abilities of the campers in the group. The activity schedule will remain flexible to allow camp counselors to maximize those times when Zoo animals are visible and most active.

- Tours of Zoo exhibits
- Up-close encounters with small education animals (snakes, birds, small mammals, etc.)
- Arts and crafts
- Games and nature activities that reinforce the concepts shared that day

Animal Contact

Campers will have opportunities for up-close encounters with small education animals. Touching of these animals may or may not be permitted.

For the safety of all, direct contact with exhibit animals is not possible.

All exhibit animal care, including feeding and cleaning, is done by professionally trained zookeepers.

Arrival & Departure

Before Care arrival:
(additional cost)
7:30-8:50am

Full-day and half-day arrival:
9:00am

Half-day departure:
12:30pm

Full-day departure:
4:00pm

After Care departure:
(additional cost)
4:15-6:00pm


Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Auditorium

If your camper needs to be **picked up early** or is going to **arrive late**, please call the Zoo's Program Registration office at **216.635.3391** to notify our staff.

Please enter through the **Program and Private Events entrance** at the Zoo Administration Building, attached to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Auditorium



Drop-off & Pick-up

- **Upon entering the Zoo off of Wildlife Way, park your car in the Stork or Lion lots.**
- Walk your camper to the Program and Private Events building entrance.
- Have your camper's lunch, if full-day, and any necessary medications with you at this time.
- Camp staff will meet you at the building entrance.
- When picking up, park your car and follow the same procedures as drop-off.
- Please bring the confirmation email, mobile or printed, received when you registered your camper(s). This contains the QR code unique to your camper(s) and will be scanned at check-out. Campers will not be released without this code.
- For the safety of all campers, we cannot release campers to anyone who does not have a QR code.
- If you are carpooling, be sure to have the QR code for each camper you are picking up.
- These procedures have been established for the safety of your children. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

What to Bring

DO send your child in comfortable shoes and clothing appropriate for the day's weather. Activities will take place rain, snow, or shine and campers will do a lot of walking. **Please** keep in mind that your child is responsible for carrying any items they bring with them throughout the day.

Backpacks and water bottles are recommended: however, your child is responsible for carrying those items.

DON'T send your child with money to spend in the food or gift shops. Campers will not be visiting these areas.

DON'T send your child to camp if they are experiencing any form of illness.





Lunch & Snacks

- Full-day campers are responsible for bringing their own lunch and beverage. No glass containers, please.
- Campers WILL NOT be permitted to purchase food from any restaurant/food stand while participating in Winter Break Camp.
- All lunches will be refrigerated. Please do not send campers with food that requires reheating as they will not have access to a microwave.
- Half-day campers do not need to bring lunch, as they leave camp prior to lunchtime.
- The Zoo will provide a mid-morning snack for all campers and a mid-afternoon snack for full-day campers.
- **Due to the severe food allergies in an increasing number of children, all snacks offered will be free of the top 9 food allergies: milk, wheat, soy, eggs, sesame, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish.**
- **For other dietary needs, please contact the Camp Coordinator** via the Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 prior to your session regarding snack substitutions for your camper.

Registration, Payment & Changes

Online Registration

- **Pre-registration is required for full-day and half-day campers.**
- **Payment in full is due at the time of registration and registrations are processed on a first come, first served basis.**
- **Online registration is available at** https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo/education/educational-programs/educational-opportunities/winter-break-camp#registration



Once registered for Winter Break Camp, you will receive a ticket with a unique QR code.

Please bring your mobile or printed ticket with your unique QR code to camp pick-up each day. Campers cannot be released without this code.

Late Fee Policy

Late fees of **$10** for every 15-minute interval or part thereof will be assessed for: half-day campers not picked up by **12:46pm**, full-day campers not picked up by **4:16pm**, after-care campers not picked up by **6:01pm**.



Rescheduling & Cancellation

- Program fees and deposits are **non-refundable**. Participants assume risk of all changes in personal health and affairs.
- With advanced notice of one week prior to the scheduled program date, the program may be rescheduled for free to a new date pending inventory/availability before the end of the following calendar year with a maximum of one (1) rescheduled move.
- Rescheduling requests will not be honored for 'no-shows' and requests submitted with less than a week's notice will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- If Cleveland Metroparks Zoo finds it necessary to cancel a program, a refund or internal education program credit will be issued. Registrants will be notified if programs are cancelled.
- By registering for a program, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this policy.

Behavior, Health & Emergency Information

Camper Behavior Expectations

Expectations of campers, parents, and staff include: considerate treatment of all people, physically, verbally, and non-verbally; considerate treatment of the Zoo's animals, facilities, landscape, and materials; appropriate language always and in all situations.

Examples of inappropriate behaviors

- Bullying
- Mistreating animals
- Name-calling
- Talking back
- Fighting
- Stealing
- Disobeying instructions or safety rules
- Swearing
- Deliberate property damage
- Disobeying safety regulations
- Breaking another camper's skin

The tools we use to help campers develop responsible and appropriate behavior patterns include discussions, clear communication about consequences, and separation from the group to refocus/regain calm. Parents are notified of any major issues that may result in dismissal from camp.

In some situations, parents may be called to pick up a camper immediately, or a camper may need to remain home for a day as a corrective and reflective measure.

Campers who exhibit persistent behavioral issues that require excessive staff attention or campers who engage in more serious behaviors may be immediately and permanently dismissed from Winter Break Camp.

These behaviors include actual, threatened, intended, or implied physical violence towards campers, staff, or animals; grossly inappropriate gestures or actions; theft, and the use or carrying of illegal substances or items. Refunds will not be granted for campers that are dismissed from camp.

While the behavior policy will be reviewed with all campers on their first morning at camp, please discuss this policy with your camper before that time.



Medication

Campers needing any form of medication during the day must have a completed Parent/Guardian Request for Administration of Medication form on file at the Zoo before they will be allowed to take any medications, including prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, and food supplement.

This form will be available when you drop your camper off on the first day of camp.You may also reach out ahead of time to programregistration@clevelandmetroparks.com to request a copy.

All medications will be kept in a secure location while camp is in session and will be administered at the appropriate times by trained staff.

All medications must be clearly labeled with the camper's name and in their original packaging.

Refrigeration is available if required.

Illness & Emergency Procedures

Please do not send your camper to camp when they are ill or show symptoms of a communicable disease.

Our camp follows the Ohio Department of Health "Communicable Disease Chart" in that if there is a concern a child may have a communicable disease, the parent/guardian will be notified, and an early pick-up will be required.

Some symptoms of communicable diseases are diarrhea, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, yellowish skin/eyes, conjunctivitis, temperature of 100° or higher coupled with other symptoms, untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots/ rashes, sore throat/difficulty swallowing, vomiting, lice, and scabies.

In case of an emergency, staff from the Zoo's First Aid office will be dispatched to the camper's location to assess the situation. Camp staff will call the camper's emergency contact numbers immediately.

Frequently Asked Questions



❄ What if we lost/can't find our original confirmation email with the QR code?

-Please contact the Zoo Program Registration Office at 216.635.3391 to resend the QR code email.

❄ What happens if it's cold or snowing?

-Camp activities take place rain, snow, or shine, and campers should be prepared to spend time outdoors even in cold or snowy weather. Please dress your camper in warm, weather-appropriate layers and send necessary winter accessories, such as a coat, hat, gloves or mittens, and warm footwear. We will do our best to limit time outdoors during extreme cold weather but campers should arrive prepared for outdoor activities.

❄ Can my camper bring a phone or electronic device?

-Yes, your camper may bring a phone or other electronic devices but we ask that they keep them put away during activities so they can stay engaged and participate fully. Campers are responsible for the belongings they bring to camp.

❄ Where should I drop off my child if we arrive after 9 am?

-Up until 9:10 am, drop-off takes place at the Program and Private Events Entrance. If you arrive after that time, please check in at the Guest Resource Center (inside the main entrance of the Zoo across from the gift shop).

❄ Is it possible for someone else to pick up my child from camp?

-Yes! The person picking up your camper must present the unique QR code from the registration confirmation email for each camper they are picking up. You may forward the confirmation email or send a picture or screenshot of the QR code.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian who registered the camper to ensure the pickup person has the correct QR code. Campers will not be released without a valid QR code. This procedure helps us ensure the safety of all campers.

❄ What should I do if we are running late for drop-off or if I need to pick my camper up early?

-Please reach out to our Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 to notify our staff.

Additional FAQs can be found at our website: https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo/education/educational-programs/educational-opportunities/winter-break-camp#faq