



Winter Break Camp Parents' Guide

When school is out, camps are in!

Dates:

Winter Break Camp 2025 will take place on December 29th – January 2nd.

NOTE: There is no camp on Thursday, January 1st due to the holiday.

Overview:

BACK for Winter 2025, 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 what happens during the winter months and highlights the Zoo's conservation programs. All sessions include tours of Zoo exhibits, Get-Close encounters with small animals, arts and crafts, and conservation-themed games.

Goals & Objectives:

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

Camps at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo support the organizational mission 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. Campers will have the opportunity to participate in various activities. The activity schedule will remain flexible to allow camp counselors to maximize those times when Zoo animals are visible and most active.

Program activities may include, but are not limited to:

- 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.

Registration/Admission Policy:

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>. Only complete registrations, which must include both the Registration Form and Waiver Packet, will be processed.

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.

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.

Lunch Guidelines:

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 or 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. Examples of snacks that may be served include applesauce, potato chips, and granola bars. Due to the severe food allergies in an increasing number of children, all snacks offered will be free of the top 9 food allergens, which are: 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.

Arrival/Departure Policies:

Arrivals: Before Care arrival time is 7:30-8:50am. Full-day and half-day arrival time is 9:00am. The check-in process will begin promptly at 9:00am at the Program and Private Events entrance at the Zoo Administration Building (see pictures of this entrance below). Follow signs for the Programs and Private Events and Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Auditorium.



Departures: Half-day camp departure time is 12:30pm, full-day camp departure time is 4:00pm, and after-care departure time is 4:15-6:00pm at the Zoo Administration Building.

For your child's safety, please follow these procedures when picking up and dropping off:

- 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. Here, you will finalize paperwork, if needed, and be able to ask questions if you have them.
- When picking up, park your car and follow the same procedures as drop-off.
- Please bring the **confirmation email** (mobile or printed) you 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 having trouble locating your registration confirmation with this QR code, please contact the Program Registration Office at 216.635.3391.
 - *NOTE: If you are carpooling, be sure to have the QR code for each camper you are picking up.*
- Once each QR code is scanned, camp staff will release your camper(s) to you.
- These procedures have been established for the safety of your children. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Late Fees: Any fees for late pick-up will be charged to your account. 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

If your camper is going to be absent, please call the Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 to notify our staff.

Behavior Policy:

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.

To provide for the safe enjoyment of all campers, Winter Break Camp staff will not allow inappropriate behaviors. Examples of inappropriate behaviors include:

- 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 rules/expectations and consequences, and separation from the group to refocus/regain calm. Parents are notified of any major issues, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping keep Winter Break Camp safe and enjoyable for all.

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. Staff keeps a log of all corrective action that goes beyond a warning. 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. Winter Break Camp staff believe that your understanding of these expectations, and your support of them, is integral to your camper's positive experience.

Thank you for helping to make this year's Winter Break Camp a success for your child and fellow campers.

Do's and Don'ts:

Please consider the following when getting your camper ready each morning:

- *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.
- *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 camper with cell phones, video games, or radio/portable speakers. Backpacks and water bottles are acceptable; however, your child is responsible for carrying those items throughout the day.
- *DON'T* send your child to camp if they are experiencing any form of illness.

Participant Health Records:

All campers must have a completed Emergency Medical Release form on file at the Zoo before they will be allowed to participate in any camp activities. This form is not considered complete without a parent or guardian signature and date in Part I, Refusal to Consent, or Part II, Consent Granted.

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
- Food supplement

This form is not considered complete without a parent or guardian signature and date. 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 Medical Procedures:

In the best interest of your camper, as well as the other campers and the staff, please do not send your camper to camp when they are ill or show symptoms of a communicable disease. Please contact the Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 if you know your camper will be absent.

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. A staff member will remain with the camper until they are picked up.

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 if it is deemed that treatment or transport is necessary.

