

Cheakamus Centre Natural Systems Program Parent Handbook 2014/2015



CHEAKAMUS
CENTRE

nature is in session

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Natural Systems Program - Studies in Environmental Learning

Outdoor School at Cheakamus Centre

has been committed to
Participation in Education
since 1969

We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions:

Cheakamus Centre
P.O. Box 250
Brackendale BC
V0N 1H0

Phone: 604.898.5422

Email: programs@cheakamuscentre.ca

Website: www.cheakamuscentre.ca

General information for parents:

Some facts about Outdoor School:

- Outdoor School is housed at Cheakamus Centre, a public education facility operating since 1969
- located approximately 40 minutes north of Horseshoe Bay, in Brackendale, B.C. (14 km north of Squamish), within minutes of all emergency services
- 165 hectares (420 acres) on the banks of the Cheakamus River
- each year, approximately 5300 students attend residential programs at the main school and the Bighouse
- special needs accessible

About primary programs:

Central to the primary grade programs at Outdoor School are the concepts of community and environment. Throughout the three days, activities are planned which work together to promote awareness of those concepts. The subjects taught at Outdoor School emphasize and enhance the material students explored in their schools, and provide a basis for further study when they return to their classrooms.

Students in the primary grades spend three days (two nights) at Outdoor School, taking part in classes each day. In outdoor sessions, students have an opportunity to learn from hands-on experiences. In small groups, they learn about topics such as: stream and forest ecology, farm management, salmon enhancement, wildlife conservation and basic survival.

In daily afternoon Special Program periods, students enjoy exploring, nature games and crafts. These activities are supervised by the special program coordinator and trained counsellors who make certain a high safety standard is maintained. Evening programs may include a night time senses walk, or singing in the covered campfire area.

Living with other students and staff members helps develop social skills, and encourages students to be more independent. With an emphasis on co-operation with, and consideration for, fellow students, children are encouraged to solve any social problems which may arise.

From humble beginnings in a 1969 pilot project, Cheakamus Centre has grown into a year-round public education facility providing memorable learning experiences for thousands of students.

The 2014-2015 school year marks the 45th Anniversary of Outdoor School's PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION.



WHY?

Outdoor School for Primary Students

WHERE?

Outdoor School Site

Location:

Located on the banks of the Cheakamus River in Paradise Valley, the 165 hectare property allows the staff to teach a wide variety of studies at the school. The geographical area of the Outdoor School provides a valuable opportunity for studying important topics which cannot be covered adequately in an urban setting.

Some of the advantages of Outdoor School's unique site include:

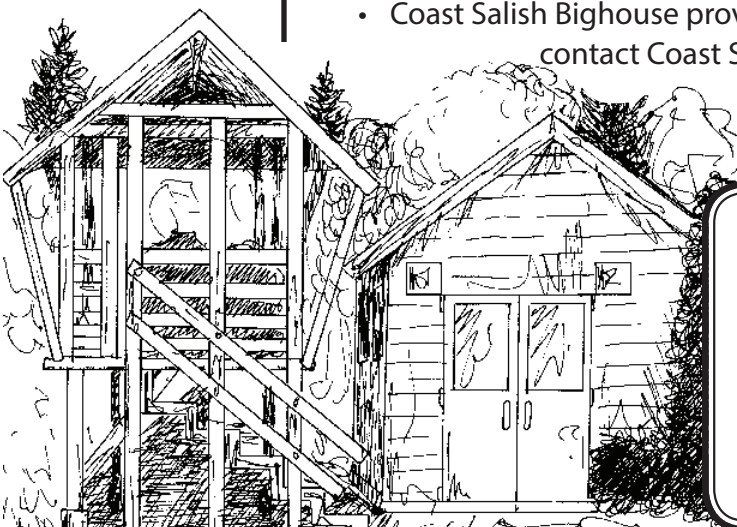
- location at the head of Howe Sound, only one hour from Vancouver, in an area where human population pressure and environmental needs maintain a precarious balance;
- an environmentally-sensitive site with virgin and second growth forests, including trees about 1000 years old;
- Cheakamus river frontage, and ground-fed spawning channels used by five species of Pacific Salmon;
- the largest recorded concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in North America;
- diverse habitat for aquatic, land, and aerial species.

The School:

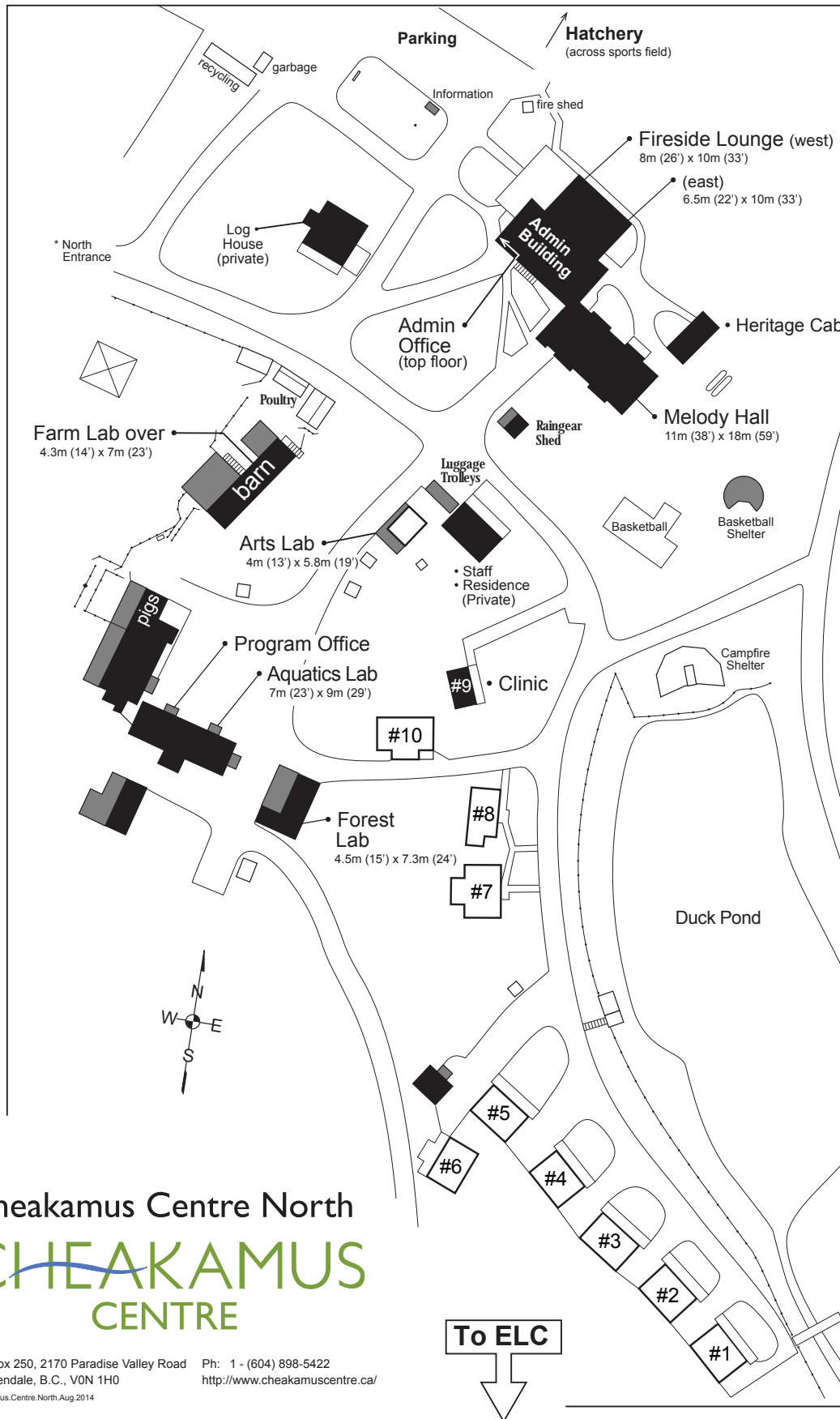
Outdoor School's facilities offer unique educational experiences:

- Salmonid Hatchery involves children in hands-on study of the salmon life cycles and salmon enhancement practices;
- Biodiversity Farm allows children to observe animals such as goats, sheep, chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigs;
- Farm Lab introduces embryology and genetics;
- Forest Field Pavilions act as centres for studying forest ecology;
- Coast Salish Bighouse provides a "day-in-the-life" insight into pre-contact Coast Salish life through the Skw' une-was program for grade four students studying native culture.

Collecting salmon eggs; checking trays filled with shimmering silver "alevin"; calculating food for "fry" swimming in tanks; or helping release young salmon into the nearby spawning channel: each season offers wonderful hands-on learning at the SALMONID HATCHERY



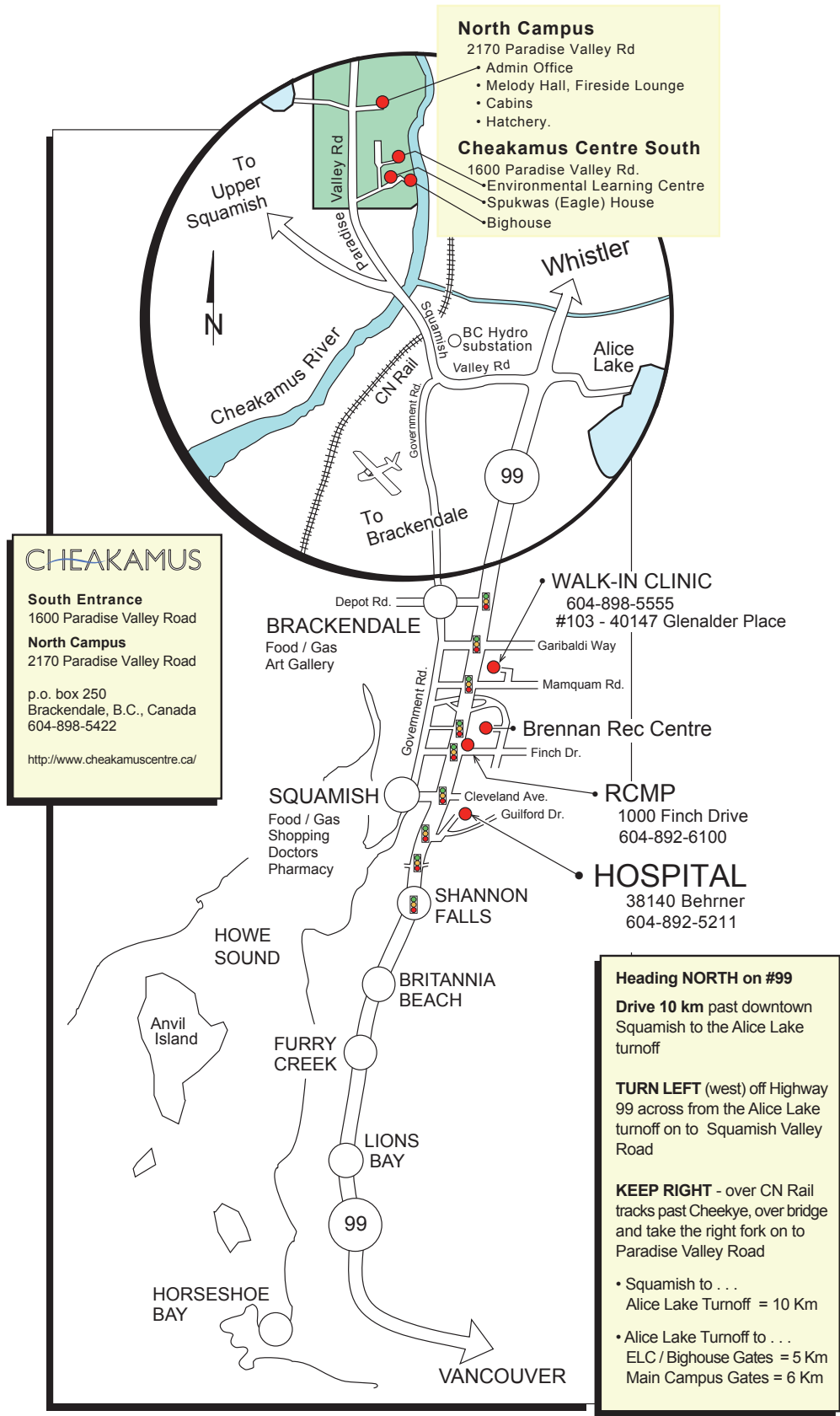
Location of Facilities



Cheakamus Centre North
CHEAKAMUS
 CENTRE

p.o. Box 250, 2170 Paradise Valley Road Ph: 1 - (604) 898-5422
 Brackendale, B.C., V0N 1H0 <http://www.cheakamuscentre.ca/>
 Cheakamus Centre North Aug 2014

Outdoor School & Paradise Valley



Accommodation:

Students are housed in warm, comfortable cabins, fully winterized and equipped with heat, electricity and two bathroom facilities, including showers and/or bathtubs.

The Custodial and Maintenance staff of Outdoor School inspect the cabins and the surrounding grounds each day to ensure safety, cleanliness and neatness.

A short distance to the south of the cabins, students eat at the environmentally sustainable BlueShore Financial Environmental Learning Centre (ELC) with a electric zero carbon professional kitchen and tree canopy view dining room. To the north of the cabins welcoming and many program activities occur in the administrative building with Melody Hall, fireplace lounge, and administrative offices.

With help from their counsellors, students at Outdoor School soon settle in and feel at home in their comfortable CABINS



Living at Outdoor School

Evening Supervision:

Each night of your child's stay at Outdoor School, a counsellor will be in the cabin all night long.

Besides the supervision in the cabins by counsellors there will also be supervision outside the cabins from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m., by Outdoor School staff and Outdoor School Administration, with assistance from visiting teachers as required.

A Program Support Specialist is on-call 24 hours a day to deal with illnesses or injury. If they are busy then the Special Program Coordinator and Vice Principal are at ODS to fill-in and lend a hand.

WHO?

Supervision

Children are NEVER left unsupervised at Outdoor School

Health and Safety

ANY MEDICATION (including over-the-counter remedies) MUST BE GIVEN TO THE PROGRAM SUPPORT SPECIALIST.

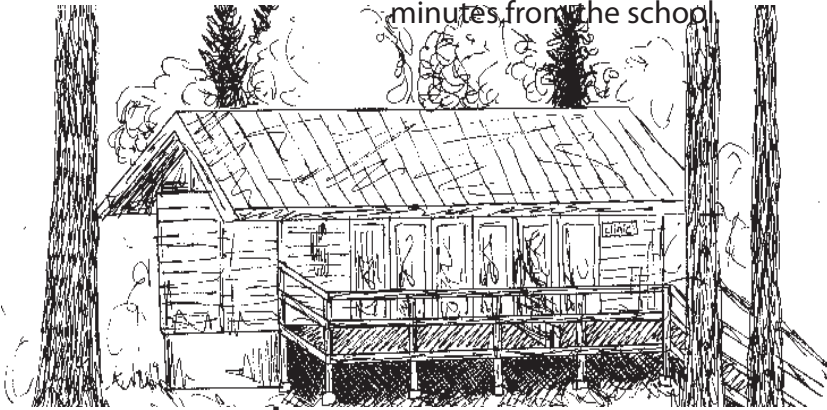
Make sure your child's name and prescribed dosage are written clearly on the container.

Program Support Specialists & 1st Aid Attendant:

A certified Program Support Specialist and 1st Aid Attendant, are on-call 24 hours a day. In addition to treating the inevitable cuts and scrapes that come with any group of children, the Program Specialist:

- are trained and experienced in dealing with health problems as they are noted on medical forms;
- work with the chef on any special diets and food allergies; please call with any dietary considerations
- inform counsellors of children's health concerns as reported on medical forms, and offer suggestions for dealing with commonly occurring problems such as bed-wetting, attention deficit disorders, and other social and behaviour difficulties;
- are responsible for administering any medication. (The counsellor will take your child to the clinic on time to receive the dosage prescribed);
- will assess and provide first aid treatment for any illnesses or injuries children report to their teachers, counsellors or other staff members. Parents will then be contacted, if necessary.

In case of sickness or injury, Squamish doctors may be consulted. In emergency situations, Squamish General Hospital is only 15 minutes from the school.



Certified Program Support Specialists and 1st Aid Attendant are on-call 24 hours a day to dispense medication, Band-aids and reassurance from Outdoor School's well equipped CLINIC

Program Staff

Teachers:

Weeks before your child's stay, Outdoor School Administration and teachers are in touch with classroom teachers. Outdoor School staff help plan lessons, exchange ideas for studies, offer suggestions for activities, and note any special medical or behavioural needs of individual children. Visiting teachers and ODS teachers, Outdoor School Administration, Special Program Coordinator, Program Support Specialists, volunteer counsellors and guest interns work together to form an instructional and supervision team. This teamwork allows your child to enjoy all the benefits of small-group learning in the out-of-doors.

Special Programs Coordinator (SPC):

Each season offers its own opportunities for recreation and Special Program activities. The SPC helps plan and co-ordinate afternoon activities and makes sure the students and their counsellors enjoy a variety of games, crafts, and outdoor skills during activity periods in the afternoon. In addition, the SPC is responsible for planning and overseeing evening programs. A trained professional, the SPC is experienced and enthusiastic about introducing students to Special Program activities that can lead to life-long enjoyment of the out-of-doors.

Counsellors:

Volunteer Counsellors (an average ratio of one for every ten students) are a very important part of Outdoor School. During your child's stay, counsellors will:

- sleep in the cabins, providing supervision and guidance;
- act as assistant teachers;
- provide instruction and supervision for Special Program activities;
- help children perform their chores.

Prior to counselling, these volunteers take part in a weekend-long training which prepares them for the responsibilities of this important position. In addition, high school students volunteering to counsel must obtain written permission from their own teachers, parents and their high school administration.

Enthusiastic role models, these volunteers build great memories of Outdoor School: one reason why many children who visit in elementary school return as high school student COUNSELLORS



Other Outdoor School staff members:

An experienced kitchen staff prepares nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks. Outdoor School cooks are often called upon to provide for special dietary needs: they are able to accommodate many food allergies, and other dietary restrictions. We encourage parents to send along any special diet foods that your child needs to supplement their meals.

The school also has a full staff of custodians, and maintenance personnel, all dedicated to ensuring the best possible Outdoor School experience for each child.

Counsellors

Support Staff

WHAT? Getting ready for Outdoor School

REMEMBER: Your child's health and safety depends on the information you provide on the medical form. Did you forget anything?

You are welcome to call the Program Support Specialists to discuss your child's special medical or dietary needs:

1 (604) 898-5422 ext. 232

What should I do to help my child get ready?

A successful Outdoor School experience really begins at home, long before your child arrives at the school. Please read the student's portion of this manual with your child, and talk about the things to see and do at Outdoor School.

You will also need to:

Carefully read and consider the information provided with the Informed Consent form. Fill in this form and return it to your child's teacher by the deadline given.

Attend the parent information meeting hosted by your school regarding your child's visit to Outdoor School.

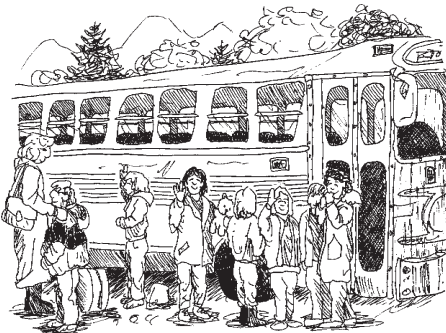
Fill in the medical form and return it to your child's teacher by the deadline given. Make sure you:

- include the child's medical number;
- list all medications the child may require – including Graval™ Tylenol™, or other over-the-counter remedies;
- note special dietary needs. (Be specific: if the child is a vegetarian, are eggs and dairy products acceptable? If the child is lactose intolerant, is milk in baking okay? etc.);
- include comments about sleep disorders, bed-wetting, allergies or other potential problems;
- SIGN the form in ink!

Pay for your child's Outdoor School visit. Parents are asked to bear the cost of transportation, accommodation, meals and their preparation. Your child's teacher will let you know the amount: make your cheque payable to your child's school.

Help your child gather clothing and equipment. Children carry their own luggage: please pack accordingly.

Mark all clothing and equipment for identification. Use a sew-in name tag or write your child's name and school with a laundry-marking felt pen. Use the check list which follows to make sure your child is well-equipped. Re-check the list when your child returns.



On the day children leave for Outdoor School, they bring their luggage to school. The teacher will let parents know when children need to be ready to leave. It is an exciting time for your child: best to make sure nothing is left behind before loading the
CHARTERED BUS

Clothing and Equipment for Outdoor School:

Here is a checklist of suggested items. Please remember: learning and playing in the out-of-doors can be wet and dirty. It is best to send older clothing and equipment you may already have at home. If necessary, Outdoor School can provide raingear and boots.

Sleeping Gear

PACKED	RETURNED
Sleeping bag (extra blanket if sleeping bag is lightweight) OR 3-blanket bedroll and sheet Pillow and case	

Clothing

PACKED	RETURNED	PACKED	RETURNED
Shirts (3 or 4)		Warm jacket	
Jeans/heavy pants (2 or 3 prs.)		Sweater/sweatshirt	
Shorts (1 or 2)		Socks (4 or 5 prs)	
Underwear (4 or 5 changes)		Pyjamas	
Hat		Rain jacket	
Waterproof head covering		Mitts and gloves	
Rain boots - lined & warm		Heavy wool socks	

Personal Kit

PACKED	RETURNED	PACKED	RETURNED
Towel and Wash cloth		Water Bottle	
Hairbrush or comb		Soap and container	
Toothbrush and toothpaste		Lip salve (optional)	
Kleenex™ (optional)		Sun screen lotion	
Camera & book (optional)		Special diet food	
Clipboard and pencils			

Please DO NOT SEND:

Money, knives, flashlights, candy or food - except if the food is needed for special diets! Outdoor School also assumes no responsibility for the loss, damage or vandalism of items such as iPods (MP3), cell phones, cameras, electronic games etc.

It's hard to enjoy learning in the out-of-doors if you are cold, wet and uncomfortable!

Make sure you remember:

- a raincoat,
- waterproof head covering and
- sturdy, warm, waterproof boots

The most important question is:

WILL YOUR CHILD BE WARM AND DRY?

What to bring

Children carry their own luggage: pack accordingly
Hint: two sport bags, a hockey bag and other duffel-type bags are great for student belongings, but not too BIG!

Items not permitted will be **CONFISCATED!** While children may reclaim electronic devices when they return to their school, food attracts mice and probably will not be returned



WHEN? First Day

For more on
CHORES see
page 12

For more on
MEALS see
page 13

Second Day

For more on
FIELD STUDIES
see page 13

For more on
Special
Program
ACTIVITIES
see page 14

For more on
DISCIPLINE
see page 15

Primary Student Timetable

Arrival	8:45	Counsellors arrive at Outdoor School
Day 1	9:00	Buses leave school (promptly!)
	10:20	Students arrive at Outdoor School (stay on the bus to meet Outdoor School Staff)
	10:25	Welcome to Outdoor School Meeting Introduction of Staff & Counsellors, Cabin, Property Safety and Boundaries, Behaviour expectations and rules
	11:05	Cabin & Property tour with counsellors
	12:00	Fetch 'n' Carry, Farm chores OR free time with counsellors
	12:30	Lunch in dining hall @ Environmental Learning Centre (ELC)
	1:30	Field study
	3:30	Snack in dining hall @ ELC
	3:45	Afternoon Special Program Activity (Recreation)
	5:00	Chores or free time with counsellors
	5:45	Supper in dining hall @ ELC
	7:00	Follow-up with classroom teachers
	7:30	Evening Special Program Activity (Recreation)
	8:00	Snack then off to cabins
	8:45	Lights Out! Counsellors are in cabins Outdoor School staff supervising outside cabins
Program Day 2	7:00	Rise and Shine
	7:40	Meet at patio, then chores or free time with counsellors
	8:15	Breakfast in dining hall @ ELC
	8:45	Clean up, chores or free time with counsellors
	9:10	Film or presentation in auditorium
	9:35	Field Study
	11:30	Chores or free time with counsellors
	12:00	Lunch in dining hall @ ELC
	1:00	Field Study
	3:00	Snack in dining hall @ ELC
	3:15	Afternoon Special Program Activity (Recreation)
	4:45	Film or presentation in auditorium
	5:15	Chores or free time with counsellors
	5:45	Supper in dining hall @ ELC
	7:00	Daily follow-up with classroom teachers
	7:30	Evening Special Program Activity (Recreation)
	8:00	Snack then off to cabins
	8:45	Lights out! Counsellors are in cabins Outdoor School staff supervising outside cabins

Departure 7:00 Rise and Shine and pack up
 Day 3 7:40 Meet at patio, chores or free time with counsellors
 8:00 Breakfast @ ELC

Wednesday (mid Week) departure:

8:45 Final cabin clean-up, all bags to luggage carts
 9:40 Counsellor good-byes
 Field Study
 11:40 Picnic lunch @ ELC with classroom teachers
 Bathroom break, Good-bye ceremony, film and free time
 1:30 Depart for home school

Friday (end Week) departure:

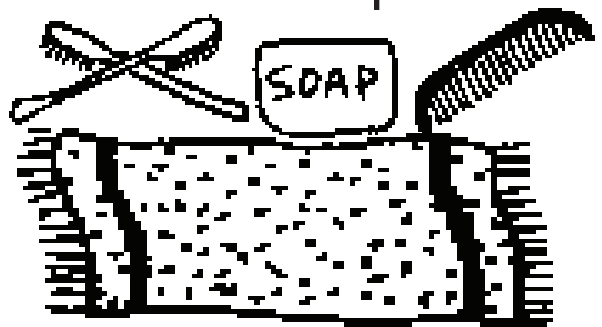
8:45 Final clean up, all bags to luggage carts
 9:40 Field study (with counsellors)
 11:30 Auditorium good-bye ceremony
 12:10 Fetch 'n' Carry or free time with counsellors
 12:30 Lunch @ ELC
 1:45 Depart for home school

Last Day

Is there enough time for... Cleanliness?

Adequate time is provided daily for children to maintain good health practices. Of course, personal hygiene is your child's own responsibility.

Changing clothing daily, washing hands before meals and after using the toilet, brushing teeth, combing hair and showering are all a big part of healthy living in the out-of-doors!



Personal Care

Rest?

The daily routine includes enough rest time to allow the students to participate in their classes.

Phone calls & Calling home?

Generally only teachers and Outdoor School staff use the telephones. But, if you're feeling anxious and feel your child must call home this can be arranged with your classroom teacher or even scheduled especially after dinner. In case of an emergency at ODS, you will be contacted. In case of an emergency at home, you can contact your school principal and they will call ODS or if necessary ODS Vice Principal cell # +1 (778) 772-1109.

Telephone

WHEN? A day at Outdoor School

Chores

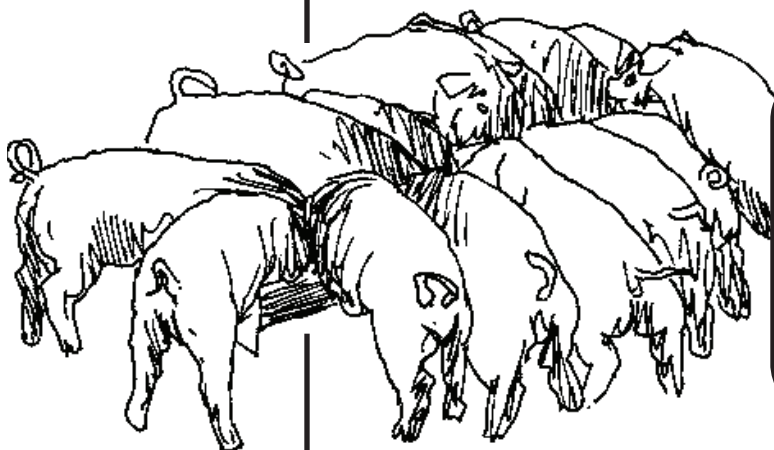
More about the scheduled activities:

While every day in the out-of-doors offers unique opportunities for learning and exploration, the Outdoor School timetable helps make sure students, teachers and staff all know who is responsible for doing what; when and where.

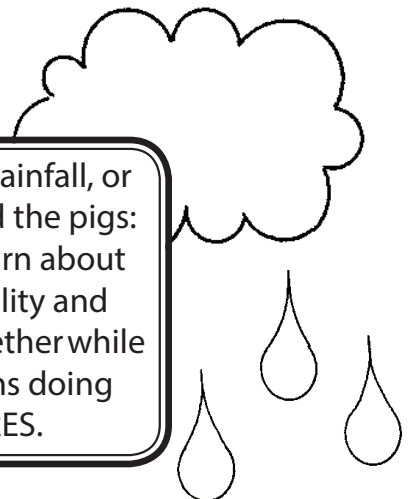
Punctuality is especially important at Outdoor School, where counsellors work hard to make sure the children arrive on time for meals, chores, field studies and other activities.

Your child's cabin group will be assigned chores to do each day, with help from the counsellors. These may include:

	WHEN & WHERE	WHAT DO THEY DO?
Table server	At meal time children report to the dining room ; remain after each meal	Sit next to the counsellor to help serve food. After meals, clear tables, and tidy dining area.
Fetch 'n' carry	30 minutes before each meal, children report to the dining room	Set tables, help bring food from the kitchen to the table.
Weather	30 minutes before breakfast and 30 minutes before dinner, children report to the weather station at the ELC	Present a weather report
Stewardship	30 minutes before lunch, children report to the patio.	Tidy grounds, work in the student garden.
Farm	30 minutes before breakfast and 30 minutes before dinner, children report to the to the barn.	Under direction of a counsellor, feed and care for animals, empty & clean compost bins.



Measuring rainfall, or helping feed the pigs: children learn about responsibility and working together while taking turns doing CHORES.



Meal times:

The schedule provides for three meals each day, plus snacks. Meals are served “family style” in the dining hall. Skilled outdoor school kitchen staff provide a nutritious, well-balanced diet, with a variety of “child-friendly” dishes on the menu.

Returning your child’s medical form promptly, and noting any special dietary needs will help the Program Support Specialists and chef make necessary arrangements. Providing for vegetarians, those with allergies, diabetes, or other medical conditions, is a routine part of food preparation at Outdoor School. Most dietary restrictions can be accommodated. Send supplemental foods if your child has special dietary needs.

The wonderfully nutritious home made soup or the famous Outdoor School cookies: everyone has a favourite from the varied menu prepared in the school’s own kitchens. Appetites are healthy after a day spent learning in the fresh air: our cooks make sure there’s always something good to eat at MEAL TIME.



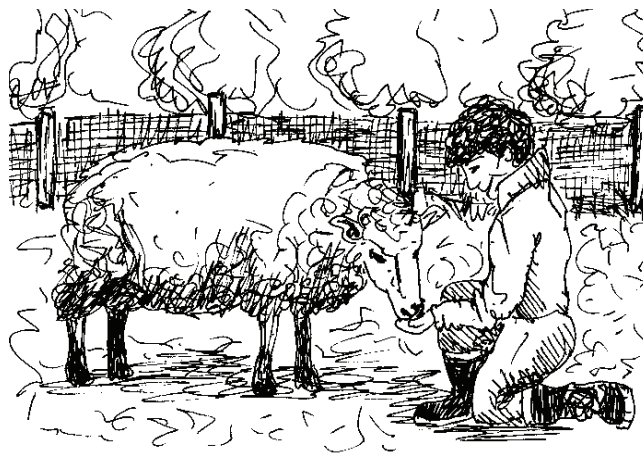
Meals

Note any food allergies or special diets on the health form.

Studying outdoors:

Every morning from 9:30 to 11:30, and each afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00, children are learning in their outdoor “classrooms”.

Outdoor School’s spectacular Paradise Valley setting presents the perfect environment for studying natural science, ecology, conservation and recreation. In their study periods, children may be learning about eagles, or salmon; life in the forest or in a pond; farm animals or any number of other important and exciting topics.



Feeding the ducks, holding baby chicks, checking out the pigs, or petting a goat: while children are getting to know the animals, there are many valuable lessons to be learned in FARM STUDIES.

Field Studies

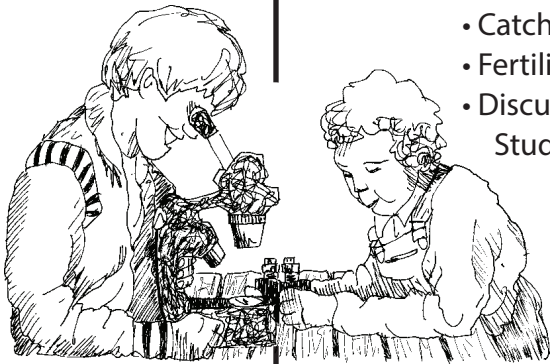
In most field studies, children will be working in small groups. Classroom teachers and Outdoor School's own teaching staff, with assistance from counsellors, will help your child discover the wonderful animals and plants in Paradise Valley. This is an important opportunity for learning as much as young students can about the environment, and about the effects humans have on the world around them.

Integrated Environmental Learning Studies:

A focus on the out-of-doors does not mean that students' regular classroom subjects are set aside for their stay. Instead, as children work together, they will be using the skills they are beginning to gain in other areas to discover the world around them, and to share what they have learned.

A single topic can be used to teach many subjects at Outdoor School—Integration. In an integrated salmon study, for instance, children might be

- Hiking to a stream area (recreation);
- Observing fish and writing down what they are doing (Science/Language Arts);
- Catching, measuring and weighing salmon (Mathematics)
- Fertilizing salmon eggs (Science/Genetics)
- Discussing how salmon influence our economy (Social Studies).



Using a microscope to explore the diverse life in a pond sample; observing, and recording; and discussing the impact of pollution are all possible aspects of INTEGRATED ENV LEARNING STUDIES

Special Program Activities

Afternoon Special Program programs (Rec):

"Integration" does not stop when field study time ends. During afternoon activity periods, children are given the opportunity to explore the out-of-doors; to exercise their senses by playing games which challenge them to learn about animal life, survival, or teamwork. During your child's stay, a selection of these activities will be offered.

Evening Special Program programs (Rec):

After dinner, children spend half an hour discussing the day's activities with their classroom teacher. At 7:30, your child will be going on a short night hike or singing around a campfire with a counsellor. As many of our alumni will testify, primary students who take part in Outdoor School's evening programs will have memories to last a lifetime.

“Messing up” means missing out!

For almost all primary students, there simply isn't time in the busy Outdoor School schedule for getting into trouble. In small-group studies and activity periods with counsellors who have learned techniques for helping children pay attention, most primary students are so intrigued by hands-on learning in the out-of-doors that discipline is not a problem.

Occasionally, children will choose to be uncooperative: they will miss some of the opportunities available to their classmates. On field studies, for example, they may be asked to step aside and wait while others pet the animals or catch fish. They may forfeit a special activity or eat alone.

In extreme disciplinary situations—when a child is reprimanded repeatedly, or endangers self or others—the ODS Administration and the child's classroom teachers will call the home school principal and the child's parents. These occurrences are rare but, if an incident occurs, you will be asked to come to Outdoor School to take your child home.

There are so many wonderful things to do at Outdoor School: children don't want to miss out on any of them! Of the thousands of children who attend Outdoor School each year, only two or three students are sent home: most of those are from the intermediate grades, not the primary grades.

But what about...

We hope we've answered any questions or concerns you may have had about Outdoor School. But, if there's something you're still wondering about, or if you have a comment about Outdoor School, please speak to your child's teacher. Or, feel free to contact us at:

Telephone: +1 (604) 898-5422

eMail: programs@cheakamuscentre.ca

Your comments and concerns are important to us: all of us at Outdoor School are dedicated to ensuring that your child's stay here is a positive experience, providing foundations for learning that will last a lifetime.

Discipline

Comments?
Concerns?