

A photograph of a serene forest stream. The water is clear and reflects the surrounding dense green foliage. Large, moss-covered rocks are scattered throughout the stream. The forest is thick with various types of trees and ferns, creating a vibrant green environment.

Field School Program Parent Handbook

CHEAKAMUS
CENTRE

nature is in session

CHEAKAMUS CENTRE

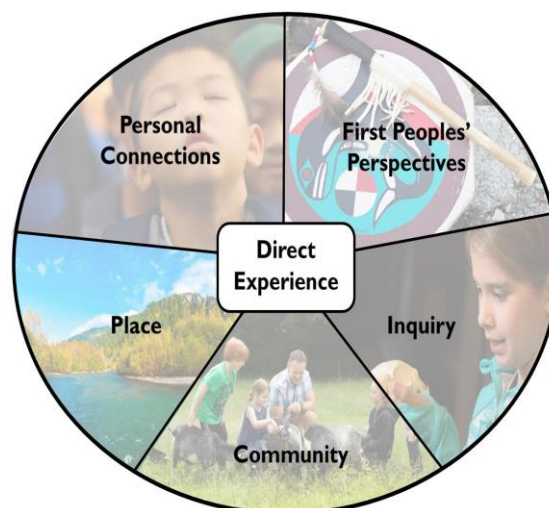
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I | Field School Program Overview

The Field School Program is housed at Cheakamus Centre, a North Vancouver School District owned environmental learning centre operating since 1969. Cheakamus Centre is located approximately 15 minutes north of Squamish, B.C. in Paradise Valley. Field School offers students the chance to immerse themselves in educational experiences that are inspired by nature. Utilizing the Centre's 165 ha (420 acre) ecological reserve, these experiences take place within an extensive network of trails, ancient forests, spawning channels, a teaching salmon hatchery and working farm. Designed around [5 guiding principles](#), Field School seeks to connect students to themes of **Place, Inquiry, Community, Personal Connections** and **First Peoples' Perspectives**. Most importantly, Field School is about engaging learners in fun and meaningful ways that foster understanding and care for our natural world. With input from visiting teachers, Cheakamus Centre staff will design a hands-on, nature-based program that creates a memorable outdoor learning experience for students and staff alike.



Accommodation & Facilities

Cabins: Our 9 heated rustic cabins can house up to 140 people in a beautiful forested setting. Each cabin can accommodate from 13 to 17 people with 2 shared washrooms. There are 2 wheelchair accessible cabins able to accommodate students with mobility challenges.



Blueshore Financial Environmental Learning Centre: Our sustainably-designed learning centre is raised above the forest floor, offering visitors unexpected close-up views of the forest canopy, and a sheltered outdoor classroom area beneath. It is located in the heart of the campus and includes classrooms and a dining hall, and connects to numerous trails and trailside-learning shelters. To see more images of our facilities, check out our [facilities photo gallery](#).

Meals and Dining

Chef Wade and his talented culinary team strive to prepare sustainable meals and snacks that are kid-friendly and nutritious, and keep our students healthy, happy and energized. Check out a sample of our [Daily School menu](#).

Our kitchen is able to cater to a variety of special dietary needs and restrictions. Ensure you correctly complete the dietary portion of the Medical Form to highlight any special diets. This is essential for our ability to properly care for the visiting students. On occasion parents will be asked to provide food to supplement the daily school menu (our kitchen will contact you if this is the case).

During meal services, we require that visiting teachers/adults assist in portioning the food at the buffet. It is also the responsibility of each individual to take their used plates and cups to the clearing station, once they have finished their meals, where bins will be appropriately marked.

Nut-restricted policy: Cheakamus Centre is a nut restricted facility. We do not order, import or permit any products containing nuts on site. We cannot, however, fully guarantee that private individuals are not bringing items containing nut products on site for personal consumption or use. Please do not bring any products containing nuts on site. This also includes any skin care and hair products that may contain nuts.



Supervision

Visiting staff and adult chaperones are responsible for the health, safety, and conduct of their group for the duration of your child's program. An adult to student ratio of 1:10 is mandatory for all programs. Cheakamus Centre also requires visiting staff or adult volunteers to stay in the cabins with students overnight. Visiting teachers are responsible for administering all student medication while at Cheakamus Centre. While visiting staff are responsible for basic first aid, on-call Cheakamus Centre staff are on call 24/7 to support.

Personal Care and Rest

Adequate time is provided daily for children to maintain good health practices. Getting enough sleep is important for children particularly given the many activities they're involved in throughout the day. The program is scheduled to provide enough time for breaks, and students' bed times are closely supervised by their school teachers and chaperones.

Students Requiring Adaptations or Support

We are committed to providing opportunities for all students to attend and actively participate in the Field School Program. Our goal is to integrate students with complex needs as much as possible into our regular program schedule. Please contact your child's teacher and/or support staff well in-advance of your program date to inquire about planning requirements.

2 | Program Activities

Outdoor Environmental Learning: We provide students the opportunity for experiential learning in our 165 hectare forest, river and stream habitat. Students participate in hands-on activities that supplement their classroom learning. We offer the following Outdoor Environmental Learning opportunities:

- Birds & Wildlife Study (local fauna diversity and adaptations)
- Farm Study (domestic animal diversity, farm to table initiatives)
- Forest Study (ecology and sensory exploration or indigenous perspectives focus)
- Pond Study (aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems)
- Salmon Study (salmon life cycle and habitat)
- Nature Art Study

Outdoor Recreation Activities: Seasonally-dependent recreational activities offer a chance for participants to try their hand at an outdoor skill and community building activities. We offer the following Outdoor Recreation Activities:

- Archery
- Bluff Hike
- Canoeing
- Cave Exploration
- Orienteering
- Wilderness Skills

Community, Leadership & Team Building:

- Challenge Course
- Stewardship Project
- Mini Raft Build Challenge
- Leadership Workshop

Sample Day Schedule

| Time | Activity |
|----------|---|
| 8:00 AM | Breakfast |
| 9:30 AM | Outdoor Environmental Learning – Salmon Study |
| 11:45 AM | Lunch |
| 1:00 PM | Outdoor Environmental Learning – Forest Study |
| 3:00 PM | Snack |
| 3:30 PM | Outdoor Recreation Activity – Archery |
| 5:30 PM | Self-directed Time |
| 6:00 PM | Dinner |
| 7:00 PM | Campfire |
| 8:00 PM | Self-directed Time & Snack |
| 9:00 PM | Quiet Time and Lights Out |



3 | Helping your Child Get Ready

A successful Field School experience begins at home, long before your child arrives at Cheakamus Centre. Please share parts of this handbook with your child and talk about the things to see and do at Cheakamus Centre. A recommended resource for preparing your child for spending time away from home/family can be found [here](#). You will also need to:

- Carefully read and fill in all required Cheakamus Centre forms (Medical Form, Informed Consent Form) and return them to your child's teacher by the deadline given.
- Please remember to include the following:
 - Any special dietary needs
 - Comments about sleep disorders, bed-wetting, allergies etc.
 - Complete and sign the form in ink!
- Help your child pack their clothing and equipment (see below for more details). Children will carry their own luggage: please pack accordingly.
- Mark all clothing and equipment for identification.



What to bring

Here is a checklist of suggested items. A printable version of this list can be found [here](#). Please remember that this is an outdoor program and students must be dressed and prepared for changing weather. Our programs run rain or shine! It is best to bring older clothing or equipment you already have at home or can borrow. Each individual must be able to carry their own bag. **Please do not bring:** Cell phones, money, knives, other electronic devices, expensive items or food. As a reminder, we are a nut-restricted site.

Sleeping Gear

- ☐ Sleeping Bag
- ☐ Pillow and case

Personal Kit

- ☐ Towel and wash cloth
- ☐ Hairbrush
- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Shampoo/conditioner
- ☐ Water Bottle
- ☐ Soap and Container
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Sunscreen

Clothing

- ☐ Shirts (3 or 4)
- ☐ Sweater
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ Warm pants (2 pairs)
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Mitts
- ☐ Sturdy walking shoes
- ☐ Indoor shoes
- ☐ Socks and underwear (1/day + extra)
- ☐ Pyjamas
- ☐ Warm Jacket (with hood)
- ☐ Rain Boots
- ☐ Waterproof raingear (jacket + pants)

4 | Site Visits

We are excited to welcome families to our Annual Open House on the first Sunday in May. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce children to the site and tours will be provided by program staff to help parents and students prepare for their program experience.

5 | Program Fees

The program fee helps to cover the cost of accommodation, meals, and onsite program facilitation and support. Questions with regards to program fees can be directed to Cheakamus Centre. Allowances for partial fees are provided only for students with Ministry designations requiring program adaptations, on compassionate grounds (e.g. family funeral), and in coordination with the school-based administrator and the Director of Educational Programs at Cheakamus Centre.

6 | Still Have Questions?

We hope we have answered many of your questions regarding the Field School Program. For further information about the Field School Program and Cheakamus Centre, please feel free to visit our website at www.cheakamuscentre.ca

If you still have questions, please contact your child's school and they can contact us directly if necessary.

7 | Support Cheakamus Centre

Cheakamus Centre values your support of this unique educational program, and we are committed to ensuring that your child's stay here is a positive experience, providing foundations for learning that will last a lifetime.

Increase your impact by donating to the Cheakamus Foundation for Environmental Learning. Your donation will enable us to enrich program offerings, enhance our living and learning spaces, and ensure the very best in environmental education for future generations. The importance of the continued support of our friends and community partners cannot be understated. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Thank you, once again, for supporting Cheakamus Centre, where *nature is in session*.

