



# Outdoor School Program Teacher's Guide

CHEAKAMUS  
CENTRE

nature is in session

**Last Modified by:** Harriet Haines, Program Administrative Coordinator (January, 2020)



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Dear Teachers,

Thank you for providing your students the opportunity to experience the Outdoor School Program at Cheakamus Centre. Whether you are a new school or one that has been coming here for years, we hope this trip will be a highlight of the year for both staff and students.

We recognize this is a big undertaking on your part and the time and effort in planning for a successful program is greatly appreciated. We are reminded daily of the long-term benefits that result from getting children back into nature and the powerful learning that occurs in an immersive, overnight setting. The purpose of this Teacher's Guide is to provide you with the planning support you need, and to better prepare you and your students for an enjoyable, safe and memorable visit to Cheakamus Centre.

Within the guide you will find information and links to things to do before your trip, information packages for parents and students, releases and medical forms, and other vital information. In addition, we are pleased to share detailed field study resources and guidelines to aid teachers in planning for their field-study lessons. Please read through the material provided to give you a better understanding of our site and what you can expect from the moment you arrive until the time of your departure. Your Cheakamus Centre Planning Teacher will be working alongside you to provide guidance and support throughout the planning process.

We've developed the Teacher's Guide based on feedback received from many visiting teachers over the past number of years. We hope you find the guide to be a helpful and informative resource and we ask that any suggested updates be directed to your ODS planning teacher.

We look forward to your arrival and the opportunity to offer a quality overnight outdoor learning experience for you and your students.

Sincerely,



Conor McMullan  
Director of Educational Programs

## I | Welcome to Cheakamus Centre and the Outdoor School Program

### **Our Mission at Cheakamus Centre**

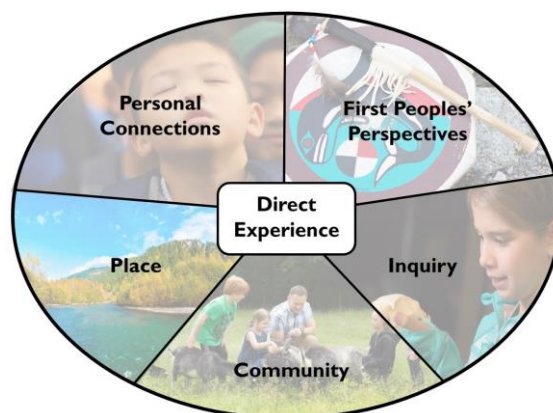
To create a hub of authentic, meaningful experiences that connect people to the natural world, and inspire sustainable values and behaviours.

### **Program Philosophy**

We believe outdoor environmental learning is a key element in the holistic education of all students. Since its inception in 1969, the Outdoor School (ODS) Program has provided experiential environmental programs to thousands of students from North Vancouver and beyond. This unique program including field studies, outdoor recreation, and other direct experiences in nature, instills in learners a sense of respect and appreciation for the natural world. In addition, through cabin-living and participating in daily chores, students learn skills and strategies to create and maintain healthy relationships, recognize and appreciate diversity, and make positive contributions to their community and environment.

### **Guiding Principles**

Building on the foundation of the existing ODS program model and using BC's re-designed curriculum as a guide, Cheakamus Centre instructional team and partners identified five high-level themes (the 'what') supported by related instructional approaches (the 'how'). Together, these [guiding principles](#) provide a framework that informs our program design and development. The accompanying visual illustrates these principles and how they support and enhance curriculum connections.



### **Program Seasonality and Progression**

The identification of ODS program 'seasons' and how these support specific grade level outcomes and themes has been an intentional part of the program design. Natural cycles of spawning salmon, congregating eagles and birthing animals has been an integral part of students' experience at ODS and we continue to seek new opportunities to connect learning to the powerful seasonal patterns of our 'place'.

This intentionality extends to the progressive links being developed between the Gr. 4 and 6 programs. From the length and season of the program, to the nature of the field studies, and planned activities and interactions with their counsellors, students' experiences are differentiated to reflect age-appropriate outcomes. This progression extends all the way into the secondary school through the recruitment, training and mentoring of Gr. 10-12 volunteer counsellors who play such an important part in the ODS program. The schedule below provides an overview of the Gr. 4 and 6 ODS seasons in addition to the Gr. 3 Skw'unc-was program.

### **SD44 Programs by Season**

Grade/Program	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
Gr. 3 Skw'unc-was									
Gr. 4 ODS									
Gr. 6 ODS									

## 2 | Program Overview

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### The Role of the Visiting Teacher

Visiting teachers play a key role in the planning and facilitation of the Outdoor School Program. Cheakamus Centre teachers and staff work together with visiting teachers to plan their program and provide for engaging learning experiences for all students. Visiting teachers are responsible for:

- Assisting in ODS program planning including determining cabin and field study groups
- Communicating program information to parents/guardians including distributing and collecting forms
- Preparing and delivering morning and afternoon field studies
- Organizing and supervising the “teacher time” evening program
- Supporting students’ social, physical and emotional needs while at Cheakamus Centre
- Assisting Cheakamus Centre staff in maintaining a safe and caring environment for students

### Teaching Responsibilities

#### Field Studies

A number of field study resources have been developed for you to access, here:

[Environmental Learning Page on the Curriculum Hub.](#)

The field study is a 2 hour instructional period taught by the visiting teacher to a rotating group of students. Field Study groups are typically between 12-16 students and consist of students from all attending schools. The same study will be taught 4-5 times during the visit depending upon the length of the program. There are a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces and equipment available for use. Cheakamus Centre planning teachers will share curriculum planning materials and resources with visiting teachers 6-8 weeks before your visit to assist in developing engaging and experiential field studies. If you would like to access resources ahead of time, please contact your Cheakamus Centre planning teacher.

High school counsellors will be available to assist teachers during some of the field studies. The counsellor's do not receive specific training on each field study and their role is to support teachers in the facilitation of the planned activities. Teachers are encouraged to check-in with their counsellor(s) in advance of their field studies to clarify roles and expectations. During instructional blocks when counsellors are not available, efforts will be made to provide additional support through interns or other staff as required.

New and returning visiting teachers and staff will be provided with an orientation on the morning of their arrival. This will provide an opportunity to become familiar with instructional spaces, trails, and materials or resources required for field studies.



## Field Study Selection

Visiting teachers need to coordinate their Field Study choice amongst each other and with their Cheakamus Centre planning teacher. Some of the most common and popular field studies include:

- Forest
- Pond
- Birds
- Farm
- Orienteering
- Survival in the Woods
- Nature Art

Be creative! There are many field study options that provide for authentic, hands-on learning in a natural environment, such as poetry, drama and digital photography to name a few. There are also many excellent options for outdoor learning locations around the site. We have a variety of equipment and resources that can support field studies: magnifiers, dip nets, microscopes, stuffed birds, binoculars, field guides, compasses, billy cans, backpacks, sit-upons, an Emily Carr kit, Andy Goldsworthy slide presentation, video microscopes, and a range of other equipment. Please let your planning teacher know what you require and how they can support you in your planning. Please note: You must supply your own consumables, i.e. paper, pastels, matches, etc. Note that food should not be prepared or provided to students during field studies due to allergies and dietary restrictions.

## Predator & Prey (Gr. 6's only)

This activity will be offered during intermediate programs on the final morning of the program. Predator & Prey will be run by Cheakamus Centre staff and additional info re: roles and responsibilities will be provided by the planning teacher.

## Evening Program

Each teacher meets with the students from their class or school after dinner for either 45 minutes (Gr. 4's) or 60 minutes (Gr. 6's). The purpose of this time is to give the visiting teachers and staff an opportunity to check in with their students and participate in activities that are class or school specific. Cheakamus Centre has resources available to assist with developing engaging student-centered activities for this time, however please provide your own writing/drawing utensils and paper if required. Please inquire for more information.

## Cheakamus Staff-Led Programming

### Recreation Programs

Cheakamus Centre staff will select counsellor-led recreation programs to complement your field study choices. Please note due to weather, safety concerns and staffing, not all programs are available in all seasons. Below are some of the available options:

#### Gr. 4:

##### Afternoon Programs:

- Insects
- Cooperative Challenges
- Nature Games
- Gardening
- Tracking

##### Evening Programs:

- Sensory Walk
- Campfire (*counsellor lead*)

#### Gr. 6:

##### Afternoon Programs:

- Archery
- Canoeing (*fall*)
- Cooperative Challenges
- Orienteering
- Caves
- Gardening
- Nature Games
- Apple Pressing
- Drama Games
- Tracking

##### Evening Programs:

- Sensory Night Walk
- Campfire (*student and counsellor lead*)

If you have any specific requests from the above lists, please let us know.

## Daily Schedule

Example schedules for our Gr. 4 and Gr. 6 programs can be found here: [Grade 4 Schedule](#) [Grade 6 Schedule](#)

### 3 | Preparing for your Outdoor School Program

#### Pre-Program Site Visit

Cheakamus Centre Open House is the first Sunday of May each year. We offer tours of the property, facilitate educational experiences, and provide information about programs at that time. Please encourage parents and staff to visit at Open House. If you are interested in visiting Cheakamus Centre prior to your program date, or if you receive inquiries from parents about bringing their children to Cheakamus Centre please contact [office@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:office@cheakamuscentre.ca) to discuss a possible date and time for an appointment.

#### When attending with another school

In most cases, 2 schools attend together for the duration of their program. The opportunity for students to live and learn in a mixed school community is one of the richest aspects of the ODS experience. It is anticipated that cabins and field study groups will be combined. This provides for a better integrative experience and allows us to effectively utilize all available beds on site. As such, it's important for Planning Teachers from each school to complete the cabin lists and field study instructional groups forms together. In the event there's a strong reason to provide separate cabins, please discuss this in advance to your Cheakamus planning teacher.

Note that there are a total of 8 cabins for student use and the maximum number of student beds are indicated on the Cabin form. Please return one cabin group form and one field study instructional group form with student names from both schools. Please use lower case and UPPER case to differentiate schools when filling in the forms. **These forms must be typed** to ensure legibility.

#### Program Planning & Preparation Timeline

In order for Cheakamus Centre to prepare for and organize the best possible outdoor educational experience for your school, we require specific information prior to your program arrival date. Please note the preparation timeline below. A printable version of this timeline can be found [here](#).

Timeline	Stage	Task
6-8 weeks Before Visit	Begin Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Your Cheakamus Centre Planning Teacher will contact you to provide more information about your program, curriculum resources, links to required forms (also below), and dates forms are due back.</li><li>▪ Begin collaborative planning process with other school (if applicable).</li><li>▪ Confirm bus transportation (for non SD44 schools only).</li></ul>
	Complex Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Start to make plans for students with complex needs. Speak with your Learning Support Teacher and your Cheakamus Centre Planning Teacher about this.</li></ul>
	Distribute Resources and Forms to Parents and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Send a digital <a href="#">Parent Letter</a> (including dates, costs, and Parent Meeting details).</li><li>▪ Send a digital copy of the <a href="#">Parent Handbook</a> which includes a packing checklist (print version available <a href="#">here</a>).</li><li>▪ <a href="#">Packing List</a></li><li>▪ <a href="#">Informed Consent Form</a></li><li>▪ <a href="#">Medical Form</a></li></ul>
	Parent Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Host a Parent Information Meeting at your school. Share our 8 minute <a href="#">Introductory Video</a> and ODS Powerpoint (<a href="#">Grade 4</a> or <a href="#">Grade 6</a>).</li></ul>
2-4 weeks Before Visit	Field Study Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Communicate field study preferences with attending teachers from both schools. Confirm field study plan and related resources or other requirements with your Cheakamus Centre Planning Teacher.</li></ul>
	Prepare Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Prepare student name tags and orient students to their upcoming trip.</li></ul>



	Collect Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect all required documentation for all students and staff and check for completion.</li> <li>Collaboratively create Cabin Groups and Field School Groups (typed with schools differentiated by CAPs or lower case).</li> </ul>
<b>2 weeks Before Visit</b>	Scan and send forms to Cheakamus Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scan and email all completed forms to <a href="mailto:odsclinic@sd44.ca">odsclinic@sd44.ca</a>. Include the name of your school and start date of program in the subject line. Ensure indicated forms are alphabetized when sent. Keep all original forms at your school. <i>(please see below for links to required documentation)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Arrival Day</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illness: If a child's or adult's health is questionable on arrival day, please keep them back. If they recover quickly, they can always join us at a later time. Bringing a sick child or adult may result in someone having to travel to Cheakamus Centre to pick them up or, worse, the possible quick spread of illness to other students and staff on the program.</li> <li>Verify student numbers and confirm any changes to cabin or field study groups.</li> <li>Ensure any medications or dietary supplements are passed on to the Program Support Specialists.</li> <li>Make sure student name tags have been distributed and are worn by students getting off the bus. (*this will provide more time for teacher orientation on arrival.)</li> </ul>

## Required Documentation

All of the forms noted below are located on the [Teacher Resource & Forms Page](#) on our website using the "Outdoor School Program" drop-down menu:

### Package 1

1. [Class List](#)  
*Please include a list of all attending students and staff indicating the # of girl and boy students.*
2. [Medical Form](#)  
*We require this form for all student and adult participants, even if they are only staying for a single night.*
3. [Informed Consent Form](#)  
*This form is for all student participants and outlines the inherent risks associated with the Outdoor School Program at Cheakamus Centre. It must be read and signed by parent or guardian of the child.*

### Package 2

A link will be emailed to you by your CC planning teacher to a shared folder on the SD44 OneDrive. The folder will contain the below forms. Please complete these forms online and email your CC planning teacher once completed. Using these shared documents helps support a smooth planning process when working with another school.

1. [Cabin Groups Form](#)  
*This form details how students are grouped in their cabins. Please distribute students as equally as possible when preparing your lists. This will assist our high school leaders who are responsible for creating a cabin community.*
2. [Field Study Groups Form](#)  
*The number of field study groups is the number of visiting teachers plus two teachers from Cheakamus Centre. For example, with 5 visiting teachers, the number of groups is 7. Teachers who job-share during the week are considered as one teacher.*

Please note: Any [EA Coverage Forms](#) are to be completed by your school's administration and sent to [cmcmullan@sd44.ca](mailto:cmcmullan@sd44.ca). Please check-in with your school's administration to confirm this has been completed.



## Bus Transportation

Cheakamus Centre is responsible for bus bookings for schools from SD44. We contract with a professional bus company that provides highway coaches for students and staff to and from Cheakamus Centre South Entry (1600 Paradise Valley Road, ELC Parking Lot). Teachers and support staff accompany students during their trip up and back from Cheakamus Centre. Departure from the home school is 9:00 am. Departure from Cheakamus Centre on the last day of program is 1:30 pm with arrivals back to school generally between 2:45 - 3:15 pm. Midweek departure time is 15-30 minutes earlier. Please discuss any transportation questions or concerns with Cheakamus Centre staff. Schools from other districts are required to book their own transportation.

## Accommodation

### Students:

Students are placed in heated cabins by their teachers and are typically mixed with students from another SD44 school. Students are mixed to efficiently utilize the number of beds available, as well as to provide a more integrative experience. The social emotional well-being of each student should be taken into consideration when organizing cabins and groups. Cheakamus Centre welcomes groups to arrange all gender cabins if preferred. Six of the cabins are equipped with two shared bathrooms and bunk style beds. There are two cabins (Cabins 7 & 8) with bunk style beds and shared bathrooms that are also wheel chair accessible and have separate bedrooms for students requiring additional support. Students change in their sleeping bags or in the washrooms. Groups are required to bring their own bedding (sleeping bag and pillow). There is a complete packing list in the [Parent Handbook](#).

To see more images of our facilities, check out images in our [facilities photo gallery](#).



### Visiting Staff:

Teachers and other visiting staff are provided with shared accommodation in Cabin 10. Each of the four rooms has a bunk bed and single bed for a total capacity of 12 people. This cabin is equipped with a small kitchenette, shared bathrooms and a common living room. All teachers and support staff from visiting schools stay in this cabin, unless needed in Cabin 7 or 8 to assist a student with complex needs. Typically, two schools attend for each 3 or 4 Day Outdoor School Program.

## Meals and Dining

Chef Wade and his talented culinary team strive to prepare simple, sustainable meals and snacks that are kid-friendly and nutritious, and keep our students healthy, happy and energized. Daily meals are served in the Environmental Learning Centre, and on occasion in the Fireside Dining Hall. Our kitchen is able to cater to a variety of special dietary needs or restrictions. Check out a sample of our [Daily School Menu](#).

**Nut-restricted policy:** Cheakamus Centre is a nut restricted facility. We do not order, import or permit any products containing nut 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 nuts or nut products. This also includes any skin care and hair products that may contain nuts.

### ***Meal and snack protocols***

- Visiting teachers and staff eat most meals in the dining area with their students, at a staff table
- Visiting teacher assistance is requested if there are discipline concerns with their students during meals and at snack times
- If there are insufficient numbers of counsellors to assist at student tables, visiting teachers may be asked to assist on a rotating basis
- During afternoon snack, visiting teachers and staff are requested to be in the dining area to assist with student supervision
- When necessary, EAs are expected to support students with complex needs during meal times.

### **Inclusion and Planning for Complex Needs**

Cheakamus Centre is committed to providing inclusive outdoor educational experiences for all learners, as laid out in this [information for parents](#) document. To ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in the Outdoor School Program, effective planning between schools, parents, support staff and Cheakamus staff is required well in advance of the scheduled program dates.

#### ***Recommended planning steps:***

- At the start of school year, consult with the Learning Support Teacher, Case Manager, parents and school Administration about the student's needs when attending the ODS Program.
- For diabetic students, ensure the appropriate planning steps have been taken. Review with your LST/Administrator the [planning guidelines](#) in place.
- Clarify the supports available with school administration. Ensure any the [EA Coverage Forms](#) have been completed by your school administration and sent to [cmcmullan@sd44.ca](mailto:cmcmullan@sd44.ca).
- Notify your Cheakamus Centre Planning Teacher of specific student needs and supports. They will consult with Cheakamus Centre administrators regarding our ability to meet individual needs.

### ***Medical Information***

- Student medication will be administered by the Program Support Specialist and kept in the First Aid Clinic while the student is at Cheakamus Centre
- All student medication must be clearly labeled with the student's name, name of medication, what it is to be used for, quantity to be given and times to be given
- Teachers/visiting staff are required to collect all student medication at the end of the program
- Program Support Specialists are trained in first aid but are not nurses. Other members of Cheakamus Centre, including resident staff, also have first aid and emergency training
- Students or visiting staff requiring a higher level of medical care will be transported to the Squamish Hospital. Visiting staff will be informed in advance of decisions of this nature and may be requested to accompany their students during a hospital visit

Please Note: Cheakamus Centre staff is not able to provide specialized support for students with diabetes or other complex medical conditions. In these cases, individual care plans must be coordinated with your school administration and/or case manager, and confirmed with the Cheakamus Centre Education Director.

### ***Dietary Information***

- Our kitchen is able to cater to a variety of special dietary needs and restrictions. Ensure parents are reminded to correctly complete the dietary portion of the [Medical Form](#); this is essential for our ability to properly care for the visiting students.
- Our kitchen will contact parents if there are questions about dietary restrictions or allergies.
- Adjustments can be made for many dietary needs. On occasion parents will be asked to provide food to supplement the daily school menu.

## 4 | Site Policies

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Over the years, Cheakamus Centre has developed a number of policies for school visits. Cheakamus Centre staff do their best to make sure our students, teachers and visitors enjoy their experience, while protecting their safety and the sensitive natural features of our site.

Here are a few important items to be aware of:

- We strive to be a zero-waste facility. Please utilize the compost and recycling bins provided. If you don't know what goes where, we are happy to guide you.
- We are a non-smoking facility; a tobacco-free policy is part of our commitment to creating a healthy, safe and sustainable environment for all members of our community.
- Pets are not allowed on the property with exception of service animals and resident pets.
- Open flames are not permitted in any of our buildings; this includes lanterns, tea lights, candles and incense.
- The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- Please park motorized vehicles in designated spaces only.
- Please stay on designated trails and avoid picking, trampling or disturbing plants or animals.
- Outdoor spaces used for activities (e.g. nature art or survival) are to be returned to their natural state.
- Drop-in visits by family members are not permitted.
- Weapons are prohibited on campus.
- Visits by school staff members not staying as a program chaperone/teacher must be prearranged with Cheakamus Centre. Note that charges for meals or overnight stays may apply.
- If you are accessing Wifi, you understand that you are accessing this under the same usage rules as school district access.
- Students are not permitted to bring food to Cheakamus Centre unless specific arrangements have been made in advance. Food (candy, gum etc.) is not allowed in student cabins.
- Students are not to bring any personal electronics to Cheakamus Centre.
- Student cell phones are not allowed at Cheakamus Centre. Phones brought by students will be held by their teachers until they return to school.
- Students may only leave the campus if prior arrangement has been made between the student's parents and the visiting school teacher and/or administration. Notification of departures must be communicated to Cheakamus Centre staff prior to arrival.
- Any incidences of head lice one week before or one week after your visit should be reported to Cheakamus Centre so that we can maintain a lice-free facility.

### **Partial Stay Policy**

SD44 Programs at Cheakamus Centre are designed as multi-day overnight experiences. Due to the many fixed costs involved in offering these district-subsidized programs, we are limited in our ability to provide discounted fees for students attending for partial stays. This includes students leaving early due to missing home, illness or other community or family commitments. Allowances for partial fees are provided for students with Ministry designations requiring program adaptations, or on compassionate grounds (i.e. family funeral), and should be in coordination with the school-based administrator and the Director of Educational Programs at Cheakamus Centre.

Where possible, schools are asked to make these requests well in advance of their program dates. Please note, the pro-rated refund will be based on full days missed.

Please Note: Teachers are responsible for confirming arrangements for any students that may need to be dropped off or picked up at Cheakamus Centre. This includes being available to meet parents/guardians and 'handing-over' students when they leave the site.



## 5 | Contact Information and Important Links

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**General Program Inquiries:** [programs@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:programs@cheakamuscentre.ca)

**Website:** [www.cheakamuscentre.ca](http://www.cheakamuscentre.ca)

**Teacher Resources Page** – use the “Outdoor School Program” drop-down menu

### **Driving Map**

#### **Address:**

Cheakamus Centre **South:**  
1600 Paradise Valley Rd  
Brackendale, BC, V0N 1H0

#### **Our Program Team:**

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Read more about our program staff and meet the other members of the Cheakamus Centre team on our [Meet Our Team](#) page.

## Thank you!

**We greatly appreciate your support in planning your Outdoor School Program!**

Join our nature community. Become a Friends of Cheakamus member today!  
[cheakamuscentre.ca/support/sponsorship-opportunities](http://cheakamuscentre.ca/support/sponsorship-opportunities)

