



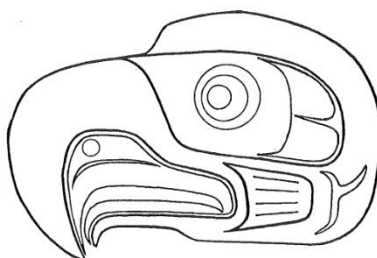
CHEAKAMUS  
CENTRE

nature is in session

# Skw'une-was Program Teacher Planning Guide

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# CHEAKAMUS CENTRE

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Dear Teachers:

Thank you for providing your students the opportunity to experience the Skw'une-was Program at Cheakamus Centre. Whether you are new to this program, or someone who has been coming to the longhouse for years, we hope this trip will be a highlight for yourself, your parent volunteers and your 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 Skw'une-was Program continues to provide strong and authentic connections to indigenous learning and we're proud to offer this award-winning school district program now in it's 35<sup>th</sup> season.

The purpose of this Teacher Guide is to provide you with the planning support you need, and to better prepare you, your parent volunteers, and your students for an enjoyable and memorable visit to the longhouse.

Within the Guide, you will find information and links to guide you from the parent information meeting to arrival at the longhouse. Please read through the material provided to get a better understanding of the longhouse site, the program schedule, and what you can expect during your time onsite. At the end of the Guide you will find contact information for our Cultural Programs Coordinator should you have further questions.

We hope you find the Teacher Planning Guide helpful and informative. We look forward to your arrival and the opportunity to offer a quality indigenous cultural immersion program for you and your students.

Sincerely,



Conor McMullan  
Director of Educational Programs



## I | Welcome to Cheakamus Centre and the Skw'une-was Program

### **Our Vision at Cheakamus Centre**

To be a dynamic centre of excellence for environmental and indigenous cultural education, and a welcoming place for learning, gathering and sharing in nature.

### **Program Seasonality and Progression**

The identification of Cheakamus Centre program 'seasons' and how these support specific grade level outcomes and themes has been an intentional part of the program design. This intentionality extends to the progressive links being developed between the Skw'une-was (Gr. 3) and Outdoor School (Gr. 4 and 6) programs. From the length and season of the program, to the nature of the activities, students' experiences are differentiated to reflect age-appropriate outcomes.

### **SD44 Programs by Season**

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

### **Program Philosophy and Description**

The Skw'une-was Program at Cheakamus Centre (CC) is an indigenous cultural immersion education program developed in conjunction with Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Elders. The Program was named Skw'une-was, the Skwxwú7mesh word for partnership, to reflect this relationship. The Program is based on three major understandings - Respect, Sharing/Cooperation and Seasonality. These ideas underlie the activities that students participate in when visiting this Coast Salish longhouse.

Students are placed into family groups that may include: Plant Gatherers, Wood Workers, Cedar Bark Workers, Wool Weavers and Hunters/Fishers. A parent volunteer provides supervision and guidance for each Family group. Some of the cooking is done using hot rocks and students cook their own bannock over the fire. Family groups cook and eat together and participate in Family activity time specific to their duties at the longhouse. Cultural Program staff teach the Family specific activities with assistance from the parent volunteers.

The whole group explores the forest during the Journey Back In Time walk to the longhouse at the beginning of the visit, as well as the Cedar Walk on the second morning after breakfast. During the evening, a Cultural Program staff member tells legends, teaches games, or sings and drums. The final activity of the first day is an evening activity led by the Cultural Program staff, include a walk in the forest depending on the group.

### **Program Objectives**

1. To enhance students' understanding of, and respect for, First Nations culture in general, and the pre-contact longhouse culture of the Skwxwú7mesh people, in particular.
2. To provide a cross indigenous cultural learning experience based on students and adults living communally and participating in traditional daily activities of the Coast Salish people.
3. To promote greater understanding and awareness of the beliefs and traditional values of the Coast Salish culture in relation to sharing, the seasons, and respect for others and the environment.

### **Major Understandings**

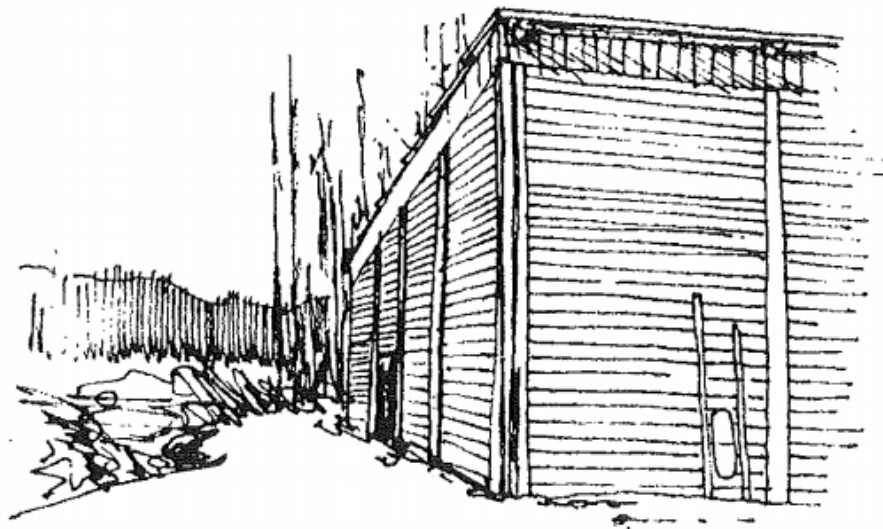
The cornerstones of the teachings at the longhouse are sharing, respect and seasonality. They represent central pillars of our program philosophy and reflect the importance of care for self, others and the environment. A deeply rooted and culturally authentic respect for the natural world is fostered through traditional communal living.

**Sharing (cooperation):** Life in pre-contact times was characterized by an attitude of sharing. Food preparation, hunting, fishing, tool-making, basketry, and weaving were done by select groups for the benefit of the whole house. In addition to sharing with one another, the Skwxwú7mesh people lived in harmony with nature, taking only what was necessary

**Respect:** The Skwxwú7mesh people believed in the worth and dignity of each person. They showed tremendous respect for their elders and were taught to perceive themselves as neither above nor below another person. They also showed respect for Nature. Realizing their lives were interconnected with Nature, they were careful to show their respect by acknowledging the spirits that they believed were found in Nature. Activities such as giving prayers of thanks before stripping cedar bark and returning salmon bones to the river, reflected their deep respect for Nature.

**Seasonality:** The lifestyle of the Skwxwú7mesh people was governed by the seasons. Activities such as fishing, hunting, gathering, building, and creative activities depended on the season. For example: basket making required gathering cedar materials in spring; waiting for particular berries to ripen for dyeing in the summer; burying materials to set dyes for six months to a year; and then completing the weaving of the basket through the fall and winter. Almost all aspects of Skwxwú7mesh life were influenced directly or indirectly by the changing seasons.

Supplemental teaching resources can be found [here](#).



## 2 | Program Overview

### The Role of the Visiting Teacher

Visiting teachers play a key role in the planning and group management of the Skw'unc-was Program. Cheakamus Centre 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 program planning including recruiting parent volunteers and determining Family Groups
- Communicating program information to parents/guardians including distributing and collecting forms
- [Prepare students in the classroom](#), and lead [activities](#) during recreation and unstructured time
- Supporting their student's social, physical and emotional needs while at Cheakamus Centre
- Assisting Cheakamus Centre staff in maintaining a safe and caring environment for students. Ensure students have been on safety tours and know the rules and boundaries.
- Confirm the objectives of cooperation and respect are being modeled and practiced by your group.
- Administer all prescribed medication to students. Please ensure you have received details from parents prior to your program about any daily medications.
- Be a leader for your parent volunteers, providing assistance where needed and communicating as necessary (provide backup in terms of discipline, troubleshoot difficulties, suggest motivation techniques and ways of dealing with unstructured time).
- Remain at the longhouse during activity time to maintain overall supervision, helping parent volunteers when needed.
- Take responsibility for the care and safe use of all tools and equipment.



### Supervision and Parent Volunteers

Visiting teachers and parent volunteers are responsible for the health, safety, and conduct of their group for the duration of their stay.

The number of parent volunteers required for a Skw'unc-was program is dependent on the number of students participating. There will always be one parent with each family group and one parent that will be a floater to help with family chores and activities. Parent volunteers are responsible for guiding the children in acquiring skills and understanding throughout the program. Once your volunteers are selected, please distribute the [Parent Volunteer Guide](#) to provide more information. Please see the table below for specific numbers required depending on the number of students in your group.

# of Students	# of Parent Volunteers Required	# of Family Groups	Adult to Student Ratio
20-32	5	4	2 adults : 5-8 students
33+	6	5	2 adults : 6-8 students

*There may be exceptions to these numbers required for supervision of students with complex needs.*

## Family Activity Groups

The structure and cooperative activity of family life is a focus of the student's visit to the longhouse. Prior to the Skw'unc-was Program, the students are organized into family groups by the teacher. Each group will be recognized as a family and, within the family, children will live and work together. Each family group will also be associated with a specialized-activity including: Fishing + Hunting, Plant Gathering, Cedar Bark Working, Wool Weaving, and Woodworking. Just as in the past, commitment to the family is

so important to life in the longhouse that it is essential that children remain in their assigned family group throughout the session. By demonstrating patience and a commitment to learning about one activity, children express their respect for the skills and knowledge of the Skwxwú7mesh people.



### **Cedar Bark Family-**

learn about cedar bark harvest and preparation, prepare cedar by beating and shredding bark, learn to make rope.



### **Plant Gathering**

**Family-** learn about food and medicinal plants around the longhouse area and in the forest.



### **Wool Weaving**

**Family-** learn about wool gathering, and how to card, spin and weave wool.



### **Hunting and Fishing**

**Family-** learn to look for animal signs, bait traps, make fish traps and fish, depending on the season.



**Wood Working Family-** learn to identify tree species and their uses, how to finish wood after carving, make kindling with traditional tools and shapes used in carving and art.



## Teacher's Detailed Skw'une-was Program Schedule

There will be at least one member of the Cultural Program Staff team at the longhouse from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm on Day One, and 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on Day Two.

Day One	
7:45 AM	Bus arrives at school's pick-up location. Prepare students for journey. Bathroom breaks, ensure all are dressed in appropriate clothing for walk, with rain gear and water bottle in daypack.
8:00 AM	Bus departs school's pick-up location. Call or text Cultural Programs Coordinator when bus reaches Squamish.
9:15 AM	Bus arrives at Cheakamus Centre (CC) South Entry to pick up Cultural Programs Staff. Group dropped off near Bailey Bridge. <b>Journey Back in Time</b> – Walk with group, help with group management and safety.
10:45 AM	<b>Arrival and Welcome to Longhouse</b> – After welcome, ensure parent volunteers are with their groups. Check in with Cultural Programs Staff regarding special diets.
11:15 AM	<b>Snack</b> – Please help serve.
11:30 AM	<b>Namegiving Ceremony</b> – Sit with your Family group, help children stay focused.
1:00 PM	<b>Safety review</b> – Gather group in longhouse. <b>Lunch</b> – Help parents and students learn mealtime routines & cooking skills. Join a group for lunch (students are expected to serve adults first as a sign of respect). <b>Clean up</b> – Assign <a href="#">chores</a> with assistance of Cultural Programs Staff. Monitor groups as they do chores. Assist where needed. <i>Floater Elder will supervise dishwashing procedure as students from one Family group wash all dishes with assistance from their Elder. Other families bring luggage to longhouse, clean bannock sticks, wipe off box lids and collect firewood.</i>
3:00 PM	<b>Family Activity Time</b> – Assist Cultural Programs Staff in organizing groups. Help Floater elder with dishes if need be, stay at longhouse and assist with groups if needed. Enjoy! <i>You are responsible for safety and discipline of the whole group during your visit. Parents and Cultural Programs Staff may refer to you if a particular student requires additional attention.</i>
4:00 PM	<b>Snack and recreation time</b> – Led by teacher. Game and activity resources can be found <a href="#">here</a> . You may want to ask some parents to assist in supervising games. The remaining Elders take a break.
4:45 PM	<b>Afternoon Program</b> (story telling/legends/drumming/games) with Cultural Programs Staff – students can wait at outside fire with parent Elders.
5:30 PM	<b>Salmon Feast Preparation</b> – Cultural Programs Staff will provide preparation instructions for feast. <b>Salmon Feast</b> – Children should serve Elders first out of respect. <b>Clean up</b> – Assign <a href="#">chores</a> with assistance of Cultural Programs Staff.
7:30 PM	<b>Prepare</b> for bedtime. <b>Evening Activity</b> led by Cheakamus Centre Program Staff. <b>Bedtime</b> – Students will stay with their parent Elder for tooth brushing and bathroom breaks. Once all are in bed, read a story to settle them. Remind students no one gets up (except for the bathroom) until you tell them in the morning! <i>If a child becomes ill during the night &amp; needs to be taken to the hospital, ask a volunteer Elder to accompany the child. As the teacher you must stay with the group at the longhouse to supervise. Call Cheakamus Centre staff to assist.</i>



Day Two	
7:00 AM	<b>Good morning!</b> Wake students and parents. Woodworking Elder starts fire outside and puts on water for hot chocolate. Floater Elder makes a large pot of oatmeal on a burner. Other Elders assist students in packing gear and putting on ledge by door.
7:30 AM	<b>Breakfast</b> – adults serve food, students sit by outside fire. Best served buffet style while some adults clean mats inside.
8:15 AM	<b>Clean up</b> – Assign <a href="#">chores</a> . Luggage goes in half of shed only.
9:00 AM	<b>Cedar Walk</b> – Cultural Programs Staff arrive. Co-lead walk with staff.
10:15 AM	<b>Snack</b> – Assist Cultural Programs Staff in handing out snack.
10:30 AM	<b>Family Activity Time</b> – Monitor students during activities. Stay at the longhouse.
11:30 AM	<b>Lunch Preparation</b> – Done by Cultural Programs Staff. <b>Lunch</b> – Eat in Family areas. <b>Clean up</b> – Assign <a href="#">chores</a> .
12:45 PM	<b>Closing Ceremony</b> – Organize students in Family Groups by river if weather permits.
1:30 PM	<b>Departure</b> - Bathroom visits prior to getting on the bus. Load bus, attendance. Thank you!

### Crossover Days

On occasion, two groups will be at the longhouse at the same time for approximately one to two hours over the midday mealtime. This provides a perfect opportunity for sharing and cooperation by both the group leaving (outgoing) and arriving group (incoming). Here are some hints to help make the crossover time flow smoothly:

#### Outgoing Group

- 10:30 AM Participate in Family Activities. Incoming group will be arriving around 11:00 am. **Please** keep your students engaged in their family activity.
- 11:30 AM Welcome incoming group to your family area inside of the longhouse. Begin lunch preparation for both groups. Ensure all your group's belongings are on ledge by west door of the longhouse.
- 12:45 PM Closing Ceremony
- 1:15 PM Departure

#### Incoming Group

- 11:00 AM Arrive at the longhouse. Welcome by an Indigenous Cultural Staff.  
Boundaries tour and outhouse visit.
- 11:30 AM When invited by Cultural Programs Staff, join outgoing group for lunch preparation inside the longhouse. Make the most of this opportunity to learn from the experience of the outgoing "families".  
**Note:** *Outgoing students have been asked not to share too much of their experience, but to share knowledge about safety and bannock cooking.*
- 12:45 PM **Clean up** – The outgoing group will leave the longhouse after lunch and allow the new group to "move in" and make it their own. The incoming teacher will assign clean up chores.  
*Remember: the outgoing group will be having its closing ceremony during this time. Incoming teachers should ensure their students are quietly doing their chores.*
- 1:30 PM Cultural Programs staff will guide the Name Giving Ceremony and welcome to the longhouse, discussing the house and its families. Following the welcoming, carry on with the remainder of the Day One program.

### 3 | Preparing for your Skw'une-was 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.

#### Program Planning & Preparation

We look forward to organizing the best possible educational experience for your group. In preparation for this, please note the recommended timelines and due dates for required forms below.

**All of our forms can be found on the [Teacher Resources Page](#) on our website.  
Please use the “Skw'une-was Program” drop down menu.**

#### Form submission

Please email completed forms to [odslclinic@sd44.ca](mailto:odslclinic@sd44.ca) including the name of your school and start date in the subject line. Please ensure ALL fields in forms are complete and alphabetized by first name.

Stage	Action Items
Early in the school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete and submit the <b>Group Profile – due ASAP</b></li><li>Begin preparing students and parents, and share program dates</li><li>Begin recruiting volunteers (see table on pg. 6) and obtaining criminal record checks. Share <b>Parent Volunteer Guide</b></li></ul>
6-8 Weeks Before Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cheakamus Centre Staff will host a Teacher Meeting in North Vancouver</li><li>Host a Parent Meeting at your school - <a href="#">Parent Letter</a>; <a href="#">Parent Meeting PowerPoint</a> or <a href="#">video</a></li><li>Distribute information and all required forms:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Informed Consent Forms</b> – for all student and adult participants</li><li><b>Medical Forms</b> - for all student and adult participants</li><li><b>Packing List:</b> “<a href="#">What to bring to your Skw'une-was Program</a>”</li></ul></li><li>Attend a half-day orientation at Cheakamus Centre prior to the program (Cheakamus Centre will confirm the date via email)</li><li>Once ready, begin filling out <b>Family Group Medical Dietary Summary</b></li></ul>
2 Weeks Before Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Final due date for remaining forms:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Informed Consent Forms</b> - for all student and adult participants</li><li><b>Medical Forms</b> - for all student and adult participants</li><li><b>Family Group Medical Dietary Summary</b></li></ul></li></ul>
1 Week Before Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure you have hard copies of student forms to bring with you in case of an emergency</li><li>Complete the appropriate <b>Program Summary Sheet</b> as a reference for parent volunteers:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">4 Family Groups Program Summary Sheet</a></li><li><a href="#">5 Family Groups Program Summary Sheet</a></li></ul></li></ul>

### **Teacher Meeting**

A Teacher Meeting will be hosted in North Vancouver by Cheakamus Centre staff at the beginning of each season. The purpose of this meeting is to answer questions, review the planning procedures and required forms.

### **Parent Volunteer Selection**

Criminal Record Checks are a requirement for parent volunteers attending the Skw'unc-was Program. Please begin the process of choosing your parent volunteers as soon as possible as it may take some time for the RCMP to process the applications. Contact your school administration for further details on how parent volunteers are to proceed with a Criminal Record check. As a part of this process, SD44 parent volunteers are required to fill out a confidentiality declaration at the school level.



### **Parent/Teacher Orientation Session**

All parent volunteers and teachers are required to attend a half day orientation session at Cheakamus Centre. Parents who have volunteered for the Skw'unc-was Program in previous years are requested to attend Orientation every three years. Teachers are welcome and respectfully encouraged to attend every three years as well.

### **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). Teachers and support staff accompany students during their trip up and back from Cheakamus Centre. Departure from the home school is 8:00 am. Departure from Cheakamus Centre on the second day of program is 1:30 pm with arrivals back to school generally between 2:45 - 3:15 pm. Please discuss any transportation questions or concerns with Cheakamus Centre staff. Schools from other districts are required to book their own transportation.

### **Arrival Details**

Upon arrival, your bus will stop at the South Entry to pick up Cultural Programs Staff before continuing to the Bailey Bridge. From the Bailey Bridge, students will take their day-packs and begin the Journey Back In Time, about an hour walk to the longhouse through forest trails and along the Cheakamus River. There should be one or two parents who are driving up in order that you have a vehicle in case of an emergency. Those parents need to arrive prior to the bus so that we may give them instructions regarding unloading luggage from the bus and where to meet the group. After dropping the group off at the Bailey Bridge, the bus will return the South Entry and continue to the longhouse Parking Lot to meet the parent volunteer and unload luggage into a covered structure in the parking area. Later in the day students will move their luggage into the longhouse. The parent(s) will be able to join the group for the last part of the walk and the Arrival and Welcome to Longhouse.

### **Overnight in the Longhouse**

Students, parent volunteers, and teachers all sleep inside the longhouse during a Skw'unc-was program. Sleeping mats are provided and each individual should bring their own sleeping bag and pillow. Please refer to the [packing list](#) for what to bring for your program. Our Cultural Programs Staff will explain and facilitate the sleeping arrangement setup before the evening activity that they lead on the first night. You can find a detailed interior layout of the longhouse [here](#). Students are advised to change their clothes either in their sleeping bags or the change area at the back of the longhouse. A recommended resource for preparing children for spending time away from home/family can be found [here](#).

## Meals

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. The Skw'une-was program [menu is chosen to reflect the types of food eaten by Coast Salish people of the area ~150 years ago](#). Our kitchen is able to cater to a variety of special dietary needs and restrictions.



## Menu

The CC kitchen staff and Cultural Programs Staff will organize food for each meal. It will be located in the Elder's Room in the fridge or on the shelves. Every member of the group is involved in preparing meals using traditional cooking methods.

	Day 1	Day 2
<b>Breakfast</b>		Oatmeal, toasted sunflower & pumpkin seeds with dried berries, cream, brown sugar, apples, hot chocolate (Parent and Teachers responsible for setup)
<b>Snack</b>	Granola cookie, hot apple cider	Muffins
<b>Lunch</b>	Soup, bannock, honey	Meatballs, cooked apples + brown sugar, cooked onions, bannock, honey
<b>Snack</b>	Apples	
<b>Dinner</b>	Salmon steaks, potatoes, carrots, ice cream + berries	
<b>Snack</b>	Muffins	

*Please note there are occasional adjustments made to this menu. On Crossover Days, incoming groups have meatballs on Day 1 and soup on Day 2.*

## Breakfast on Day 2

Breakfast on the second day is prepared by the Wood Working Parent and Floater Parent with the help of the visiting teacher. The Wood Working Parent will start the outdoor fire and heat water in one large pot for hot chocolate. The Floater Parent will make a large pot of oatmeal on a burner.

## Meal and snack protocols

- Parent volunteers learn how to safely cook meals, including with hot rocks, at the Parent/Teacher Orientation
- When necessary, EAs are expected to support students with complex needs during meal times

Outside Food Policy: Any food and beverage not provided by Cheakamus Centre must be pre-approved and is only permitted in designated areas. The use of glass vessels and consumption of snacks outdoors is prohibited. For more information regarding specifics on self-catering please address them with your planning contact. Parents may be asked to provide food to supplement the Skw'une-was menu for specific special diets.

Nut-restricted policy: Cheakamus Centre is a nut restricted facility therefore we do not serve any food items that contain nuts or nut products. 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 products containing nuts on site. This also includes any skin care and hair products that may contain nuts.

### **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. We are able to provide a wide range of adaptations to support a wide range of student needs. To ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully participate in the Skw'unc-was 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 Skw'unc-was Program.
- Clarify the supports available with school administration. Ensure any EA Coverage has been arranged.
- For diabetic students, ensure the appropriate planning steps have been taken. Review with your LST/Administrator the [planning guidelines](#) in place.
- Notify [office@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:office@cheakamuscentre.ca) of specific student needs and supports. They will consult with Cheakamus Centre administrators regarding our ability to meet individual needs.

#### ***Medical Information***

- Medication cannot be given to children without the permission of their parents. **The teacher is responsible for administering all scheduled and unscheduled student medications. For students with a parent attending in a volunteer capacity, medications are the responsibility of the parent.** 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.
- Although we usually suggest not pairing a student in their parent's Family Group, if a student with medical requirements has a parent attending as a volunteer parent elder, this would be a reasonable time to place a student in their parent's group.
- A first aid kit with supplies necessary for minor injuries is in the Longhouse Elders Room.
- Please report all incidents and accidents to the Cultural Programs Coordinator.
- Program Staff are on call for first aid assistance for the duration of the program. 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 confirmed with the Education Director.

#### ***Dietary Information***

- We are able to cater to a variety of special dietary needs and restrictions with food substitutions to the Skw'unc-was menu. Ensure parents are reminded to correctly complete the dietary portion of the [Medical Form](#). Please complete the [Group Medical Summary Form](#) to highlight any special diets and other needs of your group. This is essential for our ability to properly care for the visiting students.
- Someone from the Cheakamus Centre team 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 menu.

## 4 | Site Policies

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### **Emergency Procedures**

An overview of [emergency procedures](#) will be covered in the Parent/Teacher Orientation, provided to the group after arrival at the longhouse, and posted in appropriate locations. Complete emergency procedures are located in the Cheakamus Centre Emergency Procedures Manual in the Cultural Programs Staffroom near the longhouse.

### **Fire Safety**

Indoor and outdoor fires are an integral part of the program and require diligent supervision by adult supervisors. Please let the fire burn out after dinner, to avoid having a smoky longhouse overnight. It's important that adult supervisors know the location of all safety-related equipment: shovels near fire put; portable dry chemical extinguishers at each exit door, emergency exits, etc.

### **Site Policies**

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. The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- Pets are not allowed on the property with exception of service animals and resident pets.
- Outdoor spaces used for activities 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.
- 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 sleeping areas.
- Students are not to bring any personal electronics, including cell phones, to 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.

## **General Expectations**

The longhouse program area is designed to mimic times prior to European contact. This natural and rustic environment has been used by thousands of students since 1985 and it's important that we take steps to preserve this area so it can be enjoyed by many more to come. Please adhere to the following guidelines during your Skw'unc-was program to ensure your students safety as well as the protection of our natural environment.

- Stay within designated boundaries.
- All water access is restricted unless accompanied by Cheakamus Centre Staff: please stay away from the spawning channels, Canoe Pond and off of the dyke slopes. This protects salmon habitat and limits erosion.
- Please respect our forests by staying on the designated trails. Plant gathering is only permitted with a Cultural Programs Staff member.
- The longhouse fire is for cooking, not to heat the building, so please limit your use of firewood.
- Ensure that all tools and craft materials are treated with respect by informing children of the appropriate uses and providing supervision.
- Students should always travel with a buddy, use their common sense, and have fun!



## 5 | Frequently Asked Questions

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**Q:** *May children or parents visit the property before the program?*

**A:** Our site is open to the public only during our Open House which falls on the first Sunday in May each year. Other dates may be available, please email [office@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:office@cheakamuscentre.ca).

**Q:** *Do I need to bring any extra food?*

**A:** All meals are provided during your Skw'úne-was program. It's recommended that students bring a healthy snack (packed in their day-bag!) to be eaten on the bus to Cheakamus Centre, however please to not bring any additional snacks. Please ensure any snacks are finished prior to arrival, and do not contain any nuts.

**Q:** *Where do I find the forms for my Skw'úne-was Program?*

**A:** All the forms for your program can be found on our website under [teacher resources](#), using the "Skw'úne-was Program" drop down menu. Please scan and send your forms to [odsclinic@sd44.ca](mailto:odsclinic@sd44.ca) two weeks prior to your program date.

**Q:** *What will the weather be like?*

**A:** The program will run rain, snow, or shine. Ensure your students are dressed for all weather before they get on the bus so that they can fully enjoy learning outdoors. Please check the forecast in our area [here](#). In very inclement weather, adaptations will be made to ensure student safety.

**Q:** *What is the cell phone use policy?*

**A:** Cheakamus Centre has good cell coverage throughout the site however, we encourage you to unplug and only use cell phones for emergency situations or to contact CC staff. If you need to use your phone, please do it out of sight from the students and check in with CC staff about appropriate times for phone use. Provided it's cleared by your school's teacher, phones can be used to take photos during this unique and memorable experience.

**Q:** *Do you provide transportation to Cheakamus Centre?*

**A:** Transportation will be booked for schools from SD44. All other visiting schools must arrange their own transportation to Cheakamus Centre. We are happy to provide recommendations for your travels. You can find driving directions to our site [here](#). We require that all groups participating in an overnight program have their own vehicle or transportation plan for non-life threatening emergencies. If available, please ask one of your supervising adults to drive up separately so that you have a vehicle on site. If you are not able to supply your own vehicle, an alternative transportation plan can be a local taxi service.

**Q:** *How is luggage managed upon arrival to Cheakamus Centre?*

**A:** Please have one of your parent volunteers drive a separate vehicle (as per previous question). This parent is to arrive just before the bus to receive instructions on how to help unload luggage. The bus will pick up Cultural Programs Staff at the South Entry (1600 Paradise Valley Road) and continue to the Bailey Bridge to drop off the students to start their walk. The bus will then return to the South Entry and continue on to the Longhouse Parking Lot where the parent will meet the bus. The parent will help unload luggage into a covered area in the parking area, then go to meet the rest of the group. Later in the day, students will move their luggage into the longhouse.

**Q:** *How do I pay for my program?*

**A:** After your program is over, your school will receive an electronic invoice.

**Q:** *Is there a discounted rate if a student is only able to participate for one day?*

**A:** Please see partial stay policy on page 13 for information.

## 6 | 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 “Skw’une-was Program” drop-down menu

**Driving Map**

**Address:**

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

**Our Program Team:**

Conor McMullan  
Director of Educational Programs  
[cmcmullan@sd44.ca](mailto:cmcmullan@sd44.ca)  
604.898.5422 ext 231

Matt Houston  
Program Manager  
[matt@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:matt@cheakamuscentre.ca)  
778.838.1767

**Program Planning:**

Harriet Haines  
Program Administrative Coordinator  
[office@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:office@cheakamuscentre.ca)  
778.838.0943

Devon Dobson  
Booking Coordinator  
[devon@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:devon@cheakamuscentre.ca)  
604.898.5422 ext 222

Wade Rowland  
Executive Chef  
[kitchen@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:kitchen@cheakamuscentre.ca)  
604.898.8427

**General Program Inquiries:**

Cultural Programs Coordinator  
[cultural@cheakamuscentre.ca](mailto:cultural@cheakamuscentre.ca)

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

**Ensxi7pm - Thank you!**

**We greatly appreciate your support in planning your Skw’une-was Program!**

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



### Program History

The development of this curriculum began with a conference at North Vancouver School District's Outdoor School in Paradise Valley, now known as Cheakamus Centre. Skwxwú7mesh (pronounced "Sko-ko-mish") people, North Vancouver District educators, and a few non-First Nations guests knowledgeable in Northwest Coast First Nations culture came together at that conference in February, 1985.

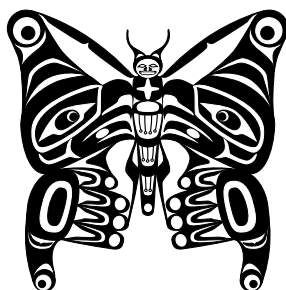
We listened to the Skwxwú7mesh people speak of the value, attitudes and ways of life that were their culture. We learned of their family roles and structures, their belief in educating by example. They talked to us about their religious beliefs and their language, their experiences of the past and hopes for the future of the Skwxwú7mesh people.

Both First Nations and non-First Nations came away from the conference with a heightened understanding of and respect for one another. We were excited by the sharing that had taken place and were determined to convey, in the longhouse curriculum, the same sense of partnership between cultures.

Our approach to writing the curriculum was to determine the major understandings or structures that inform, and are important to all aspects of Skwxwú7mesh people life. These were to respect and care for all life forms; to value sharing as central to group survival; and to live in harmony with the seasons which determine the pace and quality of life.

With these understandings as our guide, we began to write. Throughout the development and implementation of this program, the most vital element was, and is, the continuing involvement of the Skwxwú7mesh Nation. If the program successfully meets its objectives, it will be because we have worked well together.

We called the program **Skw'une-was**, the Skwxwú7mesh word for partnership.



### **'Bighouse' to 'longhouse'**

We want to acknowledge the change in language from Bighouse, to longhouse. When the Skw'une-was program was established in the mid-1980's, it was developed around the construction of a traditional Coast Salish longhouse built in partnership with members of the Squamish Nation and SD44 staff. Over time, the longhouse became known as the Bighouse and this title has become synonymous with the program name. In 2017, through consultation with members of the Squamish Nation and others with deep knowledge of Coast Salish traditions and architecture, we have concluded that it is appropriate and preferable to return to the original 'longhouse' reference. As a result, we appreciate your patience while we continue to update program materials, resources, and signage.

## **Acknowledgements**

The following people have given their time, knowledge and energy to create together a program for Grade 3 students, enabling them to experience the pre-contact longhouse culture of the Skwxwú7mesh people. It has been an exciting challenge which could never have been met without the spirit of partnership which sustained us all.

### **Skwxwú7mesh Nation**

Sadie Baker (1904-1992)	Ann (RIP) and Richard Billy
Mabel Lewis (RIP)	Lawrence and June Baker
Chuck Billy (1926-1989)	Alvie Andrews (1906-1997)
Ernie Harry ( - 1996)	Leona Nahanee
Gwen Harry	Rick Harry
Val Moody	Gloria Wilson
Jackie Nahanee	Chief Philip Joe
Bighouse Building Crews	Alice Tsawaysia Guss

### **North Vancouver School District**

Coordinators, Mainstay First Nations Indian Education Program	Judith McPhie Chris Kelly
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### **Writing Team**

Louise Steele	Ann Copp
Cathy Harasym	Carol Roitberg
Anne Sanderson	Victor Elderton
Pat O'Brien	Dr. Robin Brayne
Marilyn Vesely	Don Robertson
Maintenance Department, School District 44	

### **Revisions Team**

Laurie Clark	Patti Gregson
Heather MacLeod	Kimberley Graham
Kate Keogh	

### **And Others...**

Hilary Stewart	Carl Halvorson
Lorna Williams	Vancouver Museum
B.C. Provincial Museum	
Skw'une-was Logo by Rick Harry (Xwalacktun) Skwxwú7mesh Artist	

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School District No. 44 (North Vancouver)

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*Illustrations courtesy of H. Stewart*

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