



Leadership Development Information Package

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Dear Camp Thunderbird Family,

Welcome to Camp Thunderbird! Summer will be here before we know it and soon it will be time to start preparing for camp.

Information in this booklet is updated every year, and all the information is vital for your camper(s) to have a successful experience. Please read carefully even if you have been to camp before!

Life at camp is different from the routines and patterns of home. Taking the time to talk with your camper(s) about their upcoming experience is an important step in preparing. Setting a positive tone and clarifying expectations can really help your child make the adjustment. In doing this, your child will take the most out of their Camp Thunderbird opportunity.

If you, or your camper, have any questions about their upcoming experience, we encourage you to give our Summer Camp Program Manager a call.

We look forward to having your child join us at Camp Thunderbird this summer!

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island commits to our core values of respect, honesty, responsibility, caring, and inclusiveness. These values guide us in everything from our everyday decision making, our programming choices, and how we build and guide our camp community. In our commitment to these values, we recognize that we have room to grow and improve.

Camp Thunderbird is situated in, and benefits from, the traditional territories of the T'Sou-ke and Scia'new Nations, who have lived in harmony with this land since time immemorial. We recognize the history of colonization and systemic racism that has shaped the world we operate in today, and we commit to increasing our awareness of where improvement is needed. We are dedicated to continuing to do the work of listening, learning, and making changes so that Camp Thunderbird a place for everyone. A place where people who are Indigenous, Black, racialized, or may experience discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, age, health status, neurodiversity, or ability are truly welcome and included.

We recognize that this critical work will take time, may be uncomfortable, and will ultimately be a great benefit to the Camp Thunderbird community and those we serve and interact with.

Camp Commitment

Camp Thunderbird strives to be a fun, safe and nurturing environment where everyone has a chance to be their best. All camp participants, staff and volunteers pledge to treat each other with dignity and respect. If necessary, parents will be required to collect their camper early. Inappropriate behavior including the use of offensive language, aggression, or use of prohibited items such as but not limited to tobacco, vape juice, alcohol, non-prescription drugs or offensive materials will not be permitted.

We recognize that conflict between program participants is a normal and inherent aspect of summer camp programs. It is important to note that **we address these challenges through conflict resolution; not conflict elimination.** This means we recognize that conflict is a reality in our work and that there are multiple stories to each conflict. We take the time to facilitate our participants working out their conflicts with each other in an age-appropriate way. We do not simply remove the conflict for our participants. This is a part of our overarching program goal of helping our campers learn and develop positive and lasting conflict resolution skills that will stay with them for life. The process is more challenging for the campers, but the outcomes are far more beneficial for the development of everyone involved. If one of the campers involved in the conflict does not live up to the commitments made through conflict resolution, we then will take steps to remove them from the program.

The Camper's Commitment is a very important aspect of Camp Thunderbird's philosophy and speaks to our core values of respect, honesty, responsibility, caring, and inclusiveness. We ask that you take the time to read and discuss the Camper's Commitment with your child.

You will be asked to acknowledge and agree to the commitment during registration.

Camper Commitment

I want to be a camper at Camp Thunderbird. I agree to behave respectfully at camp. I will do my best to make this a great experience for myself and my fellow campers. If I get into conflict with other campers at camp, I commit to working it out with the other camper and my counsellors. I understand that failure to live up to my Commitment may mean that I am sent home from camp early. I also understand that by making this Commitment, I can look forward to fair treatment from my cabin mates, fellow campers, and staff.

Parent/Guardian Commitment

I have discussed the Camper's Commitment with my camper and confirm that they agree to cooperate in the camp experience, to follow safety instructions, participate actively in conflict resolution, and refrain from behavior that is harmful or disruptive to themselves or others. I understand that by supporting this Commitment, my child may look forward to fair treatment from their fellow campers and the camp staff.

I also understand that camp prohibits the use of offensive language, inappropriate behavior, and the use of tobacco, vape juice, alcohol, or non-prescription drugs. I acknowledge that their use, or the failure by my camper to abide by this commitment is cause for my camper to be sent home early without refund of camp fees.

Risk Awareness

Participant Safety and Risk Management

The YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird is committed to providing quality outdoor experiences that support healthy growth and development of young people. The camp environment and programs provide unique opportunities for children, youth and adults to challenge themselves, learn new outdoor and interpersonal skills and make new friends. We invest significant resources to create programs that provide these benefits to our participants without exposing them to unacceptable hazards.

Participants and their families should be aware of the risks involved in participating in camp programs and accept that by participating they are taking those risks. Please take the time to review this summary of risks and our risk management approach. Risks will vary for each program, so we ask that you also take the time to review the information provided about each program [on our website](#). We are happy to speak with you should you have any questions or comments.

Risk Management, Planning and Safety

The unique nature of an outdoor education or summer camp experience comes with risks called “inherent risks”. This means that we cannot eliminate the risk without destroying the unique character of the activity – the aspects that make it beneficial for the participants. Although we cannot eliminate those risks, we actively take steps to reduce or control them, with the intent of bringing them to a tolerable level. For example, riding a bicycle has certain risks, and most people would agree that by wearing a helmet and obeying traffic laws, the risks are tolerable.

At the Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird, we manage the risks specific to our environment and programs by being experts in our field, providing thorough staff training, and buying and maintaining quality program and personal protective equipment. While these measures do not guarantee safety, they allow us to offer programs that provide the many documented benefits of outdoor education and summer camp experiences, such as personal growth, connections to nature and a sense of accomplishment.

Risk Encountered at Camp Thunderbird

Activities we encounter in our everyday lives, and those that take place at the Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird involve risks. Risk may vary based on the nature of the activity. Any of the activities at the Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird involve certain emotional and physical risks, and many of them include the risk of disability, psychological trauma or even death, in the event of a serious incident.

Some of the hazards encountered as part of Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird programs may be familiar from our home communities: inclement weather and storms, motor-vehicle accidents, uneven ground, treefall, fire, hot liquids, infectious illnesses such as COVID-19, and equipment failure. For more information of the risk of COVID-19 please see our [COVID-19 FAQ page](#).

Some hazards may be more unique to the Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird programs and settings. These hazards include, but are not limited to: lake and ocean water, marine traffic, boat capsizes, wildlife encounters (including bears, cougars, wolves, mice or other rodents, and stinging insects), hypo- or hyperthermia, fall from heights, including falls while hiking in steep terrain, falls or injuries due to equipment failure, error in judgement, or natural rock or tree fall on our real-rock climbing areas or High Ropes challenge courses, remoteness from emergency medical or evacuation services, including the failure of communication technology.

The hazards listed, and other hazards not listed, can pose a risk to even a well-trained and highly certified instructor, leader or guide. Any of the Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird programs or activities can, due to an error in judgement or factors beyond the leader's control, become hazardous and potentially life-threatening.

Participants and their families must weigh the risks that may be encountered with the strengths of the Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird's Risk Management approach and plan as well as with the benefits of an outdoor education or camping experience.

Risk Management Plan Summary

The following is a short list of examples of the types of procedures and policies that are part of our larger Risk Management Plans:

- All staff and volunteers have a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening.
- All staff and volunteers have program-appropriate first aid training, with a minimum of Standard First Aid and CPR-C.
- Camp Thunderbird sea kayaking programs are led by guides certified by the [Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of British Columbia](#).
- The Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird is accredited by the [British Columbia Camping Association](#). This accreditation ensures compliance with stringent training, health and safety protocols and auditors regularly visit the site for inspections.
- Camp Thunderbird cooperates with land managers and permitting authorities.
- The Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird are supported by the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island Health and Safety Committee.
- The Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird staff team inspects, maintains and reviews all safety equipment, particularly emergency communications devices, regularly.
- The Outdoor Centre and Camp Thunderbird staff team reviews all family and staff surveys.

Contact Us about Risk Management

We encourage participants and their families to share questions or comments concerning risk management with us. Please contact General Manager Luke Ferris lferris@vancouverislandy.ca about any aspect of the inherent risks of camping and about our risk management plan.

Camp Programs

Camp Thunderbird's Leadership Development (LD) Program enables teens to develop outdoor adventure skills in a supportive and safety-oriented environment. Learning outcomes include self-discovery, group dynamics and management, working with children, and technical skills for successful wilderness travel... all key ingredients in developing well-rounded leaders. We do this through in-person practice supported by highly trained Y staff, with years of experience working with youth in an outdoor setting. Campers face experiential challenges together, work through these with their peers, and are encouraged to think about how their actions affect others. Counsellors help the group find solutions using democratic and/or consensus-based decision-making tools to work toward outcomes that benefit every member. Through deliberate practice of the Y core values of honesty, respect, caring, responsibility and inclusiveness, this program aims to support youth in their personal growth by building interpersonal skills, helping to develop greater empathy, confidence, and resilience for their future challenges.

Out Trips

LD Kayak Program

Groups travel in a mix of single and double kayaks, and participants learn on-the-water navigation and leadership skills. Each day, campers can expect to paddle approximately 4-5 hours, with some longer days of up to 10 hours. Campers work together, and take turns leading aspects of the trip, including water travel, set up and functioning of the campsite.

Participants travel to the spectacular wilderness of the Broughton Archipelago Provincial Park. This area is home to wildlife including seabirds, bears and the highest diversity of marine mammals in coastal Canadian waters, including the endangered Northern Resident Killer Whales.

LD Hike Program

Participants stay together as a group and travel distances of 7-15 kilometers a day. The trip is planned to allow 11 days to complete the trail, leaving plenty of time for breaks and at least one rest day for recovery and skill building. Campers work through challenges together and build solutions to those challenges. The LD Hikers learn about No-Trace camping, set up and functioning of safe campsites.

The North Coast Trail has some similarities with the West Coast Trail in its beautiful scenery and beach hiking. The trail itself is shorter but rougher. Campers get to see Cape Scott and the stunning large beaches along the North Coast of Vancouver Island on this lesser traveled trail.

Please read the out trip packing section closely and ensure you are prepared.

What to bring

The following checklist is a good guideline for packing for camp. Things you bring to camp often get dirty or damaged or lost during the experience – keep that in mind.

Label everything! We suggest sew-on labels for clothing items, and an indelible marker for other items. Include the camper's full name. Try to ensure that your camper can recognize the items that belong to them.

General Packing List

The quality of a Camper's clothing and gear is an important part of the comfort and safety of their experience in the Leadership program.

Weather can vary from hot days to prolonged cold rain. Evening, though usually warm or cool, can be quite cold at times. The out-trip locations are remote, thus the leadership camper needs to be in proper clothing. **The Broughton Archipelago has significantly different weather than the Gulf Islands, so if you are a returning kayak camper experienced in the Gulf Islands, please review the packing list carefully.** For example, you *will* need rain pants in the Broughton!

Clothing

- 12-day supply of underwear
- 12-day supply of socks (wool socks are best)
- 4 pairs of shorts
- 4 pairs of pants (sweatpants are warmer than jeans)
- 5-6 t-shirts
- 3 long-sleeved t-shirts
- 1-2 warm pullovers (wool or fleece)
- 1-2 sweatshirts
- Warm jacket
- Hat (for those rainy or sunny days)
- Raingear (needs to be waterproof, jacket and pants – try standing under the

- shower to make sure it is indeed waterproof)
- Toque and mitts (for cool nights on out trip)
- Pajamas
- 2 pairs of shoes (1 for daily wear, athletic shoes or sport sandals, close-toed preferable & 1 sturdy pair of hiking shoes or boots for out trip)
- 2 bathing suits (easy to move, paddle, and swim in)
- Sunglasses
- Flip-Flops for showering

Personal Items

- Biodegradable soap and shampoo
- Toiletries, comb, toothbrush, etc.
- A watch and/or alarm clock
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher

Other

- Water bottle
- Pillow
- Towel
- Day pack
- Stationery and pens (stamped envelopes)
- Flashlight (extra batteries)
- Breathable laundry bag
- Camera (optional) **Please do not bring your cell phone as a camera**
- Book (optional)

Out Trip Gear List

Equipment	Quantity	Comments
Rain Jacket	1	A rain jacket is probably the most important piece of personal safety gear on an out trip. It should be properly sized and stay waterproof after standing in a running shower for 10 minutes. Plastic ponchos aren't a good idea as they get caught on branches and rip easily, nylon ones are okay though. Breathable material is strongly recommended.
Rain Pants *All trips!	1	A basic pair of rain pants keeps campers dry while setting up tents or sitting in a canoe.
Socks	3-4 pairs (1 pair for kayak)	Wool or polypropylene hiking socks. A set of liner socks paired with outer hiking socks prevents rubbing and blisters. Some 2-in-1 (liners built into sock) hiking socks are made.
Hiking Boots (North Coast Trail, West Coast Trail) Rain Boots (Kayak programs)	1	Hiking boots or shoes with good ankle support and sturdy soles. Waterproof is recommended. Wear for a couple weeks before camp to break them in. On Kayak trips rain boots are highly valuable in good weather or bad. They are always useful in camp and highly appreciated by those who have them.
Water Shoes/Sandals (Kayak)	1	Water shoes, sandals or just an old pair of runners. These are for wearing in the boat and for carrying boats in and out of the water. No flip flops/thongs.
Sleeping Bag	1	A warm (rated to 0°C recommended) sleeping bag made of synthetic material. Down sleeping bags don't stay warm when wet and therefore pure down sleeping bags aren't recommended in our damp climate. Hybrid down/synthetic bags are okay. Sleeping bags should compress well into an appropriate sized stuff sack. Stuff sacks can be lined with garbage bags to make them waterproof.
Sleeping Pad	1	Inflatable sleeping pad or foam pad.

Backpack (Canoe, Hike)	1	A sturdy backpack with chest and padded waist straps. Volume should be between 50L and 70L. Pack should be appropriate length.
Water Bottle	1	A study water bottle 1L in volume.
Toque/Warm Hat	1	Wool or fleece, no cotton.
T-Shirt	1	A synthetic or merino wool t-shirt is recommended.
Warm Sweater/Jacket	1	Warm fleece or wool pullover or zip-up jacket. No cotton.
Long Underwear Tops and Bottoms	1	Synthetic or wool long underwear helps you warm if it's cold and rainy.
Hat/Bandana	1	Any piece of head covering. All of our trips spend time near water or snow where UV rays being reflected increase the exposure to the sun.
Sunglasses	1	Sunglasses with UV protection. As sunglasses can often be dropped in water or crushed, don't send an expensive pair.
Sunscreen	1	SPF 30 or higher.
Dry Bags (Canoe, Kayak)	1-2	One 10L dry bags, or two if you can fit your sleeping bag into one of them.
Bowl and Spoon	1	Light and not overly bulky, no breakables. No need to bring whole sets such as plates, cups or knives and forks.

Please do not bring

- Cell Phones or Smart Phones
- Portable music devices
- E-Readers
- Hair Dryers
- Expensive clothes
- Tobacco or vape juice
- Food
- Video games
- Other valuables
- Hatchets
- Money
- Tobacco
- Food
- Video games
- SPOT or other emergency communication device

Cotton vs. Synthetic Fabrics

Cotton does not insulate the wearer when it becomes wet and takes a very long time to dry. Synthetic fabrics such as polyester, polypropylene, nylon, spandex and fleece are better suited for spending lots of time outside in different elements. These fabrics keep the wearer warm even when wet and they dry very quickly. Wool takes a long time to dry but insulates relatively well even when wet.

How do I get all this stuff?

Getting everything you need for camp together can be a long process. The out-trip gear list is necessary and important. Everything else is just a guideline. If you feel one bathing suit or one towel is all you need please don't feel like you need to go buy a new one.

When getting out-trip specific gear try borrowing things first. Try looking on the [Mountain Equipment Co-op gear swap](#), if you start keeping your eye out early you might find a good deal. Some families have found it more affordable to rent certain gear*. For those things you do have to buy, here are some local Victoria stores to consider:

Mountain Equipment Co-op

www.mec.ca

1450 Government Street

Victoria, BC V8W 1Z2

(250) 386-2667

Capitol Iron

www.capitaliron.net

Multiple Locations

Victoria, Sidney and Langford

(250) 385-9703

Ocean River Sports

www.oceanriver.com

1630 Store Street

Victoria, BC V8W 1V3

(250) 381-4233

***Sports Rent**

www.sportsrentbc.com

3-1950 Government Street

Victoria, BC V8T 4N8

(250) 385-736

Robinsons Outdoor Store

www.robinsonsoutdoors.com

1307 Broad St

Victoria, BC V8W 2A8

(250) 385-3429

Information for Families & Campers

Typical Day at On Out-trip

7:00 am	Wake-up
7:30 - 8:00 am	Campers work together to prepare breakfast
8:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Take-down camp, pack boats or backpacks
10:00 am	Launch boats or depart on trail. Travel, resting as necessary.
12:30 pm	Lunch and rest
1:30 pm	Continue travel, or make camp, depending on the day. Learn and practice travel navigation, group dynamics and leadership.
4:30 pm	Dinner preparations
5:30 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Evening Program: Daily debriefs, learning discussions, campfire story sharing/singing
9:30 pm	Retire to sleeping areas

Contacting Your Camper

Telephone

No phone is available for campers to regularly make or receive calls while at camp. If parents want to speak to their child, they are more than welcome to do so. Calls must be organized through Camp Thunderbird's supervisory staff. If you would like to speak with Summer Camp Program Manager for any reason, please feel free to phone the camp: 250-642-3136.

Mail

Thunderbird's Mailing Address:
Camper Name (and dates attending)
c/o Camp Thunderbird
5040 Glinz Lake Rd, Sooke, BC V9Z 0E3

Since Leadership campers will be away on trip for their entire camp stay, sending a letter before your child arrives at camp can help allow them to receive it on their first day. Our mail service is inconsistent and sometimes slow, due to our remote camp location. Sending the letter so it would arrive at our mailbox by the first day of camp is your best bet to ensure your camper can get it. When writing to your child, focusing on positive and encouraging messages ("I'm so proud of you! You can do this!") will help ensure the letter uplifts them.

Camper Wellness

Preparing Your Child for Camp

Camp is an exciting and fun filled place: new friends, new adventures, new skills, stories, songs, campfires and games. It's also a very different place: different bed, different washroom, different food, different schedule and different people.

Along with the excitement of all these new experiences, there is bound to be some anxiety. Here are a few things you might do to keep the anxiety low and anticipation high.

- Read this package, camper and parent together, and talk about preparing
- Talk about ways to solve problems at camp—talking with a counsellor or other camp staff
- Write and mail a letter before the camper leaves for camp so it will be waiting at camp when they get there

Camper Health

Make sure that you have provided all of the necessary medical information on the registration form. Please feel free to provide us with more information if you think it would be beneficial. We will keep it in your campers file and staff will have access to that information.

Medications

All medications are stored in a locked cabinet unless otherwise arranged. Staff keep a written record of the date and time of medication distribution. Please make sure that any medications your camper may have are in the original package and are labeled clearly with the camper's name and instructions for use. If you are dropping your child off by car you can choose to meet with the camp staff on the first day to discuss the medications necessary for your child. All campers have a "Wellness Check" on the first day of camp.

We stock basic over-the-counter medications including: Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Antihistamines, cough syrup, throat lozenges, and upset stomach relief medications. We encourage families not to send these medications to camp with their campers unless they take them on a regular basis. We will always do our best to make contact with guardians to communicate your campers wellbeing before administering medications, however if we are unable to make contact we may decide to administer the medication on the advice of our medical staff as per your sign off agreement.

In case of emergency or illness

If your camper becomes ill and is diagnosed as being either contagious or too ill to remain at camp, we will contact you. Until they are picked up your child will be isolated from other campers in the Wellness Centre and cared for by a senior staff member. If your child becomes injured and needs to be seen by a physician, you will be contacted. If contact cannot be made in a timely fashion the Program Manager or designate will arrange what they feel is best in terms of treatment.

If any prescription drugs are necessary as a result of the doctor's consultation, you will be billed for that cost.

Homesickness

It is reasonable to assume that until they become adjusted to camp life, your child might go through a period of homesickness. It is natural for children to experience homesickness when they come to camp. Our staff are trained to detect early symptoms of homesickness and to help children/teens feel comfortable at camp. Our counsellors are people who enjoy being with children/teens and will take the time to listen. Our Team Leaders, who oversee the counsellors, have years of camping experience and excellent counseling skills.

If your child is homesick, we will take the following steps to ensure a positive experience:

- Your child's counsellor will comfort and work with your child to overcome the negative aspects of homesickness
- If your child continues to show strong signs of homesickness, the Team Leader will become involved
- Staff may contact guardians to discuss options and strategies for working with your child
- As a last resort, we may ask you to talk to your child to help him or her through the experience.

In most cases these steps will allow your child to overcome their homesickness and enjoy their remaining time at camp.

Supervision at Camp

Our staff are trained in providing high quality care for our campers and ensuring that the needs of each individual are met. We strive to provide a safe, comfortable and supportive environment. Camp Thunderbird provides 24-hour supervision of campers. This means that a cabin group will always have at least one counsellor present. If the cabin group is separated for activities (during interest groups or other individual choice time) there will also be at least one Thunderbird staff with the campers.

Some activities (orienteering, capture the flag, scavenger hunts, etc.) involve groups of campers being out of direct supervision. During these activities there may not be a staff member in direct line of sight with campers, but someone will always be within earshot and campers are given clear directions on what to do if they need assistance. These activities are only run with groups where all campers are able to interact positively together.

Camp Behaviour Policy

Our staff are trained in respectful, child-honouring and evidence-based behaviour guidance practices. This includes staff observing and supervising campers, setting clear boundaries and limits, and helping campers work through conflict in a supported way. We believe that negative behaviour often stems from unmet needs and we work to meet needs of campers through respect and caring. If a situation arises where a camper threatens the safety or security of another camper, or if a camper shows disregard for camp guidelines, we will use our practices to encourage and support safe behaviour and we will contact the parents. We commit to keeping parents as part of the support team for their campers, keeping them in the loop about challenges and progress. In some situations, however, **we are not successful in supporting appropriate behaviour. In those cases the child will be dismissed from camp at the management team's discretion. Camp will not be held responsible for any costs associated with a dismissal on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour.**

Miscellaneous

Lost and found

Lost and found items are displayed outside the dining hall during the session and are available for review by parents on pick-up days. Lost and found items are kept at camp for 14 days after the session ends and are then donated to charity unless... you fill out our Lost and Found request form (found on our website) and a staff member will check the lost and found for you. If the item is found, we will contact you and make arrangements to hold it for you at camp until September 15, at the latest. This will give you time to get to camp during our office hours for collection. **We do not transport Lost and Found items.**

The best ways to help us reduce the amount of lost and found is to talk to your camper about keeping track of his or her things before getting to camp and putting your camper's name on anything brought to camp.

Your Privacy

The YMCA-YWCA is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy, and accuracy of personal information it collects, uses and discloses about its participant, members, donors, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers. At the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island (the “Y”) your privacy is and always has been very important to us. We are dedicated to provide you with superior service while protecting your privacy and safeguarding your personal information

Camp Office

Camp Thunderbird

5040 Glinz Lake Road

Sooke BC V9Z 0E3

hkucera@vancouverislandy.ca

Phone: (250) 642-3136 Fax: (250) 642-3980