Y Camp Thunderbird

Spring Break Camp Information Package

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Dear Camp Thunderbird Family,

Welcome to Camp Thunderbird! We are so excited to spend Spring Break with your camper.

Information in this booklet is updated every year, and all of the information is vital for your camper 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 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 contact our Program Coordinator at **cagocs@vancouverislandy.ca.**

We look forward to having your child join us at Camp Thunderbird this Spring.

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 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, Body, 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 also understand that camp prohibits the use of offensive language, inappropriate behavior, and the use of tobacco, cannabis products, vape juice, alcohol, or non-prescription drugs. 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.

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.

Food at Camp Thunderbird

Day campers are required to bring their own lunch every day.

Reminder: **WE ARE A NUT FREE FACILITY.** Please do not send nuts or nut products to camp. This includes Nutella. Food that "may contain nuts" is ok.

Camp Programs

Activities at Day Camp take place in groups of similarly aged campers and are gender-inclusive. Y camps across North America have found that activities focused on a small group of peers encourage the development of close friendships as campers play and meet challenges together.

We do our best to foster an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competition. If we run an activity containing some element of competition, we focus on challenging campers to achieve their own goals, rather than encouraging them to measure their accomplishments against the achievement of others.

Activities are designed to engage campers, providing opportunities to learn and grow with staff skillfully balancing challenge and support. K-5 campers learn and build basic skills in outdoor adventure, nature and creativity. Grades 6-8 campers try more challenging activities such as our hike-in climbing area, longer and more spectacular day-hikes and advanced paddling skills.

Experiencing Nature
Campers will spend time exploring, learning and connecting with nature... this is a chance to let the imagination run wild, and to enjoy unstructured play.

- ☐ Nature Hike
- ☐ Newt Observations
- ☐ Nature games

Creative Programming
Campers will join ranks with eccentric heroes to find clues, complete challenges and save camp from visiting villains!

- ☐ Arts & crafts
- ☐ Teambuilding

Outdoor Adventure
Campers will learn basic skills, or build upon existing knowledge through creative games, obstacle courses and races.

- ☐ Canoeing
- ☐ Kayaking (grade 3+)
- ☐ Archery
- ☐ Rock Climbing
- ☐ Orienteering

There will be no Swimming during Spring Break Camp.

What to Bring to Day Camp

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.

Please pack all these things in a backpack, and be aware that the children will carry their backpack throughout the day.

- ☐ Lunch – **MUST be Nut Free** - A large lunch as we are active throughout the day!
- ☐ Water Bottle
- ☐ Day Pack
- ☐ Shorts or pants depending on the weather
- ☐ 1 pair of long pants
- ☐ 1 sweatshirt, long sleeve shirt, or jacket
- ☐ Hat (for those rainy or sunny days)

- ☐ Raingear
- ☐ Pair of shoes (athletic and close-toed)
- ☐ Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer

Please do not bring:

-Nuts of any kind
-Cell Phones or Smart Phones
-Portable music devices
-E-Readers
-Expensive clothing
-Hatchets or knives
-Money
-Tobacco or vape juice
-Video games
-Other valuables

Bus Transportation/Camp Arrival

Bus transportation is provided and included in camp fees from **Downtown** (at 851 Broughton street, along the Quadra side of the building), or from the **Westhills** YMCA-YWCA (in the far parking lot). Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the listed departure time. In the afternoon, buses must stay on schedule, so please plan to be on-time **(or early!)** for pick up.

Downtown, We ask that participants and families *wait on the grass along the side of the building, ensuring that the sidewalk is kept clear.* Morning bus **departs at 8:00am sharp**. Afternoon bus arrives at 5:15.

The **Westhills Y** bus stops in the upper parking lot off Westhills Dr. (upper lot of the large Y parking area, near the 4-way stop entrance). Morning bus departs at 8:30am, and returns at 4:30pm**. In the afternoons, particularly on Fridays, traffic in the Westshore can cause delays for guardians picking up**. The bus will not wait at Westhills, so campers not picked up on time will stay on the bus and guardians will need to go downtown to collect their campers.

At **Camp** drop-off is at 9:00am and afternoon pick up is 3:45pm. Follow the signs on arrival. In the afternoons, please be aware of heavy traffic if coming through the Westshore.

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. Camp Thunderbird's supervisory staff will facilitate the call. If you would like to speak with the Program Coordinator for any reason, please feel free to phone the camp: 672-884-1264.

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 washroom, different schedule and different people.
Along with the excitement of all these new experiences, campers may have some nervous feelings. Here are some things you can do to help them prepare.

- ☐ Read this package, camper and parent together, and talk about preparing
- ☐ Talk about what it's like being in a group with up to 11 other children, and the ways they can go about making new friends
- ☐ Talk about ways to solve problems at camp—talking with a counsellor or other camp staff
- ☐ Focus on the positives like all the new skills they will learn and build confidence in the skills they already have

Camper Health

You have provided all necessary medical information during the registration process. Please feel free to provide us with more information if you think it would be beneficial.

Medications

PRN/As-Needed Medications

Over-the-counter medications that campers do not take regularly are stocked by camp and there is no need to send these with your camper. We stock the following medication and their generic equivalents: Tylenol (acetaminophen), Advil (ibuprofen), Polysporin, Gravol, Immodium, Pepto Bismol, antacids (e.g., Tums), Benadryl, Claratin/Reactin, Restorolax (PEG stool softener), and anti-itch cream (hydrocortisone cream 0.5%). If you give permission during registration, the staff will give these to your camper if they are needed.

Medications taken on a schedule

To prepare your camper for their time at camp, please do the following:

- Ensure all details of medication name, dosage and timing are up to date in the registration form.
- Have a pharmacy prepare the medication in multi-dose or blister packaging

Prescription medication, vitamins, melatonin, allergy medication that is taken on a specific schedule must be sent to camp in multi-dose strip or blister packaging. Pharmacies will do this packaging for you. Each compartment must contain ALL of the medication to be taken at a particular time. For example, if your camper takes two different pills at breakfast, and then a third pill at dinner, there would be one breakfast compartment for each day at camp, containing both pills and separate dinner compartments containing the third pill.

Exceptions will be made for bottled liquid medications. These medications must come in original bottles with legible label and administration instructions.

Camper medications are kept in secure storage by staff until they need to be given. Team Leaders (in camp), or cabin leaders (on out-trip) dispense medications. Dispensing of medication happens at meals (8:30am, 12:30pm, 5:30pm) and at bedtime, unless medically required at other times. Medications are administered at or just outside of the dining hall.

Supervision at Camp

It is our goal to provide a safe, comfortable and supportive environment. Our staff are trained in providing high quality care for our campers and ensuring that the needs of each individual are met. A Day Camp group will always have at least one counsellor present. Some activities may involve groups of campers being out of direct sight-line of staff; however, 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 Behavior 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, and 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.**

Final Administrative Items

Lost and Found

Lost and Found items are kept at camp for 14 days after the session ends and are then donated to charity.
Please 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. 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 way to help us reduce the amount of lost and found is to talk to your camper about keeping track of their belongings before getting to camp. Put 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 your privacy is and always has been very important to us. We are dedicated to providing 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
May 1 – Sept 2: (672) 884-1264

Program Coordinator, Daycamp
Claire Agocs
Cagocs@vancouverislandy.ca
519-994-2225