

Camp Kawartha Environment Centre

Nature School Parent / Camper Handbook (2024-2025)

Welcome to Environment Centre Nature School! We are sooo excited to see your family this season for Outdoor, Nature, and Environmental Learning experiences! In this Parent / Camper Handbook, we share important details about 'dressing for success', safety and other logistical information that is good to bear in mind.

Please read on and don't hesitate to be in touch if you have questions. We are looking forward to seeing you and your family very soon!

Pick-Up & Drop-Off:

- Drop-Off is 9:00am
- Pick-up is 3:00pm

If you need to check-in with one of the instructors – please do so during drop-off and pick-up times.

Each Day, our staff will greet you near the front entrance or near the groups' gathering location. **Please be sure to see us each morning to sign in and in the afternoon to sign out.** On occasion a group's location can shift due to other events/programs happening at the Environment Centre, but we'll be sure to point you in the right direction.

Health Information:

Communicable Disease Policy:

Many things have changed from the past few years but there are still some considerations to bear in mind.

Screening - Prior to bringing your child to the Environment Centre, please screen them for the following symptoms (new/unexpected or outside of their baseline health):

- ➔ *fever, cough, shortness of breath, decrease or loss of taste or smell, muscle aches or joint pain, extreme tiredness, sore throat, runny or stuffy/congested nose, headache, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, abdominal pain, pink eye, decreased or no appetite.*

The following self-assessment tool can be used as a guide: <https://www.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Please remember, for the well-being of all our participants, staff, and their families, **Do Not Send Your Child If They May Be Ill** to Environment Centre programs. We sincerely appreciate everyone's support in this regard!

- ➔ A camper who is showing signs or symptoms of a communicable disease (on arrival or during the day) will be assessed, and parents will be contacted. Ill campers must return home until they are fever free for 24 hours and have had 24 hours of improving symptoms (any symptoms from the list above). Campers must be 48 hours free of gastrointestinal symptoms before returning to camp.

Masking - Masking is optional and not required at Camp Kawartha. Your child will be responsible for their own masking should they prefer, or you prefer them to do so. While not necessary, masks are welcome at camp and we respect & support anyone who needs/prefers to use them.

Handwashing & Hygiene: Campers will be required to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating and when appropriate throughout the day. Staff carry hand sanitizer in the field for use as needed.

Vaccines - Camp Kawartha recommends (but does not require) all campers and staff be up to date with their immunizations based on their age according to the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario. Campers are not required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to attend.

Water & Food: All Camp Kawartha programs are **Nut Free**. If a student brings a product containing nuts, it will be removed and given back to parents/guardians at the end of the day.

- Please ensure your child has **enough food/snacks to keep them energized throughout the day**. We are **very active**, and kids often require larger lunches than in other settings.
- Participants will **not be permitted to trade/exchange food**.
- The Centre does not receive garbage or recycling pick-up. We require all participants to pack out their garbage and encourage the children to bring a **litter-less lunch**.
- Each camper must bring their own **water bottle**, which should be kept with them all day.

Medication: All medication must be given to a staff member who will store it in a safe location. If a camper is required to take medication during the day, parents/ guardians will be asked to complete and sign a **Camper Medication Form** that provides information on dosage and frequency.

- ➔ Campers with **EpiPens or inhalers** will always keep these with them during the day. If your child is anaphylactic to any food, insect, or medication, please fill out the **Anaphylactic Emergency Form** found on the website under “Register for Camp” (we can provide this on the first day).

BEE ware: Camp Kawartha is proud to house an observational beehive. With plexiglass walls, this observational hive is designed to encourage campers to view bees at work from inside the Environment Centre. The bees enter the hive from a PVC tube located on the exterior of the building. Honeybees play a critical role in helping to pollinate plants. With a variety of apple trees near the Centre and pollinator gardens, the bees will help to ensure that there will be a healthy harvest of apples next fall.

- ➔ We’d like to remind all visitors to the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre that there are always bees, wasps, and stinging insects in any natural area. Please ensure that any students with allergies to bees come with the appropriate safeguards in place (an EpiPen – if required, antihistamine tablets etc.).

Severe Weather: In case of severe weather (typically thunderstorms), all groups of kids on site need to go inside the Environment Centre for the duration. We engage in games, crafts, stories and more and we can return to our regular programming 30 minutes after the last thunderclap. Many of these weather events are short-lived and then we're back outside again; however, they can be longer or, at times, all day. If this happens, the programming can be lower key than our usual outdoor experiences - some families may want to pick up their child early. Many of the kids are happy but it can be a long day for

some. We will send a note home if we need to go in for more than a short period of time. You know your child and the decision is up to you - we like to give families the option of what they would like to do.

Poison Ivy: We'd also like to remind visitors that there are patches of poison ivy in the vicinity of the Centre. Closed toed shoes and long pants are highly recommended. These and other natural hazards are covered as part of the 'Program Orientation' each season.

Ticks: Though ticks (and Lyme Disease) are not as common in this area as in some locations, there are ticks, and a few cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Peterborough County. Lyme disease can become a serious infection caused by a bacteria spread by the bite of blacklegged ticks (formerly called deer ticks). We highly encourage all families to do **TICK CHECKS at the end of each day** and to get in the habit of doing so after every outing in the woods. This is part of helping families to build important routines around tick awareness and Lyme disease prevention.

The Peterborough City County Health Unit recommends a **TICK CHECK** when coming in from the outdoors:

- Have a shower to rinse ticks off.
- Outdoor clothing should be placed in the wash or hung outside
- Check your body thoroughly for ticks.
- Make sure to look in hidden areas like the scalp, between toes, armpits, back of knees, groin, behind ears.
- Please remember that ticks can be tiny freckle sized or as large as a small grape when engorged.
- If a tick is found, put it in a screw top bottle or zipper closed bag and bring it to your local Health Unit.

For more info: <https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/31711-2/?highlight=ticks>

What to Bring:

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| ➤ Lunch and two snacks [nut free] | ➤ A change of clothes |
| ➤ Refillable water bottle [min ½ litre] | ➔E.g., a second pair of items that are likely to get wet such as socks, mitts, hats etc. |
| ➤ Sunscreen & Sun hat (if applicable) | ➤ Backpack |
| ➤ Clothing [old is best] | ➤ Medication [if required] |
| ➤ Rain Gear [as needed]; Snow Gear & Boots in Winter | ➤ A sense of curiosity & adventure! |

Be Prepared/Dress for Success: Programs run rain or shine so please check the weather and dress appropriately. Here's a good article to help with some layering ideas for potentially cool, wet late fall weather - <https://teachmeoutsideactivities.com/how-to-dress-for-fall-outdoor-education/>

Restricted Items: Expensive jewelry and electronics. We are trying to create a nature rich experience for all—electronics interfere with kids having a fulsome connection to nature. (Please leave ALL valuables at home).

Contact: In the case that an urgent need to reach your child arises, please contact the Camp Kawartha main office at (705) 652-3860.

Please be aware that we do not have a receptionist on site at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre. If you need to speak with a staff member, **please leave a message with the Environment Centre Manager's cell phone (705) 930-3545** and we will return your call as soon as possible. If your child will be away, a quick text to this number or email is great and we will forward the info to the instructors.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Craig Brant, our Environment Centre Manager - craig@campkawartha.ca

Camper Conduct: For our team to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for all participants, we ask that Parents/Guardians review this code of conduct with their children.

Remember **The Three Rs:**

- **Respect yourself.** All participants are expected, in accordance with their age, to take appropriate care of themselves (personal hygiene, dressing appropriately, water, food, sunscreen etc.)
- **Respect others.** We expect all participants to treat one another, and our staff, with courtesy and respect.
- **Respect the environment.** The Camp Kawartha Environment Centre is located on Trent University's Wildlife Sanctuary. It is our responsibility to take care of these lands.

Please review our Code of Conduct with your child – you can find it online at—
<https://campkawartha.ca/pdf/summer-camp/CamperCodeofConduct.pdf>

Behaviour Management: We seek to provide a safe and caring experience for each participant. We can assist and support children, but we are unable to provide alternative programming for extended periods of time should a participant require this. If a student needs to be repeatedly withdrawn from activities and/or their behaviour is deemed to be a threat to their own safety or to the safety of others, we will not be able accommodate them.

Our staff will do their utmost to:

- Make expectations clear
- Be positive and supportive
- Consult with parents/guardians about recommended approaches with each camper.
- Keep parents/guardians informed about issues as they arise
- Consider the child's developmental needs

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON!