

O.E.S.
(Outdoor Experiential School)
Parent/Student Manual

Camp Chief Hector YMCA – Outdoor Schools



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.



Welcome to the Camp Chief Hector YMCA

For over 25 years, the Camp Chief Hector YMCA has been running residential outdoor schools experiences that provide unique opportunities for enhancing curriculum objectives, building communication and cooperative group skills, and providing a shared experience for students of different backgrounds. All of our programs are centered on the four core values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Responsibility, and Respect. Using the beautiful area of the Bow Valley, the skills of dynamic staff, and carefully selected learning activities, we have a legacy of building strong kids who become community leaders in years to come.

Contact Information

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Map to Camp Chief Hector YMCA



Directions

The Camp Chief Hector YMCA is located approximately one hour west of Calgary in the "evening shadow of the Rockies." From Calgary, travel on Highway 1 (Trans-Canada Highway) west towards Banff. Exit at the "Rocky Mountain YMCA" exit (114A) which is one exit after Highway 40. At the stop sign, turn right and follow Ranch Road West to the camp gate. Follow YMCA Road to Bowfort Lodge and Bowfort parking lot. Hector Lodge and parking is 2km farther down the road.



Accommodations & Dining

For their time at Outdoor Experiential School, students stay in spacious tipis a short walk from Hector Lodge. Fires provide light and warmth in the tipis for a cozy atmosphere. Tipis are comfortable even in rain or snow, although there is the chance of being a bit damp. Shower facilities are provided for all clients, though students will likely only shower once during their stay and there are outhouses and indoor washrooms located in various locations around our site. Hector Lodge contains our dining hall and is an indoor space that is available for programming. Students eat three meals a day, and will have a snack in the evening during campfire. Students with birthdays during the program celebrate with cake!

Fees & Refunds

The cost for this program is \$250.00 plus GST per student which includes accommodation, meals and snacks, program supplies, staffing, (and transportation for Calgary-students only). Due to food and staffing costs, we cannot offer refunds or reduced fees for students who must arrive late or leave early during a week of program. All fees are paid to the school. The school is invoiced by mail after their students' week at Outdoor School.

Financial Assistance

YMCA Calgary, through the Strong Kids Campaign, will assist students from families who are in need of financial assistance to attend Outdoor Schools programs at the Camp Chief Hector YMCA. YMCA Calgary does not provide 100% financial assistance. Families are asked to make a contribution towards the cost of the program and the YMCA Strong Kids Fund will look after the remainder. Financial need is to be assessed by the school and/or teacher. A confidential Opportunity Fund application form is available from your son/daughter's teacher if you would like to apply for financial assistance. Some families may also wish to contribute funds to families in need. Prospective donors should contact their student's teacher or the Outdoor Schools Manager.

Transportation

Busses will depart from the school at _____ on _____. Please ensure that your student has arrived early and that they have been checked in with their teacher. Buses will return your student to the school for _____ on _____. Please arrange pick-up for your student on their return day.

Student Care

The Camp Chief Hector YMCA has a long history of providing quality learning experiences for youth in the outdoors. The first priority of our staff is ensuring the physical and emotional safety of our young clients; for only after they are comfortable will they be able to fully participate in the activities around them. Student care is a collaborative effort between YMCA staff, teachers, parent/guardians, and the students themselves.

YMCA Staff Requirements

All YMCA staff need to have current Standard First Aid and Basic CPR certifications. Most of our staff have training in wilderness or remote first aid, canoe instruction, and challenge course



facilitation. To work for YMCA Calgary all staff also need an annual criminal record check. Staff members go through a mandatory week of training at our site before they begin their work with students.

On-site Student Care

Like at school, teachers act *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent) and are ultimately responsible for their students while they are attending Outdoor School. While the YMCA staff is trained to handle and will act in the case of a first-aid incident, teachers will be asked to coordinate non-emergency decisions such as transportation, and to initiate communication with you. Our goal is for students to either return quickly to program, or access the support they need to feel safe and be comfortable.

Non-Urgent & Emergency Transportation

Communication with you is very important should your son/daughter become ill or injured. If required, a teacher or the Outdoor Schools Manager will call you to talk about transportation options. In most non-emergencies, if your student should see an outside health service professional, they will be taken to Canmore in a vehicle provided by one of your school's teachers. Students may also be taken to the Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary, at your request. Whenever possible, it is preferable that parents transport their own students back into the city so that teachers can continue to support the majority of their students on-site.

In the unlikely event that your student needs immediate medical support, an ambulance will be dispatched from the Kananaskis Emergency Centre a few minutes away.

Medication

The dispensing of any medication is the sole responsibility of the teachers. Students who carry "take-when-needed" medications such as inhalers or epi-pens may still do so at Outdoor School, but all other medications should be labeled with your child's name and placed in a zip lock bag. Please leave medications in their original containers to avoid confusion. If possible, provide duplicates of all prescriptions so a back-up is always available. Medications should be handed directly to teachers when your student is dropped off. Camp does not provide any medications, i.e. Advil, Benadryl, so OTC drugs must be sent by the parents.

Contact

Should you need to reach the Camp Chief Hector YMCA, please contact the Outdoor Schools Manager or the Outdoor Experiential School Coordinator. In an emergency, if you are unable to reach either person at their office number, both carry cell phones. Please feel free to check in with us to see how your child is doing out at camp. If the phone is not answered, please leave a message and we will call you back as soon as possible. This may be the following morning.

Emergency Procedures

The Camp Chief Hector YMCA has emergency procedures in place to deal with fires, first aid evacuations, lost student and wildlife encounters. Students and teachers are told where to meet, in the case of large-scale incidents, during the opening community meeting.



Health and Dietary Information Forms

School board forms are required for your student to participate in this program. Though the Student Information & Permission form may seem long, it is very important that teachers and YMCA staff have this information so they can best plan for your student's stay. Being proactive rather than reactive is crucial in risk management; YMCA staff must be informed of any pertinent student information prior to your son/daughter arriving. We are able to cater to a wide variety of dietary needs. Please contact our Food Services Director if you have questions about our menu.

Risk Assessment

Supervision

Students are supervised by YMCA staff and teachers. If students need to move from one area to another, for example, from an activity area to the washroom, they travel in pairs. At night, YMCA staff sleep among students to provide overnight supervision. YMCA staff carry radios to maintain contact with the Outdoor Schools Coordinator and Manager as needed.

Activity Risks

In general, injuries at the Camp Chief Hector YMCA are the same types of injuries that occur in elementary Physical Education classes, at recess and at lunch breaks. Because our activities take place outside, there is a risk of falls, joint injury, and scrapes as students move from area to area or as they run during wide-games. Some areas, such as the low-ropes course, have potential for short falls, so students are trained as spotters to support their peers under staff supervision. Counsellors carry first aid kits when they are working with groups of students.

Environmental Risks

The Bow Valley is an area prone to rapid and drastic weather changes. All students should be prepared for wind, snow, rain, and scorching sun all in the same week. The packing list included in the Parent/Guardian's Manual should be followed so students have the warm layers, extra socks, and sunscreen that are required for a comfortable stay. It is better to come over-prepared than to have a wet/cold or hot/burnt student. Outdoor activities continue in most weather conditions.

Student Preparation

Most first aid incidents can be avoided if students are well-prepared. Many first aid injuries can be traced to improper footwear. Most illnesses are the result of dehydration. If students do a thorough job of packing (with adult support), drink water prior to and while at the YMCA, and get a lot of sleep, the week will be a highlight. If they arrive ill-equipped, dehydrated, and tired, they are at elevated risk.



OUTDOOR SCHOOL PACKING LIST

The weather can be quite unpredictable in the Bow Valley, and Outdoor Schools programs are designed to run rain, snow, or shine! Please keep this in mind and pack clothing that will prepare your student for all weather extremes. We suggest the following as a guideline.

Raincoat/poncho	Toiletry Articles
Winter Jacket	Towel (for showering)
Snow pants *	Toothbrush & Toothpaste
Gloves or Mitts	Lip Balm
Pajamas	Sunscreen
Long Underwear	Sunglasses
Sweaters	Soap/Shampoo
Long Pants	Comb or Brush
Lots of Socks	Sleeping Bag or Bedding
Underwear	Pillow
Rubber Boots	Blanket
Toque	Laundry Bag
2 pairs Walking/Hiking Shoes	Flashlight
Winter Boots *	Camera
Long Sleeve Tops	Water Bottle
Cap or Hat	Pens or Pencils
T-shirts	Day Pack
	Prescription Medications

Please leave the following items at home:

- Money
- Knives
- **Cell Phones**
- iPods, MP3s, CD players
- PSPs, Gameboys
- Make-up & fancy clothes
- Food or Snacks
- Clogs
- Curling Irons
- Body Sprays (Axe) and perfumes



The O.E.S. Program

O.E.S. stands for Outdoor Experiential School. The O.E.S. Program fosters positive social growth and leadership for students in secondary school. The goal of the students' week is on the preparation and completion of a full-day focus activity in the area of hiking, canoeing, or horseback riding. Other activities such as orienteering, climbing, and challenge course initiatives are designed to enhance multiple objectives from various Alberta Education Programs of Study. Our holistic and in-situ approach to teaching these objectives has proven to successfully reach our students, including those with learning and behavioural exceptionalities that may experience difficulties in traditional classroom settings. Activities that *may* be run by YMCA staff in the O.E.S program are:

Initiatives and Team-building Activities - As a start to the week, students will spend time getting to know each other in their groups while participating in various initiative and team-building activities.

Challenge Course - This half block activity focuses on the development of communication and leadership styles by using obstacle-course challenge elements and facilitation to develop group goals.

Higher Ground - Students will push the limits of their comfort zones while making use of climbing technology to complete group and individual tasks on our aerial challenge courses. At high ropes, students move with a belay team across elements suspended off the ground. A number of team elements are used as well, including a giant teeter-totter.

Focus Day - On their full-day focus activity, students will explore the Bow Valley by foot, horse, or paddle. Historical and biological knowledge will be learned first-hand as students are taught progressively more complex skills to meet their goals. Students will pack an outtripping lunch and will spend some time in quiet reflection before finishing their experience.

Goal Setting - Each day, students will be given an opportunity to set goals with the help of both teachers and staff. Goals may focus on desired accomplishments or the demonstration of specific behaviours.

Hiking – Students will participate in a full or half-day hike where they will learn about our local flora and fauna, play some games and explore our natural surroundings.

Canoeing – Students will get the opportunity to visit our lake and explore the area by boat in our tandem or Voyageur canoes.

Campfire - A campfire concludes every day at Outdoor School. Students become more involved as the week progresses, with the final campfire being presented mostly by students.



SAMPLE WEEK

The O.E.S. Coordinator breaks student into tipi and activity groups for their week at Outdoor School. Students may be in co-ed activity groups during the day, but always sleep in gender-specific tipis.

Here is a generic R.O.P.E.S. program week. Program times and blocks will change throughout the season.

	DAY ONE	DAY TWO	DAY THREE	DAY FOUR
7:00		WAKE-UP	WAKE-UP	WAKE-UP
7:30		FLAGRAISING	FLAGRAISING	FLAGRAISING
8:30		BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST
9:00		ALL-DAY FOCUS ACTIVITY (BAG-LUNCH)	LAKE CANOEING	HIKE
9:30				
10:00				
10:30	ARRIVAL & GAMES			
11:00	COMMUNITY MEETING			
11:30	MOVE-IN		LUNCH	
12:00	LUNCH		DEPART	
12:30	GROUP INTIATIVES		HIGH ROPES	
1:00				
1:30				
2:00				
2:30	FOCUS ACTIVITY PREPARATION	CHALLENGE COURSE		
3:00				
3:30				
4:00	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	
4:30				
5:00	GOAL SETTING	GOAL SETTING	GOAL SETTING	
5:30				
6:00				
6:30				
7:00	CLASSROOM MEETINGS & EVENING ACTIVITIES	CLASSROOM MEETINGS & EVENING ACTIVITIES	CLASSROOM MEETINGS & EVENING ACTIVITIES	
7:30				
8:00				
8:30	CAMPFIRE	CAMPFIRE	CAMPFIRE	
9:00				
9:30	READY FOR BED	READY FOR BED	READY FOR BED	
10:00				

The safety of each individual is of the utmost importance to us. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, the Camp Chief Hector YMCA reserves the right to alter the program at any time without compensation to participants, parents or guardians.



We try our best to accommodate the physical needs of students who are feeling unwell or who have limited mobility. The best decisions and plans are made between parents, physicians, and teachers. In many cases, students who are ill can only recover at home.

Special Needs

If your child may need some extra support and reassurance in order to attend Outdoor School, please contact your child's classroom teacher and/or the Outdoor Schools Manager or Coordinator. Tours of our site are available for students who are feeling nervous about attending camp and for parents who are nervous about having their child attend! We can also arrange for you to meet or contact your child's counselor.

Lost and Found

We do our best to send Lost and Found back to your child's school and to have students take a look before they depart, however quite a few items get left behind. If your child is missing an item that they think they might have forgotten at Outdoor School, please have them take a look through their school's lost and found. If they do not find the item, the Outdoor School Coordinator should be contacted and will take a look through what we have. If the item is found, it can be picked up at our site or we will have it brought in to Calgary the next time someone is heading in and it can be picked up at one of our YMCA branches or at another specified location. After items have been at camp for two weeks, we donate them to a local shelter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please contact the Outdoor Schools Manager or Coordinator if you have questions, comments or concerns.

We look forward to having your child at Outdoor School!