FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAM

TEACHER PLANNING GUIDE

CHEAKAMUS CENTRE

nature is in session

Last Modified by: Chelsea Kennedy, Program Administrative Coordinator (August, 2026)

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1 | Program Overview

Field School offers students the chance to immerse themselves in educational experiences that are inspired by nature. Utilizing the Centre's 165 ha (420 acre) ecological reserve, these experiences take place within an extensive network of trails, ancient forests, spawning channels, our teaching hatchery and working farm. Designed around 5 guiding principles, our curriculum-based Field School program seeks to connect students to themes of ***Place***, ***Inquiry***, ***Community***, ***Personal Connections*** and ***First Peoples' Perspectives***. Most importantly, Field School is about engaging learners in fun and meaningful ways that foster understanding and care for our natural world. With input from visiting teachers, Cheakamus Centre staff will design a hands-on, nature-based program that creates a memorable outdoor learning experience for students and staff alike.



CLICK HERE for a letter from our Education Director, Conor McMullan

Sample Schedule

Field School can range from one day to upwards of five days. Below is a sample schedule for a three-day Field School Program. Programs are customizable to suit your group's specific goals.

Time	Day One	Day Two	Time	Day Three
8:15 AM		Breakfast	8:15 AM	Breakfast
9:30 AM	Arrival, Welcome & Teambuilding	Activity C	9:15 AM	Activity F
11:00 AM	Move into accommodation		11:15 AM	Closing Session
11:45 PM	Lunch	Lunch	11:45 AM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Activity A	Activity D	1:30 PM	Departure
3:00 PM	Snack	Snack		
3:30 PM	Activity B	Activity E		
5:30 PM	Self-directed Time	Self-directed Time		
6:00 PM	Dinner	Dinner		
7:00 PM	Evening Games	Campfire		
8:00 PM	Self-directed Time & Snack	Self-directed Time & Snack		
9:00 PM	Quiet Time	Quiet Time		

All sections highlighted grey indicate times when Cheakamus Centre staff are facilitating programming and assisting with supervision. At all other times, visiting staff/adult volunteers are responsible for the supervision of students.
**Please note – group organizers must have activities prepared for self-directed time

2 | Planning Overview

All of our forms can be found on the Teacher Resources Page on our website.
Please use the "Field School Program" drop down menu.

Form submission

Please email completed forms to our Administrative Coordinator, Chelsea, at chelsea@cheakamuscentre.ca.
Please ensure ALL fields in forms are complete with parent signatures where required.

Timeline

Stage	Action Items
Booking	▪ Confirm proposal details, dates, and estimated numbers ▪ Alert Cheakamus Centre of any extra space/facility needs ▪ Submit signed contract and deposit to secure your booking ▪ Submit C.O.I. (Certificate of Insurance) – *details will be outlined in your contract*
6-8 Weeks Before Visit	▪ Complete and return the **Planning Form – *due ASAP*** ▪ Distribute the following forms to parents/guardians and adult participants: - **Informed Consent Forms** *(required for all student and adult participants)* - **Medical Forms** *(required for all student and adult participants on **MULTI-DAY PROGRAMS ONLY** – no medical forms required for One Day Field School)* - **Packing List** ▪ Organize transportation to and from Cheakamus Centre ▪ Begin completing the **Activity Group Med Diet Summary** ▪ Begin making your own **Cabin Group Lists** *(overnight programs).*
2 Weeks Before Visit	▪ Final due date for remaining forms: - **Informed Consent Forms** *(required for all student and adult participants)* - **Medical Forms** *(required for all student and adult participants)* - **Activity Group Med Diet Summary – *Note*** – we must receive this document by the due date to plan for dietary requirements. Any dietary received after may not be accommodated. - **Confirm Final Numbers** – *you will be invoiced for this final number, or actual number in attendance, whichever is higher*
Day 1 of Visit	▪ Bring hard copies of your student **Medical Forms** with you in case of emergency during transportation ▪ Bring your **Cabin Group Lists** with you *(overnight programs)*

Activity Groups

Cheakamus Centre will assign your number of activity groups based on student numbers. If your numbers change significantly, group assignments may be adjusted.

Please:

- Keep groups as even as possible
- Use only the number of activity groups assigned to you
- Email the form as an Excel file (not PDF)
- List all dietary needs
- HIGHLIGHT any life-threatening or anaphylactic allergies

One Day Programs

Medical Forms are **not required** for one-day programs. However, we do need a summary of all student dietary and medical needs**.**

If your school doesn't already have dietary requirements on-file, you're welcome to use our Medical Form to collect this information for the Activity Group Med Diet Summary**, however you do not need to send copies to us.**

3 | Accommodation



Cheakamus Centre has **8 heated rustic student cabins** nestled in a beautiful forest setting, with total capacity for up to 127 guests.

- Each cabin sleeps **12–18 people** and includes 2 shared washrooms
- Cabins **1–6** can be split into two sides by a door
- Cabins **7 & 8** are **wheelchair accessible**, offering accessible beds and washrooms
- An additional adult cabin (Cabin 10) may be available

Cabin Assignments

You will be assigned specific cabins prior to your visit, based on group size, age, and any other on-site groups. We support all-gender cabin assignments if preferred. Please arrive at Cheakamus Centre with your pre-arranged cabin group lists.



Bedding

Guests must bring a **sleeping bag and pillow**.
Linens are available to rent for a fee—ideal for groups travelling from a distance. Cabins are heated, so winter-rated sleeping bags are not necessary.

Overnight Supervision

Adult chaperones are responsible for **overnight supervision**.

- **Elementary groups**: Adults must sleep in the same cabin. Depending on group size and cabin availability, there is usually space for adults to have a private room within the student cabins.
- **Older groups**: Separate adult accommodations may be available, though adults remain responsible for overnight supervision.
- A Cheakamus staff member will be on-call overnight; contact info will be provided on arrival.

Links to our Cabin Layouts/Map & Facilities Photo Gallery





4 | Meals & Dining



Our head chef and culinary team prepare simple, sustainable meals and snacks that are nutritious, kid-friendly, and designed to keep students healthy and energized. We can accommodate a range of dietary needs and restrictions.

To help us plan appropriately, please ensure:

- Parents complete the dietary section of the **Medical Form** accurately.
- Visiting teachers fill out the **Group Medical Summary**, noting any special diets, on time.

Complex Dietary Needs

If a student has complex dietary requirements, contact our **Admin Coordinator**, who will connect you with our head chef if needed. We may also follow up with the planning coordinator or the parent/guardian based on information collected on the Medical Forms. In some cases, parents may be asked to send supplementary food items.



Note: Outside food is not permitted unless pre-approved by Cheakamus administration.

Nut-Restricted Policy

Cheakamus Centre is a **nut-restricted** facility. We do not purchase or serve nut products. However, we cannot guarantee items brought by individuals are entirely nut-free. Please **do not bring** any food, skin care, or hair products containing nuts.

5 | Leadership & Supervision

Chaperone Responsibilities

A safe, high-quality outdoor education experience depends on the support of adult chaperones. Chaperones are responsible for student health, safety, and conduct at all times, including overnight. Most schools bring teachers, parents, or school staff. Our minimum adult-to-student ratio is 1:10.

Chaperone Expectations

During Programming

Each activity group must include a teacher or chaperone who stays with the group all day. Chaperones follow the instructor's lead, participating or observing as needed, and are expected to manage behavior and support group dynamics. If a student cannot participate due to illness or injury, it is the school's responsibility to care for the student and arrange pickup if necessary.

Meal Times

Meal service is a collaborative effort. Chaperones are required to:

- Ensure students with dietary restrictions receive the correct meals.
- Flag any allergies.
- Assist younger students with portioning and serving, if needed.

Outside Program Time

Chaperones take a more active role during unscheduled times:

- Supervise students before/after meals, during self-directed time, and overnight cabins.
- Support activities like games, meal clean-up, and comforting homesick students.
- Rotate duties among adults to allow everyone a chance to relax and enjoy the experience.

Important: Consumption of alcohol is **strictly prohibited** for all school groups and chaperones while on site.

6 | Health & First Aid

Medications

Visiting teachers and chaperones are responsible for administering all student medications. Please collect and distribute medications at appropriate times.



First Aid

Cheakamus program staff are first aid trained and will handle injuries during instructional periods. During non-program times, visiting staff are responsible for basic care. On-call staff are available 24/7 to support in case of first aid needs or emergencies.

Each group must bring:

- Basic first aid supplies
- A vehicle for emergency transport (or use **Squamish Taxi**: 604-567-1111)

All incidents and accidents must be reported to the **Environmental Program Coordinator**.

Advanced Medical Care

In case of emergency, call **9-1-1** and provide the address: **2170 Paradise Valley Road**.
The nearest hospital is **Squamish General Hospital**, located 20 minutes away at **38140 Behrner Drive**.
Emergency procedures will be reviewed upon arrival.

Illness

Sick students will be isolated from the group and must be supervised by a chaperone. If possible, the student should be sent home. The visiting school is responsible for contacting parents and arranging pickup.

Complex Needs Planning

We welcome all students and aim to support inclusive participation. If a student has complex medical or support needs, please consult with our **administration team** in advance. A **Medical/Care Plan** is required for conditions such as diabetes, seizures, or heart conditions. While this helps inform our team, visiting staff are responsible for the student's primary care.

Please ensure your team is prepared with adequate staff supports (EA's, etc.). These additional adults attending 1:1 for supporting complex needs attend at no extra cost.

7 | Site Policies

Please review all Cheakamus Centre policies **prior to your visit** to ensure your group is prepared to follow them. With such a large and unique site, there are important guidelines in place to support both **safety and enjoyment** during your stay.

Thank you for taking the time to read through these important details.

8 | Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *My student has a vegan diet- will there be an alternative at meals?*

A: Yes, we are able to cater to many special dietary needs including veganism.

Q: *A student is only able to attend 2 of 3 days of their Field School Program - will they have a discounted rate?*

A: Generally we do not provide partial rates for programs. Allowances for partial fees are provided for students with Ministry designations requiring program adaptations, on compassionate grounds (i.e. family funeral), and in coordination with the school-based administrator and the Director of Educational Programs at Cheakamus Centre. Please contact us for more details.

Q: *We have a group of 50 students with 5 teachers/adult volunteers attending. More parents would like to be chaperones - is this allowed?*

A: In general, more hands isn't always more helpful. Depending on the circumstances it is possible to bring additional adults with the approval of our admin team. For guidelines on this including fees, please refer to your contract. Please contact chelsea@cheakamuscentre.ca to discuss this further.

Q: *Can I run my own evening activities?*

A: Yes, if you would like to facilitate your own evening activity, please communicate that on your planning form.

Q: *Is there an indoor space to facilitate my own activity?*

A: Yes, please send a specific request during your booking or planning process to ensure a space is available for your use, and so any AV needs can be prepared for.

Q: *Does Cheakamus Centre provide overnight supervision in cabins?*

A: Visiting teachers and adults are responsible for overnight supervision. We recommend one supervisor in each cabin with students. It is your responsibility to provide a supervision model that works best for your group. Please contact us at chelsea@cheakamuscentre.ca if you have any questions about supervisory roles and responsibilities.

Q: *Who is responsible for first aid and medication administration during a program?*

A: Cheakamus program staff are first aid trained and will attend to first aid requirements during program periods. On-call staff are also available in the event of an emergency. During non-instructional periods, visiting teachers and chaperones are responsible for student care including basic first aid needs, and therefore should come prepared with a stocked First Aid kit. Visiting teachers are responsible for any medication administered to a student/youth.

Q: *Where does our group arrive and depart from?*

A: This information will be confirmed with you prior to your arrival. Programs generally arrive and depart from **Cheakamus Centre South Entrance (1600 Paradise Valley Road), ELC Parking Lot.** *Please note: GPS applications such as Google Maps do not provide accurate directions to our site, please look for the large Cheakamus Centre sign with our address on it.*

9 | Cheakamus Centre Contact Information

Forms submission and program questions: Please email Chelsea at chelsea@cheakamuscentre.ca
Questions about booking/program cost/invoicing: Please email Niki at niki@cheakamuscentre.ca

Website: www.cheakamuscentre.ca

TEACHER RESOURCES

SITE MAP

Our Program Team:

Conor McMullan
Director of Educational Programs
cmcmullan@sd44.ca

Chelsea Kennedy
Program Administrative Coordinator
chelsea@cheakamuscentre.ca

Matt Houston
Program Manager
matt@cheakamuscentre.ca

Niki Hurst
Education Booking Coordinator
niki@cheakamuscentre.ca

Ariella Smith-Eidelman
Environmental Program Coordinator
programcoordinator@cheakamuscentre.ca

Simona Bonelli
Executive Chef
please email Chelsea for any kitchen related questions

