Information for Parents & Guardians

Rivers to Ridges Programs
2020/2021

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Our Vision

When young people are supported in fostering a sense of empathy and self-awareness in relation to place and others builds the foundation for resilient and healthy communities. We believe that **deepening our relationship with the natural world** is crucial for healthy bodies, minds and hearts.

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower a diverse range of Northerners to spend more time connecting meaningfully to the land, and developing a deeper sense of empathy, awareness and community.

In addition to our on-the-ground programs for young people, we design training custom programs, build outdoor and land-based curriculum, provide public presentations, and collaborate with existing programs across the North and beyond to support and deliver outdoor, and land-based programs for children, youth and adults in all four seasons.

We are based out of Whitehorse, Yukon and also run programs across the Territory. We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

To learn more about us and our team, please visit www.riverstoridges.org

Reconciliation + Rivers to Ridges

In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established and mandated to record and address the legacy of Indian residential schools and advance reconciliation in Canada. It published its final report on December 15, 2015.

The education and early childcare professions are addressed specifically in a number of the Legacy Calls to Action. The actions call on governments and educational institutions to ensure that educators understand Aboriginal people and the law, including the history

and legacy of residential schools, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. They also call for educators to be trained in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and antiracism. These calls to action were created because of deficiencies noted by the TRC in the education and early childhood profession's understanding and competency in representing individuals, communities, the government and the private sector when dealing with Aboriginal related issues.

The TRC Report states that reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people must inform every aspect of our relationship with each other, and that it requires transformative action on the part of all Canadians - "Reconciliation begins with each and every one of us" (Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future, p. 185).

Rivers to Ridges is an outdoor and land-based education organization that primarily provides related programs and services to citizens of Yukon and broader Canadian society. Our mission is to empower a diverse range of Northerners to spend more time connecting meaningfully with the land, and developing a deeper sense of empathy, awareness and community. We believe that the goal of reconciliation must infuse every aspect of our operations. To further the goal of reconciliation, Rivers to Ridges is currently working towards a Reconciliation Action Plan, which is available on our website.

* Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf

Commitment to the Land

At Rivers to Ridges programs we believe in supporting children to foster a deep and respectful relationship with the land they spend time on. While we do not aim to leave spaces untouched by program learning, we are aware that exploration and immersion, repetitive use of outdoor spaces can leave impacts such as plant trampling, removal of vegetation, distrubed soil, potential litter/left behind items, and more.

As part of this respectful relationship, Rivers to Ridges staff will help participants to see how they can become stewards for the lands and waters they love and learn on. Staff will help minimize program impact on the land through ongoing ecological assessments, seasonal and sessional rotations of program spaces, and positive reminders to participants of how they can help minimize unnecessary impacts to the land (removing litter, gentle handling of plants not being harvested for a specific purpose, treating animals with respect, celebrating and respecting water, etc.).

Designing Immersive Programs

Our programs are carefully designed to foster and deepen a sense of wonder and curiosity within each child through interacting with the land. We use specific core routines inspired by the nature mentorship movement (read more below about sit spots, exploratory play, nature journaling, the art of questioning, etc.) to uniquely contribute to an overall sense of community and meaning for each learner over time. We aim to inspire confidence, resilience and community by interacting with the natural world.

Depending on the program, participants may be involved in any of the following activities:

- natural shelter building techniques
- sit spots & nature journaling
- sneaking quietly in the woods
- wild crafting (gathering, twining & weaving, plant pressing)
- mammal, bird and wildlife tracking
- Yukon wild edible and medicinal plants
- ecological games & songs
- macro sketching and botanical drawings
- forest, invertebrate, and soil studies
- exploratory play
- sensory awareness training
- team-building challenges
- storytelling and active listening
- bird behaviour and bird language
- creative land mapping

Preparing Your Child for Outdoor Programs

Programs are run nearly 100% outdoors, and participants should come dressed and prepared for the weather every day. We run programs all year-round, including in cold winter temperatures. While we have an indoor facility to use in case of extreme weather conditions (below -30 including wind chill), the plan is to be out and about as much as possible. We aim to accomplish this by making sure that everyone has the right gear to remain warm, dry, and happy.

Below is a general list of what youngsters should have packed for our full-day programs.

Gear	Winter	Spring & Fall	Summer
Backpack	✔	✔	✔
One full, reusable water bottle with a secure lid	✔	✔	✔
One full thermos with a hot beverage	✔	optional	optional
One large, healthy nut-free lunch + lots of snacks	✔	✔	✔
Warm winter jacket & snow pants **OR** full snowsuit	✔		
Warm, non-cotton winter hat	✔	✔	
Insulated/water-resistant winter boots	✔		
Indoor shoes	✔	✔	✔
2 pairs warm, non-cotton socks	✔	✔	
Non-cotton scarf/buff/balaclava	✔	✔	
2 pairs of warm mittens	✔	✔	
Insulated/water-resistant boots **OR** full shoes/hikers		✔	
Warm jacket & pants (depending on weather)		✔	
Rain jacket and rain pants			✔
Sweater		✔	✔
Hat with a brim			✔
Full shoes/hikers (no sandals/open-toe shoes)			✔
Sunscreen			✔

Note: We are outside for significant portions of our programs, but it is not like a sports program where we are taking part in high-intensity physical activities all day. Throughout the day there are games and activities that require running, hills that require climbing, and backpacks that require carrying. We don't typically do extended hikes with younger kids.

What if I don't have access to the best outdoor gear for my child? If you're unable to get the gear your child will need for program, please let us know. We may be able to lend certain items out for them to use during program. Contact us as soon as you can if this is a barrier for you.

Core Routines & Vocabulary

Our focus on land-based learning, nature mentorship, and sensory awareness informs the types of activities and routines we plan with our groups. There may be some new lingo that your child is using when they come home from program, so we've listed some of the key terms you might want to know a little more about:

Sit Spots

Imagine being able to find a spot in the forest (within eyesight of the leaders) that feels like your own special place. Every day you get to go there to sit quietly for some time (5, 10, 20+ minutes) and watch the environment around you change and move. You might be listening for bird calls, drawing a special plant in your nature journal, or simply sitting and letting your awareness open up when other distractions are removed. When you're called back to the group, you get to share something amazing you noticed while you were visiting your spot. Doing this over and over again allows you to get to know one place really well, and to process everything that's happened that day. It also allows quiet time to let the birds and animals get used to your presence. We could go on, but that's a Sit Spot in a nutshell!

Forest Names & Medallions

Like many people, maybe you have a plant or animal (or fungus, place, natural phenomenon, etc.) that you feel connected to in some way. In our longer programs, you'll be encouraged to think deeply about what in the natural world you connect with and why. When you're ready, you'll announce your Nature Name to the group and design a medallion (round piece of wood that will hang around your neck each day) to show off your Name to the group. (So if your child sees us outside of program and calls out, "Hi Yarrow! Hi Rabbit!" and we say "Hey Penguin!" or "Hey Tree Master!", you'll know why).

Sensory Awareness (Owl Eyes, Deer Ears)

Sensory awareness is the ability to receive finely tuned input from each of our five senses (and a whole range of others!). If you spend a lot of time in a city environment, your senses have probably been dulled down as certain survival-based pressures are removed. It's not true for everyone, but it may be true for you. Using animals as our guides, we will encourage you to develop your senses, and challenge and test your awareness through activities like Owl Eyes (a group of challenges that use our peripheral vision) and Deer Ears (games and activities that test our sense of hearing, often by using blindfolds to dampen our, typically, dominant sense of sight).

Stalking & Silent "Fox" Walking

Can you walk silently in the woods? Most of us think we can, but it's seldom true. Try sneaking up on someone in the woods to see for yourself. Fox Walking is the name we

give to the practice of walking in silence through the forest, and it's an enjoyable challenge. Walking silently allows you to see more undisturbed wildlife and to be hyper aware of the land you're walking on. There are lots of game we use to practice this skill, and now you'll know what you kid means when they say they were practicing their Fox Walk.

Bird Language

Have you ever heard a bird and wondered what they're saying? Bird Language teachings allow us to notice the different calls that birds make for different reasons. If you know the four types of 'baseline' calls (adolescent begging calls, courtship calls or songs, companion calls, and territorial calls) that make up a typical forest soundscape, then you'll notice when their fifth call (an alarm call) is used. Once you start to notice alarm calls, you'll be 'in' on the forest signals letting you know that something of importance is going on. Maybe some chickadees found an owl, or a raven has noticed a fox walking by. If we listen to the birds, it's more likely that we'll see the owl and the fox.

Wildcrafting/Medicinal & Edible Plants

Imagine knowing which plants make medicine or which ones are edible. Maybe you know lots already (some of our kids certainly do), but it seems that there's always more to know. In certain programs and in certain seasons, there are different plants available to work with as materials (for weaving or other crafts), as medicine (like salves or teas), and as food (like berries or leaves). We follow a careful routine of having kids prove their ability to identify plants before ever consuming them, and we encourage in-depth curiosity about the special properties of many plants.

Friction Fires/Bow Drills

Have you ever tried to make fire by "rubbing two sticks together"? While that's a pretty simplified description, it is possible (with the right tools and the right form). Your child may practice using a Bow Drill in our programs (a fire kit that includes a fire bow, a spindle, a fire board, a hand-hold, and a fire bundle or nest) to try and create a flame using only natural materials and perseverance. On City property, we won't be sustaining fires by building them up, but, if your child is very dedicated and focused, they may experience the joy of watching their hard-earned ember blossoming into a flame right before their eyes. Staff will always be present when this skill is being practiced.

Exploratory Play

Do you ever just want some free time to explore the forest? We do too. It's crucial for kids to have time to let their imagination run wild, and that's why we have exploratory play time almost every day of program. Kids may create their own games, check out guidebooks, sculpt with snow, practice skills for the day, or have an extended Sit Spot. All of it is valuable time spent in nature.

Opening & Closing Circle + Story of the Day

You want to feel confident in what is going on for the day, heard when you share something significant that was part of your 'story' for the day, and sent off feeling great about returning the next day. That's why we open and close with group circles, and also allow participants to share their experiences in different ways throughout our programs. Story of the Day allows participants to integrate their learning in different ways, and to share their insights and discoveries with the group so that we can all deepen our understanding and curiosity.

Why does understanding these routines matter?
When the families are able to connect with the child about their experiences on the land, the child is able to share more fully. Hopefully this information allows you to better understand some of the terminology they may be coming home with. Keep the conversation going at home, and watch your youngster flourish (they may even teach you a thing or two)!

Supporting Risky Play

"Bumps and scrapes are the vivid feedback you need to improve your judgement. Thankfully, you'll get better, and your brain will have developed from the experience."
- Build Your Brain

Many of the activities that make up our programs have an element of risk. You could say the same about many of our everyday activities in the Yukon. We live in a beautiful part of the world, and the desire to explore and enjoy it is a big part of why people choose to live here. We believe that children who start developing their sense of risk awareness as young people are better equipped to make better choices about risk management as they grow older.

For this reason, our programs are as "safe as necessary", rather than as 'safe as possible". This means that we engage in activities with certain levels of risk (e.g. running through the forest on uneven ground, carving, or spending time outdoors in the winter, etc.), and we encourage our participants to consider their roles in managing risk while outdoors. When participants are given the correct amount of autonomy to help make decisions, it leaves room for their brains to develop. **Participants learn to take responsibility for their part in risk management.**

Rivers to Ridges supports risky play. This means that we are:

- always assessing level of risk and, when the level of risk is too high, mitigating the risk to an appropriate level (rather than remove/avoid the risk every time)
- supporting participants in becoming aware of and managing risk

- providing programs that are “as safe as necessary” rather than “as safe as possible’

Hazard: Something that can cause surprise and/or injury (e.g broken glass in the forest, a broken tree limb hanging in the tree canopy, or a patch of ice on the hill). These are things staff members will aim to remove from play space, as they do not add to children’s learning or growth.

Risk: An activity with the possibility of physical injury (e.g. tree climbing, hiking near a cliff, playing at speed, rough and tumble play, etc.) It is imperative that we don’t remove risk, since risk taking is crucial for healthy development. Instead, we coach children on how to navigate their risk taking in a safer way.

Pick Up & Drop Off

What time do I drop off/pick up my kid?
Our Summer Camps start at 9:00 am and run until 4:00 pm.

Drop off is from 8:45 - 9:00 am.
Pick-up is from 4:00 - 4:15 pm.

We appreciate you being on time so that the program can run smoothly.

Where do I drop my kids off?
Our Summer Camps currently run out of Grey Mountain Primary School, located in Riverdale at the intersection of Alsek Rd. and Lewes Blvd. See the image below for where to park and where to drop off your child. **Note:** During Sign Out/Pick Up time, we may be in with the group in the forest by the edge of the school playground.

Locations for non-Summer Camp programs will be shared with families.

A Day Within Our Programs

What if my child can’t participate in one of the scheduled activities?
Please let us know at least one day in advance if your child is unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities of the program.

I have to pick up my child early. Where will I find you?
We may be back in the forest around Hidden Lakes, on a hike with an Elder, or on the water canoeing, so please let us know at least one day in advance so that we can make a plan for you and your child.

Sample Day Schedule

Here's a little sneak peek of what a day at camp could look like:

8:45 - 9:00	**Participant Drop-off/Sign-in** Morning Activities & Exploration	12:00 - 1:00	**Lunch** Exploration/Story Sharing
9:00 - 9:15	Opening Circle & Song	1:00 - 2:00	Land-based activity with visiting Elder
9:15 - 9:30	**Snack & Story** Bird Language Skit Performances	2:00 - 2:10	**Snack & Story**
9:30 - 10:00	Wandering Activity to Home Base: Bird Sign Scavenger Hunt	2:10 - 3:10	Activity: Owl Eyes + Wildlife Obstacle Course
10:00 - 12:00	Exploratory Play & Whole Group Forest Game	3:10 - 4:00	Sit Spots Story of the Day & Closing Circle
		4:00 - 4:15	Outdoor Game/ Exploration **Participant Pick-up/Sign-out**

Family Inclusivity and Celebration

Families are an integral part of programs. When possible, we look forward to welcoming you to our family celebrations. Often gatherings will be held routinely on the final Friday of the program, as a way to bring our community together and to celebrate the learning! Details will be shared closer to celebration time.

Elders, Knowledge Holders, Visitors & Guests

We have a number of Elders and Knowledge Holders, guests and visitors that enrich our programs by coming to share their knowledge, skills and perspectives. These guests are accompanied by Rivers to Ridges staff during the duration of their time with us, and are not a substitute for program leaders.

Inclusion & Support Workers

We can accommodate inclusion works and aim to make our programs as accessible as possible. It is important to note that we are outside for the majority of all programs, and our staff are not able to provide one-on-one support for any of our participants. If you would like to talk further about your child's specific needs, please email us at info@riverstoridges.org.

If you are sending an inclusion worker with your child, they must:

- Be 16 years of age or older
- Provide a copy of their current Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening prior to the start of program

- Sign and submit the Inclusion Worker Release Form, at least one week prior to your child's start date
- Attend a meeting with Rivers to Ridges staff prior to the start of your child's program

Nut-free, Healthy Food & Drinks

We have 2 scheduled snack times and 1 time slot for lunch. We are active and outdoors for the majority of our programs, and encourage children to eat/drink when they are feeling irritable, fatigued or cold. You know your children best, so please prepare them for an active day (especially during cold weather). A full water bottle and/or thermos is encouraged (depending on weather).

NOTE: We aim to be a nut-free program! Please pack nut-free food and snacks for your child!

Allergies & Health Conditions

You are required to provide our programs with a list of your child's allergies, as well as a list of any existing health conditions/diagnoses that are necessary for the staff to be aware of (i.e., diabetes, asthma, ill-functioning organs, etc.), when registering your child. It is your responsibility to keep program leaders up to date with any changes in your child's medical conditions/diagnosis, and to provide the program with copies of on-going medical evaluations.

If necessary, program leaders will meet with you to develop a 'Care Plan' for your child based upon his or her specific health care needs, and the 'Care Plan' will be shared with all relevant program leaders to protect confidentiality.

A note from your child's physician indicating the symptoms to be aware of, as well as the appropriate first aid protocol to follow, is also required if your child has an existing medical condition/diagnosis and/or life-threatening allergies. A list of all children's allergies, as well as the appropriate first aid protocol to follow, will be available for all relevant program leaders

If your child suffers from severe allergies (e.g. anaphylaxis), you are required to supply the program staff with an EpiPen and/or Ana-Kit (whichever your child's physician recommends). A "Permission to Administer Medication" form must be filled-out and signed by yourself and your physician BEFORE your child begins attending the program.

Illness

While we are sensitive to a family's needs, if your child is not well enough to participate in all program activities, including outdoor play, then we request that your child does not

attend the program that day. You will need to keep your child at home or make alternative arrangements, if your child:

- has a communicable disease
- has a fever of more than 38.0 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- is vomiting or has diarrhea
- has an infection or undiagnosed illness

Please note that if your child has a communicable disease, you are required to notify staff immediately and the Program Coordinator will notify other families and Yukon Health and Social Services. Please be assured that your child's identity will be kept confidential.

Your child may return to the program after 24 hours of the last symptom (fever, diarrhea, vomiting etc.) or with permission from a doctor (Doctor's note is required).

If your child becomes ill or injured during the day, we will contact you or your emergency contact/s to pick-up your child.

Head Lice

Please keep your child(ren) at home if they have evidence of head lice. In the event that they do, please communicate this with program leaders so they can notify all families and to check their own child(ren) for head lice. Please be assured that your child's identity will be kept confidential.

Reportable Incidents

What is a Reportable Incident?

There are incidents involving children that require reporting to parents and some may also have to be reported to other agencies. Below are examples of reportable incidents, which are not limited to what is listed. Incidents are to be reported to the parents, and only to Child Care Services (CCS) and other agencies where indicated.

AGGRESSIVE/UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR Aggressive/unusual behaviour on the part of a child in care towards another child or other persons, or an unusual behaviour by a child.	MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT Where there is any MVA during transit of a child while under the care and supervision of the program.
DISRUPTION OF SERVICE Any disruption of services which affects the delivery of care provided to children in the program (e.g. fire, flood, labour actions).	SUICIDE Reportable to CCS and other appropriate agencies (RCMP, Social Services, Coroner) when a child in care has taken his/her own life.
EMOTIONAL/PHYSICAL/SEXUAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT Any concerns are to be reported to the Social	SUICIDE ATTEMPT

Services Agency or to the RCMP.	Reportable to CCS and other agencies as mentioned above when a child in care attempts to take his/her own life.
MEDICATION ERROR Where the incorrect medication is given to the child. Reporting to the Child Care Services Unit is required only when a child in care requires emergency care by a physician or transfer to a hospital.	UNEXPECTED ILLNESS Any unexpected illness involving a child in care requiring transfer to hospital. The report is to be copied to Child Care Services.
MISSING/WANDERING CHILD A child in care who goes missing.	UNEXPECTED DEATH Any unforeseen death of a child in care.
POISONING Ingestion of a poison by a child in care.	ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT Any illness or accident requiring a Doctor's care.

First Aid & Minor Injuries

All program leaders (including subs) have valid first aid certification. The program has multiple first aid kits and are checked each week to ensure they are fully stocked. In the case of minor injuries, such as bumps, bruises, scrapes and falls, first aid will be administered and your child will be comforted until he or she is ready to resume play. Leaders will communicate all minor injuries with families during pick-up.

Medical Emergency

In the case of major injuries, first aid will be administered, your child will be comforted, and you will be notified via telephone of the incident. If the program leaders believe it is necessary, they will contact you or your emergency contacts to come get your child and take him or her to the doctor for consultation. Additionally, if leaders are unsure of the severity of the injury, they will use their discretion to call an ambulance for immediate emergency assistance and you will be notified immediately and asked to meet your child at the hospital.

Administering Medication

When it is necessary to administer medication to your child, specific procedures will be followed:

- You must fill-in the "Permission to Administer Medication" form. It is important that you complete this form, including date and signature, before medication can be administered.
- Only prescription medication will be administered. It must be in its original bottle, and will only be given to your child in the dosage and duration stated on the bottle's label.
- The medication will be stored in a locked container and placed out of the children's reach.

- The administering staff member will initial your child's medication sheet every time the medication is administered.
- Once the medication sheet has expired and/or the medication no longer needs to be administered, the sheet will be attached to your child's personal file.

Suspected Child Abuse

Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect is required in the Yukon Child Care Act (Section 38(1), 38(2)). When your child is in our program we have a responsibility as child care providers to report any suspected child abuse. We do not need to prove that abuse or neglect has taken place, only that there is a suspicion. Yukon Family and Children's Services will do any investigation that is necessary.

For more information see Yukon Family and Children's Services guidelines at www.hss.gov.yk.ca/childabuse.php.

Policies & Procedures

Children's Records

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent/guardian to keep all children's records up to date and inform program staff of any changes regarding information in the Child Participant Profile form.

All written information that is confidential will be stored in the child's file and in a secure place. No information will be released about a child or family without the written consent of the enrolling parent or legal guardian. Exceptions include: situations related to child protection or when the information is subpoenaed by the court.

Cancellation Policy for Parents & Guardians

Rivers to Ridges designs and implements programs based on enrollment. We invest in program planning, equipment and other costs before the program begins. These expenses cannot be recovered in the event of a cancellation. When considering a cancellation, please be aware and respectful of our policies and commitment to facilitating quality programs.

Refund Policy

A full refund (less $50 non-refundable deposit) will be issued to any cancellation made during the notice period of 28 calendar days or more prior to the start date of the program. Full refunds (including $50 deposit) will be offered for a cancellation within 48 hours of registering.

Program Cancellation

Rivers to Ridges reserves the right to cancel programs that have low registration. In this event, a transfer or full refund will be provided (less processing fees).

Wait Lists

In past years we've had a wait list for most programs. When a spot becomes available, we will reach out to the next eligible family.

Late Pick-Up

If a parent/guardian is late to pick up their child (after 4:15 pm), a late fee charge of $25 may be recorded and invoiced. After 30 minutes (4:45 pm +), an additional $25 may be charged. Parents/ guardians will be required to pay for any accumulated late fees, or services/service may be suspended for their child.

We apologize in advance for any inconvenience and encourage parents/guardians to try and make special arrangements if they know they will be unable to pick up their child on time.

Authorized Pick-Ups

We take the safety of our program participants very seriously. Only those people authorized by you in the “Person(s) authorized to pick-up” section of the Child Participant Profile form are permitted to pick-up your child from the program. In emergency situations, when neither you nor one of your authorized pick-up persons can come to get your child, you may authorize via telephone a person to pick-up your child. In this instance, the staff will need to know the full name of the individual and a description of the person’s physical appearance. When the person arrives to pick-up your child, he or she will be asked for photo identification. Additionally, if leaders have not met parents yet, photo identification will be required to pick-up your child.

Custody & Access

The program expects that all information provided by the enrolling parent/legal guardian is accurate. If a family has a custody agreement or court order, a current copy of the legal document must be placed in the child's file. The staff will only follow the access or pick up instructions of the enrolling parent/legal guardian unless otherwise instructed by a court order.

When custody has not been legally determined and a conflict between the parents is evident, we will be unable to care for your child unless the following takes place:

- Both parents are required to sign a written agreement authorizing pick up and access information about your child.

Child Not Picked Up

If a child is not picked-up by the end of camp and if staff are unable to reach the parent/legal guardian or an emergency contact listed on the Child Participant Profile

Form within 30 minutes of the program's closing time, Yukon Family and Children's Services will be contacted for assistance.

Release of Child without Adult Supervision

In order for your child to leave the program on their own, the following is required:

- the child must be a minimum of 10 years old
- parents provide written consent to the Program Coordinator that their child has permission to sign themselves out of the program
- the child's name is listed in the "Authorized to pick-up" section of the Child Participant Profile form

Emergency Procedures

Fire Emergency Procedure

In the event of a fire indoors, program leaders will line the children up and exit the building in a calm and safe manner. Program leaders will lead the group to the muster location at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and take attendance. Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately.

Earthquake Emergency Procedure

In the event of an earthquake, program leaders and children will immediately find cover (i.e. doorway, chair, table, or open outdoor area). Program leaders will count down from 60 seconds or determine if the shaking has stopped and, if inside, it is safe to exit the building. Program leaders will round up the group in a calm and safe manner. Program leaders will lead the group to the muster location at the Grey Mountain Parking Lot. Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately.

Missing Person Procedure

In the event of a missing child, the following outlines the procedure staff will follow:

1. Staff will ask the other children if they have seen the missing person.
2. If it is determined that the person is missing from the group, one staff will keep the rest of the children engaged and the other staff will sweep the area/building/facility and ask for other staff (if available) to assist with this.
3. If the missing person is not found within 10 minutes, staff will call the Program Coordinator to notify them of the situation.
4. The staff will then call the RCMP to report the missing person and the Program Coordinator will contact the parents/guardians or emergency contacts.
5. The Program Coordinator will go on-site to support the program leaders.

6. When RCMP arrives at the scene, staff will provide them with detailed information about the child and the situation (Child Participant Profile form, photo, time and location of the missing person last seen, etc.)
7. Once the child is found the Program Coordinator will contact the parents/guardians or emergency contacts to let them know.
8. Program leaders will complete a detailed incident report.
9. Program leaders will check-in with the family and child the next day to ensure everything is okay.
10. The Program Coordinator and the program leaders will have a team meeting to discuss and review what happened and implement further strategies that will minimize the risk of a missing person.

Open Door Policy

Registered Families

You are welcome, and encouraged, to drop into the program at any time throughout the day. The program leaders ask that you be mindful of the routines of the day, and to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner (i.e. adhering to the outdoor and indoor rules of the program and remembering that during activities the staff's focus is on the children – not on conversing with you to the point that it interferes with the safety and supervision of the children).

Family Celebration

Oftentimes, our programs end with a family celebration for any family members who would like to take part. For Summer Camp, we usually gather on the last day of program at about 3:00/3:30 and share a snack, Sit Spots and a Closing Ceremony with families. Details will be communicated with families during the start of the program week.

Elders, Visitors & Guests

We have a number of Elders, guests and visitors that enrich our programs by coming to share their knowledge, skills and perspectives. These guests are accompanied by Rivers to Ridges staff during the duration of their time with us, and are not a substitute for program leaders.

Electronics, Toys & Valuables from Home

The policy of our programs is that NO ELECTRONICS, TOYS/VALUABLES are brought into the program from the children's homes. This includes phones, music devices, money, toys, special items and valuables, etc.

Photos & Videos

Photographs and video footage of your child may be displayed online through the Rivers to Ridges Facebook page and online at www.riverstoridges.org.

Photo consent is required, and if you do not sign and date the Media Release form then your child will NOT be photographed or video recorded in the program.

Families

If a parent/guardian, authorized pick-up, family member is visiting the program or letting their child(ren) continue to play for a few more minutes when picking-up we ask that if you want to take pictures of your child you may do so but please do NOT take any pictures of other children in program.

Social Media

To ensure the safety and well-being of participants in the program, staff leaders are NOT permitted to post photos or videos of children in the program to personal social media websites. These sites include but are not limited to the following: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Google Plus.

Guiding Child Behaviours

Guidance

Your child is participating in a program that is challenging, active and fun. We recognize that a successful program requires everyone's cooperation to ensure positive social interactions. In order to ensure a safe and fun program for your child, the Rivers to Ridges Staff will carry out a set of guidelines that promote inclusion and respect. The staff is committed to working with your child to ensure both positive play experiences and interactions. A strong emphasis will be placed on promoting risk management in an environment free of bullying and violence.

Families can expect staff to:

- Supervise children responsibly
- Demonstrate appropriate, respectful behaviours at all times
- Encourage children to understand and follow rules and positive expectations
- Promote the development of positive social skills including self-esteem, self-control and risk management skills.

The staff will strive to:

- establish clear, consistent and simple expectations and implement appropriate consequences, if required
- discourage aggressive play and assist children to learn and practice resolving conflict in non- violent ways
- acknowledge children's feelings and seek their input offer choices that are developmentally appropriate
- provide verbal direction and redirection as the main way of guiding children.

Expectations

The following set of expectations will be carried out under the direction of Rivers to Ridges staff to ensure the program is both enjoyable and as safe as possible for every child. Please review these expectations with your child.

All participants have the responsibility to:

- Follow and respect the program rules.
- Treat others with respect at all times.
- Include others and play fairly.
- Be co-operative and willing to participate.
- Use equipment safely and appropriately.
- Use language that is positive, respectful and appropriate.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Be responsible for your actions.

Unacceptable behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Physical or verbal abuse to staff and other participants
- Endangering oneself by leaving the program location without permission or supervision
- Harassment, bullying, teasing
- Destruction of property/vandalism
- Theft and possession of stolen property

Re-Directing Behaviours

When a child's behaviour is inappropriate and interferes with the safety or rights of others, the following are guidelines to be followed:

1. A verbal reminder to the child, a discussion as to why the behaviour is inappropriate, and a discussion on what the child can do differently next time. If the behaviour is repeated:

2. A second verbal reminder and another discussion will occur. The child and staff member will work collaboratively to resolve the behaviour and determine a fair consequence if the behaviour is repeated. The child will be re-directed to another activity for a period of time. The behaviour will be documented and the parent will be informed of the behaviour. If the behaviour is repeated:

3. A discussion with the parent/guardians will take place to establish a team support network for the child in their efforts to change their behaviour. If the behaviour does not change:

4. Parent/guardians will be consulted as to whether or not outside resources may be sought to work with the child.

As a last resort, if the staff team determines that the behaviour is consistently and severely disruptive, and that the welfare of other children and program leaders is seriously jeopardized, the parents will be required to pick up the child.

Please note that there is zero tolerance for violent, physical or threatening actions. An immediate incident report will be issued and parents may be required to pick up the child from the program. Rivers to Ridges reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers the safety of themselves, others, or if inappropriate behavior does not stop. No refunds will be issued.

Bullying

Rivers to Ridges recognizes that one of the key ways to create a safe space for children is to develop a bully-free environment.

What is bullying?
Generally, bullying involves a person who has a strong need to dominate others and who uses aggression as a means of resolving conflict.

The main types of bullying behaviour are:
Physical: This form of aggression is action-oriented and may involve some of the following behaviours - pushing, shoving, kicking or hitting. Other types of physical bullying involve: stealing, use of a weapon, property damage (e.g., breaking a child's fort or snow sculpture), or humiliating acts (e.g., pulling down a child's pants).

Verbal: Some examples of verbal bullying are (e.g. name calling, insults, racial comments, teasing, taunting or any verbal threat of violence).

Social: This type of bullying involves trying to cut the person being bullied off from social connections. Through threats, hurtful gossip, or public humiliation (e.g., revealing personal information), the bully convinces his/her peers to exclude or reject their victim. Bullying in its most extreme form can lead to violent situations or events.

Other FAQs

My child is 5 turning 6 later this year, can she/he join the program for children ages 6-9?
As much as we'd like to include everyone in every program, we will be sticking to our age ranges so that we can plan great tailored programs, and also leave space for parents with kids in that age range to access the programs. We are continuing to expand and experiment with different programs for different ages, so join our mailing list at www.riverstoridges.org and stay tuned!

Where can I get more information about your programs?

Please visit www.riverstoridges.org or on Facebook at Rivers to Ridges to get a better sense of our programs through photos and reviews.

Appendix 1

Waiver of Liability

This agreement releases Rivers to Ridges Inc. ("Rivers to Ridges") and all of its employees, directors and agents (together the "Releasees") from any causes of action whatsoever that may occur while my child participates in the programming of Rivers to Ridges, including any damages relating to injuries or death and including any such damages caused by the negligence of the Releasees. For clarity, this agreement releases Rivers to Ridges from all liability relating to injuries or death that may occur while participating in Rivers to Ridges programs. By signing this agreement, I agree to hold Rivers to Ridges entirely free from any liability, including financial responsibility for injuries or death incurred, regardless of whether injuries or death are caused by negligence.

Negligence: the failure to take proper care in doing something or the failure to use reasonable care, resulting in damage or injury to another. Example: Negligence in a Rivers to Ridges program could take form in the inability to keep all members of the class together while moving through the outdoors.

I also acknowledge the risks involved in outdoor programs. These include but are not limited to:

- running through the forest off-trail,
- using trails that are unmaintained, icy, slippery and uneven,
- carrying heavy logs, rocks or other found objects,
- participating in activities in cold or wet weather,
- walking blindfolded and/or barefoot,
- instructional fire-making,,
- inadvertent animal encounters (e.g. bears, cougars, etc.),
- wandering solo in the forest (within adult supervision),
- ascending steep forested slopes,
- climbing small trees,
- eating wild plants, and
- being alone for a sit spot (within view of an adult) for up to 30 minutes.

_____ Initial here	I have read through the above activities, I understand what they mean, and I agree to allow my child to participate willingly.

I swear that my child is participating voluntarily, and that all risks have been made clear to me as a parent/guardian. Additionally, my child does not have any conditions that will

increase the likelihood of them experiencing injuries or death while engaging in this program.

By signing below I forfeit all rights to bring a suit against Rivers to Ridges for any reason. In return, my child will receive instruction and participation in these outdoor programs. I will also make every effort to ensure my child obeys safety precautions as listed in writing and as explained to them verbally.

Please take all the time you need to read through it and let our staff know if you have any questions.

Parent/Guardian Consent (participant is under 18 years old)

I, _____
(parent/guardian printed name), fully understand & agree to the above terms on behalf of my child _____ (printed child's name).

_____ _____
Parent/guardian signature Date

Media Release Form

Our staff may photograph, video and/or audio record programs and special events to catch participants in action. If you or your child object to our taking and/or using your photograph, please let us know.

I _____ (print name of parent/guardian or participant over 18 years old) grant to Rivers to Ridges, its representatives and employees, the right to take photo, video and/or audio recordings of, _____ (print participant's name), in connection with Rivers to Ridges programs. I authorize Rivers to Ridges, its assigns and transferees to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically. I also authorize Rivers to Ridges, and their respective agents to use the media for educational, organizational, and program or series publicity purposes. I further consent to any reproduction, copyright, exhibition, broadcast and/or distribution of the Media in whole or in part, without limitation or compensation.

I agree that Rivers to Ridges may use such photos, video and audio recordings of _____ (print participant's name) with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including for such purposes as publicity, promotional posters, illustration, social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and other forms of advertising and web content (such as web pages). This media may be

released to third parties for connected promotional purposes (e.g. Arctic Inspiration Prize, YFWET, Earth Day Canada, CoalitionWILD, Forest School Canada, etc.).

I understand that my own or my child's participation in Rivers to Ridges confers upon me no rights to use, ownership or copyright of the whole or part of any materials created as part of the process of the programs.

I have read and understand the above:

_____ _____

Date Signature of parent/legal guardian or participant over 18 years old

Updated: Winter 2021