

Foley Mountain Winter Day Camp Handbook

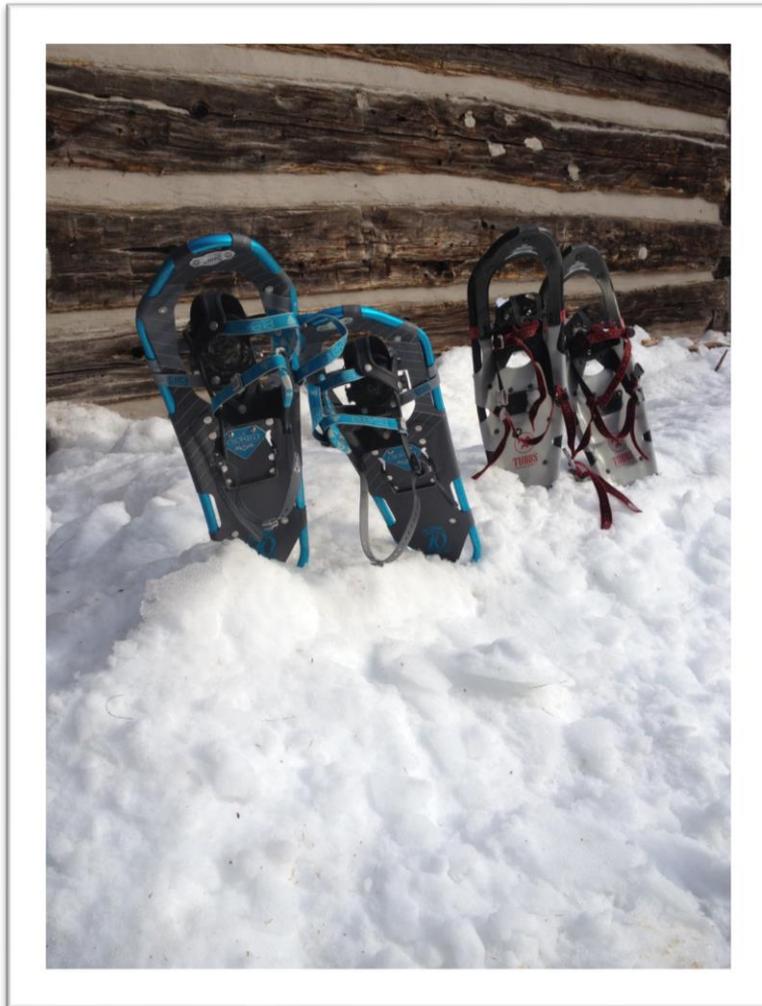


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **2**

WHAT IS NATURE DAY CAMP AT FOLEY MOUNTAIN? **2**

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES **2**

- Emergency Procedures and First Aid
- Risk Management
- Safety in the Forest
- Winter Adventurers Camp Staff: Participant Ratios
- Foley Mountain Education Staff Responsibilities
- Behaviour Guidelines
- How to be Prepared for Winter Adventure: Supply List
- Sunscreen and Bug Spray Policy
- Lost Items Policy
- Drop-Off and Pick-Up Time, Location and Authorization
- Inclement Weather Policy/Closure Policy
- Extreme Weather Policy

COMMUNICATION **9**

- General Communication
- Emergency Communication

*** For any additional information not covered in this handbook, please consult the Foley Mountain Nature Day Camp Handbook or consult with staff ***

INTRODUCTION

The following handbook provides an overall guideline to our winter day camp program to ensure that you and your child get the most fun and excitement possible from the experience. Please read this information carefully and share important details with your child to ensure that they understand what the instructors expect from campers and what items your child should bring along with them.

WHAT IS WINTER ADVENTURERS DAY CAMP?

The Winter Adventurers Day Camp is a chance for children aged 6-12 to get outside, explore, be active, and have fun in the forest! The camp is run by qualified and experienced outdoor educators who are certified teachers. Activities will include but not be limited to snowshoeing, exploring the natural world, fire and shelter building, cooking over a fire, and crafts. We will be spending most of the day outside and we cannot stress enough how important it is for your child to be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions.

- Program fees
 - o \$45/child, \$40 for additional children in the same family
- Regular Hours
 - o 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Silversides Outdoor Learning Centre located in the Group Camping Area (182 Foley Mountain Lane) large log barn located past Spy Rock on the left, look for the “Group Camp” sign)
- Facilities
 - o Silversides Outdoor Learning Centre is a rustic facility that has a large woodstove but is not as warm as a standard building. There are heated washrooms available. PLEASE PREPARE YOUR CAMPER ACCORDINGLY.
- Contact Information
 - o Site Phone Number – 613-273-3255. In the case of an emergency, if someone cannot be immediately reached at this number, please phone 613-539-8048.
 - o Email – rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Procedures and First Aid

Foley Mountain has emergency procedures with which all educators and volunteers are familiar. Procedures, including emergency phone numbers, are carried by educators at all times in the emergency/first aid backpack.

Risk Management

Definition: Risk - the experience and management of it - is an inherent and an integral part of outdoor education, and indeed of healthy child development. Foley Mountain educators and volunteers endeavour to co-assess and co-manage risk with participants. We believe this to be an essential skill for children to acquire and for adults to support. By embracing physical, emotional, and social risk taking we provide an environment for children where they feel in control, capable and trusted to make decisions for themselves.

Risk Assessment

Foley Mountain staff implement dynamic risk assessments every day, based on need, as we visit various natural sites on the property and determine suitability of the site for the goals of the lesson and safety of the children. The following risk assessments are conducted:

- seasonal risk assessments
- activity or experience risk assessments
- daily risk assessments

Activities

When we are assessing risks in an area or related to an activity, we are always balancing the benefits with the risks, as we guide the children toward safe behaviour in the forest. During our programs, children may partake in perceived 'risky' activities including, but are not limited to:

- Hiking off trail
- Playing with sticks
- Throwing rocks
- Climbing trees and rocky outcrops
- Digging
- Tasting edible plants
- Making and cooking over a fire
- Exploring around a body of water
- Using tools to build, create and explore
- Building shelters

Safety in the Forest

Teachers and volunteers are provided with safety training, policies, and procedures. These measures create an environment and culture that takes safety seriously and uses a proactive approach to Risk Management. Students and teachers actively play a role in personal and group safety.

Foley Mountain Winter Day Camp Handbook

Our safety principles include:

- Constantly assess risk as conditions change (dynamic risk assessment)
- Set up a safe space with boundaries and safety guidelines
- Observe the children's interactions with each other and with nature
- Spot the children during more challenging physical activity
- Gently guide the children to safer activities if required
- Head counts are carried out throughout the day, especially before and after transitions to different sites
- Two-way communication will be maintained by teachers and supervisory staff by way of cell phones
- In depth seasonal trail checks- looking for dangerous conditions
- Weather and environmental safety including- teaching students about hydration, application of sunscreen and insect repellent as seasonally appropriate, changing of wet clothes, staying warm or cool as is seasonally appropriate
- Educators conduct regular program assessment surveys
- Site Supervisor conducts monthly site and facilities inspections
- Educating students on safe water ways practices; such as safety equipment needed, and guidelines for safe water way play

If we feel that the children's play is becoming dangerous, we will redirect the children and remind them that it is important to stay safe outdoors. If your child gets a bump, scratch, or a bruise, we will provide necessary first aid and let you know at the end of the session.

Some of the risks inherent to Winter Adventurers Day Camp and outdoor play in general include, but are not limited to:

- Injuries from executing strenuous and demanding physical activities, possibly on uneven ground in the forest
- Injuries from failing to properly use tools, such as carving knives
- Injuries resulting from matches or fire
- Miscellaneous health problems relating to environmental factors such as the cold, wind, sun
- Contracting poison ivy
- The presence of wild animals and ticks (for ticks – when temperatures are above 4 degrees C)
- Inclement weather

Winter Adventurers Camp Staff : Participant Ratios

The ratio of unaccompanied school-aged children to Foley Mountain educator/volunteer is 10:1.

If your child requires one-on-one support in the classroom, with the help of an EA or support staff, then parents/guardian will be responsible for providing this support during Foley Mountain programs, at their own expense. We are unable to provide 1:1 child to educator ratios and we want every child to have the same opportunities and experiences available to them.

Foley Mountain Education Staff Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a Foley Mountain educator are wide-ranging and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ensuring the physical safety of participants by co-assessing and co-managing risk with them on an ongoing basis such that all participants feel connected to and comfortable in the natural world
- considering the social and emotional safety of participants, and endeavouring to foster a caring and respectful community so that the risk taking and question posing necessary for deep, inquiry-based learning can occur
- modeling care and respect for the natural world, as well as safe use of the tools and supplies
- interacting with and closely observing students during activities in order to support children in their learning

Behaviour Guidelines

Our goal is to ensure that Winter Adventurers day camp is a positive experience for all our participants. Our staff are trained to deal with mild to moderate behaviour issues as they arise. If your child is severely misbehaving or is verbally or physically abusing another camper or instructor, staff reserve the right to expel or suspend a child from the program should their behaviour be deemed unsafe for themselves or others. In this event, a phone call home to parents/guardians will be made, the child will be asked to leave the program immediately and no refund will be issued. This is only used in extreme circumstances when other children and instructors' safety is in danger. Please inform staff ahead of time if your child has any special needs or considerations so that we can make your child's school experience a positive one.

Here are our Behaviour Principles:

- No Violence
- Respect all living things
- Respect diversity
- Respect all people – yourself, your peers, your educators
- Respect the learning environment
- Use things with care
- Enjoy learning
- Help others learn
- Be prepared

How To Be Prepared for Winter Adventure: Supply List

The key to having a great time outdoors in the winter is to dress the part! To stay warm, it is important to dress in several light layers to allow for any sweat and moisture to be wicked away from the body. One key is to try and avoid wearing lots of cotton. It traps moisture close to the body and can make you cold. Here are some suggestions for layering:

- Inner layer – This is the layer that is closest to the skin and meant to remove moisture away from your body. Long johns and a long-sleeved undershirt that are made from a synthetic material (polypro, think “under armor” that hockey players wear), wool or a wool/synthetic blend. No fancy “base layer” in your collection? Try synthetic pajamas!
- Middle layer – This is for insulating. Look for wool, fleece, or a combination of materials.
- Outer layer – Ideally wind proof and water resistant (or waterproof if possible) jacket and snow pants
- Hat and waterproof or water-resistant mitts or gloves (mitts keep your hands warmer), neck tube (scarves should be avoided)
- Warm wool socks, boots that are insulated and waterproof and not too small so the blood can circulate to the toes to stay warm

Check out this great video on dressing for winter play:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McUKYXGLHfs>

Things to bring to camp:

Children need to bring well-labeled bags and gear including the following items:

- Winter jacket and snow pants, sweater
- Warm toque, mitts or gloves, scarf or neck tube plus extras in case things get wet
- Long johns and extra layers
- Extra change of clothes (including underwear and socks)
- A litter-less lunch with no nut products please. There will NOT be access to a microwave or refrigerator.
- Lots of snacks as children will be quite active throughout the day.
- Lots of drinks or a refillable water bottle to ensure that campers do not become dehydrated. Water will be available for refills.

Things not to bring to camp!

- Gum or candy
- Electronics (including: Video games, MP3 players, iPods, cellphones, etc.)
- Money
- Special things like toys that could get lost or broken

Campers should wear clothes that can get soiled – clothes damaged at camp are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian and will not be replaced or repaired by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

Lost Items

Foley Mountain Nature Day Camp is not responsible for any lost or stolen items while on site. We encourage parents to label everything coming with your child to help ensure it ends up back home. Any items left at day camp will be placed in a Lost and Found, which will be made available on request.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Time and Location

- Children may be dropped off at camp no earlier than the program start time at 9am.
- All children must be promptly picked up at 4:00pm by a designated person
- For safety purposes, you must sign your child in each morning when they are dropped off. At pick up time a child will not be released into any adult's care until the child has been signed out.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Authorization

We ask that parents/guardian give Foley Mountain staff written authorization for the people who may have access to their children (i.e. a relative who picks up child, emergency contact in cases where parents cannot be reached). If written authorization is not possible, the parent must phone or email us to give authorization. Parents/guardian must notify staff before changing the usual pick-up routine. We always act in the best interests of the child if there is any confusion or uncertainty.

Here are examples of situation where we may not allow your child for pick up:

- If a person appears intoxicated or impaired
- a family member/friend comes to pick up your child without written or verbal consent

As bound by the education act, staff members are legally responsible to protect the children in their care from any perceived risk.

Inclement Weather Policy/Closure Policy

If the weather/road conditions make travel to/from Foley Mountain unsafe for either staff or participants and we need to cancel programs for that day, we will notify families by telephone at least one hour prior to the time the program would have started. If the weather makes it necessary for programming to close earlier than normal, this decision will be communicated to families such that they are able to make the necessary arrangements for early pick-up.

Extreme Weather Policy

Educators and volunteers at Foley Mountain consult the forecast regularly, and weather-related safety is considered in all decision-making (i.e. how far to venture away from the cabin, how long to be outside). In the case of predicted thunder and lightning or high-winds, educators/volunteers will ensure participants are close to shelter so that it may be sought quickly should thunder and lightning or high-winds occur. During thunder and lightning and high winds, participants will stay under shelter (in the cabin, or under the pavilion, for example). In the case of extreme cold (-25C or below) or extreme heat (30C), Forest School educators/volunteers will limit participants' length of exposure based on age/outerwear, and will constantly assess participants' comfort and safety, watching for signs of frostbite, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, etc.

COMMUNICATION

General Communication

Generally, education staff will communicate with families predominately via email. To reach us in a timely manner, please send an email to rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca or call 613-273-3255.

Please be sure to communicate the following:

- if you will be late or absent
- if your child is ill with a communicable disease
- if your child is being treated for lice

Emergency Communication

In the event of an emergency at Winter Adventurers day camp, parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone once emergency personnel (if needed) have been contacted.

If weather/road conditions make travel to/from Foley Mountain dangerous for staff/participants and the staff needs to cancel programs or close early for the day, parents/guardians will be notified by telephone.