

VWCA Summer Camp Parent Handbook



Victoria West Community Association
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Dear Parents,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all the children and families at Victoria West Community Association. We are committed to providing the best possible learning experience for each child entrusted to our care. To facilitate our licensed daycare programs, we are pleased to offer this parent handbook. The purpose of the handbook is to better acquaint parents with the philosophy, principles, and operations of the Centre. It is hoped that the contents of this handbook will assist you and your child in making your time at Victoria West Community Association a successful, happy, and positive experience.

All parents are expected to be familiar with the Centre guidelines and policies listed within and abide by them.

Sincerely,

Staff of Victoria West Community Association

Victoria West Community Association

Vision:

Victoria West community is a diverse, healthy and vital place to live, work and play.

Mission:

The Victoria West Community Association is a not for profit organization whose mission is to engage residents in community stewardship, to impact decisions that affect the community, to raise awareness, to foster a sense of spirit and pride and to encourage participation in community issues, solutions, projects and events.

Victoria West Community Centre is the heart of the neighborhood, offering diverse and relevant activities for all. It is a place where neighbors meet, learn and volunteer. The Centre provides physical, intellectual, social and cultural services and programs that contribute to individual and community health and development.

Values:

Accountability: We are transparent and accountable to our community, funders and partners.

Inclusiveness: The purposes of the Society are to promote, support or undertake any activity that will enhance the quality of life in the Victoria West community and supports the diverse population of the community.

Sustainability: The social, environmental and economic health and vitality of the community is enhanced by VWCA activities and initiatives.

Service: The VWCA provides services to the community as an advocate for, and facilitate participation in, the discussion of community issues in the provision of community services and in sharing information.

Territory Acknowledgement

With humility and gratitude, we acknowledge that the land on which we gather as guests is the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Lekwungen, also known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

Program Hours

VWCA Summer Camp operates Monday – Friday from 8:30am – 4:25 pm.

Location: Victoria West Community Center - Fireplace room.

2026 Summer Camp Offerings

Week 1	July 6-10, 2026	The Great Canadian Adventure
Week 2	July 13-17, 2026	Fairytale Fantasy
Week 3	July 20-24, 2026	Sporty Sprouts
Week 4	July 27-31, 2026	Little Thespians
Week 5	Aug 4-7, 2026	Dinosaur Explorers (4 day week)
Week 6	Aug 10-14, 2026	Eco Buddies
Week 7	Aug 17-21, 2026	Silly Scientists
Week 8	Aug 24-28, 2026	Little Artists

Summer Camp Typical Daily Timeline

8:30** - Campers should use washroom before coming to camp.

- Arrival & Optional Snack Time, Free Choice Table Activities

10:00 - Washroom Break and get ready

10:15 - Activity #1

12:15 - Washroom Break, Lunch, quiet activities

1:15 - Activity #2

3:15 - Washroom Break/Snack

3:30 - Free time

4:25* - End of Day

*Please arrive no later than 4:25 to pick up at the end of each day. Please note that we do not provide options for late pick ups however, if there is an emergency preventing you from arriving on time, please notify the program as soon as possible and prior to the end of the day.

**There are days that we will be leaving the community center on outings, on these days we will be leaving by 9:30 am at the latest. Please arrive at the center by 9 am.

What to bring?

Please check the **weekly camp newsletter** for specific needs for each day of the camp.

In addition, please always have the following available in your camper's backpack:

- A change of clothes* (top, pants, underwear, and socks).
- Food: enough for 2 snacks, lunch and a **refillable water bottle** in a lunch box with an icepack
- Outside Wear: Please ensure campers are dressed in weather appropriate clothing, as the Summer Camp program will be spending time outside every day. (ex raincoat/boots, sunscreen, wide brimmed sun hat).

Sun Safety

To protect children from excessive sun exposure during seasons when children wear clothes that expose more skin, we ask parents to apply sunscreen before arrival each day. Parents must provide a labeled broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen lotion (no aerosol sprays) and educators will ensure they reapply before afternoon outdoor play. Each child should also bring a labeled wide brimmed hat for sun protection, a refillable water bottle, sunglasses are optional. Sun-protective clothing is also recommended. As our playground area has limited shade, staff assess conditions daily when deciding where to go in order to limit time in direct sunlight during peak hours.

Wildfire Smoke

Our camp leaders' phones have the WeatherCan apps installed with air quality notifications. In the event of a poor air quality alert, we will follow the government recommendations.

During moderate air quality days, we may reduce our time outside and/or avoid more strenuous activities. If we have more severe air quality, we will avoid going outside and create active play opportunities that are appropriate for indoor spaces.

Pickup and Drop Off Policy

Parent/Caregivers must check in with the camp leaders so they can sign your camper in and out of the program. Campers may never sign themselves in or out, walk home or leave the premises without being signed out by an authorized person. Please indicate on the Summer Camp Application Form the name and phone number of anyone who is authorized to pick up. If you wish to add someone to your authorized pick-up list, please notify the leaders in person or send us an email. Leaders may ask you or your designated pick-ups for photo ID.

Child's Emergency Information

Educators always carry with them emergency information for each child. Each child has their own page in an emergency binder including:

- child's name and birthdate
- a current portrait photo that can be shown to First Responders
- parent contact information including address and phone numbers
- emergency contacts and authorized pick ups
- medical information such as allergies, medications, doctor and BC Services number

Please notify us as soon as possible if there are any changes to this information, including if you move to a new address or change your contact information so that we always have the most up-to-date information in the event of an emergency. Please also ensure that the contact information for your emergency contacts remains accurate.

Parent/Caregivers Code of Conduct

We are very proud of our community. We do ask that parent/caregiver to observe the following as good decorum:

- Treat their children and other campers with respect both verbally and physically.
- Treat each staff member with respect.
- Treat each other with kindness and respect.
- Use a soft voice while inside the program areas.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language. There are many ears listening.

- If you have a conflict with a camp leader, other parent/caregiver, or any other campers, please take it to the Team Lead or Childcare Manager immediately. Any misunderstandings can be cleared up through the office
- Smoking and vaping tobacco or cannabis are strictly prohibited inside the centre or on or near centre property.
- Campers will not be released to parents/caregivers who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substance.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to ensure Registration Forms have the most updated and correct addresses, phone numbers and lists of emergency contacts

Attendance

Please tell camp leaders in person or text/call the camp phone to inform us when a camper will not be attending on days they are enrolled or if they will arrive late/be picked up early.

Punctuality

To ensure a smooth experience for all campers and families, please adhere to the following schedule:

- Drop-off time is between 8:30-9:30 a.m. If you anticipate arriving later, kindly coordinate with the Team Lead in advance. On excursion days, please ensure prompt drop-off at 9:00 a.m. to facilitate a timely departure.
- Pick-up time is between 4:00-4:25 p.m. If you require an earlier pick-up time, please arrange this with the Team Lead beforehand. Please aim to arrive no later than 4:25 p.m. for pick-up

Your understanding is crucial in ensuring the smooth operation of our camps. As camp leaders' schedules are dependent on these times. Please note that we do not offer options for late pick-ups but understand that emergencies can happen. We kindly ask that you notify us if you anticipate running late for pick-up. Additionally, we recommend allowing at least 5 minutes prior to closing to collect your child, ensuring a timely and efficient end to the day's activities for all participants.

No Show at End of Program

If a child is still at the centre at closing time, the staff will take the following steps.

1. **Attempting to Contact the Parent or Guardian:** Staff will immediately try to reach the parent or guardian using the contact information provided in the child's records.
2. **Contacting Emergency Contacts:** If after several attempts (5 min) the parent or guardian cannot be reached, staff will begin to try to contact the emergency contacts listed in the child's record.
3. **30 min late - Involving Authorities:** If no authorized individuals can be reached and the child remains uncollected, staff will contact local authorities, such as the Ministry for Children and Families and/or the police, to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

Refund Policy

You can withdraw your registration at any time however, a full 1 month's notice before the start date (prior to the Monday of the week before) of each camp is required to receive a refund. There is no refund or reduction of fees offered for a child missing camp due to personal reasons such as illness or behaviour challenges.

Parent Communication

Clear, ongoing communication is an important part of a parent's involvement in their child's care and early learning. We encourage families to speak with educators if they have questions or concerns related to their child or the program. While educators may not always be available for in-depth conversations during drop-off or pick-up, they will work with families to find an appropriate time to connect. Direct all questions regarding fees or enrollment to the Childcare Manager.

The Centre communicates primarily by **email including newsletters prior to each camp**, using the address provided on your child's registration form. Important information, notices, and updates are shared this way, so it is essential that families ensure their contact information is accurate and that emails are checked regularly, including during holiday periods. We assume emailed communication has been received and read unless it is returned as undeliverable, in which case families will be contacted by phone.

Supporting Respectful Behaviour in Shared Spaces

As part of our daily routine, we teach the children to be respectful and mindful members of our shared community centre. This includes walking indoors, using quiet voices, and not playing on ramps, railings, or in areas outside of our designated camp space. We kindly ask that parents and caregivers support this important learning by modelling and encouraging the same respectful behaviours during pick-up and drop-off times. While families are always welcome in the community centre, we ask that everyone helps us maintain a calm and considerate atmosphere for all users of the community centre.

Please remember that certain areas, such as the gym or other program rooms, may appear unoccupied but are not available for general use unless booked. To respect other programs and community members, we ask that all children stay with their caregivers and avoid entering any spaces without permission. Thank you for your support in helping us create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for everyone.

Food and Drink Policy

We promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. Safe drinking water is always available for all children, and we encourage them to drink as much as they would like. If a child has specific nutritional requirements, we will ensure that all staff understands these requirements. Please inform the staff of any dietary needs or allergies.

Please pack two healthy snacks and a lunch from home that follow Canada's Food Guide <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>. Foods with high sugar content are not allowed in our programs.

Do not send candy, gummies, cookies, cake, chocolates, chips, juice or pop.

We cannot reheat foods so please send foods that need to stay warm in a thermal container. Please include all necessary utensils required to eat the lunch and snacks. Include an icepack in the lunch box to keep the foods fresh.

Nut Policy

In the event that we have a child attending one of our camps with a severe nut allergy, we will then enforce a **NUT FREE** policy. Please check the newsletter for that week of camp for any restrictions based on allergies in the group before including any nut products in your child's snack/lunch. Substitutes such as seed or soy butters (ex: Sunbutter/Wowbutter) would be permissible in a nut free zone, however we would greatly appreciate it if you could include a note for educators letting them know that it is not a nut butter.

Bikes, Scooters and Strollers

Children's bikes, or scooters must not be left in the classroom or inside the community centre. There is limited space outside where you can lock things up at the bike stand as well as one ring on the wall to lock a larger items like stroller or trailer. Since there is very limited space, preference would be that you take these items with you after you drop off your child.

Guidance / Harassment and Bullying Prevention

Victoria West Community Centre believes that all children attending our camps have the right to learn in a safe, caring and orderly environment with a focus on physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our approach to behaviour guidance is to assist campers in developing self-control, self-confidence, and ultimately self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. The Centre's approach to discipline is positive, pro-active and consistent with the developmental age and stage of each camper. We encourage acceptable behaviour such as being respectful to ourselves, to others, and to centre property and learning to follow Centre rules such as walking calmly when inside and staying in designated areas.

Unacceptable behaviour can consist of but is not limited to fighting (or play fighting), lack of respect for others, teasing, throwing objects and running in building. This applies whilst at the centre, at a program-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the centre environment.

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, will respect an individual's right, taking into account their age, maturity and special needs, if any. Consequences will be restorative rather than punitive.

Behaviour Management Guidelines:

1. The first incident of inappropriate behaviour will result in the camper being redirected from the activity. The leaders will discuss the rules with the camper and the reason that their behaviour is inappropriate. The camper will be supported by the staff to make more appropriate choices and find problem solving solutions.
2. If inappropriate behaviors persist, escalate in frequency, or pose a risk, our camp leaders will promptly reach out to parent/caregiver to collaboratively explore solutions and options to address the situation. Depending on the severity of the incident, you may be contacted to arrange for immediate pick-up of the camper.
3. If the agreed upon solutions to address concerning behavior prove ineffective, a formal meeting will be scheduled for alternative strategies. If issues persist, the Centre reserves the right to discharge the child from the camp, and future camps, for the safety of all participants.

Illness

For the health and well-being of your child and other camp participants, please keep your child at home if they are sick. If, during the day, we see that your child is not feeling well, we will call you to pick them up promptly. **Please Note: We ask that parents keep their child home until they have been symptom-free (without the use of fever, vomiting or diarrhea reducing medication) for at least 24 hours.**

Below is a general list of illnesses that would prevent your child from being allowed to attend the VWCA Summer Camp as well as a general guideline for the camp leaders to call you to pick up your child promptly.

- A fever exceeding 38°C or 100.4°F
- An infection for which the child has not been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- A child vomiting or complaining of severe headaches or stomach aches.
- A child who has diarrhea.
- A child who has been constantly coughing or has a runny nose with thick discharge.
- A communicable disease such as pink eye or head lice. Parents are required to notify the Childcare Manager or Team Lead immediately if their child contracts a communicable disease.

Medical Information

It is important for the Centre to have all relevant medical information at hand to ensure the safety of all our campers, including:

- Full Disclosure: Parents/Caregivers must fully disclose all medical information about campers during registration (information as specified in the medical section of the application and/or registration form). Disclosure is vital so that the Centre can take any medical precautions as becomes necessary – such as requiring an EpiPen be kept in the program areas for a camper with a severe nut allergy.
- Immunization: In the event that a camper is not immunized against a certain illness or disease, the family is advised that in the event of an outbreak, or an immediate threat of an outbreak, the child will need to temporarily stay home from the camp to protect them from becoming ill and prevent the spread of the disease
- Medication: Camp Leaders should be notified of any prescription or non-prescription medication a camper is taking. In the case where a leader may be required to administer medication, please complete a “Permission to Administer Medication” form which can be provided to you by the Team Lead.
- Allergies: Parents/Caregivers must notify the Centre of any allergies. Emergency medications such as an EpiPen or puffer must be kept on premises for campers prescribed them for severe and life-threatening allergies.

Accidents/Incidents

For minor injuries, campers will be tended to immediately by a camp leader. Appropriate first aid will be administered, if necessary (soap and water and/or an icepack, bandage), or comfort and support given should that be more appropriate. It will then be shared with the whomever is picking up the camper that day.

In case of a Serious Accident:

- The camper will be tended to immediately by a camp leader who will ascertain the extent of the injury, begin first aid if it is appropriate and inform the Childcare Manager/Team Lead as soon as possible through another staff member
- For very serious injuries we will also call 911. (Parents/Caregivers will be expected to assume responsibility for any expenses incurred.)
- Parents/caregivers will be notified
- Should the camper need to go to the hospital, and you cannot be reached, the camper will be accompanied by a member of staff who will take along all their necessary medical information; care card number, family doctor (as listed on the registration form) etc.

Inclusive Programming and Support Needs

We are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming program for all the children entrusted to our care.

We are pleased to offer inclusion support for children with diverse needs, made possible through funding from the Supported Child Development Program. These supported spaces are limited. Families must contact the Childcare Manager and receive confirmation of availability before registering.

Once a supported space is confirmed for your child, it is essential that families disclose in the camp application *all support needs, diagnoses, or accommodations* their child may require. We endeavor to support a wide range of abilities, learning styles, and needs within the resources and staffing available to us.

Service Continuity Policy

We understand the importance of mutual understanding and adherence to our camp policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. Our aim is to ensure a harmonious and safe environment for all participants in our summer camp programs. Your cooperation ensures a positive and enriching experience for all. In the rare instance where policies or procedures are not being upheld, we follow a progressive approach:

1. Reminders and Guidance: We are committed to assisting parents/guardians in understanding and complying with our policies. We will remind you of the policies and encourage you to review the handbook.
2. Supportive Correction: Continuous non-compliance may necessitate further action. In such cases, we will offer additional support and clarification to facilitate adherence to our policies.
3. Service Termination: In instances where repeated non-compliance persists, we reserve the right to discontinue camp services. This decision is made with careful consideration and in the best interests of all campers, families and staff.

Contact information:

Childcare Manager – Jack Tharp

Email: childcaremanager@victoriawest.ca

Phone number: 250-590-8922 ex:1

VWCA Summer Camp Team Lead

Email: outofschoolcare@victoriawest.ca

Phone Number: 250-508-0142 (cell phone)

Summer Camp Leaders

Phone Number: 250-508-5935 (cell phone)

Victoria West Community Centre: 250-590-8922

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