

# OUTDOOR LEARNING SCHOOL AND YOUR CHILD

## Philosophy

*We believe that thoughtful and active learning outdoors in a supportive community allows us to connect and relate to others and to the natural world, which together enables and inspires us to act wisely.*

*We believe that Outdoor Learning is most effective when all four dimensions of wellness are exercised: mental, physical, emotional, and social. We believe that learning is about who we are, how to live well with others, and how to grow joy and balance.*

*We believe that nurturing a sense of connection grows compassion and responsibility: to oneself, to others, and to the natural world.*



## COMMON QUESTIONS about Outdoor Learning

### Where will learning and teaching take place?

Using nature's lens to teach the Ministry's mandated curriculum, students will learn in a variety of settings around the South Canoe School. On occasion, locations may change based on seasons and animal movements throughout the year, with parents dropping-off/picking-up off-site on those days.

The school site itself also provides an indoor learning environment. Most outdoor school models in B.C. seem to begin around 20% outdoors early in the year, leading up to spending as much as 85% outdoors by years-end. These numbers are based on other sites and may not reflect exactly what actually happens at South Canoe. Classrooms will be strategically used in a workshop-style approach, where many rooms will be designated for different purposes such as a literacy room, numeracy room, fine arts and music room, kitchen, and hands-on building rooms.

### How will students' comfort and safety be assured?

Ongoing training in first aid, risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and planning for outdoor experiences will be assured. With preparation and support, students will be exposed to a variety of weather conditions and physical challenges. Dressed in the right gear, students around our province have proven able to handle

all weather conditions, and students and teachers at South Canoe will be no different. Temperature cut-offs will be clear to parents once the school begins, and attention will always be given to other possible safety concerns such as under-dressed students, animal sightings, and windy days in or near forests.

### Will special needs students be fully integrated with adequate support?

The school is covered by the same policies and guidelines with respect to inclusion as other district schools. The goal is to build a learning community in which all students can flourish. Students with needs that garner CEA support will do the same at South Canoe, and an LRT will be hired to meet the demands of the school population.

### Who are the teachers?

We are hopeful to have the hiring of teaching staff by April. In addition to the teachers, there are many other educators at the school. They include students, community members, elders, family members, the natural spaces around the school and community (i.e. plants, animals, rivers, wetlands, forests, and mountains) and locations around the Shuswap (i.e. farms, businesses, public institutions, public streets and squares, artists' studios).

### If the program is not a good fit for my child, can he/she return to their home school the following year? How about if they are in French Immersion?

Your child may return to their home school, however this would be dependent on available space, otherwise they could attend the regular program at the nearest school that could accommodate them. A child in French Immersion can opt out of French Immersion for one year to attend the South Canoe Outdoor Learning Program. If they decide to opt out for more than one year they could join the late Immersion group at Grade 6, but would no longer be eligible for early immersion.





## Expectations of Parents

- To provide transportation to the South Canoe Outdoor Learning School. Students will walk a great deal at this school as they get from place to place around the South Canoe community, with regular visits to the South Canoe trails, Klahani park and local South Canoe residents' properties.
- Sometimes, the school day will occur at other sites in the Salmon Arm area, in which case parents will be asked to drop-off and pick-up at that site.
- To ensure that your child is properly dressed for all weather conditions. Your child's comfort in the outdoors will go far to nurturing a positive attitude and engagement. Extra outdoor clothing does not have to be new, but rather well-fitted and effective. A list will be sent to families once teachers are hired and a program is formalized. As a parent, this could also mean additional laundry as your child explores the outdoors. We also have a contingency plan for families for whom this may cause a financial hardship.

## What about the ALR zoning?

Please note that we are still awaiting approval from the City of Salmon Arm and the Agricultural Land Commission. We are optimistic that we will receive approval prior to September 2018. However, if we do not receive approval to re-open South Canoe for September 2018, then all students will remain registered in their 'current' school. Once approval from the Agricultural Land Commission is received:

- we will notify all registered families that a decision has been made
- registration of students will be confirmed. (Anyone registering on Feb. 1 between 6 - 8pm will be considered on "equal basis". We anticipate space for everyone. However, if we have more than we can accommodate at South Canoe then we would use a lottery for those that registered between 6-8 p.m. If spaces still exist after Feb. 1 registration will be at Bastion Elementary.)
- We anticipate a meeting for parents sometime in the late Spring or Summer
- Welcome to K to be held late Spring or Summer
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to be formed

**More information on Outdoor Learning at [www.sd83.bc.ca](http://www.sd83.bc.ca) under District Dept.**

**For questions regarding this programs, please contact: Carl Cooper, Director of Instruction at (250) 804-7826 or Isabelle Gervais, Principal Bastion Elementary at (250) 832-3741.**



# North Okanagan-Shuswap School District No. 83



# SOUTH CANOE OUTDOOR LEARNING SCHOOL

## The Vision and Mission

*Our aim is to develop a school that engages students with local ecosystems. The focus of learning is on inquiry, experience and reflection while teaching the full BC curriculum through nature's lens.*

*Our Mission is to implement a program that inspires a cultural shift that embraces, protects and connects meaningfully with the natural world.*