 Parent/Student Handbook

**Table of Contents**

1. Letter to Parents
2. Letter to Learners
3. Aims of the Program
4. Facilities at the Centre
5. Map to the Centre
6. General Information about the Centre
7. Student Responsibilities at the Centre
8. Overnight Centre Rules and Routines
9. Environmental Ethics
10. Sample Daily Timetable
11. Equipment and Clothing Checklist

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This year as part of the regular TDSB academic program students will have the opportunity of participating in Toronto District School Board Outdoor Education Overnight Program. This will give them an excellent opportunity to develop responsible attitudes toward the environment and, through direct experiences in that environment, achieve certain aims and objectives. The Ministry of Education has stated that learners should "develop an awareness of the natural environment and of how it affects, and in turn is affected by human activities." The Toronto District School Board has stated that the student "will have a growing understanding and appreciation of the world in which they live".

The program for the class will be conducted at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre.

Activities are planned which develop knowledge and skills in such academic areas as history, geography, science and language arts, as well as expanding the sphere of the physical and health education program. Recreational activities could include hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and snowshoeing. A balance for both curriculum and experiential activities are combined to give each child a well-rounded and truly unique experience.

The social aspect of the program is also valuable. Students will be living and working with their classmates and will have an opportunity to develop co-operation and teamwork skills through both field work and other responsibilities, such as dormitory clean-up, table setting and outdoor group activities.

The program at the Centre is a structured inquiry based experience in an outdoor setting and is considered an important part of the curriculum.

You will receive notice from your school’s principal in the near future with regard to the user fee

that will be required to attend the overnight experience at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre.

Please read the rest of this booklet carefully. If you have any questions, please call the home school or the E.O.E.C. (905-880-1890) for further information. Also, **please visit our website for an informative video, and information on programming and facility pictures**. [Click Here](http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/eoec/)

The permission and health forms must be filled out completely,

detached and sent back to the home school as soon as possible. Please ensure your child’s

health card number is included and all required signatures are completed. Our number one

priority is your child’s health and safety.

**Please provide a nut free litterless lunch for the first meal at the centre.**

We are confident that your child will find their visit to the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre an educationally enriching and enjoyable experience.

Yours truly,

The Staff, Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre

Dear Student:

This year you will have the opportunity to attend the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre. This residential education program will help you to discover and learn about the natural environment through direct experience in the out of doors in an interesting and enjoyable manner. You will be involved in a number of instructional sessions, which may include stream and pond studies, a dairy farm visit, survival skills, wildlife studies, ecosystem studies, and team building. We hope that through these and other activities you will develop an understanding of and respect for the natural environment and the human role within this ecosystem.

Students like you, visiting teachers and centre staff have developed a set of routines

that allow us to live comfortably together. A list of the centre’s routines is included in

this booklet. Read them carefully. Your jobs will include keeping your room tidy, dining room duties, and being responsible for various pieces of equipment. You are responsible for your own behaviour.

The remainder of this booklet contains information that will answer many of your questions. Included is a map of where you are going, a sample day’s program, a list of your responsibilities, and an equipment and clothing checklist. More information can be found by visiting our website at http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/eoec/. The permission and health forms at the end of this booklet must be filled out completely, detached and sent back to the school as soon as possible.

It is important that you bring proper outdoor clothing. You will be outside regardless of weather conditions so dress accordingly and be prepared. Raincoats and rubber/winter boots are available at the centre for your use.

Please don’t forget to bring a nut free litterless lunch for your first meal at the centre and

a water bottle for your personal use during your visit.

We are confident that this experience will be rewarding and memorable for you. We look forward to seeing you soon. For more information visit our website at Yours truly,

The Staff, Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre

**AIMS OF THE PROGRAM**

Participation in this program will give students the opportunity:

1. To develop an appreciation and respect for all living and non-living components in the natural environment;
2. To develop an awareness, through direct contact, of human dependence upon the natural environment;
3. To develop an understanding of the natural environment as an ecosystem;
4. To develop scientific investigative skills using a variety of techniques in a natural setting;
5. To develop an sensory awareness of the natural world around us;
6. To develop social skills through group living;
7. To develop skills of using the natural environment for recreational pursuits;
8. To develop an awareness of environmental issues which upset the balance of our ecosystem.

**FACILITIES AT THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE**

The Centre is located in the Albion Hills Conservation Area 8 km north of Bolton off Highway 50. The site offers 450 hectares of hardwood bush, reforestation areas, and open parkland. The west branch of the Humber River and its tributaries wind their way through the property. The natural history and scenic beauty of the area make it a prime resource for the purposes of environmental studies.

The overnight centre is located near the western boundary of the conservation area. The building contains a common room, and a fully equipped instructional area available for learner use. There are separate male and female dormitories located in opposite ends of the building. The dormitories contain eight bedrooms, which hold a maximum of four learners per room. Washroom and shower facilities are located in each of the dormitory sections. A staff bedroom is also located in each of the dormitory areas. Staff and learners enter the building through the mudroom, which contains outdoor clothing storage facilities, and a boot/equipment clean-up area. The main floor also has washrooms, a teacher preparation area, office, and equipment storage areas.

**GENERAL INFORMATION -ETOBICOKE OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE**

The phone number of the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre is (905)-880-1890. This is not a long-distance number.

1. **Meals:** A well-balanced menu has been planned and will be prepared by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority cooking staff. Special dietary needs can be accommodated. Please call us if you have any concerns. All meals will be eaten in the dining hall located in their field centre, a short walk from our building. Evening snack is provided by the visiting classes will be eaten at our centre.
2. **Supervision:** Throughout their stay learners will be supervised by teachers from their home school, Toronto District School Board Outdoor Education staff and University of Guelph teaching assistants. All centre staff are first aid qualified.
3. **Transportation:** the Toronto District School Board will provide Transportation of learners and baggage to and from the centre. All items must be carefully packed and labeled.
4. **Clothing:** The weather conditions are usually more extreme at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre than in Toronto and most of the day is spent outside; therefore, it is imperative that learners bring the proper clothing for their visit. **Refer to the equipment and clothing list in this handbook**. Raincoats and rubber / winter boots are available for your use.
5. **Sunscreen and Insect Repellent:** In the months of May to October (mosquito and UV season), learners should come appropriately dressed in light-coloured long pants, long sleeves, and hats, with their personal supply of sunscreen and insect repellent with a maximum 10% DEET concentration. Repellent should be in the form of a pump-spray or lotion (not aerosol spray). The learner under the supervision of outdoor education staff will personally apply it. If appropriate to the program, outdoor education staff will have extra sunscreen and DEET of approved formulation to offer if a child does not provide their own.
6. **Sleeping:** Learners will be sleeping in a dormitory with a maximum of four per room. Washroom and shower facilities are located in the dormitory areas. Learners must provide their own bedding. Please refer to the bedding requirements listed in the equipment and clothing list. Home school teachers supervise the dormitories at night.
7. **Medication:** All medication will be collected by the homeschool teacher at Albion Hills. The learner will receive the medication from the home school teacher when required. Puffers and epipens are the responsibility of the individual learner and must be carried at all times.
8. **Health Cards:** In the event of an accident or health concern, your child will be taken to the William Osler Health Centre (formerly Etobicoke General Hospital) or other hospital deemed by staff or ambulance attendants. The Ontario Health Card must be shown at the time of treatment. We strongly advise parents to provide the card in care of the homeroom teacher. **Please ensure the health card number appears on the medical form.**
9. **Miscellaneous:**

Learners **MUST NOT** bring:

* + 1. snack food -knives, firearms, hatchets -gum, candy, beverages -matches -electronic music players -money -video/electronic games -flashlight -valuables (e.g. jewelry) -cell phone -perfume, cologne -non-prescription drugs

1. Please note: The E.O.E.C. is not financially responsible for any lost or stolen items.

**LEARNER RESPONSIBILITIES**

**You are responsible for you own behaviour**.

1. Return the completed permission and health forms located at the end of this booklet to your teacher as soon as possible.
2. Carefully read the Parent-Learner Handbook before your visit, especially Residential Centre Rules and Routines.
3. Bring proper outdoor clothing and equipment for the season in which you will be

attending. Clearly label all articles. Refer to the equipment and clothing list included

in this handbook. You are responsible for taking care of everything you bring.

1. Keep the dormitory neat and clean at all times including your bedroom and washroom area.
2. Be on time for classes and meals.
3. Noise levels in the dormitory and dining hall must be kept to a minimum for everyone to enjoy their visit.
4. Return all borrowed materials (including sports equipment) to the proper storage area after use.
5. Learners are not allowed to use the telephone without home school teachers

approval. Parents are encouraged not to telephone their child unless there is an

emergency.

**PARENTS PLEASE NOTE!**

**Students with medical concerns or learners who present definite discipline problems may be required to return home before their scheduled time at the centre has been completed. Parents and the principal will be contacted by the home school teacher to provide information about the situation. The parents will be notified to come to the Centre and take custody of their child.**

**Students found to be in possession of cigarettes, alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will be removed from the program. In addition, students entering the wrong dormitory (boys in girls and girls in boys), behaving in an unsafe manner or exhibiting persistent inappropriate behaviour will be removed from the program. The Board has passed equity and safe and caring schools policies that impact on all learners. These policies are upheld at the centre. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a proper manner at the centre as in all schools. Violation of policies or behaviour expectations will result in removal from the program.**

**OVERNIGHT CENTRE RULES AND ROUTINES**

Overnight centre rules and routines have been developed by learners, parents, homeroom teachers and centre staff and are designed to ensure that a large group of people can live together and enjoy the week.

**A. DORMITORY AREAS**

1. Bedrooms are to be used for sleeping and changing only. Any socializing must take place in the common room or outside.
2. Learners are allowed **only in the bedroom assigned to them**.
3. The dormitory and washroom areas must be kept neat and clean at all times.
4. All outside footwear, coats and hats must be removed and properly stored on the designated racks and hooks in the mudroom area.

**B. COMMON ROOM**

1. Displays, games, books and magazines are available for learner use. Please replace any used items in the proper location after use.
2. If it is necessary to rearrange the furniture for any reason, please ensure that it is put back in its proper place when you have finished your activities.

**C. DINING ROOM**

1. Meals must start on time so be sure that you arrive at the dining area promptly.
2. Special dietary considerations should be discussed with your teacher before your arrival at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre so that special arrangements may be made if necessary. Please note any special requirements on the permission and health forms provided at the end of this booklet.
3. Learners will have setting, serving, and cleaning duties to perform at each meal. Table setters will arrive 15 minutes prior to each meal.
4. Talk quietly to the people only at your table.
5. Neatness and cleanliness in the dining hall is the responsibility of everyone.

**D.** **OUTDOORS**

1. During recreational periods the learners must stay in the designated areas.
2. All water areas are out of bounds.
3. Any equipment borrowed for sports activities must be returned to the proper storage area after use.

**E.** **FIRE REGULATIONS**

1. Fire drills will be held periodically. Fire safety procedures and routines will be explained to the visiting teachers and learners by the residential staff.
2. When a fire alarm sounds:

a) All learners and staff clear the building immediately through the nearest exit

b) All learners and staff will then convene in the parking lot for a head count to ensure no one has been left in the building.

**F. IF YOU BECOME LOST**

Stay where you are. Hug a tree. It is much easier to find a stationary person. Listen for a whistle signal (three blasts repeated at intervals) and shout out frequently.

**G. INJURY/ILLNESS**

Let a staff member know immediately if you become injured or begin to feel ill. All staff are trained in wilderness first aid and can help to make you more comfortable.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

When large numbers of people use an area consistently, over a period of time, the environment will react to this usage and some changes result. In order to minimize these changes the residential staff have adopted a code of environmental ethics. One of the aims of our program is to instill in the participants a respect for the outdoor environment and all of the components within it.

Before you arrive at the Centre, you should take time to read and discuss with your teacher the points listed below.

1. Do not pick or collect anything -even moss and fungus are alive! There will be occasions when Centre staff will encourage you to touch or smell specimens; however, please remember not everything is safe to touch.
2. If you use natural objects for an activity, replace them in the exact location where they were found. Leave the area looking just as it was when you arrived.
3. When walking through an area, stay on the established paths and walk in a single line to minimize the impact upon the trees and plants of the surrounding area. Be careful where you step especially in environmentally sensitive areas.
4. It is unacceptable to leave litter on the ground. We all need to make an effort to be custodians of our surroundings.
5. Any animal encountered by groups should not be handled because of the possibility of diseases being transmitted to learners.
6. We encourage Centre learners to think globally, to act locally and to understand the
7. abstract, “Live gently on our Earth”.
8. Take only pictures – leave only footprints.

**DAILY TIMETABLE**

##### SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

**Time** **Activity**

6:45 - 7:20 Wake-Up

7:15 Table Setters over for breakfast set up

7.20 Leave For Dining Hall

7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast

8:30 - 9:00 Clean Rooms and Morning Chores

9:00 - 11:15 Morning Program

11:15 Table Setters For Lunch

11:20 Leave For Dining Hall

11:30 - 12:30 Lunch

12:30 - 1:00 Free Time

1:00 - 4:15 Afternoon Program

4:15 - 4:50 Free Time

4:45 Table Setters For Dinner

4:50 Leave For Dining Hall

5:00 - 6:00 Dinner

6:00 - 6:30 Free Time

6:30 - 8:15 Evening Program

8:15 - 8:30 Snack (**provided by EOEC not Homeschool)**

8:30 - 9:30 Home School Time

9:30 - 10:00 Dorms, Showers, Etc.

10:00 Lights Out

\*Please note that this is only a sample day and changes may occur - i.e., times may vary depending on group size, programs and weather conditions.

**EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING CHECKLIST**

**WHAT TO BRING TO EOEC…Remember to label everything to avoid loss**

The Centre will provide raincoats and rubber / winter boots for those learners who require them.

**Please bring a nut free waste-free lunch for the first meal and a water bottle for use during the week.**

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| --- | --- |
| Toiletry Items and Bedding   * Comb and Brush * Toothbrush and Toothpaste * Soap in a plastic container * Facecloth * Hand Towel * Bath Towel * Deodorant * Shampoo * Pillow * Clean Pillow Case * Sleeping Bag or 2 Sheets and a Blanket   Optional   * Sunscreen * Mosquito Repellent (less than 10% deet) * Camera * Lip Balm * Garbage Bags for Dirty Laundry * Shorts/Sandals for Free Time * Books/Magazines * Quiet Games (non-electric) * Musical Instruments   **Please note that EOEC will be providing evening snack.** | General Clothing   * Pyjamas * Indoor Shoes or Slippers * Underwear * Socks (bring extras) * 2 Sweaters or Sweatshirts * 2 Pair of Pants (Jeans or Sweat Pants) * 2 T-Shirts or Long sleeve shirts   Outdoor Clothing  *Fall/Spring:*   * Rain Hat * Rain Coat * Rubber Boots * Bug Jacket (or light coloured outer layer)   *Winter:*   * Heavy Winter Coat * Waterproof and Lined Winter Boots * Mitts (warm, lined and waterproof) * Snow Pants * Winter Hat * Scarf * Long Underwear * Heavy Socks |
| Please Do Not Bring The Following: | |
| * Snacks, Gum, Candy, Beverages (other than what will be consumed during the first lunch * Electronic Music Players, Games, Cell Phones, Money | * Cologne, Perfume, Scented Lotion * Matches, Knives, Hatchets, Firearms * Cigarettes, Alcohol, Illegal Drugs * Non Prescription Medication |

**Please note: The E.O.E.C. is not financially responsible for any lost or stolen items.**