

Camp Tamarack Retreat Registration Package

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child/ward is invited to embark on a three-day, two-night retreat hosted by staff members and senior students of Victoria Park CI from **Monday September 18 to Wednesday September 20, 2023**. The retreat is held at Camp Tamarack near Bracebridge, ON which is approximately a two hour drive north of Toronto. Victoria Park's grade 11 and 12 students will be acting as counsellors and assisting in leading the retreat. Camp Tamarack's outdoor education trained staff will be facilitating the more intensive programs such as trampoline, archery and ropes courses. For more information on the camp, please refer to the camp website at <http://camptamarack.info/>. Although Camp Tamarack is located on a lake, there will be NO swimming, canoeing, or water activities while on this excursion.

This trip is normally held for incoming grade 9 students with the goal to integrate them into the Victoria Park community. This year we are pleased to offer this experience to the current grade 9 students for their grade 10 year and incoming grade 9 students. The current grade 9 students missed out on this opportunity due to Covid restrictions and we are pleased to be able offer the double cohort this opportunity. The incoming grade 9 students will be primarily grouped together for them to have the opportunity to create bonds within their grade cohort and with their dedicated senior leaders. There will be a few limited cross over activities for the entire group. The trip also provides a unique chance for the senior students to develop their leadership skills in a fun outdoor setting.

The program will consist of outdoor focused activities including but not limited to: **rock wall climbing, ropes courses, hiking, archery, wilderness skills, stargazing and campfires**. Students will be given individualised instruction in all these activity areas and are encouraged to challenge themselves to try new things. Students will not only learn about self-reliance and co-operation but also learn how to interact with their peers, solve problems and make responsible decisions. The students will be accommodated in cabins which have electricity but no heat. Some of the cabins have toilets and sinks. All cabins have access to wash houses with full bathroom facilities including showers. Senior students will be sleeping in the cabins with the grade nine and ten students and acting as counsellors throughout their stay. There will be Victoria Park C.I. staff on site throughout the retreat to ensure the safety of the students as well as to enhance their experience.

The excursion to Camp Tamarack will involve medium to high risk activity. Although every precaution will be taken, there is a possible risk of injury such as but not limited to sprains, strains, concussions, fractures, abrasions and bruises. Please note that the TDSB does not provide accident insurance coverage for your child. If you require insurance coverage, please visit www.insuremykids.com or call 1-800463-5437.

We ask that you read the list of recommended clothes and pack with your student accordingly. It is very important that your child or ward bring a waterproof jacket and a WARM sleeping bag and blanket. Please note that up north in September the temperature can get down to around ten degrees Celsius in the day and potentially to zero degrees Celsius at night. Reviewing the weather forecast before the trip would be a very good idea. Your child should not bring electronics including their cell phone as we cannot guarantee the security of these items. There are pay phones available on-site that your son or daughter can use to call home collect at appropriate times.

Your child will be travelling in board approved school buses to and from Camp Tamarack. We are leaving from in front of Victoria Park CI at 9:30 am on Monday September 18, 2023. Exact time for check-in on the Monday will be given to the students in September. We will depart from the camp at approximately 3:00 pm with an estimated arrival time back at school at 5:30 pm on Wednesday September 20, 2023. The cost for the trip this year has been set at \$300. This covers accommodations, bus, food and programming. Our intention is for no student to be excluded from this event due to financial hardship so please contact myself or any one of the VPCI administration team to arrange for subsidies if needed.

Please complete the online registration form at <https://forms.gle/agzdRb5pgQbjVgP7A>. Payment must be made online via school cash online in **September**. An online information meeting will be held on Wednesday September 6th at 7 pm to answer any questions you might have. The meeting link will be emailed prior to that date. A TDSB field trip permission form will also need to be completed in September. The deadline for registration and payment is **Friday September 8, 2023**, for incoming students. Alternate programming will be arranged at Victoria Park for students who do not attend camp. Grade 9 and 10 classes will not hold assessments or cover new material during this time.

Surveys from students who have attended in the past found that 100% of students who attended would recommend the event to others. While many students expressed they had been nervous before heading to camp, they had an excellent experience. A promotional video made by the senior students describing the camp experience may be viewed at victoriaparkci.ca. Please encourage your child to attend even if this is outside their comfort zone. The Victoria Park staff and senior students want all parents to know the retreat is a truly memorable experience and a highlight of the high school years. It should not be missed!

Laura Keras
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Packing List For Camp Tamarack

Mandatory

- WARM Sleeping bag (it could get down to zero degrees at night)
- Underwear for each day
- 5 pairs of socks – at least 2 wool
- Toque
- Hat
- 1 warm blanket
- Running shoes
- Another pair of shoes (you cannot wear open-toed sandals)
- 1-2 sweater or light jacket
- Down/heavy jacket/vest
- 2 pairs of trousers or sweat pants
- 2-3 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve T-shirts
- Pajamas
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, soap,)
- Towel
- Rainwear
- Water bottle
- Label for your bags (even if it's just tape with your name on it)
- Students will be provided a white t-shirt but you may also want to bring other white clothing (socks) to tie dye
- Long underwear or leggings
- Flashlight (for outside- cabins do have electricity)

Optional

- Playing cards
- Camera (VP assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items)

Do NOT Bring

- Electronics and Valuables
- Cell Phone (bad reception, may get lost/stolen/damaged- if you need to call there are pay phones which you can use at designated times)
- Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco
- A bad attitude

Avoid suitcases with wheels if at all possible. Backpacks are preferable. Try to attach all items together so that they can be easily transported. We will be stowing sleeping bags and pillows under and on the seats of the buses.

RULES – for all Camp Attendees

1. Any consumption or possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco will result in immediate dismissal from the retreat at parent's/guardian's expense. As per the school rules, if staff believe that a student is under the influence of drugs and or alcohol, they will be dismissed from the camp at the parent or guardian's expense.
2. Students cannot be in an opposing genders' cabin at any time.
3. No swimming, wading or entering the water. Failure to follow this rule will result in the student being sent home at their parent's/guardian's expense.
4. There is to be no use of any watercraft. Failure to follow this rule will result in the student being sent home at their parent's/guardian's expense.
5. Follow the rules and regulations of Camp Tamarack and its staff, and VPCI (refer to agenda for school regulations) and its designated staff members in attendance.
6. Be respectful and considerate of your classmates's space and belongings, as well as the TDSB and Tamarack staff.
7. Safety first! Think before you act- if in doubt, ask a teacher or a Tamarack Staff member.