



TideView Nature School

www.tideviewnatureschool.ca

Program



handbook

TideView Nature
School

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Welcome

TideView Nature School – Summer Camp 2026

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to TideView Nature School Summer Camp 2026.

Our program serves children ages 4–11 who are ready for greater independence, movement, and meaningful engagement outdoors. Rooted in Forest School principles, it operates primarily outside and supports whole-child development through active, hands-on experiences in nature.

At TideView, the natural environment is both classroom and teacher. Children learn by building, exploring, observing, collaborating, and testing ideas in real contexts. Through this process, they develop confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of capability.

Our approach is child-led and place-based. We follow children's curiosity within clear boundaries. Experiences often emerge from the land itself — noticing seasonal changes, constructing shelters, investigating tracks, or creating with natural materials. Projects unfold over time, allowing ideas to deepen and skills to strengthen. Educators act as guides and facilitators, providing structure, supervision, and intentional support while allowing appropriate independence. Safety, emotional well-being, and respectful relationships are central to our work. Learning here is active and embodied. Whether climbing, digging, storytelling, or quietly observing, children develop essential life skills including cooperation, self-regulation, problem-solving, communication, and risk awareness. This handbook outlines how our program operates, what families can expect, and how we work together to create a safe and enriching experience for every child.

We look forward to partnering with your family.

Warmly, Jessie Zhao & Mikel L'Italien TideView Nature School



Warm regards,
Jessie Zhao & Mikel L'Italien
TideView Nature School

Program Overview



Program Dates

The 2026 Summer Camp runs from:
July 6, 2026 – August 28, 2026
(Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia)



Program Schedule & Hours

- Mondays to Fridays
9:00 AM – 4:30 PM



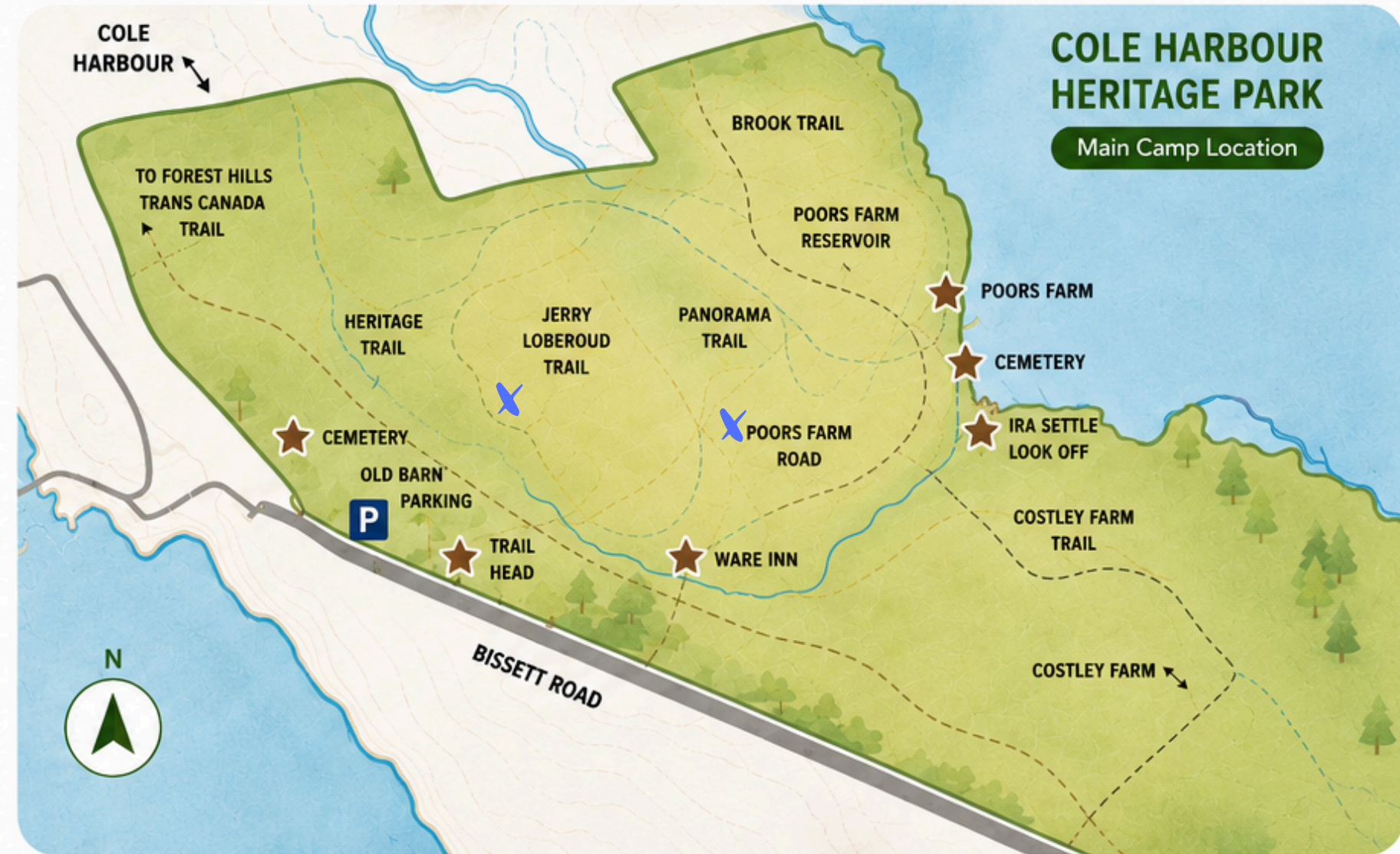
Primary Location

This program is primarily based at Cole Harbour Heritage Park, **256 Bissett Road, Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia.**

On water play days, we operate at **Kiwanis Beach & Park Morris Lake, 759 Caldwell Road.**

Drop-off and pickup on those days will be at the Kiwanis parking lot — families will be notified via BrightWheel which lot to use that morning.

Any location changes will be communicated to families ahead of time.



Weather & Indoor Contingency

This is a primarily outdoor program. In the event of unsafe outdoor conditions (such as high wind, lightning, severe storms, extreme heat, or other safety advisories), we may adjust the day's activities or relocate to our indoor backup location:



Hillside Wesleyan Church
80 Chameau Crescent
Dartmouth, NS



Families will receive updates through BrightWheel whenever weather conditions require schedule, activity, or location changes.



Arrival & Punctuality

Please arrive on time for drop-off and pick-up. Because we operate as a small group and often transition together into our learning space, late arrivals can disrupt the flow of the morning. If you expect to arrive late, please notify us through BrightWheel as early as possible so we can plan accordingly.



A Typical Day at TideView Nature School

Every day at TideView Nature School is a little different.

Our activities are influenced by the weather, the season, the children's interests, and the unique opportunities that arise throughout the day. While no two days are exactly the same, we follow a predictable rhythm that helps children feel comfortable, confident, and prepared for their adventures.

The schedule below is a general example of how a typical day may unfold.

9:00–9:15		Arrival & Welcome Children arrive at the designated meeting area, connect with staff and friends, and begin settling into the day. Staff review plans, expectations, boundaries, and any special activities.
9:15–9:45		Transition to Camp The group makes its way to Base Camp, exploring and observing along the way. Nature discoveries, conversations, games, and seasonal observations often become part of the journey.
9:45–10:15		Snack & Community Time Children gather for a snack, story, discussion, game, or introduction to a special activity. This is often when plans for the day begin to take shape and children's ideas guide our direction.
10:15–11:30		Child-Led Exploration & Activities Children are encouraged to explore, create, build, imagine, and play. Staff may introduce activities such as shelter building, knot tying, nature crafts, tracking, plant identification, water exploration, environmental education, and cooperative games. Many activities are child-led, and staff follow the children's interests whenever possible.
11:30–2:00		Lunch, Rest & Free Play Children gather for lunch and a quieter period of the day. Many children enjoy relaxing in hammocks, reading, talking with friends, building forts, or continuing projects from earlier in the day. Children who wish to remain active may participate in quieter outdoor activities.
2:00–4:00		Afternoon Adventures Afternoons often include larger group adventures. Depending on the day, this may include hiking, water play, exploration of other park areas, cooperative games, special activities, or ongoing child-led projects.
4:00–4:30		Closing Circle & Pickup The group gathers to reflect on the day, share stories and accomplishments, and prepare for pickup. Children and staff then make their way back to the designated pickup area.



A Note About Flexibility

At TideView, we believe some of the best learning opportunities happen unexpectedly.

If children discover something exciting, become deeply engaged in a project, or an unexpected learning opportunity presents itself, staff may adjust the day's plans to support that experience.

While safety, routines, and supervision remain consistent, the adventures themselves are often guided by curiosity, exploration, and the natural world around us.

(FAQ) – Frequently Asked Questions



Q: When and where is pickup and drop-off?

A: Drop-off is at 9:00 AM. Pickup is at 4:30 PM.

Our main meeting location is the parking lot of Cole Harbour Heritage Park, 256 Bissett Road, Cole Harbour, NS.

On water play days, drop-off and pickup will be at **Kiwanis Beach & Park Morris Lake**, 759 Caldwell Road, Cole Harbour, NS.

Families will be notified via **BrightWheel** which parking lot to use that morning.

In the case of extreme weather, we will relocate to our indoor backup site at Hillside Wesleyan Church, 80 Chameau Crescent, Dartmouth, NS. Families will be notified of any location changes in advance through **BrightWheel**.



Q: What happens if the weather isn't good?

A: We are an all-weather, outdoor-based program and most days we will be outside regardless of the conditions. That said, if the weather becomes too uncomfortable (e.g. heavy rain, high winds), we will make use of our on-site shelter or move part of the day indoors.

In severe weather situations (like thunderstorms or dangerous heat), we will operate from our designated indoor location at Hillside Wesleyan Church, 80 Chameau Crescent, Dartmouth, NS.



Q: Will camp always be at Cole Harbour Heritage Park?

A: Most camp days take place at Cole Harbour Heritage Park.

On designated water-play days, camp may operate from **Kiwanis Beach & Park Morris Lake**, 759 Caldwell Road.

Families will receive advance notice through **BrightWheel** whenever alternate locations are being used.



Q: Can my child bring toys?

A: Children may bring one small comfort item if desired. Please avoid valuable, fragile, or irreplaceable items, as TideView Nature School cannot be responsible for lost or damaged personal belongings.



Q: What do I need to prepare for my child?

A: Please refer to the "What to Bring & How to Dress" section of this handbook for a complete list of recommended clothing and equipment.

At a minimum, children should arrive dressed for outdoor conditions and bring:

- Lunch and snacks
- Water bottle
- Full change of clothes
- Appropriate outdoor clothing

Apply sunscreen and bug spray before arrival; labeled products can be sent for reapplication.

If your child needs medication, hand it directly to staff at drop-off.



Q: Is the camp nut-free?

A: Our camp is not strictly nut-free, but we ask all families to avoid sending nuts and nut products when possible, and to remind children not to share food. Children are never permitted to share food.

If we are aware of a child with a severe allergy attending during a specific week, we may implement additional measures and request stricter cooperation from all families to create a safer environment.



Q: What if my child needs to use the bathroom?

A: Camp has designated bathroom procedures and facilities available. Children are regularly reminded to use the washroom and staff will assist younger children as needed while maintaining privacy and dignity.



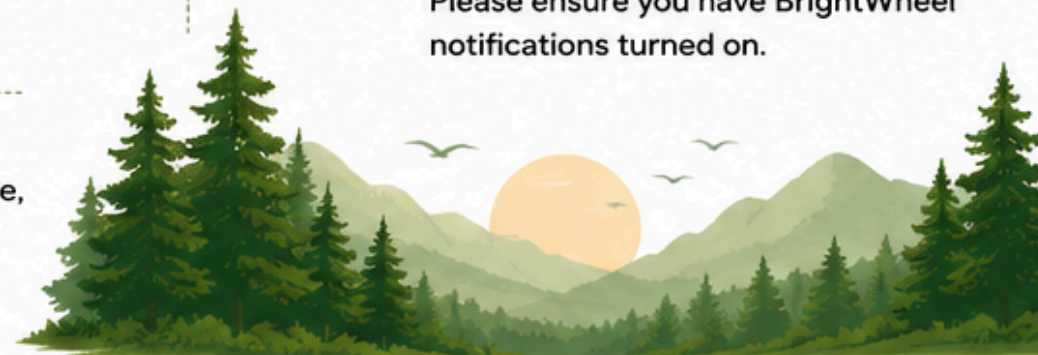
Q: What happens if a child becomes separated from the group?

A: Staff conduct regular head counts throughout the day and all children are taught what to do if they become separated from camp. In the unlikely event that a child cannot be immediately located, established search and emergency procedures will be followed.



Q: How will I receive updates or important information?

A: We use **BrightWheel** as our primary communication platform. Families will receive updates, reminders, and notifications regarding schedules, locations, and any changes. Please ensure you have **BrightWheel** notifications turned on.



(FAQ) – Frequently Asked Questions – cont.



Q: Do staff have background checks and qualifications?

A: Yes. All staff members are required to have current cleared police background check and child abuse registry check. In addition, all main staff are certified in First Aid and CPR, and at least one staff on-site will be trained in outdoor risk management and child-centred care.



Q: What is the child-to-adult ratio?

A: We maintain a maximum ratio of 1 adult to every 7 children for 4–7 groups, and 1 adult to 10 for 7–11 groups. This ensures a high level of supervision and allows staff to provide safe, attentive, and individualized care.



Q: What's the policy on ticks and insect bites?

A: We recommend applying insect repellent each morning before camp. Staff may also carry a natural tick repellent and can offer it with parent permission. If a tick is found crawling, it will be gently brushed off. If a tick is attached, it will be carefully removed using tweezers or a tick key by a trained staff member. A photo will be taken for identification purposes and parents will always be notified at pickup. We also recommend your child having a bath or shower once they get home to wash off any unattached ticks, and always perform a thorough tick check.



Q: Is there a bathroom on site?

A: Yes. We have access to two outhouses on-site, and also provide portable toilet options to ensure comfort and accessibility for all campers.



Q: What if my child gets hurt?

A: All camp guides carry a fully stocked first-aid kit and are trained to assess and treat minor injuries such as scrapes, bumps, or insect bites. For more serious injuries, we will contact the child's parent or emergency contact immediately, and call emergency services if needed. Parents will be given a full report of any incidents.



Q: How do I get in touch with somebody at the camp in case of emergencies?

A: Our primary communication platform is BrightWheel. Messages sent through the app are received by all staff and are monitored regularly throughout the day.

For urgent matters or if you do not receive a response, you can also contact:

- Jessie: 604-704-4720
- Mickey: 902-266-9347



Policies



Ratios Policy

To help ensure the safety, supervision, and overall quality of the experience at TideView Nature School, we maintain the following maximum staff-to-child ratios:

- **1 staff member for every 7 children (ages 4–7)**
- **1 staff member for every 10 children (ages 7–11)**

All staff members are required to maintain current First Aid and CPR certification, cleared police background checks, and Child Abuse Registry checks.

Additional staff may be added when activities, group needs, or conditions require increased supervision.



Staff Responsibilities

The responsibilities of TideView Nature School staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

Physical Safety

- Maintaining the physical safety of all children.
- Conducting ongoing risk assessments of camp areas and activities.
- Monitoring boundaries, transitions, and high-risk activities.
- Performing regular head counts throughout the day.
- Following emergency procedures when required.
- Supporting children in developing age-appropriate risk assessment skills.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

- Supporting the social and emotional needs of children.
- Modeling kindness, empathy, respect, and responsibility.
- Helping children navigate conflict in healthy and respectful ways.
- Creating an environment where all children feel welcomed, included, and valued.

Environmental Stewardship

- Respecting and protecting the natural environment.
- Encouraging children to develop meaningful connections with nature.
- Teaching responsible outdoor practices.
- Leaving camp spaces better than we found them whenever possible.

Active Supervision

- Maintaining active supervision at all times.
- Monitoring group dynamics and emerging concerns.
- Remaining attentive during free play, transitions, meals, and activities.
- Ensuring children remain within established camp boundaries and safety expectations.



Child Protection Policy

TideView Nature School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children.

Every staff member, volunteer, and contractor has a responsibility to help protect children from harm and to act in accordance with Nova Scotia child protection legislation.

All staff are required to immediately report concerns regarding suspected abuse, neglect, or risk of harm in accordance with provincial requirements.

The safety and wellbeing of children will always remain our highest priority.



Risk Management Policy

TideView Nature School recognizes that meaningful outdoor learning includes an element of managed risk. We believe children benefit from opportunities to challenge themselves, assess situations, develop confidence, and build sound judgment through real-world experiences.

Activities such as climbing, shelter building, tool use, water exploration, hiking, nature play, and environmental exploration may involve varying levels of risk.



While TideView values appropriate risk-taking, all activities are continuously supervised and assessed by staff. Children earn greater independence through demonstrated responsibility, good judgment, and their ability to consistently follow safety expectations. Freedom is balanced with accountability. No individual child's preferences should compromise safety procedures designed to protect the entire group.

Staff continuously assess the environment, weather conditions, group behaviour, individual abilities, and activity-specific risks and may modify, pause, or discontinue activities whenever safety concerns arise.

Some risks that may be encountered include (but are not limited to):

- Trips, slips, and falls on uneven terrain
- Injuries associated with climbing, balancing, jumping, and running
- Injuries from learning to use tools appropriately
- Exposure to insects, ticks, and wildlife
- Contact with potentially irritating or poisonous plants
- Changing weather conditions
- Wet, muddy, icy, or slippery surfaces



Our goal is not to eliminate all risk. Our goal is to help children learn how to recognize, assess, and manage risk safely while developing confidence, resilience, independence, and sound decision-making skills.

Tick Safety at TideView Nature School

Since TideView Nature School is a fully outdoor program, and our sites are mainly in natural forests, our playground is also the home of many insects, including ticks. They are especially prevalent in the spring and fall. We recommend using insect repellent to deter ticks. Staff may also carry a natural tick repellent to offer to families.

If a tick is seen on a student, it will be gently brushed off. If a tick is attached, it will be carefully removed using tweezers or a tick key by a trained staff member. **A photo will be taken for identification purposes, and parents/guardians will be notified at pickup.**

Always check yourself and your family for ticks after being outside. We recommend having a bath or shower once your child gets home, to spot for ticks and wash off unattached ticks.

Ticks like warm places on the body. Remember to check: around ears, behind knees, between the legs/groin area, around the waist, and especially in the hair.

For more information about the current recommendations for tick safety and the prevention of Lyme and other tick borne disease please visit :

- <https://novascotia.ca/ticksafety/>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/tick-bites-sheet.html>

Tick Encounter

Blacklegged Tick or Deer Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



Larva



Nymph



Adult Male



Adult Female



Water Play Days



Overview

On designated water play days, camp operates from **Kiwanis Beach & Park Morris Lake, 759 Caldwell Road, Cole Harbour, NS.**

Families will be notified through BrightWheel in advance regarding scheduled water play days, including drop-off and pickup instructions.

Water play days follow the same camp hours (9:00 AM – 4:30 PM) and overall daily rhythm as regular camp days.

All standard safety ratios, First Aid coverage, and emergency procedures remain in effect.



What to Pack (In Addition to the Usual)

- Swimsuit (worn under clothing or packed separately)
- Towel (at least one per child)
- Water shoes or sandals with a back strap (**no flip-flops**)
- Extra change of clothes beyond the usual spare
- Waterproof or separate bag for wet items
- Hat with a brim and sunglasses (recommended)
- Refillable water bottle
- Sunscreen (labelled) and bug spray (labelled)



Reminder: Apply sunscreen and bug spray before arrival as usual. Labelled sunscreen may be sent for reapplication during the day.



Swim Comfort & Participation

Children of all swim abilities are welcome. Please indicate your child's comfort level with water on the registration form so staff can provide appropriate support.

- Children are never pressured to swim. Wading, shoreline play, water exploration, and splash activities are always available.
- Children must remain within designated water boundaries established by staff at all times.
- If you would like to restrict your child's water depth, please communicate this in writing through BrightWheel before the water play day.
- If your child has a medical condition that may affect participation in water activities (ear infections, skin sensitivities, allergies, etc.), please notify staff through BrightWheel and at drop-off.



Children who do not follow water safety instructions or established boundaries may be required to leave the water area and participate in an alternative activity until they are ready to rejoin safely.



Water Supervision

Children participating in water activities are actively supervised at all times.

- Staff maintain visual supervision of all children participating in water activities.
- Designated water boundaries are established before activities begin.
- Staff regularly review safety expectations with children throughout the day.
- Activities are adapted based on weather conditions, water conditions, group needs, and individual abilities.
- Water activities may be modified, paused, or cancelled whenever staff determine conditions are not suitable for safe participation.
- Staff are certified in First Aid and CPR and carry a first aid kit, communication device, and emergency equipment appropriate for the location and activities.



Health & Safety Considerations

- Please notify staff of any medical conditions, allergies, or concerns that may affect your child's participation in water activities.
- Children with open wounds, active infections, or contagious illnesses may be restricted from water activities for their safety and the safety of others.
- Life jackets may be used for specific activities if deemed necessary by staff based on conditions and risk assessment.
- Drinking water breaks will be offered regularly.



Arrival & Pickup

- On water play days, drop-off and pick-up will be at the designated Kiwanis parking lot (759 Caldwell Road).
- Please arrive on time so we can begin our day together.
- Staff will be at the parking lot to greet families and direct you to the check-in/check-out area.
- Families will be notified through BrightWheel that morning with any important reminders or updates for the day.

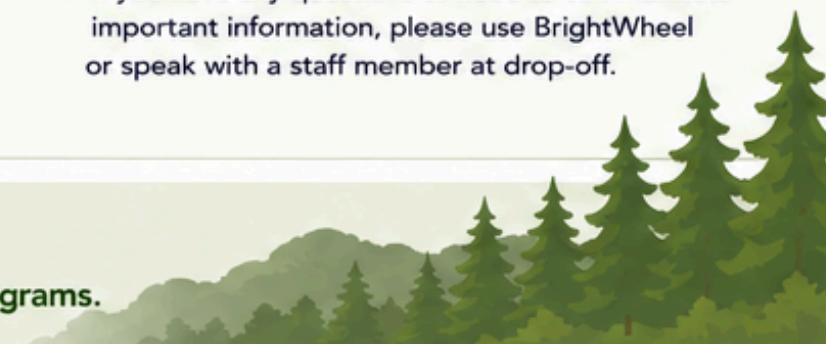


Communication

- All details, reminders, and any changes (weather, schedule, location, etc.) will be communicated through BrightWheel.
- Please ensure your notifications are turned on.
- If you have any questions or need to communicate important information, please use BrightWheel or speak with a staff member at drop-off.



Our goal is to provide children with a fun, positive, and safe outdoor water experience while maintaining the same high standards of supervision and risk management used throughout all TideView Nature School programs.



Emergency Procedures and First Aid



Emergency phone numbers and medical information of all students is carried by a TideView Lead explorer at all times. Our first aid kits are well equipped with all the necessary items to treat minor injuries, including scrapes, minor cuts and burns, slivers, blisters etc. A staff member trained in Standard First Aid and CPR will be present at all times.



In the event that urgent care is needed for a participant, parents will be notified immediately by phone and a TideView staff will stay with the child until a parent/guardian arrives. In case of a serious injury, that requires immediate medical attention, the child will be transported by ambulance with a member of the TideView Nature School team, who will stay with them until a parent/guardian or emergency contact arrives.



If an emergency affects the whole group, the TideView team will remove the group from the situation, and gather together in the pick up/drop off area. We will then proceed to contact parents/guardians by phone for pick-up.







We will notify parents verbally of any minor injuries that occur at pick up each day. In the case of head injuries (regardless how minor), we will always call home to notify parents, then let them decide if pick-up is preferable.



Extreme Weather Policy & Child Release Policy

At TideView Nature School, we run our programs outdoors in all sorts of weather and in all seasons. However, when extreme weather conditions may put us at risk while being outdoors, we will move to the program building on site. If extreme weather is predicted, we will run that day's program at our alternative indoor location at **Hillside Wesleyan Church, 80 Chameau Crescent, Dartmouth, NS.**

Examples of extreme weather which would compromise programming:

-  Winds of more than 40KM/hr or gust more than 70KM/h
-  Extreme cold, temperatures of -20C or below (including windchill)
-  Extreme heat, temperatures of 35C or above
-  Thunder and lightning

Parents will be notified each morning about the day's weather forecast with reminders on how to prepare for the day before the program start time.

Child Release Policy

TideView requests written authorization for any additional people, other than parents who may pick up their children. If prior written authorization is not possible, (in unforeseen circumstances for example) the parent must contact us via phone or text to give verbal or written authorization. If there is any confusion or uncertainty, the child will not be allowed to leave until a parent has been contacted. Anyone including parents, who are authorized to pick up students, should be prepared to present photo ID.



What to bring and how to Dress



What to Bring

At TideView Nature School, all of our programs take place fully outdoors. Children spend several hours outside in all types of weather. To keep them comfortable and prepared for their adventures, each child should bring a backpack with the following items:

- **Water bottle - preferably insulated**
- **Nutritional snacks and lunch**
- **One full change of clothes** (including two pairs of socks, underwear, a shirt, and pants)
- **Waterproof rain gear/muddy buddy**

Optional but encouraged:

- Non-aerosol sunscreen
- Bug spray (non-aerosol preferred)



How to Dress

Due to unpredictable weather conditions, it is advise to dress all children in layers. Please dress your child appropriate for the weather, and keep in mind that they will get messy! Here are some recommendations on how to dress:

- **Sneakers for running or rain boots**
- **NO open toe shoes or crocs.**
- **Sun hat**
- **Long-sleeved shirt and long pants are recommended**
- **Waterproof outer layer (rain jacket)**



Friendly reminder

- * Please label all items with your child's name and ensure their backpack is comfortable for them to carry.
- * TideView is not responsible for any lost, or damaged items.

Behaviour Management Policy

At TideView Nature School, we take a proactive approach to managing behaviour. We engage in developmentally appropriate activities, and nurture a positive physical and social/emotional space. In general, our behaviour management will:



Consider the child's needs and developmental level



Make expectations and consequences clear



Focus on the behaviour rather than the child



Be implemented in a positive and consistent manner



Be designed to help the child to learn desirable behaviour and techniques



Involve consulting with parents/guardians to include their input of successful approaches with a child, as well as to keep them informed of issues/concerns as they arise



Help children to develop self-control, self-confidence, decision making skills, the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively in their interactions with others



TideView Nature School defines inappropriate behaviour as using actions or words that make other students or staff members feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Unsafe behaviour is defined as any behaviour that puts a child or staff member at risk. This includes not responding when called, running, hiding, taking risk without consulting staff, and not following guidelines, so that behaviour becomes potentially dangerous to the child or others.



At TideView Nature School, we never use corporal punishment or removal of basic needs as a way to manage behaviour. A child may be temporarily removed from the group if it is determined to be the best way to keep both the child and the group safe. A child will never be humiliated or threatened by a TideView staff as a way to control behaviour.



TideView Nature School reserves the right to suspend or expel a child from the program, should their behaviour be consistently unsafe for themselves or others.

General Communication Policy



Tide View Nature School will primarily communicate with families, by email and text. To reach us, please direct emails to tideviewnatureschool@gmail.com or text Jessie at (604) 704-4720



Please be sure to communicate the following:

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



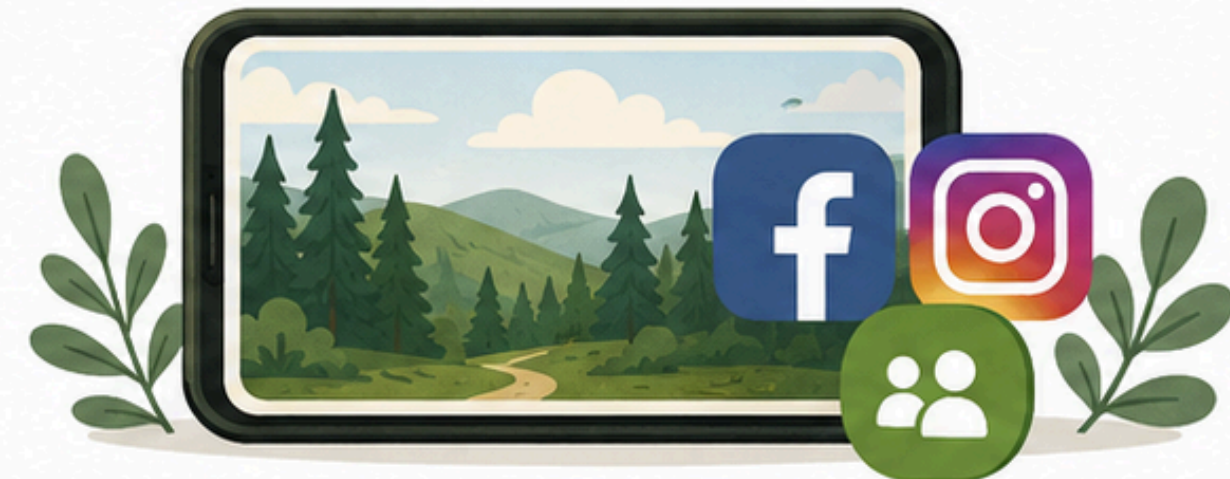
Emergency Communications Policy

In the event of an emergency at TideView, parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone, once emergency personnel (if needed) have been contacted. In the event that weather/road conditions make travel to/from TideView's program site dangerous for staff/students and the program needs to be canceled or close early for the day, parents will be notified by text.



Social Media Policy

TideView Nature School has a public website, public Facebook account, public Instagram account, and private groups for each program cohort, where both pictures and stories are posted about the things we do at Nature School. Our photo consent extends to our social media pages. Please contact us if you have any concerns about photo content or protecting your families privacy over social media.



General Communication Policy



TideView Nature School will primarily communicate with families through our communication platform: **BrightWheel**. Please download the application and setup your profile before your registered camp start date. You will receive a separate e-mail with an invitation link to setup your profile prior to the start of camp.



Things to communicate:

- If you will be late/absent
- If your child is ill with a communicable disease



How to download BrightWheel



Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play



****If you encounter any difficulties,**
please e-mail us at tideviewnatureschool@gmail.com

Getting Started with BrightWheel



1 Download the BrightWheel App

The BrightWheel app can be downloaded on your iPhone, iPad, or Android phone or tablet. Simply search for "BrightWheel" in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



2 Sign Up for a Parent Account

Click "Sign Up" and create a Parent Account using an email address or cell phone number. If you received an invitation, please use the same email or phone number to which it was delivered.



3 Link Your BrightWheel Account to Your Child

Go to "My Children" to find your child's profile. If your child is not there, enter the 10-digit code that was given to you. If you're having trouble, let us know and we can help!



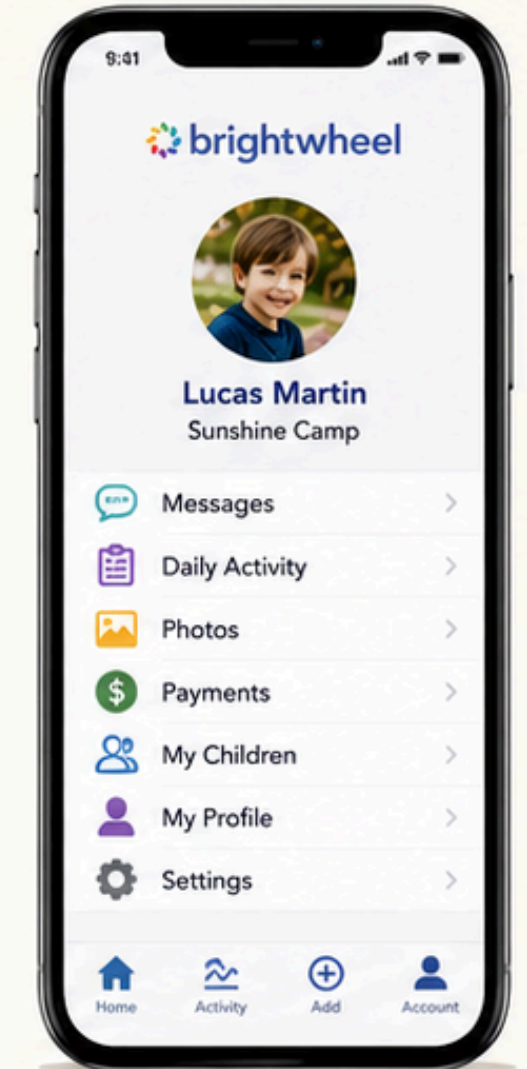
4 Update Your Profile

Add more information about you and your child! Here's a list of things we recommend you add:

- ✓ Profile photo of your child
- ✓ Emergency contact information
- ✓ Details on your child's favorite activities, allergies, etc.
- ✓ Approved pickup information
- ✓ Additional family members



We're excited to be able to offer this service to you and hope that you enjoy it. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know!



Concerns or Grievances

We value open communication and encourage families to reach out whenever you have questions, concerns, suggestions, or feedback regarding your child's camp experience.

Many concerns can be resolved quickly through a conversation. If an issue requires a longer discussion, we are happy to arrange a time for a phone call, virtual meeting, or in-person meeting.



Urgent Matters

For urgent matters requiring immediate attention, families may contact us directly by phone or text.



Email: tideviewnatureschool@gmail.com



Call or Text (Jessie):

1 (604) 704-4720



Primary Communication Platform:

Brightwheel (for day-to-day communication)



♥ Our Commitment

We strive to maintain clear, respectful, and professional communication with all families.

Our goal is to build strong partnerships with parents and guardians to help ensure every child has a safe, positive, and successful camp experience.