



# YOUR GUIDE TO ECHO POND

**A guide to preparing your students and families for the best trip ever!**

Kit List and Rules!

Fillable Bunkhouse Diagram

How To Make Your Campfire A Core Class Memory!

Expectations for Teachers and Students!

Got questions?  
[schoolprogram@echopond.ca](mailto:schoolprogram@echopond.ca)



# SO YOU BOOKED A TRIP TO ECHO POND!

Dear Educator!

We are thrilled to welcome you to the Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre! Your upcoming trip promises to be an exciting and enriching experience, where students will dive into immersive environmental education activities and explore the natural wonders of Newfoundland's wilderness.

At Echo Pond, we believe that learning goes beyond the classroom, and we're committed to providing an experience that not only meets curriculum standards but also creates lasting memories. Our hands-on programs are designed to inspire curiosity, foster teamwork, and deepen understanding of the environment. We hope that your time at Echo Pond will become a core memory for your class, one that you can build on throughout the school year.

This info packet is your guide to a successful trip. Inside, you'll find everything you need to prepare—details on what to bring, what to expect, and how to ensure that both students and their families feel ready for the adventure ahead. We're here to support you every step of the way, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

We look forward to welcoming you to Echo Pond and sharing this unforgettable experience with you!

Best regards,  
Katie Harrison  
Executive Director  
Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Preparing for Your Trip
5	Get Your Class Excited!
6	Rules
7	Free Time Areas
8	Meal Routines
9	New Phone Policy
10	Teacher Expectations
11	First Day Schedule
12	Making Your Trip Memorable
13	Printables
14	Bunkhouse Layout (for room groups)
15	Info Page
16	Kit List
17-18	Medication and Permission Form
19	Epi-Pen Allergy Form
20	Sole Source Letter



# PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

So you've booked your trip at Echo Pond. What's next?

1. Tell your class! Get them excited! We have a [short video](#) that showcases the program - it was created quite a few years ago so it has the outdated name and website. This year we also have a [slideshow](#) and a [Blooket](#) quiz to help familiarize them with their upcoming trip, the rules, and free time areas.
2. Book your bus. Your own school bus company is a good option. We've also used Executive Taxi/Fred Francis ([executive2600@hotmail.com](mailto:executive2600@hotmail.com) or 709-746-9898) when coming from the metro area. Generally schools arrive between 10 and 11 am on the first day and are picked up at 3pm on the second day. Please let us know if you need slightly different times.
3. Send out the [permission form](#) to families to fill out and return. The cost is \$65/student - you will want to factor the cost of your bus into the total that you give your families.
4. We also have a [new info pack](#) for families who would like to know more about Echo Pond and the field trip. We suggest emailing it out to families when you send the permission form!
5. Collect your permission forms and make note of how many kids are attending, the gender ratio (for sleeping purposes), and any allergies or dietary requirements.
6. Send this info into Katie ([schoolprograms@echopond.ca](mailto:schoolprograms@echopond.ca)). She will check in with you a week before your trip to see if there has been any changes!



# GET YOUR CLASS EXCITED!

Research has shown that students get more out of field trips if they know what to expect. This guide will help you prepare your students for their upcoming trip. If you haven't been to the Centre before here are a few pointers:

- Let students know they will be active, learn a lot and have plenty of fun. There will be science, art and physical education activities all related to the environment including games, a campfire and an evening hike to 'the fairy stump'.
- They will be outdoors a lot so encourage them to bring the right clothing so they are well dressed for outside activities whatever the weather.
- Some students don't have the right gear so let them know that borrowing items like boots, and sleeping bags is more environmentally sound and cheaper than buying them. We also have waterproof ponchos and boots for students to borrow
- Students generally love the food.
- Let them know they will be expected to help out with some jobs like sweeping up after meals.
- The kit list says it is preferred that there are no electronics such as cell phones. Explain that students discover they enjoy being 'unplugged' and as a result are more engaged in the fun and activities. You could point out that the Centre's cell phone coverage is spotty and cell phones soon lose their charge. Also, students sometimes lose their phones in the woods, which is very stressful. It's okay to bring cameras.
- Try to make it sound like you expect all students to come. Students who decide not to come often regret it when they hear about the fun they missed. We have a new info packet for families to help them feel comfortable with sending their child on an overnight field trip in the woods!

# RULES

Please review the rules and free time areas with your students ahead of time! We have created a [Google Slides presentation](#) and a fun [Blooket quiz](#) to help them remember! We will review the rules when they arrive as well.

**Stay in Safe Places:** Always stay in supervised areas, especially near the woods and pond. During free time, you can hang out in safe spots like the classroom, garden, observatory, field, deck, and more.

**Keep Your Body Safe:** Remember, we're 1.5 hours away from the Janeway hospital. Protect yourself by avoiding risky behaviors, such as jumping off bunk beds, roughhousing, or running down the gravel hill to the Cookhouse.

**Have a Plan for Sticks and Rocks:** Being outdoors means handling sticks and rocks. Always have a safe plan—using a stick to build a shelter or as a walking stick is fine, but sword fighting is not. You can throw stones into the pond, but never into the woods where someone could be.

**Respect Nature:** Treat plants and animals with care. Please don't pull up plants or cause harm to the environment.

**Save Electricity:** Echo Pond generates its own electricity. Help conserve it by turning off lights and taps when not in use.

**Shoes On Outside, Shoes Off Inside:** Always wear shoes outdoors. When entering a building, remove your shoes and place them on the shelves.

**Stay With the Group:** When we're in the forest or moving through the woods, always stay with the group. An adult will lead and follow to ensure safety. Please don't wander off.

# FREETIME AREAS

During free time at Echo Pond, visiting teachers and volunteers are responsible for supervising their students. This period offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with your students in a relaxed and playful environment, allowing you to engage with them in ways that might not be possible in the more structured setting of a classroom. Whether it's joining in on games, exploring nature together, or simply chatting, free time is a chance to build stronger relationships and create lasting memories with your students. There is usually a bit of free time before and after meals as we finish or get ready for an activity. We have lots of safe places for free time activities!

Garden



Classroom



Field



Observatory



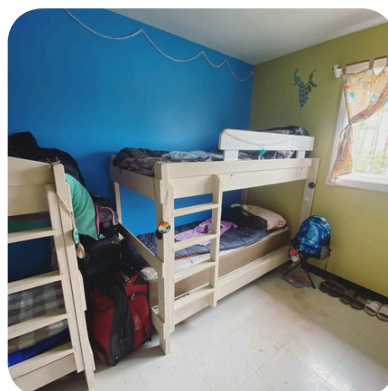
Lawn



Deck



Bedrooms



# MEAL ROUTINES

At Echo Pond, we eat our meals in the Cookhouse! Having a large group of students try to eat a meal at the same time can be chaotic, so we have a mealtime routine to help get everyone fed as efficiently as possible!

1. Students will enter the Cookhouse, remove their shoes, and place them on the shelves by the door.
2. Students will choose a table to sit at. Once a seat is chosen, it will be their designated spot for all meals during their stay.
3. Before the meal, we sing our pre-meal song, "Nature Is Fantastic," to the tune of "It's the B'y."
4. The meal will be announced, and students will be called up table by table. Food is served buffet style at the kitchen window.
5. Each table will have a designated "Hopper," responsible for refilling the water jug and taking plates up for seconds. This helps everyone stay seated and enjoy their meal.
6. There are three single-occupancy, gender-neutral washrooms available in the Cookhouse for student use.
7. At the end of the meal, the next activity will be announced, along with instructions on what gear students will need.
8. We will ask for volunteers to help sweep up the dining hall after the meal.
9. Students will be called up table by table to bring their dishes to the designated area. Each group is also responsible for wiping down their table.
10. After cleaning up, students will leave table by table to get ready for the next activity.



# NEW PHONE POLICY

At Echo Pond, we believe that the best camp experiences happen when everyone is fully engaged with the activities and each other. Over the years, we've found that when students leave their phones at home, the whole group enjoys a richer, more connected experience. Plus, it helps avoid privacy concerns, especially in spaces where students are sleeping or changing. While cell service at camp is spotty, phones can still be a distraction. They can also be easily lost in the woods during activities, which can cause unnecessary stress and disrupt the fun.

**Our new phone policy encourages students to leave their phones at home.** If a student needs to bring a phone (for the bus ride, a quick text home at night, etc.), it will be collected upon arrival and stored in a "phone hotel" in a teacher's room for the duration of the trip. Phones will be returned to students when they board the bus home or if they need them briefly in the evening.

To help capture memories without the need for phones, we're excited to introduce our new photography program! Teachers can sign out screen-free, kid-friendly digital cameras for their group to use during the trip. Afterward, you'll receive a Google Drive link with all the photos taken, so you can relive the memories with your students.

We hope this policy provides a balanced approach, allowing students to have their phones when absolutely necessary while minimizing disruptions and safeguarding everyone's privacy. Let's make this trip to Echo Pond a time to disconnect from screens and reconnect with nature and each other!





## TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

- **Student Supervision:** Visiting teachers and volunteers are responsible for student supervision during free time, meals, activities, and bedtime. Grab a mug of tea or coffee from the cookhouse and find a comfortable place to sit near where your kids are playing and enjoy the great outdoors!
- **Classroom Management:** Although we are in a much bigger classroom at Echo Pond, students may still need reminders to listen to our Environmental Educators and follow the rules. Engaging with your students by participating in activities alongside them is a great way to keep everyone on task!
- **Creating Groups:** We will need to split your class into smaller groups for most activities. Since you know the social dynamics of your students best, we will ask for your help in splitting them up.
- **Medication:** All student medication must be stored and administered by the visiting teacher.
- **Contact with Parents:** If students need to call home, visiting teachers are responsible for supervising them while they use the landline in the Cookhouse.
- **Bedtime and Mornings:** Environmental Educators sleep in a different building from students. Visiting teachers are responsible for making sure students go to bed at night and wake up on time in the morning for breakfast.
- **Communication with Lead Environmental Educator:** Visiting teachers are responsible for communicating any issues to our Lead Environmental Educator. This includes allergies, dietary needs, injuries, behavioral needs of students, etc.

# FIRST DAY SCHEDULE

No matter what grade you're in, the initial day of the trip usually follows a similar pattern. On this day, we acquaint students with the surroundings, rules, and daily schedule. Engaging group activities in nature are organized to foster positive outdoor experiences and encourage camaraderie amongst peers.

- **Arrival:** Classes usually arrive between 10-11am by bus. The Lead Environmental Educator will hop on the bus and explain to kids how to get their luggage and get their stuff to their rooms. Students will exit the bus, collect their gear, and head into the Bunkhouse. They will take off their shoes and put them on the shelves as they enter. They will have a little bit of time to unpack.
- **Rules and Expectations:** Once kids are finished unpacking, they will head to the classroom in the back of the Bunkhouse. The Lead Environmental Educator will introduce the staff and explain the rules and expectations. Ideally, you will have gone over these ahead of time so this will be a refresher.
- **Camouflage:** We get into our immersive nature activities right away! Students will gather outside where we will do a head count and take a short walk to a forested place to play camouflage.
- **Lunch:** After our game, we will return for lunch. The LEE will review the mealtime routines and then we will eat!
- **Orienteering and Shelter Building:** The group will split into two. Half will go to shelter building and half will stay at the Cookhouse for the orienteering talk. Once each group has completed their activity, they will switch.
- **Free time and Dinner:** There is usually a little free time before and after meals. This is a great time to interact with your students in a relaxed environment. Encourage them to visit the garden or throw around a frisbee! After a little free time we will have dinner.
- **Fairy Stump Hike:** Students will have some time to change into warmer clothes and get their flashlights. The group will then head out on a night hike to the Fairy Stump. One adult will stay behind in the Cookhouse in case there is an emergency. There will be one educator in the front and the back of the line with radios. When we arrive, students will sit on foam mats and listen to fairy stories told by our Environmental Educators.
- **Campfire and Games:** When we return from the hike, it will be time for our campfire. If it is a large group, we will split in half - one half will play games in the Cookhouse.
- **Bedtime Snack:** Students will enjoy a snack of homemade popcorn, fruit, and herbal tea in the Cookhouse.
- **Bedtime:** Students and visiting teachers will retire to the Bunkhouse for the night. See you in the morning!



## MAKING YOUR TRIP MEMORABLE

- The evening campfire is a great time to connect with your students and create a moment they will remember for the rest of the year! Pick a couple of your students' favorite songs and practice singing them together as a group. Leading a sing-along at the campfire is a great way to create a warm, inclusive atmosphere.
- Do you have any students who play musical instruments? Encourage them to bring their instruments along. Their musical contributions can add a personal touch to the campfire experience. Do you play a musical instrument? Even better!
- Research a funny story to tell at the campfire. This is a great way to show off your humorous side and break the ice with your students in a fun, relaxed setting.
- Challenge your students to a joke contest! Have them prepare their best jokes in advance and present them at the fire.
- Learn and challenge students to a fun card game! A simple deck of cards can go a long way in creating fun and silly memories. Games like Spoons and Cheat can incorporate a lot of students at once! These are fun to play at a picnic table on the deck or in the classroom during wet weather!
- Consider post-trip activities. Some teachers like to take a picture of every student - usually during our pond painting or shelter building activity - and use it as part of a reflective writing piece when they get back to school. This makes a great display outside your classroom or as part of an end-of-year slideshow!

# PRINTABLES

The next few pages includes all of the forms and printables you will need for your trip. If you have any questions or need anything else, don't hesitate to email us at [schoolprogram@echopond.ca](mailto:schoolprogram@echopond.ca)

- Bunkhouse Layout for Room Group
- Info Page
- Kit List
- Medication and Permission Form
- Epi-Pen Allergy Form
- Sole Source Letter (sometimes required by NLSchools)

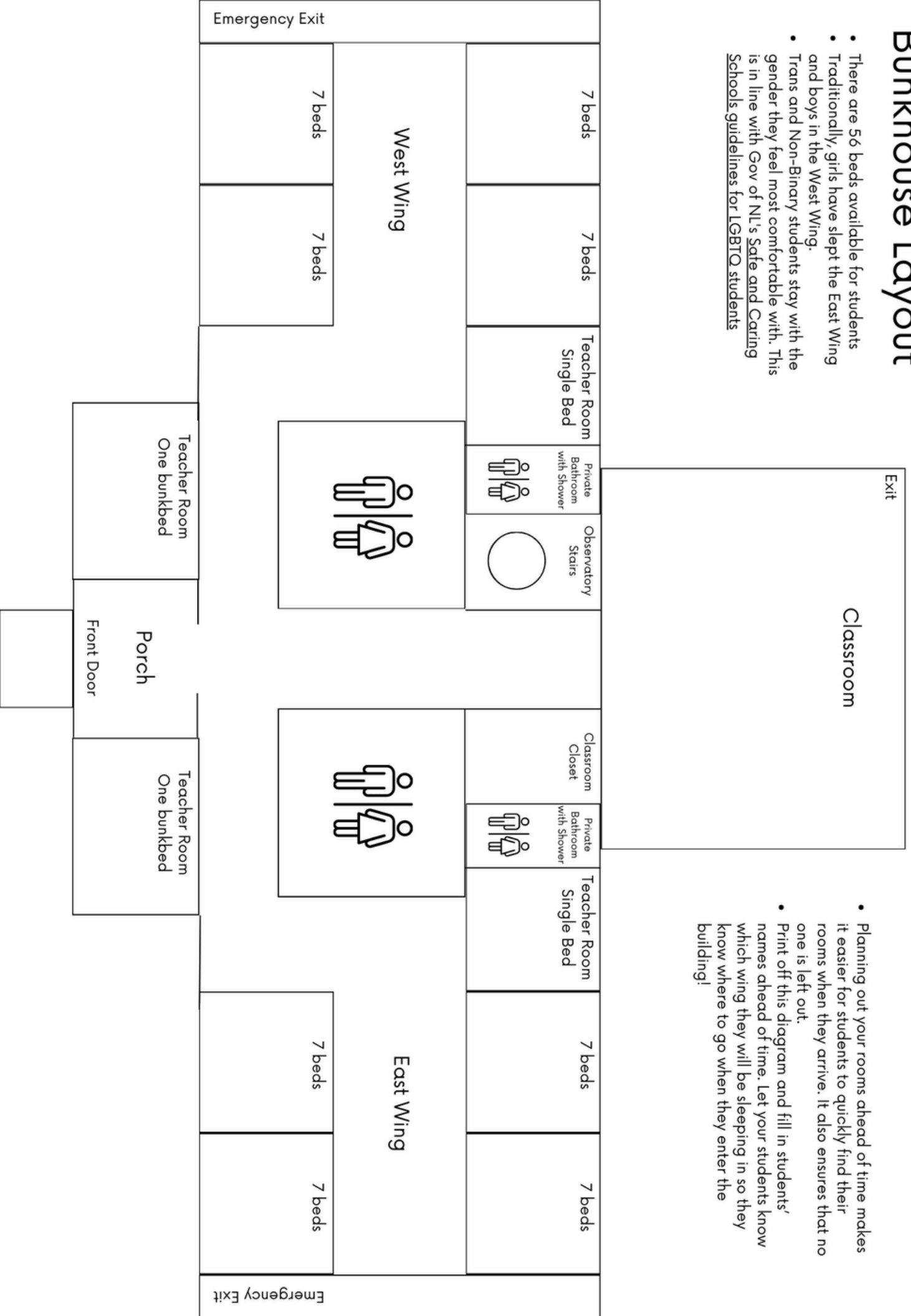
We also offer a digital information packet that you can send to families along with the permission forms. This packet provides a glimpse of what to expect from the trip to Echo Pond, helping to ease any concerns and encouraging their child to participate. You can find the link to that packet here:

[A Family's Guide to Echo Pond](#)



# Bunkhouse Layout

- There are 56 beds available for students
- Traditionally, girls have slept the East Wing and boys in the West Wing.
- Trans and Non-Binary students stay with the gender they feel most comfortable with. This is in line with Gov of NI's Safe and Caring Schools guidelines for LGBTQ students



- Planning out your rooms ahead of time makes it easier for students to quickly find their rooms when they arrive. It also ensures that no one is left out.
- Print off this diagram and fill in students' names ahead of time. Let your students know which wing they will be sleeping in so they know where to go when they enter the building!



Dear Parent / Guardian,

Your child's class is preparing for a field trip to the [Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre](#).

The Centre is located near Deer Park, off of Salmonier Line. It is in a wonderful wilderness location and has comfortable bunk rooms and friendly staff who prepare good, home-cooked meals. The class visit is subsidized by the NLSchools and is presented by enthusiastic environmental educators. The programs are fun, active, and directly related to your child's school curriculum. They also aim to immerse students in environmentally sound living while they learn about the boreal forest, bogs and ponds. For many students, this fun field trip is the highlight of their school years.

**Attached are a medical/permission form, and a list of items that students need to bring**

Your child's class will travel by school bus, which will depart from the school on:

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. and return on

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ at approximately \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

The total cost will be \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please return the medical / permission form and money to your child's school by \_\_\_\_\_.

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Teacher at School: \_\_\_\_\_

## ECHO POND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE

### KIT LIST

**Students will be outdoors for much of the time, so it is essential to pack according to the weather forecast for Placentia (e.g. go to [www.weather.gc.ca](http://www.weather.gc.ca)).**

Each student should take the following (labeling your child's belongings is encouraged):

- Sleeping bag, or sheets and blankets, small pillow, slippers or warm socks
- Warm pajamas
- Any medication (please refer to medical form)
- Small towel, toothbrush & toothpaste, soap, brush/comb
- Extra socks, underwear, shirt, pants and warm sweater
- Sneakers or hiking boots
- Rubber boots or snow boots (weather dependant)
- Warm jacket or rain jacket or both
- Snow pants or rain pants (weather dependant)
- Sun hat, sunscreen, bug spray and water bottle (weather dependant)
- Warm hat and mittens (often needed for the campfire all year round)
- Flashlight for evening hike (preferred, but optional)
- Students are encouraged to bring items such as board games and musical instruments. The Centre has balls, Frisbees etc. for free time
- Small backpack

Please do not bring any food or drinks because of concerns with allergic reactions.

Students with diabetes may pack peanut-free and nut-free snacks and those with celiac disease can bring their own bread products.

Students can bring cell phones if you and their teacher give permission. This year we will be asking teachers to collect phones when students arrive at Echo Pond and give them back when they leave or if they need to make a quick check in at home in the evening. Over the years, we've found that when students leave their phones at home, the whole group enjoys a richer, more connected experience. Plus, it helps avoid privacy concerns, especially in spaces where students are sleeping or changing. While cell service at camp is spotty, phones can still be a distraction. They can also be easily lost in the woods during activities, which can cause unnecessary stress and disrupt the fun.

**Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre**  
**Field Trip Medical/Permission Form**

**Student Information:**

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
of Birth (M/D/Y): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ MCP: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent / Guardian Contact Information:**

Name (s) : (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (es):(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: Home (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name(s) & #s: \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information:**

Diagnosis/Medical Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Medications (include dosage and time of administering it): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Relevant Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

- Food allergies must be indicated well in advance, so that dietary concerns can be accommodated.
- If your child needs medications – follow your school protocol/school board policy
- The remote location of the Centre means that it takes at least one hour and fifteen minutes to reach the Janeway Children's hospital. Echo Pond staff have First-Aid training but parents must ensure that the medical needs of their child can be met in a wilderness location. **If your child carries an epi-pen, please read and sign the form on Page 4 before deciding to send your child to the Centre.**

**Permission:**

I give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
to participate in the program offered at the Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre from

(date) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre Information for  
Parents/ Guardians of Students with Epi-Pens**

Dear Parents/ Guardians of students with Epi-Pens,

As you know your child's class is preparing for a trip to Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre. It is an exciting and worthwhile educational experience. However, before you decide to send your child you must be well aware of the remoteness of the Centre's location and therefore the delay in receiving medical attention should they have a serious allergic reaction while there. You should know:

- The Centre is at least 1 hour and 15 minutes away from the Janeway Children's Hospital. 30 minutes of that drive is on a dirt road where there is an increased risk of getting a flat tire or breakdown which would cause an extra time delay.
- The nearest ambulance (Holyrood) is at least 50 minutes away.
- The staff at the Centre will provide as safe an environment as they can for people with food allergies, but they have little control over the food (and therefore potential contaminants) that rental groups bring on the weekends.
- A member of staff at the Centre is willing, in an emergency, to drive a child to the Janeway Children's Hospital or to drive to meet an incoming ambulance.
- The Centre's cooks are experienced at serving children with food allergies. Many children with epi-pens have safely stayed at the Centre.
- The Centre's food is generally peanut and nut-free. Students are welcome to ask to read food labels.
- The phone number of the Centre 709-687-8593. You can call there should you need to discuss the menu/food ingredients with the chief cook.
- A copy of the School Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan for your child and a copy of the school photo will be posted in the kitchen at the Echo Pond Centre. Please ensure the Plan is up to date.
- The child should have at least two epi-pens (the second could be the epi-pen kept at school) and carry an epi-pen at all times. If the allergy is very severe consider sending a third or fourth epi-pen.
- If your child has severe insect allergies please send insect repellent and ensure they have clothing that properly covers arms, legs and feet as well as their two epi-pens.

Based on your knowledge of your child's allergy and the above information, you and the principal should decide whether or not to send your child. If your child has frequent serious allergic reactions or reacts to unknown substances, then it is recommended that you do not send your child.

have read and understood all of the above.

have discussed this with the school principal and still wish to send my child

(name) \_\_\_\_\_ to the Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre on the following dates \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed (parent)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (principal)

\_\_\_\_\_



To whom it may concern,

This is to confirm that the 2-day, overnight outdoor education field trip provided by the Environmental Education Commission/Echo Pond Environmental Education Centre is a sole source program for schools. No other organization in Eastern Newfoundland offers such programming for school groups.

Sincerely,

Katie Harrison  
Executive Director  
On behalf of the Environmental Education Commission