

Student & Family Handbook



Gould Lake
Outdoor Education
Programming 2026

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Welcome!

A Message from the Outdoor Education Consultant

My name is Nate Zahn. I am the Outdoor Education Consultant for the Limestone District School Board and the Director of the Gould Lake Outdoor Centre summer programs. For over 20 years, I have been pursuing a career path dedicated to outdoor education and have been very fortunate in having this career align with my life's passion.

I first attended a two-week summer camp in 1994 at Camp Wabanaki, on Lake Vernon. This experience changed my life in a meaningful and purposeful way. This was a completely new experience for me, as I had never been away from home and had not participated in many outdoor-related excursions. As a shy, reserved child with low confidence, attending this camp was a struggle. In fact, I did not want to attend. Over the course of each day as I experienced new adventures, learned new skills, and made new friends, my confidence grew and my love for the outdoors began.

At the end of those two weeks, I didn't want to come home. At that camp I experienced many new things for the first time and pushed myself past limits I didn't even know possible. I formed relationships that have lasted a lifetime and had new mentors to look up to. I gained a new appreciation for the natural world and found comfort in the forest. I have continued engaging in summer camps in some capacity, be it camper, staff, or director, ever since.

Today I continually thank my parents for enrolling me in that camp and for not giving in to me when I begged them not to send me. As a parent now myself, I cannot imagine how hard that was for them. I truly believe my life would look different today if my parents had not given me that opportunity and encouraged me to participate.

I believe that all students should have the opportunity to share in similar life changing experiences as I had back in 1994 and as a result, I have made a commitment to continue to share these experiences. Though your child may share the same feelings I did my first summer at camp, I can almost guarantee they will return home with new experiences, great stories, new lasting friendships, increased confidence, and a new outlook on life.

We hope this handbook provides families with information that will help you support your child in their summer adventure. Included are tools you will need in preparation for the summer programs. The "Check List" is a great place to start to ensure you and your child have what they need to immerse themselves in their new and/or next adventure.

As always, we are happy to answer any of your questions. Please do not hesitate to contact our office at 613-376-1433 so we can facilitate a smooth and seamless experience for you and your child.

Sincerely,

Nate Zahn
Outdoor Education Consultant & Camp Director

About Us

The Gould Lake Outdoor Centre is a year-round facility where individuals can experience outdoor and experiential education in a positive learning environment, facilitated by skilled, knowledgeable, and personable leadership. The outdoor centre is located inside Gould Lake Conservation Area.

Our aim is to provide quality outdoor adventure educational programs that are safe, fun and give the participants an increased knowledge, understanding and respect for themselves, their peers and the environment.

The Gould Lake Outdoor Centre has been providing outdoor education-based programs for students in the Kingston area since the late 1960s. Currently we offer over 16 programs tied directly to the Ontario curriculum to assist teachers, and provide unique experiences for more than 300 classes a year.

Since the late 1970s, we have been offering credit-based summer programs to students. Starting under the name Outreach, we have grown into 8 different programs serving more than 400 students a summer. Wilderness trips range from 5 days to 30 days. Our summer courses for students build on one another by continually providing increased skills, leadership training and experience. They are ultimately intended to develop the confidence required to become self-reliant individuals who actively contribute to society in a positive manner.

Our Values and Commitment

- **Fun:** We create safe, fun and engaging opportunities to inspire and promote the love of learning in and through nature.
- **Teamwork:** We work together toward common goals, honouring and building on the strengths of each other to achieve that which cannot be done alone.
- **Respect:** We recognize and value the inherent worth and dignity of individuals, having regard for the feelings, opinions and rights of others.
- **Inclusivity:** We value and embrace diverse experiences that build, promote, and support an enriched and welcoming space for everyone to learn, grow and play.
- **Curiosity:** We ignite curiosity for nature, exploring new perspectives and landscapes to create deeper connection to ourselves and the natural world around us.
- **Resilience:** Through new and challenging experiences, we persist in the face of adversity, learn from mistakes, and grow as individuals to build confidence and leadership.
- **Stewardship:** We model and promote environmentally responsible practices, leaving no trace, and inspiring ecological action to protect our natural world.

Program Philosophies

Creating balanced tripping groups is a priority and responsibility that lies with Gould Lake Outdoor Centre administration. Ultimately, the goal is to create groups that provide each student the opportunity to meet new people and each grouping the opportunity to develop teamwork, collaboration and interpersonal skills in an environment that is safe and inclusive of all participants. As such, requests for specific groupings may not be accommodated.

One of the main benefits of a wilderness excursion is that you can leave the hustle and bustle of everyday living behind. Students are asked to leave all of their electronic devices (cameras optional) at home. This will not only provide them with a break from their devices but will also ensure these items are not damaged or lost during the trip.

Our Programs

Nature Camp

Program Location: Gould Lake
Length: 5 days
Grades: Graduates of Grade 1-4
Credit: Non-Credit
Staff Prerequisites: Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid



Outdoor Escape (OE)

Program Location: Gould Lake
Length: 5 days
Grades: Graduates of Grade 5 or 6
Credit: Non-Credit
Staff Prerequisites: Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid

Quest/GAP (Girl's Adventure Program)

Trip Location: Frontenac Provincial Park
Length: 8 Days (3 Barn Days) (5-Day Trip)
Grades: Graduates of Grade 7 or 8. GAP is girls only
Credit: 0.5 PAD105 (Part 1)
Staff Prerequisites: Canoe Tripping 3, Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid



Outreach

Trip Location: Algonquin Provincial Park
Length: 16 Days (7Barn Days) (9-Day Trip)
Grades: Graduates of Grade 8 or 9
Credit: 1.0 PAD205
Staff Prerequisites: Canoe Tripping 3, Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid

Outdoor Skills (OS)

Trip Locations: Georgian Bay (2 Barn Days) (9 Days) / Palmer Rapids (1 Barn Days) (4 Days)

Total Length: 17 Days

Grades: Graduates of grade 10 or 11

Credit: 1.0 PAD4O5

Certifications: (for qualifying students) ORCKA Flatwater Kayaking; ORCKA Moving Water 1A

Staff Prerequisites: Canoe Tripping 3, Flatwater Kayaking Instructor, Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid



Outdoor Pursuits (OP)

Trip Locations: Temagami Wilderness Area (12 Days)

Total Length: 15 Days

Grades: Graduates of grade 10 or 11

Credit: 1.0 PAD3O5

Certifications: (for qualifying students) ORCKA Canoe Tripping 1

Staff Prerequisites: Canoe Tripping 3, Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid



Wilderness Instructor Course (WIC)

Trip Location: Missinabi River (14 Days)

Total Length: 18 Days

Grades: Graduates of Grade 10, 11 or 12

Prerequisite: ORCKA Moving Water 2A (or equivalent)

Credit: 1.0 GWP3O5, 1.0 GWP3OC

Certifications: (for qualifying students) ORCKA Canoe Tripping 2

Staff Prerequisites: Canoe Tripping 3, Moving Water Instructor, Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid



Kayak Instructor Course (KIC)

Trip Location: Anticosti Island

Total Length: 32 Days

Grades: Graduates of Grade 10, 11, or 12

Credit: 1.0 PAD4O5, 1.0 PAD4OC

Certifications: (for qualifying students) ORCKA Coastal Kayaking 1

Staff Prerequisites: Canoe Tripping 3, Flatwater Kayaking Instructor, Coastal Kayak 2, Lifeguard and Wilderness First Aid



Our Staff

Our program employs more than 60 highly skilled, qualified staff each summer who demonstrate exceptional leadership, communication and interpersonal skills required to successfully lead outdoor programming that provides safe, challenging and rewarding outdoor experiences for every student.

Our core values encompass professionalism, respect, integrity, passion for the outdoors, compassion and caring and fun.

All staff must be at least 18 years of age and have demonstrated successful completion of.

- Current CPIC
- ORCKA Canoe Tripping Level 3
- ORCKA Coastal Kayaking 2 (for kayaking courses)
- Current CPR
- Current Advanced Wilderness First Aid (40 hours)
- Current lifeguard certification (BC, NL)

In addition to the above certifications, many of the staff will have additional certifications such as:

- Wilderness First Responder (80 hours)
- Ontario Certificate of Teaching
- ORCKA Canoe and Kayak certifications
- River Rescue or Swiftwater Rescue Technician



Contact Us

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Phone
613-376-1433

Instagram
[@gouldlake_LDSB](https://www.instagram.com/gouldlake_LDSB)

Twitter
[@gouldlake_LDSB](https://twitter.com/gouldlake_LDSB)

Website
www.gouldlake.ca



The Gould Lake Outdoor Education Centre

The base of operations for all Gould Lake summer programs is at the Gould Lake Conservation Area. Located at the south end of Gould Lake, this area provides the perfect place for students to be introduced to their program and to learn the necessary skills and knowledge required for them to prepare for their upcoming adventure.

Barn Days

On designated program “Barn Days” (days spent at the Outdoor Centre) students will be transported by bus from Centennial Public School in Kingston to the Gould Lake Outdoor Centre in the morning, and back to Centennial Public School at the end of the day.

There are 3 optional drop off/pick up locations as follows.



Morning Pick-Up Locations and Times

8:30AM Bus departs [Centennial PS](#) (120 Norman Rogers Dr, Kingston, ON)
8:45AM Pick-up at [Elginburg & District PS](#) (2100 Unity Rd, Elginburg, ON)
9:00AM Pick-up at [Loughborough Public School](#) (4330 Wheatly St, Sydenham ON)
9:15AM Arrive at [Gould Lake Outdoor Centre](#)

Afternoon Drop-off Locations and Times

3:15PM Bus departs [Gould Lake Outdoor Centre](#)
3:30PM Drop-off at [Loughborough Public School](#)
3:45PM Drop-off at [Elginburg & District PS](#)
4:00PM Drop-off at [Centennial PS](#)

Please inform the Gould Lake Outdoor Centre office of any changes to your student’s pickup/drop-off locations.

What Students Should Bring on Barn Days

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Personal Floatation Device | • Hat and sunglasses |
| • Prescribed medications | • Swimsuit and towel |
| • 2 Litres of Water | • Raingear and warmer clothing |
| • Running shoes for fitness activities (no sandals) | • Lunch (all garbage will be sent home) |
| • Sunscreen, lip block and insect repellent | • Student manual and pencil/pen |

Important Information

Prepping For Trip

Here are a few things to remember for the duration of Gould Lake programs.

Contact Information

If there are any changes to the contact information (example, parents will now be away at the cottage during the student's trip) please ensure the Gould Lake office is notified prior to the start of the summer.

Medical Information

Please make sure all medical information is up to date. If any changes occur, please inform the Gould Lake Office as soon as possible.

Examples could include dietary changes, injuries, or medication changes. Informing the Gould Lake office of such changes will give the Gould Lake staff time to make the proper accommodations for the student.

Prescribed Medications

Students bringing medication on trip are required to bring two sets for Staff to hold onto. This way if one set happens to get damaged (wet/lost) the Staff will have extra. Staff will discreetly administer the medication and keep record of when it is taken.

What NOT to Bring

All Gould Lake Outdoor Center Programs should be seen as an extension of an LDSB classroom. Therefore, students are prohibited from bringing alcohol, cigarettes, vape pens or drugs to the Gould Lake Outdoor Centre Barn or on trip. Students who bring these items will be suspended from the course and evacuated at the expense of the parents/guardians. In the case of illegal substances, authorities will be notified.

Nut Free Trail Mix

A well-balanced trail mix is a great way to have a quick snack and very important for keeping energy levels up throughout the day. All food, including trail mix is provided on Quest and Outreach trips. Students enrolled in OS, OP, WIC and KIC programs will be provided with 3 meals a day; however, are required to provide their own trail mix or bars (granola, protein, energy). This helps to ensure every student has enough food throughout trip, based on caloric intake needs, which vary from student to student at this age,



PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE NUT PRODUCTS FOR YOUR STUDENT. The Gould Lake Outdoor Centre is Nut Aware and do not take any nut products on trips.

Clothing and Equipment

All food and group equipment (i.e. canoes, paddles, tents, cooking equipment, and packs etc.) are provided by Gould Lake for the multi-day trips.

Students are required to bring their own PFD (lifejacket), sleeping bag, stuff sacks, and personal clothing and gear, as well as lunches and drinking water for the days spent at Gould Lake. Please see [Equipment/Gear Lists](#) for a more detailed list of what will be needed each day while at the Barn.

Personal Floatation Devices (PDF's)

As referenced above, it is our policy that all staff and students wear a Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) approved PFD, at all times, when in a boat and while swimming.

It is imperative that every student brings a PFD that has been properly fitted to them. Please see the links below for more information on how to properly fit a PFD and which types (and colours) are CCG approved.

Please also note that certain types of PFDs are not appropriate for GL trips, this includes neoprene and inflatable.

Additional Website Resources

[How to Fit a PFD](#)

For a complete trip packing list please go to the student's specific program at the Gould Lake website.

Appropriate Footwear

All Gould Lake programs ask students to bring appropriate footwear, or "trip shoes". Trip shoes are footwear that is worn during the day while travelling. Shoes should have plenty of ankle support and be rugged enough to handle portages and hiking. Due to the lack of support, your typical water-shoes or sandals are not appropriate trip shoes. Examples of good trip shoes include hiking boots or running shoes.

If a student is planning on purchasing a new pair of boots, it is strongly recommended that they buy them before the summer and wear them regularly to break them in.

Camp shoes are footwear that are intended to be worn while in camp. They must be closed toed and able to be secured to your child's foot. Flip-flops, or other backless/strapless shoes are not appropriate.

Wear & Tear

It is important that students understand that all equipment, including clothing and footwear, will get dirty and worn. Students are encouraged to bring items that they will not mind looking "used" after their trip.

Summer 2025 Discounts

Students can obtain 10% off gear from Trailhead, Smith Army Surplus, Mountain Warehouse and Frontenac Outfitters.

Make sure to bring in your packing list to show at check out.

NOTE: Smith Army Surplus carries Kuss Mosquito Shield spray for clothing! Last up to 6 days.

Trip Departure Times

All Gould Lake trips will depart from Centennial Public School.

Quest	8:30AM
GAP	8:30AM
Outreach	6:00AM
Outdoor Skills (GB)	6:00AM
Outdoor Skills (Palmer Rapids)	7:00AM
Outdoor Pursuits (Temagami)	6:00AM
WIC	6:00AM
KIC	7:00AM

Trip Arrival Times

Bus arrival times will be updated on the Gould Lake website through pop-ups and email.



Maps and Directions

For maps and directions to the bus drop off locations (as well as the locations of the parks and our trip locations) please visit [Gould Lake Outdoor Centre](#).

You may also click the location below for directions.

- [Centennial PS](#)
- [Elginburg and District PS](#)
- [Loughborough PS](#)
- [Gould Lake Outdoor Centre](#)

Checklist

- ✓ I have recorded the name, dates, and times of the program in which my child is enrolled.
- ✓ I know what assignments must be completed before my child's trip (OS/WIC/KIC).
- ✓ I know the bus travel dates and times for my child's trip.
- ✓ I have made Gould Lake aware of my child's pick up/drop off location (Loughborough PS, Elginburg PS or Centennial PS).
- ✓ I know which meals my child is responsible for bringing or purchasing during bus travel days to and from the trip location.
- ✓ I have packed the clothing and personal gear that my child is required to bring for their trip.
- ✓ I have informed the Gould Lake office of all my child's medical information and of any changes to this information that may occur before my child's trip with Gould Lake.
- ✓ I have packed two sets of any required medication for staff to carry and administer, including specific directions.
- ✓ I have informed the Gould Lake office of any learning or other accommodations that my child may require prior to the start of their program.
- ✓ I have sent Gould Lake a copy of my child's IEP, if required.
- ✓ I have informed the Gould Lake office if I feel my child may have difficulty successfully completing the Gould Lake swim test prior to leaving for the trip (50m continuous swim, 1 minute of treading water, rolling entry into deep water).



Cancellation and Refund Policy

1. Payment 1 is a **non-refundable** deposit that must be made at time of registration.
2. If your student withdraws from a program prior to April 1st, 2026, payments 2 and 3 will be refunded.
3. If your student withdraws after April 1, 2026, payment 3 will be refunded unless the program fills, in which case payment 2 and 3 will be refunded.
4. If your student withdraws after June 1, 2026, no refund will be issued, unless the program fills, in which case payment 2 and 3 will be refunded.
5. If the student is placed on a waiting list, payment is not required until the student has been accepted into a program. Upon acceptance, the refund policies above will apply if the student chooses to withdraw.
6. If a student must withdraw from a program for medical reasons, payment 2 and 3 may be refunded, pending appropriate medical documentation.
7. For more information on our other Registration policies, please refer to the “**Gould Lake Registration Policy**” document on our website www.gouldlake.ca



Support Gould Lake

Gould Lake has multiple fundraisers to which you can donate year-round. If you would like to sponsor a student or help us in other ways, you can find information on our website under ABOUT US or call the Gould Lake office at 613-376-1433.

Donations over \$10.00 toward any of our Charitable Trusts, are eligible for a receipt that can be claimed as a Charitable Tax Credit.

Friends of Outreach (F.O.O.)

F.O.O. is a charitable trust fund that was formed in 1996 by Gould Lake staff and parents, the primary function of which is to raise money to support eligible students with tuition fees. F.O.O. raises funds through public donations, Gould Lake staff initiatives, and the sale of F.O.O. merchandise during the summer and at the Annual Summer Slideshow.



Denis Reed Fund

This fund was established in recognition of the founder of the Outreach Program, upon his retirement, and is also used to support students with tuition subsidization.

Gould Lake Charitable Trust

The Gould Lake Charitable Trust Fund is used for the further development of Gould Lake programming. It can provide funds to assist in purchasing new equipment such as canoes and kayaks as well as to support other Gould Lake initiatives.

Adam Woogh and Annie Casson Fund

Established in 2011, this fund is used to further assist students with tuition subsidization.

Student Achievement Forms

Report cards will be mailed directly to LDSB and ALCDSB home schools. Students from out of board will be emailed their report cards in late September or early October. Please contact the Gould Lake office for any additional information regarding these forms.



Look at the footprint
you've made!

Thank you for supporting and attending
Gould Lake Outdoor Education Programs!