

Nature Ninjas Teacher Information

Overnight Camping in Stanley Park



Photo: Mike Mills

Visualize your class playing games, singing songs and having fun in nature.

Experience the science curriculum coming alive.

Witness young people developing life skills and building strong bonds with the natural world.

Explore the wilds of Stanley Park by day, sleep under the stars at night.

Under the leadership of skilled educators, students spend two days exploring forest, wetland and intertidal ecosystems and learn survival skills. They set up tents and cook meals on camp stoves. An evening hike to Beaver Lake offers students an opportunity to encounter beavers, bats and owls.

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Welcome to Nature Ninjas Overnight Camping

Nature Ninjas are highly skilled masters of their environment. They have a deep understanding of the world around them and leave no trace of their presence. Learn to read the book of nature through nature songs, stories and games. *Nature Ninjas* is highly educational, easy for teachers, safe, affordable and FUN!

Checklist of Details and Important Dates

What?

- Read through this program information. Double check your booking date. Begin fundraising if necessary.
- Mail your **non-refundable** deposit cheque (as per your deposit invoice) to Stanley Park Ecology Society to reserve your spot (see address below).
- Print and distribute the Parent Information Package. Please note there are consent forms for parents to sign and return to you in the Parent Information Package.
- E-mail or fax us your completed *Nature Ninjas* Information Form.
- The remaining balance must be paid by cheque, based on the number of students you confirm.

When?

- Immediately
- As soon as possible.
- Two months prior to your program
- One month prior to your program
- Two weeks prior to your program

About the Stanley Park Ecology Society

Stanley Park Ecology Society promotes awareness of and respect for the natural world and plays a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through collaborative initiatives in education, research, and conservation. Our programs are made possible through the generous support of government programs, foundations, grants and donations.

Phone

School Programs: 604-257-6907
SPES General: 604-257-6908

Our Mailing Address

Stanley Park Ecology Society
PO Box 5167
Vancouver, BC, V6B 4B2

On the Web

www.stanleyparkecology.ca
school@stanleyparkecology.ca



Details at a Glance

Fees

The fee for *Nature Ninjas* is \$65 per student. There is a maximum of 30 students. If you have less than 25 students, a minimum fee of \$1650 will apply. Please confirm final student numbers by sending in the *Nature Ninjas* Information Form one month prior to your program date so that we may purchase food and organize supplies. A \$500 deposit is required to reserve your spot.

Cancellation Policy

Your camp is reserved as soon as we receive your \$500 deposit. Deposits are non-refundable. Where a cancellation is made less than two weeks in advance, Stanley Park Ecology Society may retain the program fee in full.

Adult Chaperones

- We require at least two but no more than three adult chaperones (including the teacher). Chaperones are not required to pay program fees. We must have chaperones at all times, but you may choose to have two shifts of chaperones: daytime 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and nighttime 4:30 p.m. - 9:00 a.m.
- Note that if one chaperone is a teaching aide dedicated to (a) specific student(s), please invite an additional chaperone to help with the rest of the class.
- Chaperones that plan on spending the night must arrive between 4:30 and 7:00 p.m. Call to make arrangements before your program date. Please do not arrange adult drop-in visits; these are very difficult to arrange while balancing group safety and security.

Safety and Security

Safety is our first priority in the *Nature Ninjas* program. Our leaders are first aid trained and they carry first aid kits and cell phones at all times. The camping site itself is situated in a large secure area which is fenced and locked. A professional security guard is on duty at the campsite each evening and into the night to ensure group safety. Although SPES takes every precaution to ensure the safety of the students, this responsibility ultimately lies with the teacher. Please make sure that you review rules of appropriate behaviour with your class prior to the program.

Emergency Contact Numbers

- School Programs office: 604-257-6907 (during business hours only)
- *Nature Ninjas* cell phone: 778-871-1247 (after hours, or anytime during the program)

Special Needs

If you have students with specific dietary requests or other special needs, please include this information on the *Nature Ninjas* Information Form that you e-mail to us one month prior to your program. Please contact us by telephone regarding any other considerations in regards to students, especially health or accessibility concerns.

Supplied Equipment

We will supply tents, sleeping mats, extra blankets, cooking supplies, food (except lunch and morning snack on the first day) and first aid supplies. Students and adult chaperones will need to bring their own sleeping bags, pillows, toothbrushes, clothing, any medication, and lunch for the first day.



Curriculum Connections

Nature Ninjas is a cross-curricular program. Below, you'll find some big ideas and curricular competencies for Science, Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies, and Physical and Health Education that will be addressed. You may contact us for a more detailed list for your grade if you please.

Science

Big Ideas

Grade 4

- All living things sense and respond to their environment
- The motions of Earth and the moon cause observable patterns that affect living and non-living systems.

Grade 5

- Multicellular organisms have organ systems that enable them to survive and interact within their environment

Grade 6

- Multicellular organisms rely on internal systems to survive, reproduce, and interact with their environment

Grade 7

- Evolution by natural selection provides an explanation for the diversity and survival of living things
- Earth and its climate have changed over geological time

Curricular Competencies

- Demonstrate curiosity about the natural world and make observations
- Make predictions about the findings of their inquiry
- Explore and pose questions that lead to investigations
- Safely use appropriate tools to make observations and measurements, using formal measurements and digital technology as appropriate
- Experience and interpret the local environment
- Identify First Peoples perspectives and knowledge as sources of information
- Co-operatively design projects
- Express and reflect on personal or shared experiences of place

Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies

Big Ideas

Grade 4 and 5

- Skills are developed through practice, effort, and action

Grade 6 and 7

- Design can be responsive to identified needs

Curricular Competencies

- Demonstrate an awareness of precautionary and emergency safety procedures in both physical and digital environments
- Demonstrate their product and describe their process

Physical and Health Education

Big Ideas

Grade 4 and 5

- Personal choices and social and environmental factors influence our health and well-being
- Developing healthy relationships helps us feel connected, supported, and valued

Grade 6 and 7

- Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being
- Learning about similarities and differences in individuals and groups influences community health

Curricular Competencies

- Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining positive relationships
- Describe and apply strategies that promote a safe and caring environment
- Develop, refine, and apply fundamental movement skills in a variety of physical activities and environments

Nature Ninjas Schedule

Below is a loose schedule for the *Nature Ninjas* program. Our skilled leaders are very flexible (a key Ninja trait!). We can adapt to late buses, weather, and, in particular, group needs and interest.

Day One

- 9:30 am** Meet your leader in the Miniature Railway parking lot.
Get organized: Unload gear, visit washrooms, site orientation, morning snack break.
Introduction with *Nature Ninja* names.
Head out to use our senses to explore the environment around us.
- 12:00 pm** Lunch break.
- After lunch** Going into nature to continue our experiential curriculum-based education. This will include hands on activities, exploration, games, challenges, and FUN!
- 4:00 pm** Learn how to set up tents in *Mystery Meadow*.
- 5:15 (ish) pm** Dinner. Students will be able to participate in dinner prep and clean up.
- After dinner** Return to *Mystery Meadow*. Unload gear and enjoy some free time in the tents.
- 8:00 pm** Tell the story of the day in creative ways. Go for a night hike to Beaver Lake (including a solo walk).
- 10:00 pm** Get ready for bed.
- 10:30 pm** Lights out. Everyone sleeps soundly, Zzzzzzzzz.

Day Two

- 6:30 am** Wake up to the sound of the dawn bird chorus.
Take down tents, pack bags, and share your experience about what it was like to camp out in the wilderness.
- 8:00 am** Prepare breakfast, eat and clean up afterward.
- 9:00 am** Continuation of our experiential ecosystem exploration.
- 12:00 pm** Prepare and eat lunch.
- After lunch** Tying it all together. Reflection of our *Nature Ninja* experience.
- 2:00** Head home, filled with new awareness of Nature around you.



Nature Ninjas Food

“A Nature Ninjas honour their bodies with healthy food”

Healthy food fuels strong bodies and sharp minds. All meals will be simple and camp style, and at the same time plentiful, nutritious and child friendly. Camp organizers choose local and organic ingredients wherever possible, and our meals align with Canada’s Guide to Healthy Eating. Meals are all nut-free and vegetarian with optional dairy.

Students will learn food preparation skills by assisting in the preparation and clean-up of shared meals.

Example menu:

(Note that this is just a sample. Meals will be determined close to camp date based on group needs.)

Day One

Morning snack and lunch	Provided by participants. Please pack in reusable containers to help reduce waste
Afternoon snack	Cheese and apples
Dinner	Delicious pasta with tomato sauce, side salad, dinner rolls and healthy dessert

Day Two

Breakfast	Energizing oatmeal or cold cereal with milk, fresh fruit
Morning snack	Nut-free trail mix
Lunch	Delectable burritos made with whole wheat tortillas, beans, rice and all the fixings

Special Needs

If your students have specific dietary requirements, please ensure parents write this on the Medical and Consent Forms (pages 7 and 8 of Parent Information). Our camps are all nut-free with dairy-free alternatives. We do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, but if your students are particularly sensitive, please consider having parents pack extra food for the trip.



Nature Ninjas Gear

Clothing List

Avoid cotton wherever possible. It absorbs moisture, keeping you cold if it gets wet. Choose wool or synthetic wherever possible.

Item	Quantity	Notes
Waterproof shoes	1 pair	Bring comfortable shoes for walking on forest trails. These shoes may get wet or muddy.
Gloves Warm hat	1 of each	Pack these even if it's warm out. At night and in early mornings in spring it gets surprisingly cold!
Waterproof jacket Warm sweater	1 of each	Again - pack these even if the days are warm. They'll help you out at night. Fleece and nylon are best.
Wool or fleece socks	3 pairs	These will help keep your feet warm even if it's wet outside.
Long-sleeved shirt Short-sleeved shirt	1 of each	Put the long-sleeved shirt in your daypack.
Pants Shorts	1 of each	Ideally made from fleece or nylon. Avoid jeans if possible: they take very long to dry if wet.
Pajamas	1 pair	Pack these in with your sleeping bag and pillow case.
Sun hat	1	For example, a ball cap. Put this in your daypack.

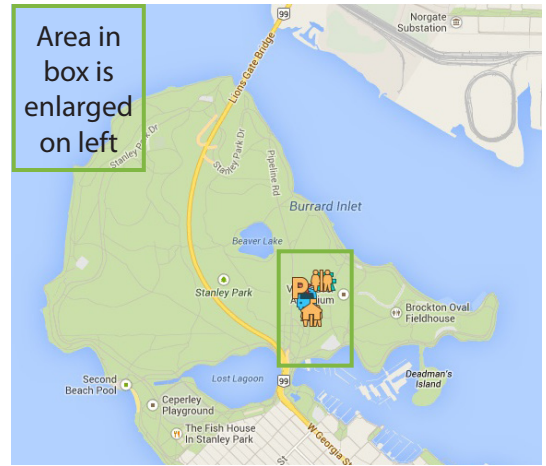
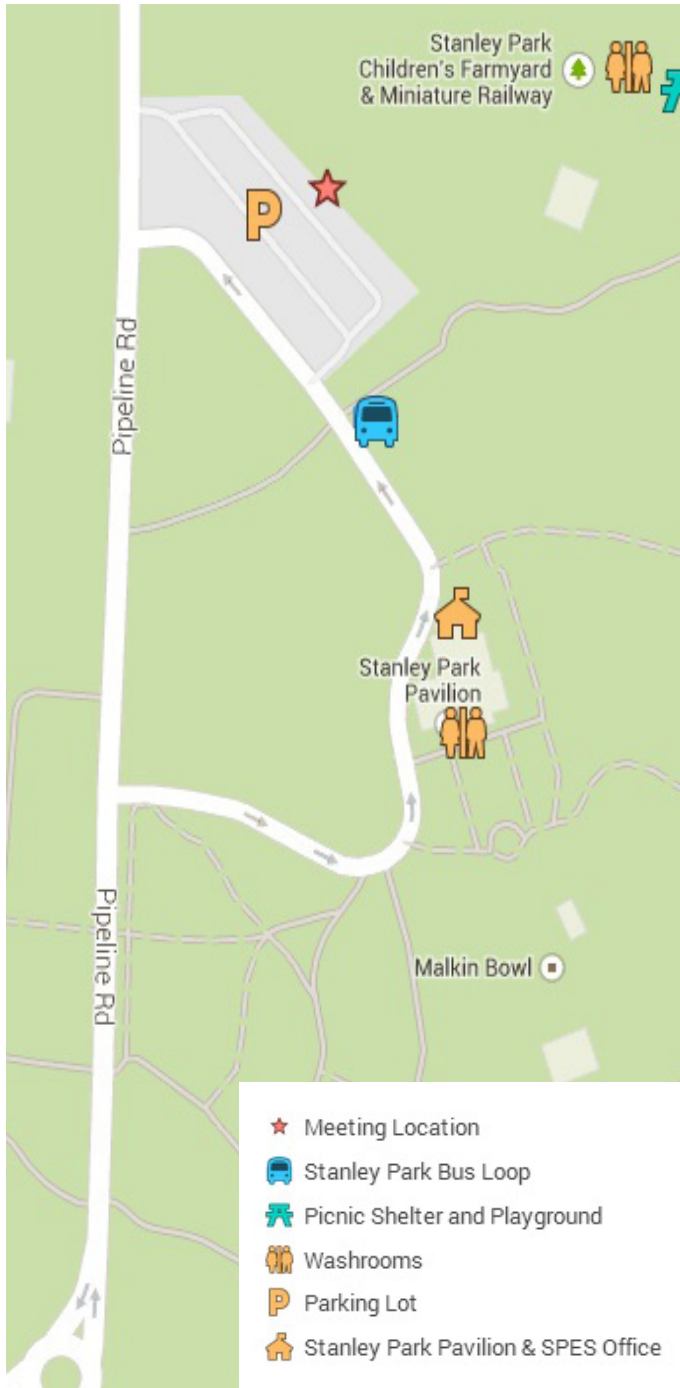
Equipment List

Ninjas need to be quick on their feet. Your mission: pack as light as possible. Do not bring any valuables!

Item	Quantity	Notes
Small backpack for day use	1	Contents: lunch, toothbrush, toothpaste, long shirt, sun hat, water bottle.
Lunch (for Day 1) in reusable container	1	Please pack lunch in reusable containers to avoid waste. Put this in your daypack.
Sleeping bag Pillow	1 of each	Please store these in a stuff sac or duffel bag (rather than a plastic or garbage bag) labelled with your name.
Any personal medications	Enough for 2 full days	Let the teacher know any medication needs.
Toothbrush Toothpaste	1 of each	Put these in your daypack.
Sunscreen		You only need a small amount. Share this with a friend or bring one per tent group.
Flashlight (optional)	1	One lantern is supplied per tent.



Map and Directions



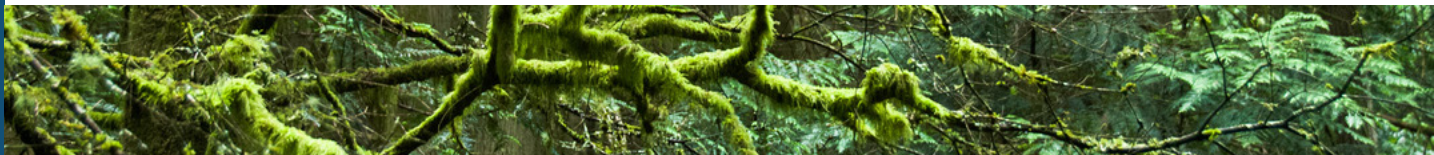
Driving Directions from Vancouver

- Travel northeast on Georgia St. past Denman St.
- Take the right lane exit into Stanley Park.
- Travel straight through the roundabout (take the second exit).
- Drive up the hill along Pipeline Road. Take your first right after the rose gardens.
- Follow this narrow road between the rose gardens and the trees past the Stanley Park Pavilion to the Miniature Railway parking lot.

Public Transit Directions

After you get off the #19 bus, walk north towards the Miniature Railway parking lot. We will meet you at the gates to the Miniature Railway.

For interactive directions, this map is also available at <http://ow.ly/pUTTS>



How to Be a Great Nature Ninja

Stanley Park is a protected area that is home to many amazing living and non-living things. We are lucky to be able to visit this area, but we must remember that Stanley Park is where these living things make their homes. As visitors to these organisms' homes we should tread carefully and act with respect.

To ensure the best possible experience for students and the Park's plants and animals, please take the time to review these guidelines with students before your Park visit.

1. Bring an open mind and your curiosity.

In our outdoor classroom, we'll engage all of our senses while exploring nature. There will be times for listening to instructions, when students will be invited to raise their hands and ask questions. There will also be times when students are given challenges to complete while exploring or sharing stories with their friends.

2. Take only photos and memories.

Every single leaf, flower, shell, stone and berry is an important part of the web of life in the Park. If we remove items from Stanley Park we are removing potential shelter and food for living things. Students should leave everything as they find it.

3. Leave only soft footprints (not garbage).

The animals of the Park have all the food they need. Human food can make them sick, create dependence on humans, and lead to aggressive behavior or overpopulation. Please ask students to ensure all garbage is disposed of properly. Even small crumbs shouldn't be left for animals to find.

4. Explore with respect.

Let us lead your adventure on and off trail in the Park; students should not be ahead of their leader. There will be opportunities to gently touch safe plants in the Park. You might be hugging trees, smelling leaves or just moving them to get a look from a different angle. However birds and mammals like raccoons and squirrels, while cute and often accustomed to humans, should not be touched. These are still wild animals and we want them to stay that way.



Frequently Asked Questions

When do I need to have my payment and camp information to you?

Send your deposit in ASAP to reserve your spot. Be sure to send your *Nature Ninjas* Information Form at least one month prior to your camp, and your final payment two weeks before the camp. We use this information to ensure we have adequate food and appropriate equipment for your program date.

How many students can you accommodate per camp?

We can accommodate up to 30 students in one session. Many schools book two spots to allow all students in one grade to attend.

How many chaperones can I bring?

A minimum of two and a maximum of three adult chaperones (including the teacher) are required. A mix of male and female chaperones can be helpful. Chaperones arriving for the overnight stay only must arrive between 4:30 and 7:00 p.m. Adults not planning to spend the night may not drop in.

Do I have to stay overnight with my class?

Yes indeed! For group safety and management, we require the teacher to stay overnight.

How cold does it get at night during our stay?

Although it may seem strange to pack a toque and long underwear in the warmer months of spring and summer, it gets very cool and damp in the forest in the late afternoon and early morning. Sometimes temperatures reach as low as 4°C. Please be prepared.

How much time do I have to notify SPES staff of any last minute changes?

Any special requests must be discussed with the *Nature Ninjas* Leaders at least one week prior to your camp.

Will there be a campfire?

Due to Park Board regulations, we are unable to have an open fire during your stay. We do however provide each tent with a rechargeable battery powered lantern.

What is 'Plan B' if the weather is too miserable to spend the night outside?

If it happens that your camp lands on an overly rainy or windy night, the *Nature Ninjas* leader will decide on whether or not to move the group to an indoor location. We have an indoor space with washrooms available just in case.

