

# Supported Camper Handbook

For Oak Bay Parks, Recreation and Culture  
Spring and Summer Camps



## Supported Campers

### Spring and Summer Camps

Oak Bay Parks, Recreation and Culture (OBPRC) is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive camp experience for children and youth. Families of campers requiring additional support in spring and summer camps are asked to review this handbook. By following the practices in this handbook, OBPRC aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all campers.

This handbook will cover:

- Camp Philosophy
- Important Definitions
- Additional Support offered in OBPRC Spring and Summer Camps
- Limitations to Additional Support
- Camper Expectations
- Caregiver Responsibilities
- Supported Camper Application Process

### Camp Philosophy

Oak Bay Parks, Recreation and Culture (OBPRC) strive to create camp environments where campers feel safe, respected, engaged, and encouraged. Diversity is valued and campers with a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and abilities are welcomed.

Staff endeavor to provide exciting, fun, welcoming and inclusive environments that promote exploration, creativity, and growth. Camp activities are designed to be both stimulating and appropriately challenging, helping campers build confidence, independence, and positive self-esteem. Staff create opportunities for meaningful participation, social skill-building, and friendship development.

### Important Definitions

- **Additional Support:** Refers to modifications, accommodation, and individualized or small-group assistance in camps. This may include support with self-regulation, transitions, adapted equipment, and/or other tools and strategies.
- **Care Plans:** A document for caregivers to complete outlining the camper's physical, intellectual, emotional, communicative, and/or behavioural needs. Care Plans provide program staff with essential information needed to create a safe and enjoyable environment for the camper.

OBPRC's Care Plan is an intermunicipal document accepted at the following organizations: City of Victoria, Esquimalt Parks and Recreation, Pacific Institute for Sport Education (PISE), Panorama Recreation, Saanich Parks, Recreation and Community Services, SEAPARC, West Shore Parks and Recreation, and Oak Bay Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Caregivers must complete the Care Plan annually; however, it can be submitted at all participating recreation sites for the calendar year.

- **Supported Child Development (SCD):** Funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the SCD Program works with childcare providers and families to facilitate inclusion in group childcare for children and youth with developmental delays or disabilities in physical, cognitive, communicative, and/or social/emotional/behavioural areas. SCD collaborates with families, therapy teams, childcare providers and community partners.
- **Spring and Summer Inclusion Grant (SSIG):** Each year, OBPRC applies for the SSIG from SCD. SCD provides limited funding for OBPRC to hire Inclusion Instructors to support school aged children in camps.

Visit the Island Health [Supported Child Development website](#) for more information and to see a list of all SSIG-funded organizations.

## **Additional Support Offered in OBPRC Spring and Summer Camps**

### **Who are Inclusion Instructors?**

Inclusion Instructors are seasonal camp staff with a strong interest in supporting children with developmental delays, disabilities, and/or behavioural challenges in a camp setting. Their role is to provide additional support within the camp setting, focusing on creating a positive, safe, and engaging experience for all participants. They are hired by OBPRC and are not employees of Island Health. Inclusion Instructors education backgrounds and experience may vary.

Inclusion Instructors receive the same level of camp training as all OBPRC camp staff, plus up to six hours of additional training, specific to inclusion practices.

### **Support Available for Campers**

Additional support from an Inclusion Instructor may be offered in a variety of ways: one-on-one direct support, shared support between two campers, or support within a small group. The type of support offered depends on staff availability and the individual needs of each camper.

The purpose of additional support is to enable campers to actively engage in the planned camp activities and foster positive participation in a group setting with enhanced staff-to-camper ratios. Inclusion Instructors do not create separate, individualized camp programs or activities for campers.

### **Examples of Additional Support Inclusion Instructors can offer:**

- Adaptations such as modified game rules, basic equipment changes or simplified instructions.
- Access to adaptive equipment for games, when available.
- Assistance with sensory tools such as noise canceling headphones, weighted lap pads, and fidget tools.
  - OBPRC has access to some sensory tools. Families are encouraged to provide their own if applicable.
- Use of visual timers, transition reminders, and early or delayed transitions to reduce anxiety and overstimulation.
- Support during transitions between planned activities.
- Visual schedules to support routine and predictability.
- Opportunities for short breaks from the larger group, within the program space, to regulate emotions, bodies, and energy levels.
- Guided self-regulation such as breathing exercises, talking through and validating emotions, and gross-motor movements.
- Simple language translations or visual aids for campers who are learning English.
- Facilitating and supporting peer interactions, social situations, and friendship-building activities.
- Encouraging participation through positive verbal guidance.

## **Limitations to Additional Support**

OBPRC strives to accommodate a wide range of camper needs, however, to ensure a safe environment and to operate within staff training, some support needs fall outside the role of Inclusion Instructor. These limitations help maintain a safe and supportive environment for all campers and staff.

### **Additional Support Outside of Staff Training:**

Inclusion Instructors are **not trained** to provide personal care, medical care, or health-related care. While some staff may have prior experience in this area, OBPRC does not provide training in these areas and **cannot guarantee** that staff can meet these support needs.

- **Personal Care**
  - Toileting (lifting, changing, personal hygiene)
  - Feeding (assistance with eating, positioning, utensils)
  - Dressing (clothing changes)
  - Mobility Assistance (transfers)
  
- **Medical or Health-Related Care**
  - Medication management (insulin administration, blood-glucose monitoring)
  - Emergency medical intervention beyond basic first aid and calling 911

**Additional Support OBPRC Staff Cannot Accommodate:**

Inclusion Instructors are not specialists in high-risk interventions. If a camper’s behaviour or support needs present a foreseeable risk of harm to themselves, other participants, staff, or the public, it exceeds what can be accommodated in an OBPRC’s camp setting.

- **High-Risk Behaviours**
  - Physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, scratching, throwing objects)
  - Verbal aggression or threats
  - Unsafe physical or sexual behaviour or assault
  - Destruction of property
  - Severe emotional escalation without ability to de-escalate
  - Behaviours that create an unsafe situation
  - Eloping/Bolting
  - Ignoring essential safety instructions

## **Camper Expectations**

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants and staff, campers are expected to follow these guided principles:

1. Be Safe
2. Be Responsible
3. Be Respectful

## **Behaviour Incident Response**

OBPRC staff recognize that situations may arise where a campers’ behaviour poses a risk to themselves, others, or the environment. When this occurs, staff will respond using strategies outlined in the campers Care Plan (if applicable), along with logical consequences, positive behaviour support techniques, and ongoing communication with the caregiver to address the behaviours effectively.

Following a Behaviour Incident that poses a risk to the safety and well-being of the camper, the participants, the public, or the property, or if unsafe behaviour becomes an ongoing issue, the following steps will be taken to ensure a safe and respectful environment.

1. **Immediate Safety Response:** Staff will ensure the safety of the camper, participants, and staff.
2. **Program Withdrawal:** If the camper's behaviour poses a risk to the safety and well-being of the camper, the participants, the public, or others, a caregiver will be called to immediately pick up the camper. The camper will be withdrawn from the remainder of the camp week, and a refund will be issued for any remaining days. For more details on this process see the "*Decision-Making Matrix*" in appendix A.
3. **Initial Communication:** Within 24 hours staff will contact caregivers to share details of the incident; strategies attempted and collaborate on additional approaches. Staff will also send an email to the families of all other campers to communicate the incident.
4. **Follow-Up Meeting:** In a timely manner a follow-up meeting will be held with the camper's family to discuss the incident, next steps, the possibility of the camper registering for future OBPRC camps, etc. Please note that returning to OBPRC camps is not a guarantee.

## Caregiver Responsibilities

Collaboration between caregivers and staff is essential to creating a positive and inclusive camp experience. This partnership should be built on ongoing communication, a shared commitment to the camper's success, and mutual respect.

### Caregivers are responsible for:

- Completing all required documents accurately and on time.
- Providing all relevant information about their camper's needs, including health, behaviour, and safety considerations.
- Informing staff promptly of any changes to their camper's needs.
- Informing staff whether their camper will be late to camp or not in attendance.
- Working collaboratively with OBPRC staff to support their camper's success.
- Reviewing and understanding OBPRC policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook and the OBPRC Camp Handbook.
- Communicating with all OBPRC staff in a respectful manner.
- Ensuring their camper arrives each day with all required items, such as preferred fidget tools, communication devices, and comfort items.
- Caregivers must be available to pick up their campers immediately if a behaviour incident occurs.

## Supported Camper Application Process

Starting in 2026, Campers who require additional support in camps will submit a designated Supported Camper Application online **prior to summer camp registration**. This dedicated process is designed to minimize uncertainty for caregivers, promote equitable access to inclusion services, and provide staff with the essential information needed to create a safe and enjoyable experience for all campers.

### Continuity of Care Campers

To foster continuity of care and strong relationships between campers and their Inclusion Instructors, priority registration is given to children currently enrolled in OBPRC Licensed Care Programs (Before School Care or Neighbourhood Learning Centre After School Care, or Henderson After School Care).

### Funding Available Per Camper

OBPRC allocates funding on a first-come, first-served basis in accordance with available resources through the Island Health Spring and Summer Inclusion Grant (SSIG). As funding is limited, each camper may receive up to the following supported weeks each summer:

- Continuity of Care Campers (*Campers currently enrolled in OBPRC Licensed Care*)
  - May receive up to 4 weeks of support
- General Supported Campers (*All other supported campers*)
  - May receive up to 2 weeks of support

### How to Apply:

- Applications and supporting documents will be available online on the OBPRC [Access & Inclusion](#) webpage three weeks ahead of the application due date.
- Applications must be submitted through the *Simple Survey* online portal. A link to the portal will be included in the application package.
- The program team will review applications and register supported campers into their requested camps.
  - Submitting an application and all required documents does not guarantee that campers will receive additional support in camps.
  - Submitting an application and all required documents does not guarantee campers a spot in their requested summer camps.

- The level of support provided (E.g. 1:1, shared support, or small group) is based on the staff and funding available, as well as the needs of the campers. Inclusion Instructors are not guaranteed.
- Additional Support is allotted on a first-come, first-served basis, regardless of support needs.
- All campers requiring additional support must complete an application for inclusion services.
- Additional support cannot be provided until the application has been submitted and approved.

To simplify the process on registration day, families are encouraged to review and complete all required documentation in advance. When registration opens, caregivers can attach the pre-completed documents into the registration portal.

### **Selecting a Camp**

OBPRC offers a wide range of camp styles to meet diverse needs. One camp style does not necessarily work for all campers. Camps are dynamic and busy environments with many moving parts and varying stimulus.

#### **When selecting a camp, consider the following:**

- **Theme:** Does the camp align with your camper's interests (e.g. Sports, arts, nature, swimming, or coding)?
- **Environment:** Does your camper feel most comfortable indoors or outdoors? Do they prefer a consistent location or enjoy varied locations/environments?
- **Activity Level and Structure:** Is the camp high energy or are the activities at a casual, relaxed pace? Is the schedule highly structured with planned activities, or flexible? Does the camp have daily out-trips? If so, are they mostly walking out trips or are they on OBPRC buses or public transport? Is the schedule predictable or frequently changing?
- **Duration and Daily Schedule:** Is the camp full day or half day? Does your camper manage best with shorter sessions or longer engagements? Will your camper need to be picked up early most days? If so, does the camp stay on location or will you need to pick up while the camp is on out trips? Please keep in mind that camp days are usually longer than on a regular school day.

- **Sensory Environment:** Most OBPRC camps are stimulating environments with loud spaces, busy rooms, and multiple locations throughout the day and week. Occasional quiet breaks can be provided with the assistance of an Inclusion Instructor.

To find out more about the camp environment, activity levels, daily schedules, and sensory demands, please contact the Inclusion Programmer at [inclusion@oakbay.ca](mailto:inclusion@oakbay.ca) before registering for camps.

**NOTE:** Due to the limited number of kayaks and available spaces, “*Coastal Kids Kayaking Camps*” is unable to accommodate supported campers.

**If you have any questions about the application process, the Supported Camper Handbook, or accessing Inclusion Support Services with OBPRC, please contact the Inclusion Programmer at [inclusion@oakbay.ca](mailto:inclusion@oakbay.ca)**

## APPENDIX A: Decision Making Matrix: Camper Return to Camp

### How to use the Matrix:

- Staff should select the zone that best reflects the camper’s typical functioning in camp.
- If the camper’s behaviour spans multiple zones, staff will select the highest-risk zone represented.
- The matrix will be used in conjunction with the Incident Review questions below.

Questions to Answer	
<b>Severity of Incident</b>	What was the nature and impact of the incident? Report any injuries, impact, and duration.
<b>Trigger</b>	What triggered the incident?
<b>Response</b>	How did the staff respond? What worked? What could have been done differently?
Zone Based Decision Making	
<b>If camper is mostly in the Green Zone:</b>	Camper may return to the program with standard supports in place. Minor adjustments to their Care Plan may be recommended. Follow-up communication will occur, but no major intervention is required.
<b>If camper is mostly in the Yellow Zone:</b>	Camper may return after a Safety Plan is created or revised. Increased, proactive strategies and regular check-in are required. Communication and a detailed, agreed-upon plan will be required moving forward.
<b>If camper is mostly in the Red Zone:</b>	Camper cannot safely return to the camp at this time. Camper will be withdrawn from the camp. Families will be issued a refund for the remaining days of camp.

Decision Area	Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Red Zone
<b>Safety</b>	No unsafe behaviours affecting the camper, others, or property. Responds to redirection and remains with the group.	Some unsafe behaviour occurring occasionally, but able to regain control with support. May require a brief break from the group (under 15 minutes).	Demonstrates behaviours putting themselves or others at harm including but not limited to hitting, kicking, biting, throwing objects, verbal aggression, destruction of property, or eloping from the group.
<b>Regulation</b>	Utilizing tools and strategies and is regulated move of the time. Camper can self-regulate with tools.	Requires staff support to regulate. Becomes dysregulated periodically but recovers with strategies from care plan.	Unable to regulate and enters a crisis state. Requires removal from the situation (or remove others from the area) and/or an emergency restraint. Physical or verbal aggression and/or destruction of property.
<b>Recovery Time Following a Challenging Moment</b>	Following a challenging moment, the camper recovers within a few minutes using known regulation strategies.	Following a challenging moment, the camper recovers within 10 to 15 minutes with staff guidance.	Following a challenging moment, the camper takes a long time to recover (20+ minutes) and/or cannot recover while in the group setting.
<b>Communication of Needs</b>	Camper can express their needs effectively – verbally or non-verbally.	Camper sometimes struggles to communicate their needs, requiring staff support or prompting to express themselves appropriately. Communication challenges may lead to escalations, frustrations, and/or dysregulation.	Camper is unable to communicate their needs in a regulated manner. Communication challenges result in crisis behaviours (e.g. Yelling, threats, aggression, or complete shut-down) that significantly impacts safety and/or their ability to participate.

<b>Trigger</b>	Camper's triggers can be easily identified and are avoidable.	Camper's triggers are somewhat predictable, but not always avoidable. Camper may become dysregulated when triggers occur but is able to return to baseline with staff support and/or strategies from their Care Plan.	Camper's triggers are frequent, unpredictable, or unavoidable. Triggers consistently result in crisis-level behaviours, inability to self-regulate, or unsafe situations for themselves or others.
<b>Supervision Needs</b>	Camper remains with the group and does not require extra supervision.	Camper requires 1:1 support during challenging moments but can rejoin the group.	Camper requires 1:1 or 2:1 supervision during challenging moments and cannot remain safely with the group.
<b>Participation in Group Activities</b>	Participates in all group camp activities with support/adaptations in place.	Participates in all group camp activities with some breaks. Breaks are 15 minutes at most.	Unable to participate in the group camp activities and/or requires 30 minutes or more away from the group.
<b>Family Collaboration</b>	Engaged, collaborative, and supportive of staff.	Not collaborative or inconsistent with communication.	Not willing to collaborate or support program staff. Does not provide essential information about their camper, are rude or disrespectful.
<b>Program Staff</b>	Program staff are confidently able to support the camper successfully in program. Staff hold the skills, abilities, and training to safely support the camper.	Program staff are hesitant to support the camper in program. Program staff would benefit from implementing additional proactive strategies from a safety plan.	Staff are overwhelmed, apprehensive, and hesitant to support the camper. Staff do not hold the skills, abilities, and/or training to safely support the camper.