



Valhalla Wilderness Program Application Information 2021/2022

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in enrolling in the Valhalla Wilderness Program at W.E.Graham Community School. The Valhalla Wilderness Program is a full year 8 credit program that offers students the opportunity to learn in many environments. We spend approximately 40% of our time outdoors and 60% in the classroom. Due to the large amount of time spent outdoors, some academic courses may have modules that must be completed independently. A portion of the academic curriculum is also integrated with wilderness studies and outdoor living skills. Much of our work is project oriented, and there is more homework than in a regular academic program. We teach classes using a broad spectrum of strategies, including: role play, simulations, drama, cooperative group work, independent study, and textbooks.

The Valhalla Wilderness Program is not a boot camp or a survival school, nor is it therapy. We do not fix kids; we do not correct errant juvenile behavior. The VWP is a self-propelled wilderness experience that offers a high level of personal challenge. For some, the challenge is physical; for others it is working as a team. This program is demanding physically, socially and academically. In both the classroom and on out trips, you may find yourself dealing with adversity. We expect you to be committed to working hard, being supportive of your classmates, willing to try new things, and to consistently do your best. You must be able to work independently and demonstrate self-discipline. During our out trips, we expect that you understand that Safety is of the utmost importance and that you have a clear understanding of authority. We expect that you understand that the needs of the team are more important than the needs of an individual. Time is spent on interaction skills, group processing and debriefing. We want you to be a full and patient participant in this process as it is an essential part of the out trips. You must be willing to learn, and to stretch yourself, both physically and mentally.

You will need the support of the adults who care for you in many ways during your time with us; one of these ways is with fundraising. You and your family will be expected to organize and participate in all fundraising activities. The School District #8 Board of Education has partnered with parents and has committed \$1000 per student for the VWP program. This does not cover the entire cost of the program. The first program fee is \$50 payable by the end of September. Other fees during the year will be: Our ski/snowboard program at Whitewater. VWP ski-days at Whitewater and Red Mountain, and individual trip fees (typically \$30-\$80).

While we carry a large inventory of equipment that you will be able to borrow, you will need some personal equipment of your own. This equipment can be expensive, as can be the out trips. It is important to discuss this commitment with your family before you submit your application so everyone is aware of and prepared for this requirement.

In return, you can expect that we will provide you with opportunities to learn about yourself, your classmates, and the world around you. You can expect to be taught in a wide variety of ways. You will have a voice in the many decisions made as a group. This process can be time consuming and may try your patience, but we believe it is worth it. We will be direct, honest, and real with you as we embark on this learning journey together.

There is one instructor for each class of 16 students; space in the program is limited. **It is important that you complete the application package fully and submit it before the deadline date of FRIDAY, APRIL 2ND, 2021.**

Please ensure that you include the following:

- Physician Questionnaire
- School report card from your school
- Two letters of reference (not a family member)
- Teacher questionnaires (two teachers)
- Student essay outlining why you are applying for the program and what you hope to gain from the experience (500 words, minimum)
- Student Registration Form
- Student Transfer Form if coming from out-of-catchment.

Student Request for Transfer form(S.3) (if coming from out of catchment). This form is due no later than FRIDAY, March 26th, 2021)

**Letter from a past teacher may be waived if student is currently in attendance at W.E.Graham Community School.

If you need more information or have questions, please contact the school. We look forward to hearing from you!