

# TREK Outdoor Education Program Information Package for Applicants

2019-2020 School Year (our 33<sup>rd</sup> year!)

An enriched integrated education program for Grade 10 students  
offered by the Vancouver School Board @ Prince of Wales Secondary School



*"An awesome, unforgettable year!"*

(TREK Student)

*"This program is outstanding, we recommend it to everyone!"*

(TREK Parent)

**Vancouver School Board**

# Welcome!

The following package should answer all your questions regarding the TREK Program and the application process.

***In addition to this package, applicants will need:***

***A) Application Form***

***B) Reference Letter Forms (2)***

## Contents

1. Program Goals
2. Program Objectives
3. Program Structure
4. Who Should Apply?
5. Teaching Staff
6. Trips
7. Funding
8. Clothing and Equipment
9. Additional Expenses
10. Transportation
11. Safety Considerations
12. Policies
13. Application Procedures and  
Timetable
14. Question and Answer
15. Contact Information

# Program Goals

The TREK program goals meet the curricular and core competencies outlined in the revised BC curriculum. We are a fully integrated, place based program that has the flexibility to create an enriched learning environment.

In addition to meeting all of the curricular requirements of Grade 10, TREK:

- Introduces each student to a variety of outdoor activities;
- Provides instruction in the safe and proper means of participating in these activities;
- Helps students develop a greater understanding of the natural world;
- Provides positive personal growth experiences that help students develop character.

# Program Objectives

## Adventure and Challenge

The TREK Program introduces each student to a variety of outdoor activities including:

- ☑ hiking and backpacking
- ☑ ocean kayaking
- ☑ canoeing
- ☑ rock climbing
- ☑ cycle touring
- ☑ telemark skiing
- ☑ snowshoeing
- ☑ cross-country (Nordic) skiing
- ☑ essential outdoor skills (minimum impact camping, outdoor cooking, first aid, navigation, weather interpretation, snow shelter construction, avalanche assessment & risk reduction)

## **Place Based Education**

Developing an understanding of the natural world has always been a key component of TREK. Students are provided with direct experiences that enable them to integrate their learning into the wider world and to make personal connections.

*Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education [place-based learning] increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active contributing citizens.*  
(David Sobel)

## **Core Competencies**

The underlying purpose of the TREK program is to provide experiences that help students learn about themselves. We create a physical and social environment that supports the development of the Core Competencies. Core competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in life-long, in depth learning.

## **Building Relationships**

A unique component of TREK is that it brings together students from across the city. The friendships that are formed between the TREK students last a lifetime.

## **Program Structure**

Each year 112 students are admitted into the TREK program.

During the TREK year, students will be involved in eight integrated "blocks". Each "block" lasts three to five weeks, and students will work with different classmates throughout the year. The "blocks" include a combination of field studies, overnight trips, inquiry projects and classroom-based academics.

All students are enrolled in the following courses:

- English Language Arts 10
- Social Studies 10
- Career and Life Education 10

- Physical and Health Education 10
- Outdoor Education 10
- Science 10
- Foundations & Pre-Calculus (Math) 10
- Blended Language Support (allows for flexibility in language requirements) or FRAL 10

There are course credit options integrated into the TREK program for students who have been in a previously accelerated program and have already completed a grade 10 course.

## Who Should Apply?

- Any Grade 9 student who lives within the Vancouver School District.  
Note: students from other districts are welcome to apply, but students who have applied from within the Vancouver School District will be given first priority.
- Any student looking for adventure and challenge in their Grade 10 year.
- Any student who is interested in meeting new people and expanding their social groups.
- Applicants must be interested in pursuing the goals of the program.
- Applicants must be committed to consistently trying their best in the academic, physical and social aspects of the program.

## Minimum Requirements

- Applicants must pass all Grade 8 and 9 core subjects (English, Social Studies, Math, Science, PE, and a second language), and maintain a minimum C+ average across the six subjects (this requirement is in place because TREK involves an intensified academic curriculum, in order to make time for outdoor adventures).
- Applicants must meet the Grade 9 standard for physical fitness (this requirement is in place because physical exertion is part of all TREK trips, and a lack of physical fitness can place an individual or an entire group at risk). As a measure, applicants must be able to run 2.4 km (6 times around a standard track) in under 14 minutes.
- Applicants must be committed to creating a social environment that supports respect and responsibility. This requirement is in place because a lack of respect or responsibility can create safety concerns during TREK trips (students must be able to listen and respond to all reasonable instructions). As a measure of respect and responsibility, students must receive generally positive comments on two confidential Letters of Reference (one from a secondary school teacher, and one from an adult member of the community).

## Students Should Not Apply...

- Students should not apply only because their parents have asked them to; students should certainly apply if their parents have asked them to and they also want to apply.
- Students should not apply only because their friends are applying; students should apply if their friends are applying and they want to apply as an individual.
- Students should not apply if they think it will be “a year off” – TREK students are required to accomplish more in a year than regular Grade 10 students.

## **Teaching Staff**

The staff team at TREK is an important factor in helping students obtain the potential benefits of this program.

TREK Staff have teaching backgrounds in English, Science, Social Studies, Math, PE and Outdoor Education. A team teaching approach is used for TREK subjects. Each member of our co-ed teaching team is certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch of BC.

TREK teaching staff have safely taught and guided thousands of students in locations throughout British Columbia. In addition to specific areas of training and expertise (such as ocean kayaking, rock climbing, and back-country skiing), TREK staff members are trained in wilderness first aid and incident response procedures.

## **Trips**

In general, during the TREK year students participate in the following overnight trips:

- Fall trip (possible travel modes include hiking, canoeing, or ocean kayaking)
- Winter camping trip (possible travel modes include snowshoes or Telemark skis)
- Lodge based (Nordic, snowshoe and Telemark trip at Manning Provincial Park)
- Spring trip (possible travel modes include hiking, cycle touring, canoeing, or ocean kayaking)

There are also many day trips which integrate academics and outdoor skills.

## **Funding**

The Vancouver School Board provides funds for teaching staff and instructional facilities. The TREK Program must generate funds through a \$900 TREK Student Fee (bursaries are available upon request) and fundraising projects, to pay for equipment and field trip expenses. For successful fundraising to occur, both student and parent involvement is required.

# Clothing and Equipment

**The following equipment is provided:**

- Backpack
- Sleeping bag, sleeping pad, over-bag
- Tent, tent fly, poles, pegs, ground sheet, tarp with ropes
- Stove, pots, fuel bottle and fuel
- Wetsuit, PFD (lifejacket)
- Ocean kayak, spray skirt, paddle
- Canoe, paddle
- Rock climbing shoes, harness, helmet, ropes
- Back-country (Telemark) skis, boots, poles, climbing skins
- Cross-country (Nordic) skis, boots, poles
- Snow shovel
- Snow shoes
- Group water containers and water treatment equipment
- Compass, maps and charts
- Safety and rescue equipment
- First aid kit, repair kit (group)
- Communication equipment (satellite phones, VHF radios)

## Additional Expenses

In addition to the \$900 TREK Student Fee (bursaries are available upon request) the following expenses should be expected:

- Clothing and equipment as outlined on the next page (some of this outdoor clothing and equipment is available for loan, free of charge)
- Food for overnight trips (approx. \$20/day)
- Incident response kit (approx. \$15)
- Sleeping bag laundering at the end of the term (approx. \$15)
- Grade 10 student fees for Prince of Wales Secondary (approx. \$30)
- Local bus fare
- TREK T-shirt – optional (approx. \$20)
- TREK annual – optional (approx. \$15)
- Sun Run entrance fee – optional (approx. \$17)

# Clothing and Equipment

**The following items must be provided by TREK students and their parents:**  
(some of this outdoor clothing and equipment is available for loan, free of charge)

- Rain jacket and pants (waterproof)
- Light-weight synthetic or wool top and bottom (long underwear)
- Mid-weight synthetic top and bottom
- Heavy-weight synthetic jacket or wool sweater
- Additional heavy-weight synthetic jacket, down or wool sweater
- Hiking pants
- Shorts
- Synthetic liner socks
- Synthetic or wool socks
- Synthetic or wool toque
- Synthetic or wool mittens
- Waterproof over mitts or waterproof ski gloves/mitts
- Gaiters
- Hiking boots
- Rubber boots
- Winter boots
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses with 100% UVA and UVB block
- Sunscreen
- Daypack
- Pocket knife, whistle, lighter
- Headlamp with spare batteries
- Watch with alarm
- Water bottle (1 litre)
- Bowl, cup, knife, fork, spoon
- Toiletries
- Incident Response Kit (details given during the first week of the year)

# Transportation

The program owns a school bus and a fifteen-passenger van.

Each TREK teacher holds a Class 2 Driver's License (school bus driver).

# Safety Considerations

Safety is our first priority. We make every effort to create high quality experiences through careful preparation, experienced staffing, and a safety commitment from students.

Prior to each trip, teaching staff prepare detailed incident response systems (including emergency evacuation procedures) for each specific area and mode of travel. Our excellent safety record speaks to our commitment to carefully balance adventure and appropriate (minimal) risk.

Guides (experts in their field) are hired to augment the teaching staff on all overnight trips and some day trips.

Students also play a vital role in creating a quality program. In an effort to make the year as safe as possible, the staff team will instruct students on the safety precautions and correct procedures of each activity. Students are asked to follow all reasonable instructions and directions of the staff, and to stay with the group at all times unless notice has been given to one of the program staff.

## Policies

The TREK Program has policies regarding attendance, absences, punctuality, assignments, physical fitness, preparedness, transportation, and equipment. These policies are outlined in the TREK Student Handbook (reviewed with students at the beginning of the year). During the application process, we would like to highlight our policies regarding smoking, drugs and alcohol.

- The TREK program encourages healthy living. Therefore, cigarette smoking, vaping, alcohol consumption and the use of non-prescription drugs are not permitted at any time during classes, program activities and trips.
- Alcohol consumption or the use of non-prescription drugs or marijuana on any activity related to TREK may result in suspension or immediate expulsion from the program.

# Application Procedures and Timetable

## 1. Information Meetings

**November 7, 2018** @ 7:00 pm, Auditorium  
Prince of Wales Secondary School, 2250 Eddington Drive

**November 8, 2018** @ 7:00 pm  
Gladstone Secondary School, 4105 Gladstone Street

*Note: You can pick up all necessary forms at either of these meetings.*

## 2. Interview Sign-up

**Friday, November 9th, 2018 – Monday, February 04, 2019**

After the information meetings, interested students must schedule an interview. Contact Prince of Wales Secondary – Main Office (not the TREK office) in person or by phone (604-713-8974).

*Note: All interested students will receive an interview.*

## 3. Student Interviews (1½ hours in duration)

**Tuesday, February 5, 2019**

Start times: 9:00am; 10:30 am; 1:00pm; or 3:30 pm

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019**

Start times: 9:00am; 10:30 am; 1:00pm; or 3:30 pm

**Thursday, February 7, 2019**

Start times: 9:00am; 10:30am; 1:00 pm; or 3:30 pm

*Note: These are group interviews (approx. 25 students and 2 teachers per interview).*

## **Please bring the following to the student interview:**

- Completed Application Form
- Proof of address – a photocopy of any 2 of the following: property tax notice, rental agreement, phone bill, hydro bill, gas bill, bank statement, driver's license.
- Copy of Grade 8 Report Card (Final) including teacher comments.
- Copy of Grade 9 Report Card (1st Term) including teacher comments.
- 2 completed Reference Letter Forms (in sealed envelopes).

Note #1: all documents must be submitted to be considered for the draw.

Note #2: applicants must be wearing their PE strip and running shoes for the interview.

If there is a serious injury or sickness please bring a note. We will schedule a makeup run.

## **What happens during the student interview?**

*These are group interviews (approx. 25 students & 2 teachers per interview)*

1. Collection of forms
2. Orientation to the TREK Program
3. In-class writing exercise
4. A group challenge
5. A 2.4 km timed run

### **4. Random Draw**

The TREK Program receives more applications than the 112 spaces that are available each year. Therefore, following the interview process, all applications that meet the minimum requirements are placed in a random draw. This draw is performed in **mid February** by the Principal of Prince of Wales Secondary School. We do not recruit or pre-select students.

A subsequent draw will be performed if any applications are withdrawn prior to the start of the program. If this occurs, the successful applicant will be notified immediately.

### **5. Notification of Acceptance**

#### **Mailed out Friday, February 22, 2019**

All applicants (both successful and unsuccessful) will be notified. No phone calls please.

## 6. Confirmation of Acceptance

Successful applicants must submit the following **by Friday, March 15, 2019:**

- a) *Contact Information Form* (sent with acceptance package)
- b) *VSB Student Enrolment Record Form* (sent with acceptance package)
- c) *Course Selection Form* (sent with acceptance package)
- d) \$50.00 non-refundable deposit

## 7. Summer Submissions

Successful applicants must submit the following **by Friday, August 23, 2019 – due to limited summer school hours items should be mailed to** the main school office (Attn: TREK Program)

- a) Copy of final Grade 9 Report including teacher comments (**ensure you download them in June. The portal is off line in August.**)
- b) *Medical Form* (given out in the June parent meeting package), including completed **tetanus inoculation** and **B.C. Carecard** sections of the form
- c) *Acknowledgement of Risk & Informed Consent Form* (given out in the June parent meeting package)
- d) *\$200 post dated "refundable" cheque for gear deposit (post dated for June 13/2020)*

## 8. September

The remainder of the TREK fees will be submitted using School Cash Online. Bursaries are available upon request.

# Question & Answer

### **Do I need previous camping/outdoor experience?**

*No. The program staff will teach you the fundamentals of wilderness camping and travel. You must have an interest in trying or pursuing outdoor activities.*

### **Do I need to know how to swim?**

*No, but you must be able to remain calm while floating in deep water (wearing a PFD/lifejacket).*

**How do the trip meals work?**

*Menu planning, food purchasing and meal preparation is done in small groups (2 or 3 students) with the guidance of program staff.*

**How physically fit do I need to be?**

*The TREK Program is a physically demanding experience, but anyone who enjoys moderate exercise will find the activities well within their physical ability.*

**I currently have a skills block in place of a language course. Can I still apply to TREK and will I be able to enroll in a skills block while in TREK?**

*Yes, you can apply. We will attempt to offer some resource support during the year, but because of the integrated schedule you will not be enrolled in a specific resource block.*

**What if I've already completed a Grade 10 subject?**

*All students will be enrolled in 8 courses in TREK. Students will complete another course in the place of the course that they have done. These courses will be taught by the TREK teachers and integrated into the program. Many students choose to do online courses to keep up with their previous accelerated programs. These online courses would be over and above the 8 courses in TREK.*

**Are former TREK students at an academic disadvantage in Grade 11 or 12?**

*No. Although we do not formally track students, informal evidence (principal's lists, scholarships, university entrances) strongly suggests that TREK students do as well or better than their peers in Grades 11 & 12 (who did not complete the TREK Program). If anything, the program exposes TREK students to skills (self-discipline, self-confidence, independence, critical thinking) that serve them well in their future studies.*

**I'm a French Immersion student interested in applying to TREK. How will I fulfill the 24 FI credits required to graduate with a bilingual dogwood?**

*French Immersion students should speak with their current school counsellor to confirm requirements for the bilingual dogwood.*

*French immersion students who do the grade 10 Trek program miss out on four full year French Immersion courses. While in Trek, they will complete their FRAL 10 course, which counts for 4 credits. They are welcomed back into the French Immersion program at their home schools in grade 11, and the French Immersion courses they take in grade 11 and 12 will continue to appear on their transcript. This information will be available to*

*universities and employers whether they choose to do the extra work necessary for the bilingual dogwood or not. Students usually complete two French Immersion courses in grade 11, and one in grade 12, for a total of 12 credits. Because they have missed the grade 10 French Immersion course work, though, they will not graduate with the bilingual dogwood diploma unless they choose to complete alternative work (in essence, this is to make up for the three French Immersion grade 10 courses they didn't take during their grade 10 year). Each year, an updated letter is sent home to families outlining current alternate course options.*

**If I'm transferring from another school for the year, can I play on a sports team while I'm at P.W.?**

*If a student is attending TREK, they must play for the school that they were registered at before attending the TREK program. If the school that they attended does not have the sport that they wish to play, they are obligated to play for the next closest school to where they live.*

**Should I call TREK if I don't get accepted?**

*No. Due to the large number of applications that we receive, we are only able to accept 112 students. A subsequent draw will be performed if any applications are withdrawn prior to the of the program. If this occurs, the successful applicant will be notified immediately.*

**Contact Information**

TREK office 604-713-8974  
Email: [trek@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:trek@vsb.bc.ca)

