



UCC

UPPER CANADA COLLEGE
NORVAL OUTDOOR SCHOOL

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“OUTDOORS SMARTS”

Developing Outdoor Safety Awareness at Norval

Just as we teach our children about safe practices when they are out and about in their urban and suburban settings (what can be referred to as “street smarts”), so too do we need to teach them about wise precautions when they are enjoying natural outdoor settings.

To this end, the Norval Outdoor School staff will talk to your child about “outdoor smarts.” We would also like to inform you about the following in preparation for your child’s trip to Norval.

Wildlife at Norval

We are proud that our 450 acre property is part of an extensive green belt along the Credit River and related waterways, and that it supports a wide variety of wildlife including deer, fox, coyote, raccoon and porcupine. It is important for your child to understand that “wild” life means creatures that are naturally afraid of humans and that will make every effort to avoid us. We see much more of the signs that they leave behind than the actual animals, e.g., tracks, scat, chewed bones.

West Nile Virus & Ticks

Mosquitoes are rare at Norval, as are ticks. However, the children are outside a lot, so it is good for them to learn how to reduce the chance of insect bites. Students should bring and use insect repellents, particularly for evening programs. Products containing DEET are still considered to be the most effective. Norval will have lots of extra repellent available in case students forget or run out.

Protection from the Sun

All students coming to Norval should bring a hat (full brimmed is better than a ball cap) and sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher and that gives protection from both UVA and UVB rays. On sunny days when students are not in the shade, we will have them apply sunscreen for both the morning and afternoon activities. UV protective sunglasses are also recommended.

Hygiene

At Norval, students learn, play, eat and bunk together in relatively close quarters. We promote good personal hygiene while at Norval to help keep students healthy. To reduce spread of infection, all staff and students are required to carefully wash their hands with soap and water and/or use hand sanitizer before meals and snacks. Students are also able to shower during free time in private shower stalls located in Stephen House.

Safety around the River

The Credit River is a highlight feature of our property, and we offer river studies to several grade levels at appropriate times of year, because our students are fascinated with what they find. We also emphasize safety around water, whether it's not going in further than knee deep when doing an aquatic study, or never attempting to cross a frozen river

Travelling in the Bush

While we use trails for most of our travel on the Norval property, we talk to students about being aware of what's around them, particularly on the ground (so they don't trip) and around eye level (so there are no branches in the face).

Night time activities

Night programs, such as owl prowls, star gazing, night walks and night games, are very popular programs at the Norval Outdoor School. Before these activities, we emphasize safe night practices, such as avoiding the use of flashlights to cultivate good night vision, and being aware of hazards.

Inclement Weather

Norval staff constantly monitor weather changes and make program adjustments where wise precaution dictates.

In Closing ...

Our students love direct, hands-on learning at Norval. So do their teachers. Our goal is to ensure that these experiences are safe as well as worthwhile in so many lasting and powerful ways