

2019 Website FAQ www.calgaryhumane.ca/camps

What is Calgary Humane Society Summer Camp All About?

CHS Camp is a place where children connect with animals. Developmentally appropriate games, crafts, activities as well as visits from special animal guests encourage children to develop skills in social and emotional literacy including compassion and empathy for all living things.

We do this by encouraging your child to have FUN and explore through hands-on learning opportunities involving animals.

How old does my child have to be?

We offer full day camps for children in Grades 1-9. Grade level is based on the grade your child will be entering in the fall. Please note the minimum age is 6 years and your child must be fully toilet trained to attend camp.

Is it a sleep away camp?

No. CHS Camp is a day camp. The unique nature of CHS Camp and its location within Calgary Humane Society does not permit us to offer a sleep away camp option.

What are the hours of camp? Do you have before or after care?

Camp runs from 9AM-4:00PM each day (Monday-Friday) with the exception of statutory holidays. Before and after care is included in the price of camp, this means that you are able to drop off your kids as early 8:30 am and pick up as late as 5 pm. Before and after care may include crafts, games, additional animal encounters or simply an opportunity for campers to quietly unwind/warm-up by reading, coloring or drawing quietly. A late pick-up fee of \$1/minute will be applied starting 10 minutes after our latest pick-up time (5:00). **Please note that the front doors at CHS are on an automated locking system, and will NOT be open prior to 8:30am.**

What is a typical day at CHS Summer Camp?

A typical camp day begins with sign in at 8:50 AM and the children break into their groups for a day of exploration and fun. Morning normally involves at least one craft, at least one animal visit, time for playing games and an educational activity as well as a mid-morning snack break. Afternoons are similar in structure with a craft, educational activities, at least one animal visitor and time for fun and games. Throughout the week your children can also look forward to presentations by other guest speakers and the opportunity to engage in special activities with shelter animals such as feeding or socialization. Due to the nature of Calgary Humane Society's operations and the animals we receive, availability of appropriate animals for campers to visit varies from day to day. We strive to provide every child with a positive experience around a variety of animals however stress on our shelter animals is also closely monitored by our staff and volunteers.

How do you choose the animals campers will meet?

We select the animals met by campers on several criteria. First, all animals met by campers must be health checked by our animal health team and cleared for camp visits. Second, we examine animals based on behaviour and personality to determine what animals would do best in the camp setting and what animals would enjoy the experience of meeting eager campers.

What is an animal interaction? Does my child get to pet, hold or feed the animals?

An “animal interaction” is a term used by CHS Camp when an animal is brought to meet a camp group. What an animal interaction looks like largely depends on the species and temperament of the animal they are meeting. Animal interactions may involve going right into the animal’s living space to play (kittens), making a fun and interactive foraging toy and delivering it to an animal (bunnies), taking an animal outside for some fun (dogs) or getting a chance to gently pet a fragile creature (small reptile). All of the animal interactions at Camp Fur, Fins and Feathers are designed with the utmost respect, safety and care for our animals in mind. We understand many children wish to hug and hold animals however our goal is to teach children how to interact with animals in a way that is respectful of the animal’s physical and mental well-being and of minimal stress to the animal. For example, many animals, such as rabbits, do not enjoy being held and passed around. In line with our values of respect and compassion for all living things a rabbit interaction would involve letting the rabbit approach and sniff and gentle petting of the rabbit while the rabbit is on the floor.

My child is really good with animals, why are they only allowed to pet some of the animals instead of hold them?

Most children who come to CHS Camp are very good with animals and passionate about caring for animals in the best possible way. We completely understand your child’s desire to hold an animal or to interact with a specific animal in the shelter. Unfortunately not all animals have a temperament that makes them a good candidate for camp. Also, asking any animal to be held by 10- 15 or more campers is not a fair demand to make of many of the animals in our care. Please keep in mind when considering animal interactions that we must carefully balance the experience of our campers with the best interests of our animals. We select animal interactions that will provide a quality experience for our campers while keeping our animal’s well-being in mind.

How many animals will my child meet?

We aim to have all children at camp meet a minimum of 2-3 animals each day, and on some days of camp children have met more than this. These figures may change from day to day or week to week due to fluctuations in shelter population, animal stress levels or presentations, and as such we can never guarantee frequency and duration of animal interactions on a day to day basis at camp. We must always take in to consideration appropriate and safe animal interactions for both the campers and the animals.

Do you offer camps for children with special needs?

CHS Camp is an inclusive camp and we welcome children of all abilities. Children with special needs (with or without an aid or assistant) are fully integrated into a camp group and encouraged to engage in all aspects of camp. Some additional assistance with crafts or activities is available from our camp counsellors and/or volunteers, but please note that we do not have the resources available to provide a team member to be a one-on-one assistant to your child. If this level of assistance is required for your child, we are open and welcoming to aids to attend camp with your camper. If you have a child with special needs, please contact our Humane Education team directly so we can discuss which options may be best suited to your child, and ensure we can set them up for a successful and fun time at camp.

Do you offer winter and spring and winter camps?

Yes, we do offer winter and spring camps! However, it is dependent on CBE and CSDD holidays.

How many weeks can my child attend?

There is no restriction on how many weeks any child may attend CHS Camp. The camp themes change each week with different activities. While we place no limits on the number of weeks a child can enjoy in our facility we do encourage parents and families to consider what arrangements will be best for their child. Some children may prefer a variety of summer camps and while we attempt to change curriculum from week to week, children returning throughout the summer should be prepared to repeat some activities during the course of their camp weeks.

My child is frightened of certain animals, will those be at camp?

We always bring a variety of creatures to camp and it is possible that a child may be frightened or uncomfortable around a certain animal. Our staff recognize that not all children are comfortable around all types of animals and at no point will any camper be “forced” to interact with an animal they are uncomfortable with. The Humane Education team addresses fear of animals by providing information and education about that animal species. In many cases, children have overcome fears at our camp, even petting the animals they were once frightened of!

Is CHS Camp a peanut-free camp?

Campers at CHS Camp are asked not to bring peanut products to camp however our staff is not in a position to inspect lunches or take food away from campers if a parent does pack peanut products. Calgary Humane Society Behaviour and Animal Care departments also use peanut butter with our dogs as part of our stress reduction protocols and therefore the Calgary Humane Society cannot be declared a “peanut-free” facility.

Parents who have concerns regarding children with allergies are encouraged to contact our humane education coordinator before enrolling or before beginning camp to discuss possible options. We are happy to provide peanut or allergen free tables for your child at camp!

Lunches purchased from CHS Camp will not contain peanuts however certain items may come from a facility that contains or processes nuts or nut products. Please contact the Humane Education department for details, or if you have any concerns.

Will my child come home begging for a pet?

Certainly it is possible that your child will meet an animal at camp they feel would make an excellent pet and may ask you about this, however we do not “push” pet ownership on anyone. Calgary Humane Society promotes responsible pet ownership and by extension our camp program focuses not just on exposing children to different types of pet animals but also showing them how much work caring for any animal can be. For example, we had a parrot routinely visit that inspired many children that a parrot is a “perfect” pet, until they heard how loud it can squawk and found out how much attention it requires every single day (4+ hours!)

Is CHS Camp educational?

Yes! Aside from meeting animals, campers will also engage in a variety of activities designed to build and test their knowledge of the animal world. Examples of past activities include a simulated vet surgery (on a stuffed animal), pet treat formulation (using real ingredients!) and determining why birds have different beaks by trying out different beak structures with different foods. Additionally, all CHS Humane Education youth programs, including camps, are rooted in building community and citizenship through instilling values of compassion, empathy and respect.

Where do you get your camp staff?

Our camp leaders are Post-Secondary students studying areas related to child development, education, social work, psychology or animal welfare. We interview every potential candidate carefully in order to select camp leaders who are passionate about children, education and animals. All leaders attend a full week of in-site training prior to the beginning of camp.

Do you accept camp volunteers?

Yes! Beginning in 2018 we started the shelter's first volunteer opportunity open to youth under the age of 16. We accept applications from youth aged 14-17 to apply for the Summer Camp Volunteer position. Once recruitment for this position is open, all information will be available on our website through the following link;

<https://www.calgaryhumane.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>

Do the proceeds from CHS Camp really go to help the animals at the CHS?

Absolutely! We closely monitor camp expenses allowing us to contribute even more to the animals here at the shelter. Calgary Humane Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the welfare of animals and our mandate is to "Help as many animals as we can". By choosing CHS Camp you are supporting animals in need within the Calgary community.

When registering, what age group should my child go in to?

When considering which age group you should sign your camper up for in CHS Summer Camp, please base it off of the grade they will be going into next fall, not the grade they are currently in (and will have completed by the summer). For spring and winter camp, please base it off of the grade they are currently in.

How much does CHS Camp cost?

Registration fees for CHS Summer Camp are:

Grades 1-6: \$225 for a full (5 day) week

Grades 7-9: \$298 for a full (5 day) week

Short camp weeks which fall on holidays are prorated accordingly. Extras such as lunches, additional t-shirts and camp photos are also available for an additional fee. Contact our Humane Education department with any questions or concerns.

What is the camp cancellation and refund policy?

CHS Camp registration fees are non-refundable but are transferable. In the unlikely event that your child is unable to attend camp, please contact our Humane Education department to discuss options available for fee transfer.

What is the camp discipline policy?

Our CHS Camp Leaders are well trained and expected to resolve minor issues with or between campers in a positive manner. Our goal is to provide every child with a rewarding experience. At the beginning of camp, the leaders go over camp expectations and rules. In the event that a rule is broken, a verbal warning from the Camp Leader is given that includes the problem and a solution. If a rule is broken again, the Community Outreach and Education Coordinator will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the noted behaviour. Together, the parent/guardian and the Humane Education team will work out a custom designed behaviour modification plan. If the improper behaviour continues, the youth program staff will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the situation further and/or notify the parent/guardian to come and get the child if warranted. Examples of unacceptable behaviour that will result in a camper being immediately asked to leave camp include, but are not limited to, destruction of property or disruptive behaviour which threatens the safety of other campers, animals, volunteers, or staff. In such a case, fees are non-transferable and non-refundable.

You can reach the Humane Education Department at;

Phone: 403-205-4455 ext. 6544

Email: humane.education@calgaryhumane.ca