

Welcome to the 2026 Bunnies and Rabbits Season at the BV Nordic Centre!

This email contains a lot of information about our upcoming season, so please settle in and take the time to read through to the end. Key update for 2026: We are expanding the Rabbits program this winter to include an option to introduce skate ski skills!

What is the focus of Bunnies and Rabbits?

This program is all about FUN! The primary intent is for your child(ren) to safely enjoy exploring the world of nordic skiing and learn lifelong ski skills. These skills will be introduced mostly through games and activities, and usually the kids are so busy having FUN, they don't even notice they're learning new skills.

Children will be grouped according to their age and skill level. The first couple sessions are an opportunity to ensure each child is in the right group. Please let your children know that the coach and group they have on the first session MAY change. As we move into the third and subsequent sessions, groups solidify and the real team building can begin!

Coaches will email their groups before [date] to introduce themselves. If you have not heard from them at this point please let me know.

Lesson Dates

Lessons are held on Saturday's at 11:00. Skiers are to meet their coach at their group sign. Lessons start Saturday January 10, and end with the Wetzin'kwa Loppet on March 21. We also have one evening Night Ski usually sometime in February, where kids get to ski "under the lights" at the Nordic centre. It's a magical night.

Skills and Lesson Length

It is strongly recommended that skiers are comfortable with all skills in each level before moving on to the next level.

Bunnies Level 1 sessions are approx. 45-60 minutes. Classic technique, skiers do not use poles. Approx. ages 4-6.

Focus on Level 1 skills: ready position, falling/getting up, star turn, side stepping, basic diagonal stride, herringbone

Rabbits Level 2 sessions are approx. 60-75 minutes. Classic technique, skiers DO use poles (armpit height). Approx. ages 6-8.

Focus on Level 2 skills: Diagonal stride, running step, herringbone, free glide, snow plow stop, snowplow turn

Rabbits Level 3 sessions are approx. 90-120 minutes, including time for a snack break. Classic and Skate technique with poles. Approx. ages 8-11.

Focus on Level 3 skills: Diagonal stride, double poling, one-step double poling, free skate, downhill tuck, diagonal skate, kick turn, skate turn.

****Skiers will need appropriate skate skis and two sets of poles (armpit height for classic, nose height for skate).**

Cold Weather Limits and Cancelled Sessions

The Bunnies and Rabbits programs operate unless temperatures are below -15 C (including wind chill). At temperatures below -15 C, it is too difficult to ensure kids are warm and safe from exposure. If a session is going to be cancelled due to weather, all families will receive an email no later than 10:00, which is one hour prior to the start of our session. I encourage families to make a habit of checking your emails prior to heading up each Saturday. Temperatures can be quite different between town and the trails.

The Nordic Centre posts updated weather conditions here: <https://bvnordic.ca/>

Equipment and Clothing Requirements

Children should have ski boots and classic skis that fit.

- Skis: Classic skis will ideally have fish-scales for grip (scale/textured portion on the base of the ski under the foot). If they do not, then grip wax will be needed (see below, "Need Help").
- Boots: Please make sure that your child's boots are compatible with their ski bindings. This is as simple as making sure the boots snap into the ski bindings. Classic or combi boots are suitable.

Need Help?! This can all seem like Greek if you're new to the sport, so if you have questions, please email me, and/or plan to arrive early for the first session. Our coaches will be present to help attach skis to kids and to answer questions.

Dressing your child for the changing weather of outdoor winter sports is a bit of an art! Here are some of the most important things to keep in mind:

- LAYERS! Dress your children in layers, following this basic order:
 - CLOSEST TO SKIN: something light but warm. Fleece, wool or synthetic long underwear
 - MID LAYER: a slightly heavier layer that's easy to remove, for example a fleece zip-up jacket.
 - OUTER LAYER: This should at LEAST be wind resistant and ideally is also waterproof. Kids will be laying on and rolling in the snow. If there is a way to get damp, they will find it.
- HEAD & NECK. Children should always have a toque. For cold days, we recommend a buff or balaclava as well. If your child gets too warm, it's simple to take it off and stuff in a pocket.
- HANDS. Mittens are much warmer than gloves! On very cold days, you may consider hand warmers or layering a thin mitt or glove inside their usual mitten. Again, ideally the mitten is wind and waterproof or resistant.
- FEET. Boots that are a bit too big are far warmer than boots that are too small. Your child's boots should allow for a thick sock to fit inside.
- Après Ski: consider having a dry set of mitts, an extra coat, and dry winter boots for your child to change into after the session.

Parent Roles and What to do During the Session

The Bunnies and Rabbits program is entirely volunteer run! There are a few key roles that we count on parents to fill each session. *Sign up to those roles here:*

volunteersignup.org/Q3HYB

Each week, we will need the following:

- 1 or 2 on-snow parent(s) per session, per group

This role does NOT require strong ski skills, and with the younger groups, may not need skis at all. The role of this person is to make sure everyone stays together, help pick up dropped mitts, fallen kids, and generally be an extra set of hands.

- One parent to be the cookie-hander-outer

This entails being at the cookie station at 11:40 to be ready to pass out cookies (with tongs) to our bunnies; and staying till all groups have received a cookie. You're basically everyone's favourite person for 20-30 minutes.

For sessions when you're NOT the parent volunteer, we encourage you to go for a ski or play with your younger children on the sliding hill. We find that bunnies and rabbits do better if their parents give them space to be a part of their group and focus (ha!) on the coach.

A Summary:

- Children must have skis, boots, a toque, mittens and proper layers for each session. Poles for levels 2 and 3.
- Sign up for volunteer positions. We need your active participation.
- We are about to have a LOT of fun learning to ski!! Looking forward to meeting you and your child(ren).