

# Thetford Ski Program



Participant & Volunteer Handbook

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## KEY CONTACTS

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Ski Patrol	603-646-7663
Dartmouth Skiway Lodge	603-795-2143
Thetford Elementary School	802-785-2426
Thetford Rec Department	802-785-2922 and <a href="mailto:recreation@thetfordvt.gov">recreation@thetfordvt.gov</a>
Program Parent Coordinators	<a href="mailto:thetfordski@gmail.com">thetfordski@gmail.com</a>

## PARENTS OF CHILD PARTICIPANTS

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### Equipment

Skiers and riders must provide their own skis/snowboards, boots, and helmet (poles optional). Please note that **helmets are required to participate** in the Thetford ski program

### Personal Equipment

Students, who have not made other arrangements for equipment transport, should bring their equipment to school to be picked up and transported to the Skiway by a parent volunteer. **IMPORTANT: Mark your child's equipment with their full name, or something on their skis/snowboard that they can easily identify. Bind skis and poles together if being brought from TES to the Skiway by a parent volunteer**

### Rental (Henderson's, Golf and Ski, etc.)

These are local companies that offer season-long leases that allow you to keep the equipment until the end of the season

**IMPORTANT: Mark your child's equipment with their full name, or something on their skis/snowboard that they can easily identify**

## Rental (Dartmouth Skiway)

These rentals are returned by the skier/rider at the conclusion of each ski day to the Skiway equipment counter. **Participants who rent from the Skiway need to go to the Skiway directly before the first Ski Friday to be measured and arrange for the equipment rental.**

Thetford volunteers will pick up the Dartmouth rental equipment weekly so that the students can quickly hit the slopes with their group. Boots are distributed to the group's table, skis and poles are placed on the outdoor racks

## Communication

The Thetford ski program coordinators will email you weekly regarding groups, generally on Thursday. Share this info with your child each Friday so that they know where to report and what to expect. While we do our best to keep groups consistent week to week, this allows us to be flexible so that we can more effectively manage participant to volunteer ratios. Please share any on-hill concerns, scheduling updates, etc. with your child's group leader, the Thetford Recreation Director at [recreation@thetfordvt.gov](mailto:recreation@thetfordvt.gov), and the program coordinators at [thetfordski@gmail.com](mailto:thetfordski@gmail.com).

## Absences

If your child will be absent from the ski program, please notify Thetford Elementary School. If your child is not a Thetford Elementary Student, please email [recreation@thetfordvt.gov](mailto:recreation@thetfordvt.gov) and [thetfordski@gmail.com](mailto:thetfordski@gmail.com).

## Drop Off and Pick Up

If your child is not riding the Thetford bus, please make certain they are checked-in with a lodge parent or their group leader by 12:30 at the Skiway before you depart. Please do not drop your child off earlier than 12:30.

Please pick up your child at the Skiway on time - no later than 4:00pm. Participants must be checked-out by either the lodge parent or their group leader

## Clothing, Food, and Snacks

Skiers and riders should be well prepared for a variety of weather conditions. Ensure that they are dressed in layers, and have adequate options for face coverings and *dry* gloves/mittens. A bag dedicated to gear for Ski days helps a lot so kids can keep track of their belongings in the lodge. **Confirm that they have their helmet with them on Fridays each week.**

Skiers and riders are provided breaks in the lodge. They should bring snacks and/or have cash or credit card for the cafe. **Note: New for 2024/2025 Mountain Credit can only be used for the ski/gift shop. For any questions about Mountain Credit and/or food/beverage options contact the Skiway at [skiway@dartmouth.edu](mailto:skiway@dartmouth.edu).**

## Student Expectations

- Eat your lunch before you get to the mountain

- Dress in layers & keep track of your belongings
- Always be encouraging of your friends, group, and other skiers and riders. After all, we are Safe, Kind, and Responsible!
- Return your ski pass to your group leader at the end of each Ski Friday unless instructed otherwise
- Be safe, stay with your group, and have fun

## Ski Groups

Groups are created based on a number of factors including age/grade, social group, skill level, on-hill volunteer availability, and attempting to keep safe participant to volunteer ratios, especially at the younger ages and early skill levels. Skill levels are described as follows during registration:

1. No prior experience (first time on skis or has only been on snow a few times)
2. Beginner (working on speed control and turning on easy trails (magic carpets))
3. Novice (has ridden chairlift, can reliably control speed on easier trails (green/blue))
4. Intermediate (regularly rides chairlift and comfortable on more varied trails (blue))
5. Advanced / Expert (confident and in control on most / all surface conditions (glades/diamonds))

We do our best to keep groups consistent week to week, however, there are often many changes during the first two weeks as things get sorted out. There also needs to be some flexibility in order to maintain participant to volunteer ratios week to week since attendance changes, often last minute with absences.

# ON-HILL VOLUNTEERS (GROUP LEADERS)

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## Goals

*The goals of the Thetford ski program are to **be safe, have fun, build community, and become better skiers/riders**. The group leaders are responsible for the instruction, accountability, and safety of 4-8 skiers/riders. The following is a more comprehensive, but not exclusive, list of the group leader's responsibilities*

## Communication

Thetford Rec will send out an email prior to the start of season with the basics: arrival/departure, expectations, notes on equipment, etc.. The Thetford ski program coordinators will email you and the participants weekly. Review this group roster ahead of each Friday so that you are aware of any changes. While we do our best to keep groups consistent week to week, this allows us to be flexible so that we can more effectively manage participant to volunteer ratios. You are welcome and encouraged to communicate with your groups. Most families appreciate the following:

- Check-in and check-out process.
- Group Leader's introduction
- Expectations
- Food and snacks
- Label equipment

You are welcome to give your group's families weekly updates on any changes, pickup up protocols, etc.. Make it your group!

## Group Expectations, Behavior, and Dynamic

- **Set and share clear expectations** with your group.
- **Keep your group together.** If a skier/rider is too fast or too slow, speak with a lodge parent to move them to a more appropriate group
- **Roster changes** - at times group leaders may determine it is necessary to make group adjustments. If you make an on-hill adjustment with another group leader, please inform the lodge parents of the change. If the change is going to be permanent, notify the volunteer program coordinators and participant's parents.
- **On-hill challenges** - skiers/riders who are having a behavioral issue, lack of motivation, just not feeling it, etc. can be left with a lodge parent
- The **participants in your group are your responsibility** until they have been checked-out to a parent/guardian or transferred to a lodge parent

# Friday Schedule

## Meeting Place

Instructors will always meet their students at the same location, which is in the Skiway lodge at the top of the stairs. The tables are numbered to correspond to your group's number. Weekly, a lodge parent will place your attendance sheet on your table as well as rental boots for those in your group with Skiway equipment rentals. Their skis will be placed on the outside racks with their name on it.

## Pre-Session

- Arrive early with enough time to take care of yourself and your equipment, check-in with a lodge parent, etc. before the Thetford bus arrives
- Check to make certain that your group is properly dressed for the day's weather
- Allow the group time to use the bathroom
- Distribute ski passes
- Confirm the designated meeting space should someone get separated from the group
- Report any absences directly to a lodge parent

## On-Hill

- The first run should be a warm-up. If this is the first session, or you have skiers/riders with whom you are unfamiliar, you should do an assessment of their abilities before tackling more challenging terrain
- Group leaders must keep their group together. Students should never be able to take a run on their own
- Skiers/riders must stay in control at all times
- Adjust your agenda to the ability of your group. Weather, group dynamic, and other factors will shift week to week and you should remain flexible.
- Only ski/ride as fast as your slowest group member
- Look for a safe spot to stop and collect your group (i.e. side of trail, before trail junctions, and where easily visible to uphill riders)
- Enjoy yourself and let your group know that you too are having fun!

## Post-Session

- Return your group to your meet-up point in the lodge
- **For the 2025 season we are recommending that participants hold on to their lift passes.** This allows folks to ski outside of the rec program should Thetford Elementary be closed on a ski Friday due to snow. We are not scheduling makeup days this year. If participants do not want to hold on to their lift passes, you may hold on to them or give to the lodge parent.
- Help any students with Skiway rentals return their equipment to the rental desk
- Help your group collect their things and clean up their trash
- Hand out some high fives
- Stay with your group until all students have been checked-out to a parent/guardian or transferred to a lodge parent
- Mark the attendance sheet and return to a lodge parent

## Some Strategies

### Transitioning From Carpet to the Lifts

- **It is important to not rush a skier/rider's development.** Here are some basic guidelines to determine when a skier/rider is ready to transition to the next part of the mountain:
  - **Little Magic Carpet** - For never-evers and beginners
  - **Big Magic Carpet** - For skiers/riders who can control their speed and stop proficiently
  - **Chair Lifts** - For skiers/riders who can control their speed, stop, and turn in both directions proficiently
- When skiers/riders get stuck in one of the carpet areas, this would be an opportunity to add in games, fun drills, obstacle course ideas to the lower areas so they still have fun and get better simply by staying on their skis longer each day. See *on-slope activities* below for ideas

### Changing Groups

- **Roster changes** - at times group leaders may determine it is necessary to make group adjustments. If a group leader makes an on-hill adjustment with another group leader, they will inform the lodge parents of the change. If the change is going to be permanent, the group leader will notify the volunteer group coordinators and participant's parents.
- **On-hill challenges** - skiers/riders who are having a behavioral issue, lack of motivation, just not feeling it, etc. can be left with a lodge parent

### On-Slope Activities, Lesson Plans, etc.

- [Beginner Lesson](#) - A good step-by-step for the never-evers/beginners
- [Games and Drills](#) - A good list of activities for beginner and younger skiers/riders. It's also a good fundamentals refresher for experienced skiers/riders
- [Lesson Plans](#) - Targeted towards the advanced beginner (solid wedge). Introduces parallel skiing
- [PSIA Level 1 Study Guide](#) - A comprehensive guide to ski instruction for beginners by the Professional Ski Instructors of America. Has good tips on managing a group as well as technical instruction

### Stay Together

- Group Leader is First (i.e. "you shall not pass") vs Group Leader is Last (i.e. "nobody left behind")
- Either method is ok, but will depend on your group dynamic and experience. Going first ensures nobody goes too fast, but you could lose someone uphill. Going last ensures nobody gets lost uphill, but a kid in the lead could take the wrong trail. You may find alternating between the two helpful
- *NOTE: groups with younger/less-experienced skiers and riders will have been given a 3:1 student to group leader ratio. In these cases, you should have one instructor in the lead and the other sweep*
- Regardless of process, your group should be visible at all times, and your group should be aware of the run plan and the designated meeting place in the event someone gets separated



## Chairlifts

- Groups have been arranged to consider participant ability, experience, and age. Groups with younger skiers/riders who are not able to pull the lift bar down on their own have been given two instructors to maintain a 3:1 student to group leader ratio. However, there may be occasions where you are without an additional instructor
  - Students should never be sent on a chairlift without someone who is capable of pulling down the bar
  - Wait for an older Thetford group and buddy up to ensure that each chair has an experienced rider who can secure the bar
  - Younger groups should stay on the Winslow side of the mountain. The Holts side has a 2-seat chairlift that can be more challenging to load/unload and services more technical terrain
- Headcounts before and after chairlift rides is encouraged
- Work with the kids while you are on the lift. It is a good time for them to practice lowering/raising the bar to gain confidence (theirs and yours). It is easier for them if they are sitting on the outside of the chair

## Basic Etiquette

Because there are other skiers/riders at the Skiway (other schools, general public, etc.) it is important that all Thetford ski program participants always represent Thetford. Some basics to follow:

- Clean up your trash and keep your equipment tidy
- Be mindful some days the trails will be very full with a wide variety of ability
- No running in the lodge
- No screaming or shouting indoors
- No throwing snowballs, blocks of ice, or other snow debris
- While on the chairlift, explain the safety reasons for not banging skis together, playing with poles/gloves, bouncing/swinging, etc.
- Only air high fives and shouts of encouragement from the chairlift

## Responsibility Code

1. Always stay in control. You must be able to stop or avoid people or objects
2. People ahead or downhill of you have the right-of-way. You must avoid them
3. Stop only where you are visible from above and do not restrict traffic
4. Look uphill and avoid others before starting downhill or entering a trail
5. You must prevent runaway equipment
6. Read and obey all signs, warnings, and hazard markings
7. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
8. You must know how and be able to load, ride and unload lifts safely. If you need assistance, ask the lift attendant
9. Do not use lifts or terrain when impaired by alcohol or drugs
10. If you are involved in a collision or incident, share your contact information with each other and a ski area employee

## Weather

- Review the weather and conditions, especially if you have a less experienced group
- The conditions can change dramatically week to week. A skier/rider may be quite comfortable skiing top to bottom one week, but find it treacherous the next
- Expect to take more breaks on colder days
- Be on the lookout for frostbite - white milky patches on exposed skin are an early indicator
- If your group is less experienced and the runs off the chairlift don't feel safe, work on technique games on terrain serviced by the magic carpet

## Accident / Emergency Procedures

- **Carry a copy of the trail map in your pocket.** While you may know all the trail names by heart, they are easy to forget when there's an accident
- **Add Ski Patrol to your contacts** - (603) 646-7663
- Before leaving the Skiway for the day, report to lodge parent to help complete an incident report

No matter how much we emphasize safety, there is always the possibility that an accident will happen. If an accident occurs in your group:

- **Make sure the child is definitely hurt.** Sometimes he or she is just scared. Take the time to talk with the child and try to calm him or her down. **If you are in doubt, assume it is serious.**
  - **Take off your skis and place them in an X** in the snow above the injured skier/rider. Make the child comfortable and warm. Use your jacket if necessary.
  - Have your group **line up below (downslope) the injured skier/rider.**
  - If you have cell reception, **call ski patrol** (603-646-7663)
  - If you cannot call ski patrol, **signal an adult** (preferably two) to go for the Ski Patrol. Try to avoid sending any students down by themselves. The injury should be reported to the lift operators. The lift operators will then notify the Ski Patrol.
  - **If you cannot find an adult**, send your two best skiers/riders. Give them the name of the slope you are on and location (i.e. Thomas, 2/3's down on the right), and have them ski to the lift operators. The two students should then report to a lodge parent.
  - **If it's cold out and another Thetford group skis by**, ask that group leader to take your group down to a lodge parent so that they can get warm in the lodge.
  - **Stay with the child until the Ski Patrol arrives.** Tell the Ski Patrol the child's name and let the child know that you will see him/her later. Reassure the child that everything is going to be okay. Collect your group at the lodge and finish the ski session. Inform the lodge parent of the nature of the accident. The lodge parent will notify the child's parents.
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# LODGE PARENT VOLUNTEERS

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## General Instructions

Lodge parents are there to help keep the group leader on the slopes with their group. Ideally, one or two lodge parents would be inside and one or two would be available outside at the base of the lifts and visible to group leaders for any support needs they might have (e.g. bringing someone inside or staying with them until their adult arrives for whatever reason).

Walkie-talkies are needed to communicate between lodge parents (e.g. if one goes out to find a kid and they show up in the lodge, they can let the outside person know).

## Supplies/Equipment:

- Laminated table numbers
- Holders for table numbers
- Sharpies
- Enough pens for all group leaders
- Masking tape (for name tags on helmets) or Labels with printed name and group #
- Lost and found trash bag
- Two-way radios
- Lodge Parent binder (containing incident reports, rosters, notes, extra lift tickets, and group sheets)

## Set-up Checklist

- Put out table numbers
- Put out group roster sign-in/sign-out forms
- Make any edits to group roster from absent list
- Bring boots (rented from the Skiway) upstairs and put them on the kid's table (they will come labeled with the kid's name)
- Take skis out to the racks closets to the hill
- If kids are not present and are not on the absent list, call parents to confirm they have their kid (make sure you check outside on the hill before calling)
- Help with renting gear if someone needs it and they were not on the list
- Place lost and found items in a visible spot for kids and parents to collect

## Closing Checklist

- Check to make sure all kids have been signed-out by either their parent or their group leader. Group leaders will check with a lodge parent (when turning in their group list). If a child has not been checked out and ski patrol has done their final sweep, a call will be placed to the parent to confirm they picked up their child. If after making contact with the

parents and the child is lost, coordinate with the Skiway manager to call 911, at least one person from the program will remain at the lodge until emergency services arrive.

- Give group rosters/sign-in/sign-out sheets to the lodge parents who will give them to the Program Coordinators so notes from group leaders can be addressed before the following week
- Kids will return their gear to the rental counter on their own - if boots are left upstairs, return them to the rental counter
- General pick-up of the Thetford area as needed and collect up any lost and found items; the Skiway will wipe down the tables and vacuum
- Photograph all items left in the lodge and email photo to [recreation@thetfordvt.gov](mailto:recreation@thetfordvt.gov) and [thetfordski@gmail.com](mailto:thetfordski@gmail.com) to be sent out to all participants.
- Take items to Skiway lost and found (so they can be available to participants over the weekend)

## Lodge Parent Binder

- Items are printed and organized by Lodge Parent Coordinator (receives group data from group leaders)
- Master list of participate names and parent contact information sorted alphabetical by child's last name, printed
- Weekly updated group rosters and check-in/check-out forms with group leaders' names and group number to be placed on the group tables during set-up
- Printed copy of absent list from Rec Director and TES
- Holds extra lift tickets and tickets that group leaders do not want to take home with them (group leaders should collect the lift tickets after the last run of the day)
- Notes page for continuity between weeks and lessons learned and recommendations for next week or next year
- Blank incident reports