

The Outdoor School



Teaching respect, inspiring wonder

Cabin Leader Handbook

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A program of the Los Padres Council, BSA

WELCOME CABIN LEADERS

The Outdoor School welcomes you to a week of adventure, learning, hiking, bonding, leadership, and fun!!!

When you arrive at The Outdoor School you will have a training session with the Program Coordinator. BUT before you arrive, YES BEFORE, you need to read this book cover to cover so that you are prepared and know what we expect of you. All you need to bring (besides the long list in the back of the book) is an:

- open mind
- a desire to work with children and
- boundless energy

Thank you in advance for devoting your time to the students and our program. We hope that this week is magical for you!!

Keep hiking,

The Outdoor School Community

P.S. If you have any questions, comments or concerns give The Outdoor School a call at 805-335-2899 ASAP- We are here to help you succeed as a Cabin Leader.

But what do we specifically have to do?!?

Specifically you will

- Monitor cabin behavior
- Assist the Naturalists on curriculum hikes
- Supervise meal behavior, set-up and clean-up
- Lead team building activities in your cabin
- Communicate any concerns or questions with the Naturalists, Program Coordinator, and Teachers
- Escort your students to their activities on time
- Create a community within your cabin, in your hiking group and with all students

What is the time commitment?

Cabin leaders are expected to remain at Outdoor School from arrival on Day 1 until departure on Day 4. If a Cabin Leader needs to leave during the week (e.g. prior scholastic obligation) they will need their departure to be pre-approved by the Education Director and must sign out appropriately (this policy is the same for both high school students and adults). Cabin Leaders under 18 and/ or in high school will need their guardian to provide transportation if they need to leave sometime during the week. Cabin leaders will have a couple of hours of designated off-time on Day 2 and Day 3. Cabin Leaders are expected to stay on the local site at this time and are welcome to catch up on school work. If you would like to earn community service hours please speak with the Education Director.

Being the Best Cabin Leader Possible

Here are some tips, tricks, and techniques...

1. Learn everyone's name in your cabin the first day – play a name game, make name tags, give them nature names
2. Include everyone – do not let anyone sit out
3. Set boundaries – be firm on day one and the students will respect and listen to you all week
4. Be fair – listen to both sides in arguments
5. Do not allow any roughhousing in the dorms
6. Earn cabin inspection points
7. Create unity – play group games, do riddles, tell stories, share your day, make up a cabin song, design a poster
8. Ask for HELP – Teachers, Naturalists, Education Director – we are here to HELP You!!!

Groups and Activities

You will be involved with 3 GROUPS at the Outdoor School

- Cabin – with you as the leader
- Hiking – you will be a member of one group that explores the natural world around the Outdoor School
- Meal – you will eat with one table of randomly assigned students

Your Duties as a Cabin Leader

While at camp, you will:

- Supervise and sleep in a cabin or 12-14 students. Phones, cameras, computers, and any other electronic devices are not allowed in the cabins. These items should be left in your vehicles. If necessary, cell phones can be left in your bag while in the cabin. Please do not have your phone out while around the students.
- **Follow the RULE OF 3. Never be alone with a student and never leave students unsupervised.** Students should always have at least one buddy from their cabin to walk around campus with. There needs to be at least two students anytime an adult is with them.
- Send all medical/first aid concerns to the Health Lodge to see our Health Tech.
- During transition times, remind students to use the restroom, wash their hands, fill up their water bottles, and get ready for hikes or the next activity.
- Motivate your cabin group to keep a clean and organized cabin. Remind them of the Golden Cabin award and how a clean cabin gets a higher chance for first pick for special activities.
- Sit with the students at mealtime to help with dining hall procedures and getting to know them.
- Lead your cabin group to/from place to place, and always sit with your cabin group during assembly times.
- Hike with a naturalist and their class and assist with activities and discipline.
- Get your group ready for showers each day after rec time.
- Participate in all evening programs with your cabin group or hiking group.
- Help students to get ready for bed each night. The Outdoor School will provide you stories to read to the students each night to help them fall asleep. Students must be silent between 9:45pm and 7:00am.

Discipline

The school's teachers retain administrative control of students while at The Outdoor School (this is a field trip). Therefore the teachers enforce all of the policies and procedures from their school while visiting The Outdoor School.

Our approach to discipline is positive reinforcement (STARS) – although sometimes it is necessary to have consequences for behavior (CHECKS).

When a student exhibits negative behavior, they will receive:

- o **1st check** – warning and discussion with Naturalist of what student did that was inappropriate,
- o **2nd checks** – the student is the last person at The Outdoor School to sign up for a special activity,
- o **3rd check** – the student misses a special activity, and a behavior contract is created with the teachers, Education Director or Program Coordinator
- o **4th check** – the student misses a special activity and they have to call home with an explanation of their behavior
- o **5th check** – the parents and/or guardian of the child are notified and the child is sent home.

Students who exhibit severe or unsafe behavioral problems such as intentionally harming another person physically or emotionally, bringing or using knives, other dangerous weapons, cabin raids or fighting will be immediately removed from The Outdoor School

Students who exhibit severe or unsafe behavioral problems such as intentionally harming another person, bringing or using knives, firearms, explosives, controlled substances, other dangerous weapons, cabin raids or fighting will be immediately removed from The Outdoor School.

Cabin Leaders will give out and help students record stars. Cabin Leaders may consult with a naturalists if they feel a student's behavior is inappropriate and a check may be assigned.

Need to Know Information

First Aid- Cabin leaders do not administer any first aid or medication to the students. All student medications are kept in the Health Lodge. Student injuries are treated either by Naturalists on the trail or by the teachers in the Health Lodge. Please call the Education Director, Program Coordinator or Health lodge if there is a first aid emergency.

Homesickness– Distraction!!! Distracting the child with other things is the key when dealing with homesickness. Do not give the student excessive attention since this tends to exacerbate the problem.

Bedwetting– Bedwetting is a common incident at The Outdoor School and should be treated with the greatest sensitivity. Every morning, after breakfast, the cabin leaders check all the bunks for bedwetting. When you find wet bedding, inform the Education Director or Program Coordinator as soon as you're done checking the rest of your cabin for other soiled bedding. The bedding will be laundered during morning hikes.

Borrowing and Lending – Do not allow borrowing or lending among the students or between cabin leaders and students. Borrowing and lending can lead to theft accusations and hurt feelings by the end of the week.

Sleepwalkers– Identified sleepwalkers need to sleep on the bottom bunk to prevent injury. If you encounter a sleepwalker, gently wake them up and guide them back to their bed. Do not shake or yell at the student to awaken them. This will only frighten them.

Rumors– You must discourage the students from spreading rumors. It draws the students' focus away from The Outdoor School experience and onto petty social problems. This includes refraining from telling personal stories, spreading gossip or answering questions about your girl/boy friend, alcohol, drugs, or sex

Raids– The Outdoor School does not permit raiding another cabin area, cabin, or someone else's belongings. A raid is blatant disrespect of other students' personal property and privacy. If your cabin is involved in a raid the CABIN LEADER will be immediately sent home.

Keeping Your Cabin Together- Your cabin group should always travel together. No student should be allowed to go anywhere at The Outdoor School alone. Send partners or groups to the infirmary, restroom, or other locations.

The Answers to F.A.Q.s

Accommodations – Cabin Leaders stay in dormitories with as many as twenty students. The dormitories have individual showers and bathrooms – you will shower during your free time

Cell Phones – Cell phones are permitted for cabin leaders at the Outdoor School, however, they must be used with discretion.

Please keep them out of sight while around students and, if possible, keep your phone on airplane mode until your free time.

Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco – The State Education Code expressly forbids drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and requires The Outdoor School to contact the Sheriff about any incident involving possession or use of drugs or alcohol.

Visitors – Cabin Leaders may not receive visitors.

Time Off – You will have a couple hours during the afternoon to relax, make important phone calls, and shower while students are not near. **THIS IS YOUR ONLY TIME TO SHOWER.**

Student gifts – You may bring team building gifts for your cabin – matching bandannas, hair ribbons, name cards, streamers, construction paper, markers, etc.). BUT you may not bring gum, candy, soda or food for the students – the Education Director will confiscate it.

Dietary Restrictions – If you have dietary restrictions please let us know the week before you attend so we can make adjustments. Please prepare a list of foods you cannot and can eat. Every meal has a vegetarian option.

Leadership to Think About:

At the Outdoor School, we're asking you to take charge of a large group of students. Your ability to run an effective and happy cabin will entirely depend upon your attitude and emotional state.

It becomes very difficult to control a rowdy group of students when your emotional state is compromised. If you are easy to anger, students will respond with less fervor than if you are calm and concise.

The best thing you can do for yourself before your arrival is to meditate on giving clear instructions and achieving leadership qualities without having to raise your voice.

If you can begin training your brain to respond clearly in stressful situations such as being in a cabin filled with students, your time here will flow with relative ease. Meditate on this!

WHAT TO PACK

DRESS CODE: SCHOOL APPROPRIATE ATTIRE WITH LONG PANTS & CLOSED TOED SHOES ON ALL HIKES!

- Sleeping Bag and/or sheets with blanket
- Pillow
- Shampoo/ Soap
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Hair brush
- Sunscreen
- Towel
- Chapstick
- Reusable Water Bottle
- Reading Book
- Money (for trading post) Cash or Check
- Flashlight
- Backpack for hiking
- Ear Plugs
- Swimsuit (One piece for showering)
- 2 short sleeve t shirts
- 2 long sleeve t shirts
- 4 pairs of Long Pants (jeans or hiking pants) these are mandatory for hikes and all activities!
 - No Leggings
- Sweatshirt
- Jacket
- Rain Jacket (we hike in the rain!)
- 1 pair of shorts
- Pajamas
- 2 pairs of shoes/boots that are good for hiking
- Underwear
- 4 pairs of socks
- Hat for sun and one for warmth
- Gloves for warmth
- Dirty clothes bag

If you are coming during the winter months, please send EXTRA warm clothes.

Optional things to pack:

- Musical Instruments
- Recreational Reading
- Cabin Decorations

DO NOT PACK: Excessive Makeup - Hair Spray - Food – Gum – Candy - Hair Appliances - Electronic Games - Tablets - Kindle

If you have questions about packing, please email amanda.chick@scouting.org

While at camp, we encourage you to unplug. While cell phones are allowed for cabin leaders we please ask for you to not use them while around the students. They can be used during your free time. Cell phones are not permitted to be used around the students or by the students.