

# **The Outdoor School**



Teaching respect, inspiring wonder

## **Cabin Leader Handbook**

2680 Highway 154  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
Phone: (805) 335-2899  
[amanda.chick@scouting.org](mailto:amanda.chick@scouting.org)  
[www.theoutdoorschool.org](http://www.theoutdoorschool.org)

**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 Director or Admin Assistant. 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 a(n):

- open mind
- desire to work with children
- boundless energy and patience
- excitement for the natural world!

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, and help with serving during meal times
- Lead team building activities in your cabin
- Communicate any concerns or questions with the Naturalists, Director, 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 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 designated time for leisure on Day 2 and Day 3. Cabin Leaders are expected to stay on site at this time. If you would like to earn community service hours as a high school student, please speak with the 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, or give them nature names!
2. Include everyone – do not let anyone sit out
3. Set boundaries – be firm and place expectations on day one
4. Be fair – listen to both sides in arguments
5. Do not allow any rough housing (pillow fights, wrestling, etc.) in the dorms
6. Earn cabin inspection points (cabin inspections will be held each day after breakfast and before dinner)
7. Create unity – play group games, team bonding activities, do riddles, tell stories, share your day, make up a cabin song, design a poster, etc. to make a positive impact!
8. Ask for HELP – Teachers, Naturalists, Admin, Assistant Director, Director – we are here to HELP You!!!

## **Groups and Activities**

You will be involved with 3 GROUPS at the Outdoor School:

- Cabin group: you living with the students as the leader
- Hiking group: you will be assigned to a group, separate from the cabin group, that explores the natural world around the Outdoor School
- Meal table – you will eat at one table with students from your cabin. Depending on cabin size, cabins may be split into two groups.

# Your Duties as a Cabin Leader

While at camp, you will:

- Supervise and sleep in a cabin of 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 First Aid or their teacher.
- During transition times, remind students to use the restroom, wash their hands, fill up their water bottles, and get ready for hikes or their 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 will have 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. Also helping serve food to students.
- 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 9:30 pm and 7:00 am.

# 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's teacher will choose their special activity at the end of sign ups
- o **3rd check** – the student misses a special activity, and a behavior contract is created with the teachers, Education Director or Assistant Director
- o **4th check** – the student misses all special activities 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, intentionally harming wildlife, bringing or using knives, firearms, explosives, controlled substances, other dangerous weapons, cabin raids, or fighting will immediately be 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 with their classroom teacher. Student injuries are treated either by Naturalists on the trail or by the teachers in the Health Lodge. Please call the Education Director 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.

Bed wetting– Bed wetting 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 bed wetting. When you find wet bedding, inform the Director 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, sex, or any other inappropriate scenarios.

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 fourteen 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 45 minute break during the afternoon to relax, make important phone calls, and shower while students are not near. **THIS IS YOUR ONLY TIME TO SHOWER (The best time to shower is during Rec Time, which will be held each day from 4-4:45 PM!).**

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 Director will confiscate it.

Dietary Restrictions – If you have dietary restrictions, please let us know in the Smartwaiver dietary restrictions section. Please prepare a list of foods you can and cannot 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 can become 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 to a leader who is calm and understanding.

The best thing you can do for yourself before your arrival is to meditate on how to handle certain situations with students, figure out who can help you in situations with students, giving clear instructions and utilizing leadership qualities in a calm and concise manner.

Many students will not have their guardian for this trip, so please be that guardian for them. Showing interest in their activities, achievements, learning, and experience will mean a lot to them. They will remember you for being that amazing leader during one of the most exciting weeks of their lives!

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.

You will have other cabin leaders, teachers and naturalists to help aid in situations you may be unfamiliar with. Utilize your resources when you are unsure how to proceed.

# WHAT TO PACK

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

- Sleeping Bag and/or sheets with blanket, twin size
- Pillow
- Shampoo/ Soap
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Hair brush
- Sunscreen
- Bath towel and hand towel for drying hands in cabin
- Chap stick
- Reusable Water Bottle
- Reading Book
- Money (for trading post)
- 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 all hikes and activities!
- Sweatshirt
- Jacket
- Rain Jacket (we hike in the rain!)
- 1 pair of shorts
- Pajamas
- 2 pairs of shoes/boots that are good for hiking, the second pair as a back up
- 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
- Activities for the kids to do in the cabin such as card games, coloring materials, simple arts & crafts
- Recreational Reading
- Cabin Decorations
- Extra towels (we do not have bath mats and sometimes the showers can get a bit flooded)

**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](mailto:amanda.chick@scouting.org). We are here to answer any questions you may have and are excited to have you!

**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.**